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 Engine House #6

other names/site number 173-5880-2166

2. Location

street & number 1300 South Broadway ☐ not for publication

city or town Wichita ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Sedgwick code ____ zip code 67211

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.)

Ramon Powers SHPO, 12-14-94
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 certifying 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:) ____		

Engine House #6
Name of Property

Sedgwick County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: Fire Station

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals:
Tudor Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete
roof Asphalt
other

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

Engine House #6
Name of Property

Sedgwick 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.)

- [X] **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.
- [X] **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

Social History

Period of Significance

1909-1945

Significant Dates

1909, 1918

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wolters, J.C. - Builder

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibilography
(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:

- [X] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [X] Other

Name of repository:

City of Wichita, Fire Department Records

Engine House #6
Name of Property

Sedgwick County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	646840	4170260
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 Dale Churchman

organization Friends of Engine House #6 date 12/12/94

street & number 1357 South Broadway telephone

city or town Wichita state Kansas zip code 67211

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 City of Wichita Fire Department

street & number 455 N. Main Street telephone

city or town Wichita state KS zip code 67202

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.

Engine House No. 6 is located at 1300 South Broadway in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas (pop. 279,272). The two-story, concrete brick fire station was constructed in 1909. It is 26 feet wide by 51 feet in depth and has a rectangular floor plan. The structure has a flat asphalt roof hidden on three sides by a brick parapet. With the exception of the back side of the building on the east, it has had few significant alterations. The original front entrance door and folding apparatus door have been replaced with modern doors. It stands across the street south from an active modern fire station and faces Wichita's major north-south street, Broadway, to its west. Broadway is zoned light commercial, and the area is an older section of the city. The neighborhood, other than Broadway, is an older residential area of modest, single family homes. The structure is located on the northwest corner of Lincoln Park, a much utilized, landscaped and well maintained public park with playground equipment, tennis courts, picnic tables, swimming pool and a bathhouse.

The station was built to serve as a front line fire house for the south side of Wichita. It was located 1.5 miles south of the downtown Central Fire House was active until 1953 when a new Fire Station No. 6 was built 1.5 miles to the southeast at Santa Fe and Mt. Vernon. It was then used by the Wichita Fire Reserve until 1988 and has been utilized for storage since that time.

The building is a brick and frame structure utilizing the most simplistic materials. The unfired brick is soft and appears to have been made from concrete. It sets on a concrete foundation. The exterior woodwork is yellow pine. The water table varies from 20 to 30 feet, and the location is within the Gilbert-Mosley Ground Water Pollution District.

The west elevation is rectangular with three sets of windows on the second story level and a entrance door, apparatus door and a window on the first floor. The middle set of windows on the second level are of two smaller panes surrounding a large pane in the middle. The other two upstairs windows are arched. All of the windows are wooden frame and double sash. The window sills are concrete. The parapet has dentils created by the corbelling out of the brickwork. This feature is carried out on three sides of the building. The corbeled brick design gives the impression of four balusters. These originally extended approximately one foot above the parapet but are now missing. Flower shaped decorative nuts are used to bolt the cast iron beam above the garage door to the brickwork. A concrete driveway extends from the building to the street. There is a nameplate formed from concrete in the center above the upstairs center windows. It is inscribed "1909 Engine House No. 6." The first letter is missing in the word Engine.

The north elevation is also rectangular and has two sets of windows on the second story level with two matching windows on the lower story. These windows match the window on the lower level of the front and are slightly arched. There are no entranceways on this side of the building. There are three corbeled balusters, one on each end and one about 15 feet from the front edge of

the building. An 8 ft. sidewalk adjoins the building.

The rear of the building on the east shows alteration. There are two square windows on the second story which have indications that they are not original to the building. There has been some alteration to the brickwork around and below these windows. There are two windows on the lower level. The one by the south edge matches windows on the other parts of the building. A large window near the center and the surrounding brickwork appear to fill an opening which was probably an apparatus door originally. There is a 10 ft. by 20 ft. driveway leading up to this area. An entrance door is south of this alteration. The framework appears original, but the door is a recent replacement. A concrete foundation and slab 8 ft. by 20 ft. lies north of the driveway. A tennis court is located 28 ft. from the rear of the building.

The south elevation has four windows on the second story. The two on the west match the windows found on the north side. The next window to the east matches the same design but is smaller, since it is a bathroom window. The last window on the east is square and small because it is a kitchen window. There are two windows on the lower level which match the windows on the north side. The south side adjoins a landscaped area of the park.

The lower floor comprises one room with a staircase in the northeast corner. This level was utilized for housing firefighting equipment, horses and some miscellaneous fire fighting equipment. The ceiling, which was of stamped metal, has been removed and stored in the building. The floor is concrete. The walls are painted concrete brick. There are pulleys in the ceiling which were used to lower the harness onto the horses. Two large holes in the ceiling originally held brass fire poles but have been covered up for safety reasons. The poles are stored in the building.

The upper floor was utilized for living and training quarters in the front. In the rear is a small kitchen, dining room, locker room and a bathroom. The flooring is painted pine. The walls are plaster over brick and are painted. The area is simplistic and utilitarian and unaltered from the time it was an active fire station.

Engine House No. 6 retains its original appearance and integrity except for doors which have been replaced and windows on the rear of the structure which are not original. The building is kept moderately heated to prevent condensation on the inside brick walls. The roof leaks, and there is some damage to walls and woodwork on the second floor. The building is deteriorating. The concrete building bricks are soft and need to be sealed. The parapet needs brick repair. The entire building needs to be repointed. New windows have been custom made using the original design; these are in storage at the present time. The building is locked and secure, and the firemen in the neighboring station keep an eye on it.

The architectural significance of the building lies in the fact that it is the last horse drawn neighborhood fire station still in public hands in Wichita. It is typical of the fire stations of the era and is the last one available for preservation in the city. The setting makes it particularly suitable for preservation since it is across the street from an active fire station, is centrally located and adjoins a public park.

Engine House No. 6 was built on its present site in 1909. It is located at 1300 South Broadway, Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. The structure is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A for its historical association with fire fighting activities at the turn of the century. It represents a typical, horse drawn neighborhood fire station of that era. This was the last horse drawn fire station in Wichita, and it converted to gasoline power in 1917.

A 1902 steam pumper is stored in the building which was at times on line at the station, along with a horse drawn hose and ladder wagon of the era. There is an abundance of antique chairs and other furniture stored in the building from various other fire stations.

It has been the determination of a group of firemen and neighbors for over a decade to renovate the building and establish a fire museum. There are approximately 150 fire museums in the United States, and they are found in 39 states and the District of Columbia. All four states surrounding Kansas have fire museums. (Conway, pp. 7-9) At the present time, however, there is, to our knowledge, no restored fire station that serves as a fire museum in Kansas.

The building is unique in that it is structured almost entirely of concrete. The bricks are cast concrete, as are the window sills, large sections of the balusters and even the nameplate.

A Sketch of South Wichita

No. 6 is located in an area of the city traditionally called the South End. The area had natural boundaries on three sides, the Arkansas River forming both the western and southern boundaries. The river ran mainly south but looped to the east just south of the city to join Chisholm Creek, which formed the eastern boundary. "Downtown," the area north of Kellogg Avenue, formed the northern boundary.

South Wichita did not play an active part in the early commercial history of the city. Wichita was formally organized as a town in 1870 and grew mainly along North Waco over to Main street. The growth was north of Douglas. Its wayward sister city of Delano grew along Douglas, west of the Arkansas River. In 1885, businessmen favoring Douglas as the main business street won out over the North Main businessmen. "Downtown" became Douglas and started to stretch toward the east. So, in its infancy, the commercial district grew towards the west, north and east but little towards the south. (Long, 1969, p. 57)

However South Wichita did grow, but as a residential area of mostly modest homes, retail shops, churches and schools. A map of Wichita during the real estate boom year of 1887 shows that the area from Kellogg to Harry Street, a distance of one mile, was nearly all platted for residential lots. The next mile south to Franklin (now Pawnee) was about fifty percent platted. (Map, 1887) A similar

map of 1901 indicates more platted additions but, more importantly, the addition of houses, parks, schools and churches. (Map, 1901)

An indication of the residential nature of the area can be found in the fact that one of Wichita's oldest schools was in the neighborhood. Lincoln school was established in 1881 at an unknown location. In 1885, a new Lincoln school building was built in the 1200 block of South Emporia.. From 1888 to 1895, Levy school existed on the southern edge of the city, probably in a rented building. Lincoln and Levy were joined by Harry Street school in 1890. Both Lincoln and Harry Street schools have been in continual existence for over 100 years. (Van Meter, 1977, pp. 447-48)

The schools were joined by new churches. The South Lawrence Christian Church (now Broadway Christian) was organized in 1886. (Mitchell, 1986, p. 10) Emporia Avenue Church (now Grace Methodist) was organized the same year. (Ross, 1976, Card # 83.)

The populating of the neighborhood brought small businesses, particularly along Lawrence Avenue (now Broadway). For example, in 1887, there were at least eight businesses in the 1100 block. A two story building stood where the Broadway Mortuary now stands at the corner of Lincoln and Broadway. It was divided into two stores, one of which was a grocery. Two doors north were a grocery and drug store. Towards the north end of the block were a bakery, meat market, another grocery and a flour and feed store, the north half of which would soon be occupied by a cobbler. All of these were two story buildings. Across the street on the southeast corner was another grocery. (Sanborn, 1887)

A Sketch of the History of the Wichita Fire Department

The Wichita fire department was born in the spring of 1872 when the first volunteer fire company was formed as the Frontier Company. A small frame building was built at 220 North Market and named Fire House No. 1. This organization lasted for two years before being disbanded and reorganized on June 24, 1874, under the same name but with a number of new volunteers added. Their equipment consisted only of rubber buckets, and it soon became evident that more than a bucket brigade was needed to fight major fires. By 1881, a water plant was constructed, and 60 double discharge fire hydrants were installed. (Wichita Fire Department, 1978 [hereinafter listed as WFD], pp. 7-9)

In 1883, with the new water works completed, the old Frontier Company was disbanded, to be replaced by the Deluge Company. By 1885, firemen were being paid $1.00 for each night run and $1.50 for each day run. Some equipment was sent west across the river to form a station on the west side. A second frame building was constructed at 232 South Topeka and was named Number 2

Independent Fire Company. Fire equipment consisted of hose carts, black rubber coats, rubber helmets, rubber boots, climbing poles, axes and picks. (WFD, p. 10)

On May 25, 1886, the city council voted to create the office of Fire Marshall. A. G. Walden was appointed and held the position until his death in 1917. Walden immediately requested the city to buy a two horse hose carriage, horses and harness as well as 1000 feet of hose and a fire alarm bell. He also requested that he be allowed to hire 16 men as firemen. Walden received his requests, and Wichita initiated its professional fire department. (WFD, p. 12.)

The old frame buildings at No. 1 and No. 2 stations were rebuilt in 1888. Two years later, in 1890, a new station, No. 3, was built at 13th Street North and St. Francis to protect the north end of the city. The same year, No. 4 station was built near Seneca and Douglas to protect the west side. (WFD, p. 13) After the turn on the century, another station was built, this time on the east side. Engine House Number 5 was built at Second and Hillside. Central Station was then built next to the old city hall and replaced old houses No. 1 and No. 2. (WFD, p. 17)

The Building of Engine House No. 6

Now only the south side of the city was without a fire station. This would soon be remedied. A station was needed in the area because the effective range of the fire horses was limited. In 1902, on a long run of twenty blocks from Fire Station No. 1, at 220 North Market, to the Dold Packing House fire, at 21st Street and Broadway, the driver reported that "upon arrival, his team was panting and sweating and two of the three were nearly exhausted." (WFD, p. 16) It was farther than that from the downtown Central Station to the southern edge of the city.

On May 10, 1909, the Wichita Daily Beacon announced that "J. L. Wolters was given the contract for building the Lincoln Park fire station for $3,950. The other bidder was Brant & Taylor at $4,485." (Beacon, 10 May 1909) The same newspaper added on May 29 that work had started, and the station was to be 25 x 50 feet and consist of two stories. It was to be finished in 60 days. (It would take more like six months.) It would be built on the northwest corner of Lincoln Park. (Tihen notes)

Lincoln Park had been acquired by the city on October 4, 1900. It was purchased from George L. and Eunice S. Pratt for the sum of $256 and was known for a short time thereafter as Pratt Park. The legal description read, "Commencing at a point on the West line of Topeka Avenue two hundred and seventy five (275) feet north of the North line of Zimmerly Street in Zimmerly Addition to the City of Wichita running thence north along the West side of Topeka Avenue to a point equally distant from the North line of Zimmerly Street and the South line of Lincoln Street; thence west to the East line of Lawrence Avenue; thence south along the East line of Lawrence Avenue to a point two hundred and seventy five (275) feet north of the North line of Zimmerly Street; thence east to beginning." The

deed was recorded on October 11, 1900 at the Register of Deeds Office, Sedgwick County Court House. (Warranty Deed, George L. Pratt & Wife to The City of Wichita Lincoln Park, October 11, 1900, recorded in book 184 of Deeds at page 214.)

The Beacon reported on October 23, 1909 that "part of the new equipment for fire station No. 6 arrived last night. It consists of a combination chemical and hose wagon. It was made by the Seagrave Manufacturing company, Columbus, Ohio." The article also stated that the building was about complete.

Engine House No. 6 Goes Online

The station actually did not go on line until January 1910. On January 3, 1910, the Beacon said, "Hose house No. 6 is to be opened at once. Fire Marshal [A. G.] Walden was directed by the city commissioners to fit up the building as soon as possible and establish a force of men at that place. A combination fire wagon for this hose house was purchased several weeks ago and a team was bought for it. In order to have men with some experience at the new station, Chief Walden has been drilling a few extra men recently. These will be in [the] charge of an experienced man from the central station, and within a very few days residents in the south part of the city are assured of a well equipped hose house near at hand in case of fires."

The next day, the Wichita Eagle added that the station "was formally opened and is now ready for business. The building has been completed and ready for operation for several days but Fire Chief Walden wanted to wait until the first of the year when the sheet for the year would be clean. The force at the new station will be in [the] charge of W. R. Snow who has been formerly assistant foreman of the hook and ladder wagon. Willie Spenser, Fred Davis and Charles Duffner will be the other members of the company." The Eagle concluded that, in the future, south side residents would have "less cause to be afraid of fires and the safety of dwellings in that part of the city."

W. R. Snow, who had joined the fire department January 18, 1897, had made lieutenant in 1907. He was the most experienced of the original team assigned to No. 6. The day before he took charge of the new station, he was made captain. Years later, on January 26, 1924, he was injured in a fire. He was still captain of No. 6 at that time. (Midwest Historical & Genealogical Society, 1981, p. 136)

Willie Spenser had become a Wichita fireman on March 7, 1906 and would serve as nozzleman at the new station. The Wichita Eagle reported that, while working out of Central Station, April 22, 1917, he was injured in an vehicle collision accident while responding to an alarm in which one fireman was killed. He received a permanent injury and was retired. (Midwest Historical & Genealogical Society, 1981, p. 137)

Charles Duffner had been appointed to the department March 15, 1904 and served as plugman. (Midwest Historical & Genealogical Society, 1981, p. 41) Fred Davis was hired as a driver for No. 6 when it opened, but little information can be found about him, and apparently he was a fireman for a very short time. He was soon replaced by E. S. Matherly, who was only nineteen when he joined the department on February 15, 1910. (Midwest Historical & Genealogical Society, 1981, p. 94)

The 1914 Sanford Insurance Map shows No. 6 with a small annex attached at the rear of the building. The map indicates that the station had "4 men, 2 horses, 1 combination wagon (hose & 25 gal. chem. tank), 1000 ft. 'C. R. L. Hose,' 300 ft. Hynber [spelling may not be correct] hose." Lincoln Park at this time had no other structures indicated.

The Era of the Fire Horses

Horses added to the excitement and glamour of early fire fighting days. As one old timer stated, "To hear the thunder of hooves, to see a team of horses galloping full out with flared nostrils and straining muscles, sparks flying from the wheels as they rounded a corner was...something wonderful to behold." The driver cared for the horses and was responsible to see that they were healthy and ready at all times. A veterinarian was notified whenever a horse was injured or became sick. Horses were exercised one hour daily by the driver and could not be taken more than an eighth of a mile from the station during this activity. The driver was to feed, groom and exercise the horse prior to 9 a.m. each day and have them ready for immediate use at all times. On returning from a fire run, "the horses were not to be driven out of a trot." The driver slept next to the horses in the downstairs of the fire station. (WFD, p. 14)

When an alarm came to the station, the fireman on watch wrote down the address and tripped the house alarm. Firemen in the living quarters slid down a pole to the apparatus floor. The release for the horses was tripped, and the horses went to the front of the fire apparatus to have the driver drop the collars and snap them into place. A Wichita fireman, R. G. Armstrong, had designed and patented a quick-hitch for fire teams, the "Armstrong Hitch," which was suspended from the ceiling with pulleys and ropes. This speeded up the hitching process. (WFD, p. 15) The two pulleys for the Armstrong Hitch are still in place in Engine House No. 6.

The foreman would issue the order when a response to an alarm was to be made. If the alarm was in another district and a response was not ordered, the horses had to "remain hitched for twenty minutes before being returned to their stalls." When they did go out on a run, drivers had to slow their teams on turns and hold the horses back "until they got their second wind, otherwise they would exhaust themselves on a long run and they could be ruined." (WFD, p. 15)

While there were many fires during the era, one merits special mention. On December 22, 1916, at 1:56 in the morning, an alarm was received from Seneca and Maple, the Masonic Home. The temperature was eight degrees. Fire Station No. 4, at Seneca and Douglas, was the closest, but because of the extent of the fire, other units were also called. Engine House No. 6 and Central Station were the next closest and were quick to respond. Within ten minutes, residents were being carried from the building as flames continued to spread. It took five hours to bring the fire under control. Nine people died and 23 were injured. Many firemen suffered burns and injury from the heat and smoke. The total of hose laid was 11,650 feet. That fire at the Masonic Home was called the "most disastrous fire in the history of Wichita." The Masonic Lodge drew up a resolution commending the firemen's heroic efforts. The city commission adopted a resolution honoring the "Heroes of the Masonic Home Fire." The listing of heroes included the personnel of No. 6: Captain W. R. Snow and First Class Firemen T. W. Spencer, Ernest Matherly and Charles Duffner. (WFD, p. 20, 22)

The End of the Fire Horses

The trend towards motorized equipment started in 1909 with the purchase of a Mitchell touring car for the fire marshall. (WFD, p. 17) Two years later, on August 1, 1911, the first piece of motorized fire equipment was purchased, a Webb Motor Fire Engine capable of pumping 700 gallons per minute. It proved so successful that "engines, chemical wagons and aerials, each bigger and more powerful, continued to take the place of horse drawn equipment." (WFD, p. 22)

The horses were kept around for a while, but their destiny was set. Motorized equipment was replacing the "valiant old fire horse." When the horses were taken from their stalls for the last time, "the tough old smoke eaters wept." From 1911 until 1918, "the noble steeds were honored with board and room," partly from a practical standpoint, since the fire horse "didn't freeze up in the winter." By 1917, however, only one horse team remained in service, and that was at No. 6 Station. (WFD, pp. 19-22)

No. 6 Station was the last in Wichita to be horse drawn. The last team of fire horses, Tom and Jerry, was removed from service at No. 6 in 1918. "They were sold to the Oil Hill Fire Department where they continued to answer fire alarms. Shortly after returning from an alarm and while the chemical tank was being refilled, Jerry stepped into a bucket of sulfuric acid which had, through carelessness, been set too near the horse." As a result of the injury, it was necessary to put Jerry to sleep. Tom's fate is not known. (WFD, p. 22)

When the last team of horses was replaced by engine-driven fire apparatus at No. 6, "Wichita became the first completely motorized fire department in the United States, and the second in the world." Improvements other than equipment came in the decade after the horses were gone. Fireman had

worked 24 hour days with every fifth day off. In 1918, the firemen joined the International Firemen's Association and formed the Wichita Union. Within two years, a two-platoon system was adopted so firemen could spend "half of their time at home." Salaries were also increased. (WFD, p. 24)

In 1922, a new station was built in Riverside. Station No. 7 showed a departure from the old two story designs of the turn of the century. It was "considered to be the latest in design and was a bungalow-style building that matched its residential neighbors." (WFD, p. 26) No. 6 station remained pretty much unchanged from the time it was built, except for motorized apparatus in place of horse drawn. It still served as a small neighborhood station but was rapidly becoming outdated. New stations were opened throughout the city. Then, in the summer of 1953, new No. 11 Fire Station was opened at George Washington and Harry, about a mile south of No. 6. (WFD, p. 46) Old No. 6 was no longer needed and went off line.

No. 6 was not dead however. It was operated by Civil Preparedness and was manned by reserve firefighters who answered calls not only in the city but in the county as well. In 1981, however, it was threatened with demolition. A proposal to tear down the old structure and replace it with a new "active-solar brick and glass" fire station was approved by the neighborhood council and the Park Board. Some preservationists objected, but Fire Chief Jim Sparr said, "The old two-story station has no historical significance." Two Wichita firehouses were older at the time. James Guy, chairman of the Wichita Historic Landmarks Preservation Committee, disagreed. He said, "That's not only a fire station, but like one in a storybook." He said it was "unusual because of its arched windows... and the actual brickwork itself." He hoped that a compromise could be found to preserve the building and still provide for a new fire station. (Wichita Eagle-Beacon, 3 November 1981)

Threatened by Demolition

By April 20, 1982, old No. 6 had found some friends. Sixth grade students at McLean Elementary School had determined to save the station from demolition. Their efforts included letters, petitions and posters. Among those impressed with these efforts was City Manager Gene Denton. He recommended to the city commission "that the old firehouse be saved for use as a privately-funded firefighters museum, and that a new $639,000 station proposed for the site be moved 50 feet to the south." Under his plan, the Fire Reserve would still use the old firehouse. Reserve equipment would be stored in the new station, and the bottom floor of the firehouse would be a museum.

Other groups joined in the battle to save the station. The Twin Lakes Candle Nook and Wichita's four Burger Kings collected signatures on petitions. The Explorer Scouts Post 881, composed of young people who were interested in firefighting, circulated petitions. (Wichita Eagle-Beacon, April 20, 1982, p. 16Z)

Denton's plan, however, did not set well with the neighbors and Citizen Participation Organization for the area since his plan would have diminished the size of Lincoln Park. A neighborhood organization, the South Central Progressive Association, also became involved, and the issue of the park and fire station became heated. These groups united to convince the city commission and the fire department to compromise. The final decision was to build the new fire station across the street north of old No. 6. (Burge and Newman, interviews)

Engine House No. 6 Today

Engine House No. 6 would not be razed. The threat of demolition by the bulldozer was postponed. But demolition by neglect began its slower yet steady work. In the latter part of the 1980s, the Fire Reserve moved to new facilities. Old firehouse furniture was stored in the building along with other miscellaneous items. Old steamer No. 2 was removed from Cowtown and stored in the building, along with a horse drawn ladder and hose wagon. The roof began to leak. Windows fell out when the putty holding them hardened and fell away. Birds nested in the building. Winter frost and ice worked away at the parapet and brickwork.

There was an unsuccessful attempt to restore the building in the late 1980s. New window frames were custom made and donated. Glass for the windows was donated and cut to size. These items are still in storage. A businessman offered to restore the building in return for a nine year lease. This plan, however, did not find favor in city hall. (Owens, interview) In February 1993, a Historic Place Team was formed within the Historic Preservation Alliance of Wichita and Sedgwick County, Inc. to study the possibility of restoring Engine House No. 6 and establishing a fire museum. The restoration was adopted as a major goal for 1994 at the annual meeting in October 1993. The HPA sponsored a new organization to accomplish this goal, the Friends of Engine House No. 6. Since January 1994, this group has written by-laws, organized as a non-profit corporation, started a membership drive, opened dialogue with the city concerning a lease of the building, elected a board of directors and published a bi-monthly newsletter.

Enthusiasm for saving and restoring Engine House No. 6 is high among South Wichita neighborhood residents, historic preservationists and firefighters, active, reserve and retired. City officials to this point have been both helpful and cooperative. Designation of the building as a National and Kansas Historic Landmark would add authenticity and importance to the project.

The Engine House No. 6 is significant as an example of a two-story, concrete brick, Tudoresque building. The 1909 construction date of the engine house places it directly within the eclectic period for firehouse design. While the projecting corbelling and quoins that define the building are not traditionally Tudoresque, the essence of the building's design captures the spirit of a medieval castle. Unique designs that were distinguishable from all other types of buildings of the time characterize this phase of firehouse architecture.

Engine House No. 6 is typical of a small station layout design. The first level was dedicated to horse and engine storage, with the second level dedicated to the use by the firemen. The dormitory, locker room, bathroom and kitchen were located on the second floor. A set of interior stairs located at the rear of the engine house provided access to the second floor, a pole in the dormitory area provided fast exit.

The choice of concrete brick for the building's construction is unique. The choice evidences the designers interest in utilizing a newer construction material. The engine house is one of the few buildings in Wichita from this period to be constructed from concrete brick.

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Wichita Eagle-Beacon, 3 November 1981, 20 April 1982.

Personal Interviews

Burge, Dwight. Former President, South Central Progressive Association, Wichita, 1994.

Newman, Lois Ann. Former Member, Citizen Participation Organization-E, Wichita, 1994.

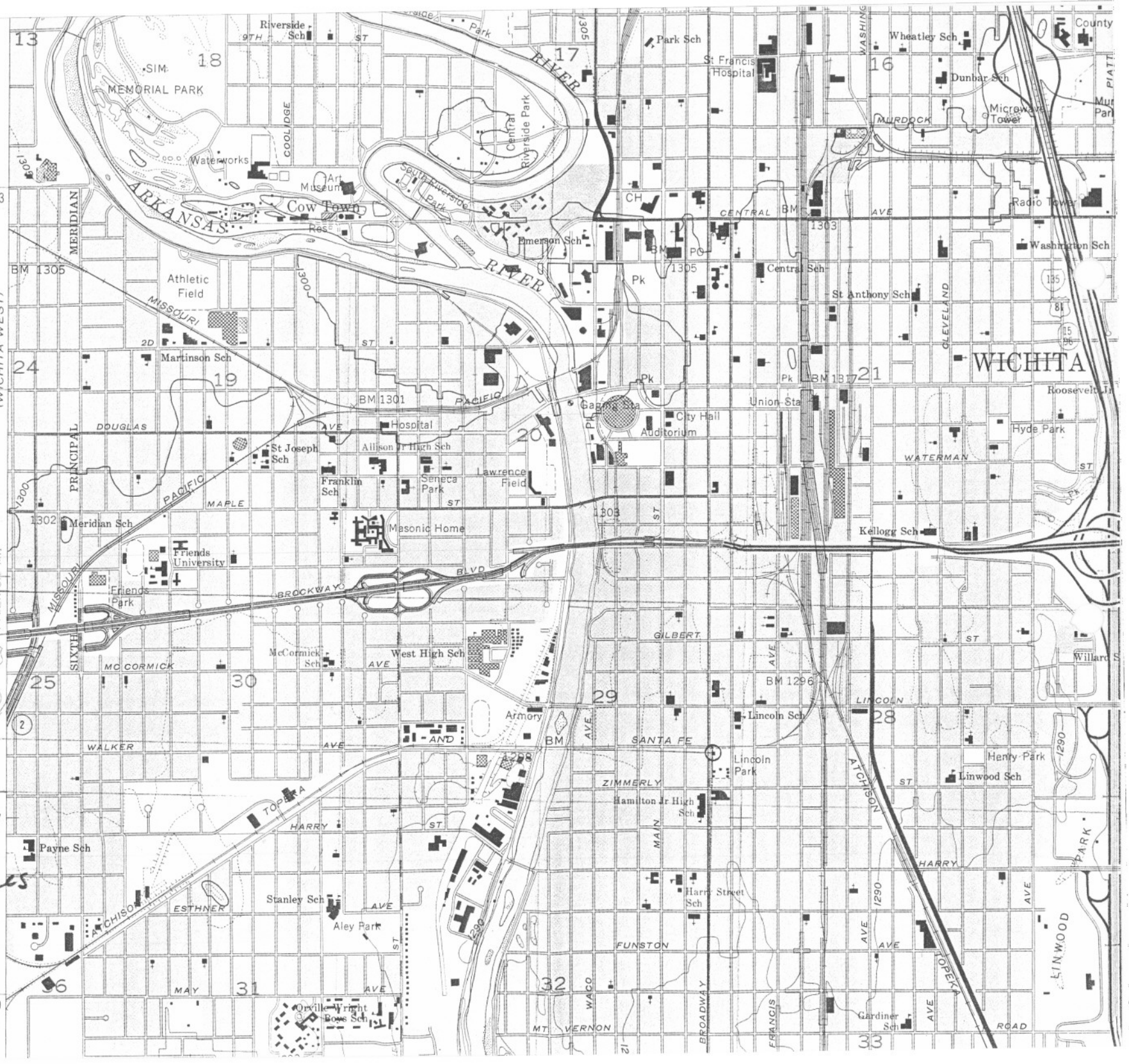
Owens, Capt. B. K. Wichita Fire Department Historical Society historian. Wichita, 1994.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is on the North 100 feet and West 50 feet of Lincoln Park, 1300 South Broadway, Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. The legal description of the park is Beg. NE Corner Lot 1, Klein Addition, N 365 ft, W 317.5 ft, S 365 ft, E to Beg., SW 1/4, Sec 28, T. 27S, R. 1E. The nominated property stands at the intersection of East Bayley and South Broadway, it is bounded to the north by East Bayley and to the west by South Broadway. A active railroad track runs down the middle of East Bayley.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes a concrete slab to the rear of the building where accessory structures were once located. It includes the driveway to the fire station on the front and a pedestrian sidewalk on the north side.



ENGINE HOUSE
NO. 6
WICHITA EAST
QUAD
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