

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Gernon, Nicholas, House

Other names/site number KHRI # 167-202

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Post Rock Limestone Properties in Kansas: 1870 - 1948

2. Location

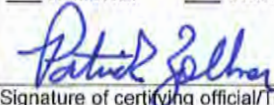
Street & number <u>818 N. Kansas Street</u>	n/a	not for publication
City or town <u>Russell</u>	n/a	vicinity
State <u>Kansas</u> Code <u>KS</u> County <u>Russell</u>	Code _____	Zip code <u>67665</u>

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide local Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ A ___ B C ___ D



Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

8-22-22
Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Register of Historic Kansas Places listed August 20, 2022

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____

Date _____

Title _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

National Register of Historic Places listed October 19, 2022

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

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

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
3	3	objects
4	4	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

COMMERCE/TRADE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Folk Victorian

foundation: STONE: limestone

walls: STONE: limestone

WOOD

roof: WOOD: shingle

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary

The Gernon House is an 1872 two-story, stone, Folk Victorian style dwelling with a modified rectangular plan, a north-south gable roof, and a porch on the south elevation. The walls of the main building are built of locally sourced post rock limestone, with a one-story wood clapboard addition on the north elevation. The gable ends at the north and south elevations are covered with wooden shakes. The roof is made of composition shingles with two brick chimneys extending from the gable centerline. The interior of the dwelling has been restored to reflect the look and feel of an 1890's residence for its current function as a house museum. The house is in the historic downtown of Russell, Kansas, the county seat, and center of rural life in the area. The east elevation fronts Kansas Street and is set behind a modest lawn with minimal vegetation and signage. A contributing 1877 post rock limestone sidewalk runs parallel to Kansas Street along the eastern property line. The property is in excellent condition and although there have been several major alterations since construction, these alterations occurred within the historic period and do not affect the integrity of the property.

Elaboration

Setting

The 818 Kansas Street property is a two-story dwelling with a one-story addition on the north elevation. The property is currently operating as a historical museum. The property comprises a 0.10-acre parcel within the original, historic downtown of Russell, Kansas. It is located one block east of Main Street, and 0.09 miles south of the railroad tracks. The dwelling is surrounded by commercial properties. There is minimal landscaping surrounding the property: grass and light vegetation.

Property	Type	Eligibility
Gernon House	Building	Contributing
Post Rock Sidewalk	Object	Contributing
Post Rock Signs (three total)	Objects (non-historic)	Non-contributing (3 total)
Metal pump and slab	Object	Contributing
Recreated outhouse	Building (non-historic)	Non-contributing
Trough	Object	Contributing

A historic era sidewalk made of post rock limestone extends along the east side of the property. This sidewalk was constructed in June 1877 by the original property owner and builder, Nicholas Gernon.¹ There are no outbuildings associated with the Gernon House. As part of its current function as a museum, there are three post rock signs, a wooden sign, a recreation of a historic outhouse, a metal pump, and stone trough placed around the property.

The three post rock signs are narrow post rock blocks extending vertically from the ground. The tops of the stones are cut at a diagonal angle with black plaques inlaid. The signs are non-historic and located along the sidewalk at the east side of the property. The first post rock sign reads: "Post No. 1 Nicholas Gernon Home, 1872 First Stone House in Russell – Avenue of History May 20, 2001 Russell County Historical Society." The second reads: "Post No. 2 Site of Nicholas Gernon Blacksmith Shop 1872 – Avenue of History May 20, 2001 Russell County Historical Society." This signage refers to the lot immediately south of the subject property. The third sign read: "Kansas Street Dedicated May 20, 2001 as Avenue of History 9 Blocks of Brick Paving 1924 –

¹ *The Russell County Record*. (June 14, 1877). p. 3.

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Russell County Historical Society.” There is a black metal post with a wooden hanging sign just north of the stone walkway to the entrance. This sign is missing a few letters, as of March 2022, but reads: “Gernon House 1872 – Russell County Historical Society.”

A small metal pump sits on a post rock limestone slab at the west side of the property, just outside the side door. At the far southwest corner of the property, at the corner of the fences, there is a re-creation of a historic wood outhouse. There is a post rock stone trough along the south elevation at the southwest corner of the building. This stone feature is approximately 3' x 4' with a wide depression at the middle. The signs and outhouse are not historic or significant. The sidewalk, trough, and pump should be considered contributing elements. A site map is included as an attachment, showing the location of the associated objects.

The city of Russell is the county seat of Russell County, Kansas. The town was originally named Fossil, after the station built there by the Kansas Pacific Railway in 1867. The county of Russell was established the same year. In 1871, a settlement colony from Ripon, Wisconsin located in the area and established the city. The area was renamed to Russell after the county. The city went through an oil boom in the 1920's and 1930's after oil was discovered west of Russell. The city's population reached its peak in the 1960's, reaching 6,113 according to the 1960 census report. Since then, the population has steadily declined, with the 2020 census reporting the population as 4,401. The town is the center of the local rural community.

The current restored dwelling has a rectangular plan with six rooms at the ground floor and four rooms at the second floor. The property is mostly, and originally, constructed of post rock limestone. In 1923, an addition made of wood clapboard was constructed at the north elevation. The post rock limestones used at the exterior measure approximately 20-24 inches thick, with limestone mortar. The limestone blocks used in the building's façade are dressed in a variety of styles, likely related to the various stages of construction. The limestone blocks used in the building are a mix of rough-hewn, hammered face, and sawed face stones. The gable ends are covered in wooden shingles; with dovetail shingles above the window lintels and plain shingles below. The gable roof runs north to south.

At the south elevation, there is a partially enclosed wood porch that features a diamond shaped window, one window under the porch, one on the western side of the enclosed porch, and two on the upper level. The porch has decorative brackets and detailing. The east elevation has a small overhang extending over the entrance, three windows on the lower level and two on the upper. There are two brick chimneys extending from the centerline ridge, one at each end of the building. The windows throughout are double hung, four-over-four wood, with vinyl covers, and feature decorative post rock windowsills and lintels.²

The interior of the property has been fully restored by the Russell County Historical Society to the look and feel of an 1890's home. The interior of the building there are five rooms at the first floor, and four rooms at the second floor. From within the building, the original post rock walls, from prior to the 1923 rear addition, are noticeable due to the width of the walls (approximately 20-24 inches). Original features of the home, such as the wood work at the entry to the dining room, are still visible. The home has wood flooring and has been painted/wallpapered in an approximation of a historic late 1800's home. The home has been furnished with vintage furniture from the local area.

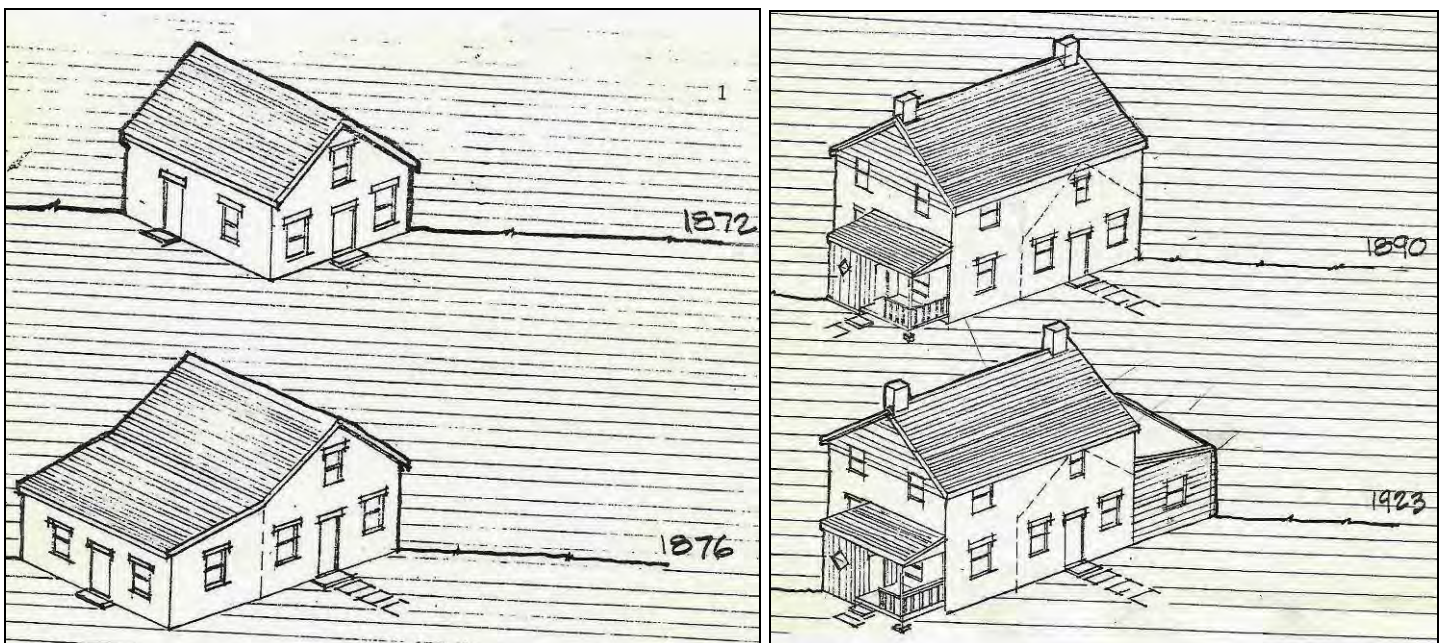
² Robert Bernham, John Limp, and Richard Wagner. *Restoration Study of The Nicholas Gernon House*. Russell County Historical Society, March 1981.

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Historic Alterations

There were major alterations completed in 1876, 1890, and in 1923. Graphics from the 1981 Gernon House Restoration Study provides illustrations of the stages of construction. View of the drawings is to the northeast. The dotted lines centered on the main entry in the 1890 and 1923 views show the original 1872 configuration.



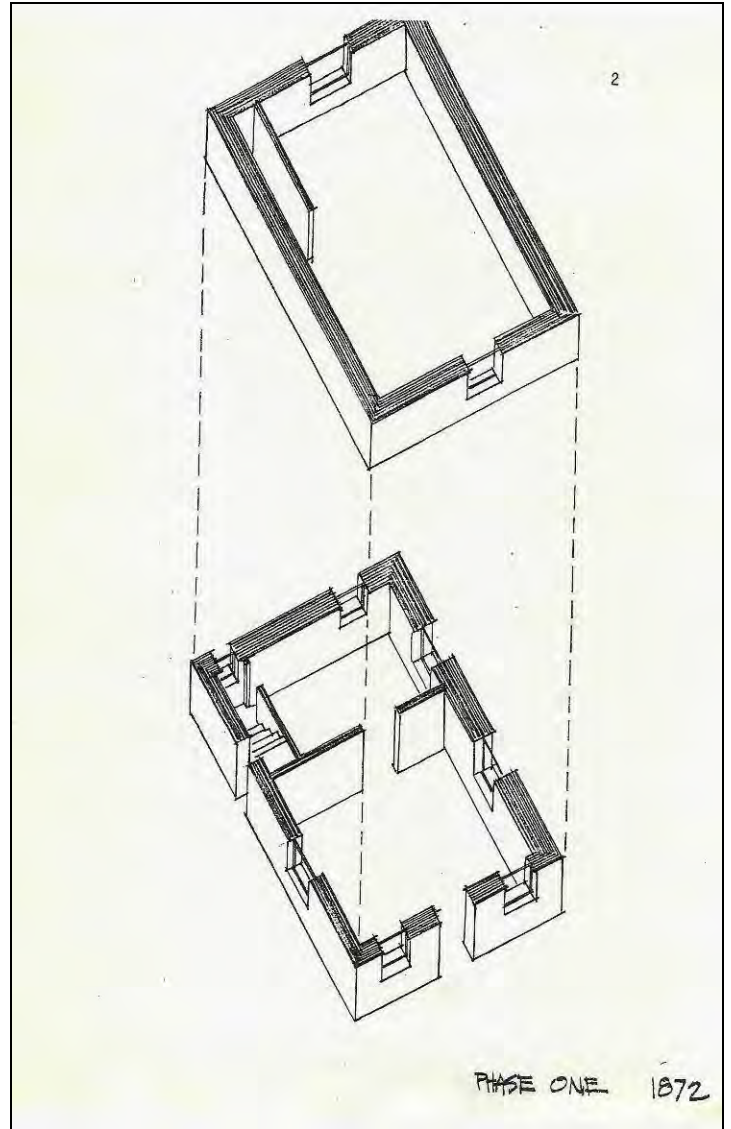
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Phase One: The dwelling was originally constructed in a simple rectangular form in 1872. The original floor plan featured two rooms at the first floor and one room at the second half floor. There were seven windows and two doors at the first story, and two windows at the second story. The building was fully constructed of post rock limestone with decorative post rock lintels above the windows and doors. The roof was a gable style in an east-west layout. The dwelling was built with limestone mortar by the original owner, Nicholas Gernon.



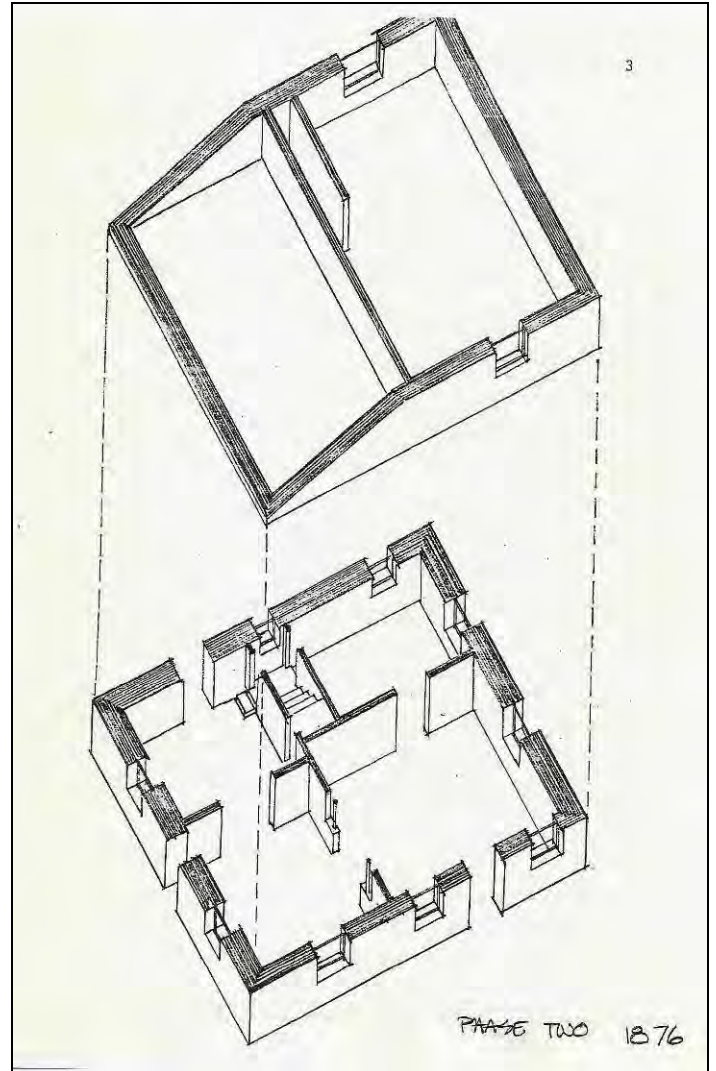
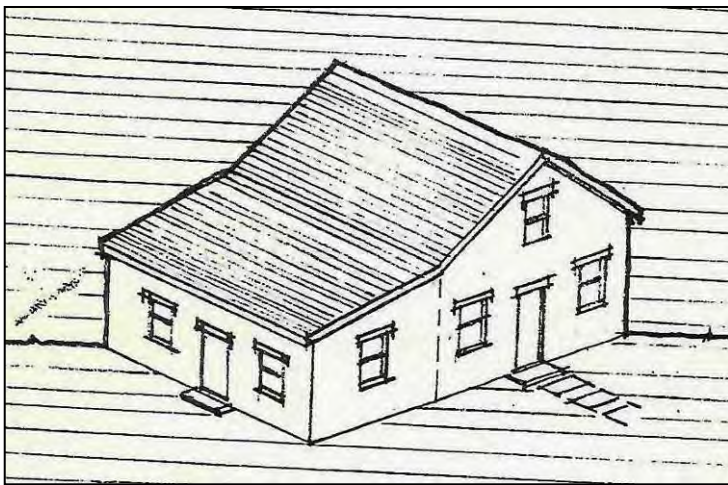
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Phase Two: In 1876, an addition of two rooms on the ground floor and minimum attic space was constructed at the south elevation. A stairwell was added to the interior of the main floor. After this renovation the property had four rooms and a stairwell at the first floor, and one room at the second floor. This addition was constructed of post rock limestone to match the original building.³ The completion of the stone sidewalk, about nine months after construction of this phase began, completed the project.⁴



³ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

⁴ *The Russell County Record*. (14 June 1877), page 3.

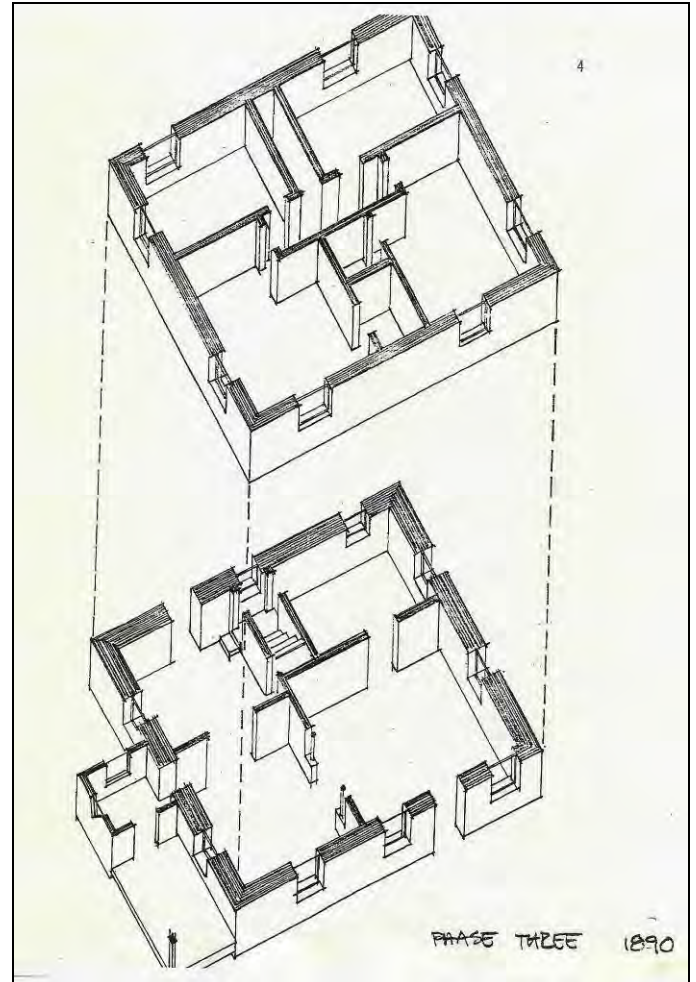
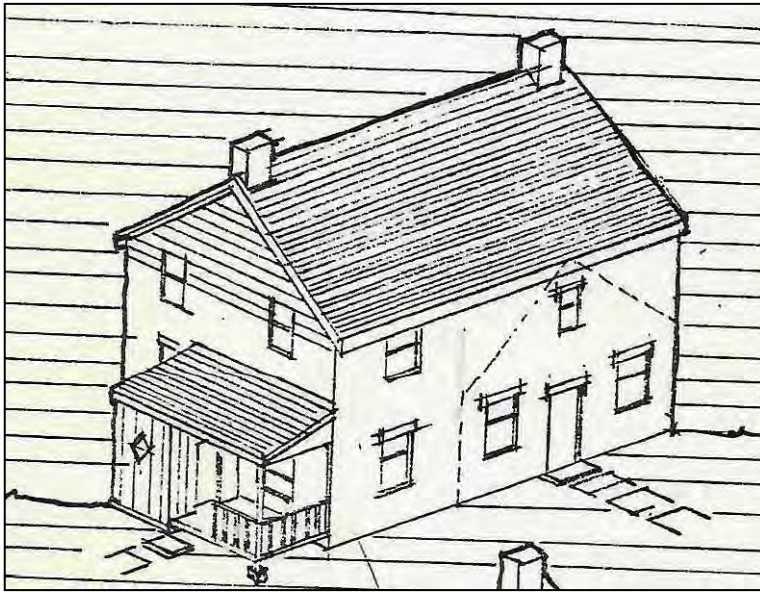
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Phase Three: Another addition was completed around 1890, which included the construction of a full second floor, consisting of four rooms, a stairwell, and hall. The direction of the roof was changed during this renovation, from east-west to north-south. Two chimneys were built at the roof centerline. At this time, an open porch and enclosed entry was added at the south elevation.⁵ A large wood-frame addition is visible at the west elevation on Russell County Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1905, 1911, and 1920.⁶



⁵ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

⁶ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, Russell County, (1905, 1911, 1920).

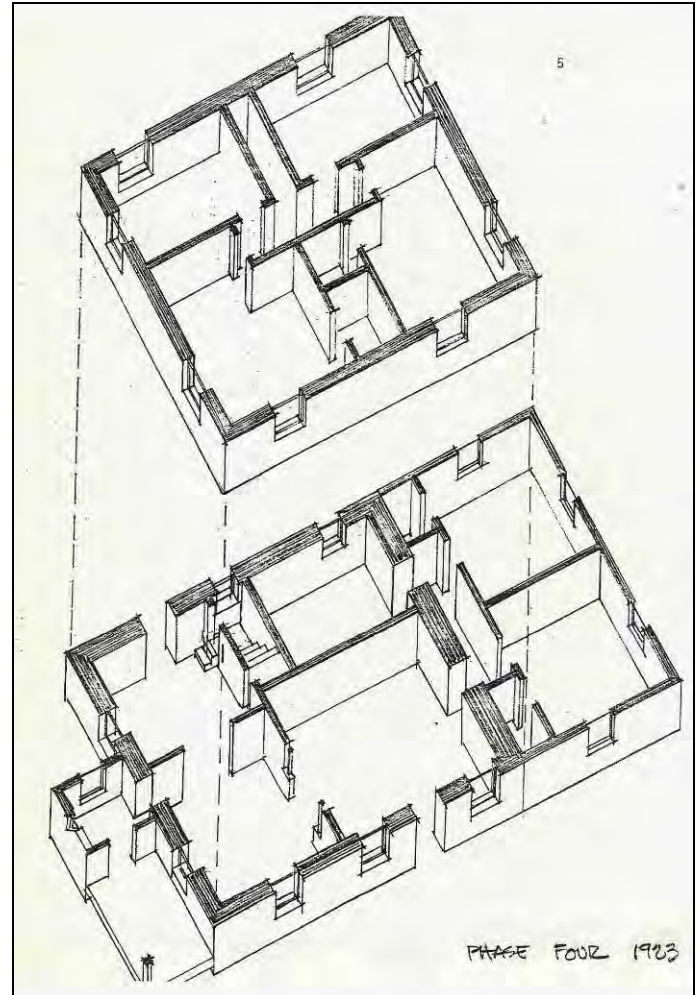
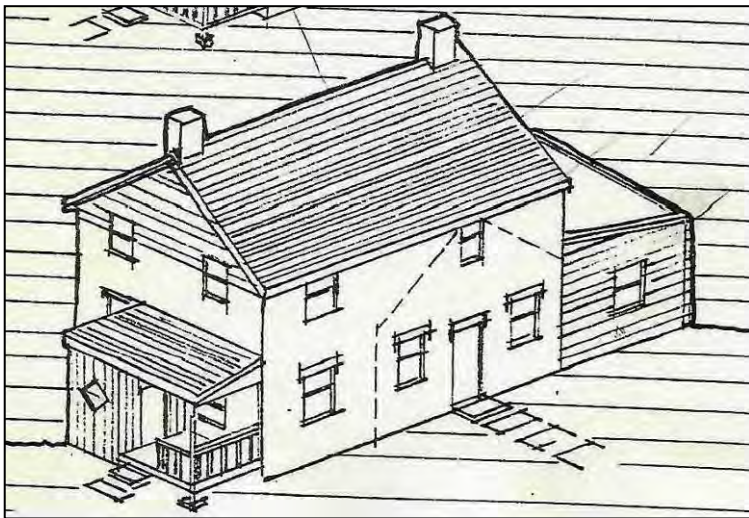
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Phase Four: In 1923, a two-room wood clapboard addition was constructed at the north elevation. This addition consisted of two large rooms, two small rooms, and a hallway. The original post rock limestone wall was retained, with two doorways cut into the stone.⁷ The 1927 Russell County Sanborn map shows the large wood frame addition at west elevation, in addition to a second wood-frame entryway constructed sometime between 1920 and 1927. By 1937, the two additions at the west elevation were removed.⁸



⁷ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

⁸ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, Russell County, (1920, 1927, 1937).

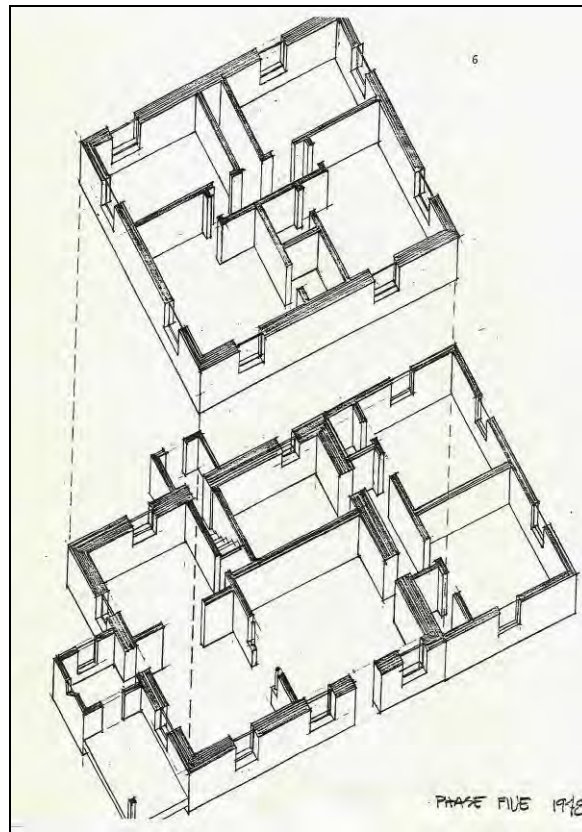
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Phase Five: In 1948 a second entrance was added to the west elevation in order to convert the second floor into a separate apartment. An extended entryway was constructed at the west elevation with a doorway added that enters to the stairwell. The interior door that had previously opened to the stairwell was infilled.



Restoration Phase:

Further alterations were minor until the Russell County Historical Society purchased the property in 1979. The Historical Society performed minor restoration activities to restore the property to its configuration from 1890 to 1925 as the selected interpretive period for the building. The restoration was guided by a team of restoration architects from Kansas State University.⁹ The restoration phase included removing the door and extended entryway at the base of the stair landing and the replacement of the west kitchen door. This is a reversal of the change made in 1948. The restoration preserved the 1923 wood clapboard addition at the east end of the property. Although not constructed during the Gernon period of ownership, it is a historic addition in good condition and functional. Its preservation was in keeping with the plan advanced by the restoration architects to maintain the 1890-1925 appearance of the building.

There have been several alterations throughout the history of the dwelling, however most of these occurred during the historic period and retained as significant to the building's history. These alterations occurred naturally as the dwelling and town around it continued to develop. Contemporary era improvements have mostly been undone to return the structure to the look and feel of an 1890's era residence. The property is in good condition and well maintained.

Evaluation of Integrity:

The Gernon House and its associated sidewalk meet the general registration requirements as outlined in the "Post Rock Limestone Properties in Kansas: 1870 – 1948" multiple property documentation form (MPDF)

⁹ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.; see Section 8 for more information.

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under the context *Urban Uses of Post Rock, 1880s-1920s*. The registration requirements for “Urban Residences” states that a nominated building should be constructed of post rock limestone, have been constructed during the common era of construction (1870-1948), and retain its historic integrity and character defining features (outlined in the description). The Gernon House meets all these requirements and maintains the following attributes, its original siting and setting in an urban space, its historic footprint (including historic additions), intact openings, roofs, and ornamentation on the interior and exterior.

The property is constructed of post rock limestone, measuring approximately 20 to 24 inches thick, with limestone mortar. The associated sidewalk is also constructed of post rock limestone slabs. Located in Russell County, the dwelling and sidewalk utilize locally sourced post rock limestone and is located in the area known as “Post Rock Country,” at the heart of the Greenhorn Formation. The building was constructed in 1872, during the early days of Kansas settlement, and at the very beginning of post rock construction. The post rock limestone walls of the Gernon House and its associated sidewalk retain sufficient integrity of design, materials and craftsmanship and embody the distinctive characteristics of the method of construction as called for in the MPDF.

The property’s integrity remains intact, and although the property has been modified since its original construction, a majority of the alterations occurred during the historic era and contribute to the home’s historic significance. Historic era additions used post rock stones to match the original building, or used a material, such as wood clapboard, that would distinguish the addition from the main residence. The stones are not damaged in any noticeable way and retain the quarry patterns that distinguishes them as post rock limestone. The limestone mortar used in construction of the home is also intact. Original decorative features, such as all of the historic post rock lintels above the windows from the 1872 construction and from subsequent alterations. The wooden porch and enclosed entry at the south elevation also retains integrity. The porch was constructed during the 1890s renovation; details such as the diamond window and wood railing were included at construction and are still intact. Window and door openings have not been substantially altered throughout the historic alterations. The original 1872 window openings at the east elevation, as well as windows from other historic alterations are still intact and operational. The gable roof and the roofline was changed to a north-south orientation during the 1890s renovation and retains this historic configuration.

The immediate setting has not been substantially altered since the historic era. The post rock sidewalk was constructed by the original owner, Nicolas Gernon, and the original post rock slabs used in construction are still in place. The Gernon House is located one block east of the Russell Main Street, the main commercial center of town. The area began developing in the early years of settlement; by 1896, much of the area had been infilled with commercial businesses. The area continued to develop with Main Street almost fully infilled by 1923. The area surrounding Gernon House, outside of the Main Street strip, remains a low-density mix of commercial and residential, as it has been since construction. The property was originally constructed as a residential property and remained so until its conversion to a museum space in 1979. By 1937, the property was also operating as an undertaker business, though it retained a residential space.

The interior layout of the building was changed over time, including the inclusion of a separate entrance to create an apartment on the second floor in 1948. However, since the acquisition of the property by the Russell County Historical Society, the house has been restored to its last historically significant appearance, with interior furnishings meant to replicate that of a late 1800’s home. The post rock limestones are in excellent condition and the property retains the characteristics and form of an early example of post rock buildings. The property is a rare example of one of the earliest post rock dwellings, and is the oldest stone house in Russell, Kansas. The historic alterations from the era of Gernon ownership are important to understanding the building’s evolution and various forms of post rock design.

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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.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1872 - 1923

Significant Dates

1872, 1876, 1877, 1890, 1923

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Nicholas Gernon

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance, 1872 – 1923, represents the historic period of the property. The 1872 date represents the original construction by Nicholas Gernon. Gernon died in 1922, and the property was sold to Thomas Bowlus in 1923. Bowlus completed the last major addition to the property that year. During this period of significance, the property underwent regular renovations and additions; after this period, alterations to the property were minor.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary

The Gernon House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the "Post Rock Limestone Properties in Kansas: 1870 - 1948" multiple property documentation in the area of architecture for its method of construction as an example of the "Urban Residences" property type. The associated post rock sidewalk is also considered an eligible object under Criterion C as an example of the "Structures / Objects Using Post Rock Limestone: Post Rock Limestone Sidewalks" MPDF property type. The 818 N. Kansas Street property is the oldest stone house in Russell, Kansas. Built by Nicholas Gernon in 1872, the home was constructed of local post rock limestone. Gernon was one of the earliest settlers in the area, and was recorded as the ninth settler in Russell, having arrived April 19, 1871.¹⁰ While alterations have been made to this structure since its construction, most occurred during the historic period, and contribute to the historical significance of the building. The Gernon House and the associated sidewalk meet the MPDF registration requirements for their respective property types. The home is an early example of a post rock building. Made from locally quarried limestone, the residence was constructed during the early days of settlement in Kansas. During this time, lumber and other traditional building materials were scarce, so settlers turned to the abundantly found post rock limestone. The stone was versatile, sturdy, and easy to quarry. The Gernon House is representative of this period and this method of construction.

Elaboration

History of Post Rock Limestone Construction¹¹

Post rock limestone originates from the Fencepost bed, the topmost layer of the Greenhorn Limestone Formation that spans through 18 counties in North Central Kansas, colloquially referred to as "Post Rock Country." This Fencepost bed is characterized by its uniformity of thickness, typically between eight and twelve inches, visible brown streaks caused by limonite stain, and pliability when freshly quarried.¹² Slabs of the material often stretched for miles, making for a relatively easy quarry and shaping process, provided availability of the proper tools – the feather and wedge.¹³

North Central Kansas was once a wide-open landscape, covered in tall grass prairie. This "Post Rock Country" is comprised of Republic, Jewell, Osborne, Mitchell, Cloud, Ottawa, Lincoln, Russell, Ellis, Ness, Rush, Barton, Ellsworth, Pawnee, and Hodgeman counties.¹⁴ In the 1860s and 1870s, the landscape began to change as the railroad crossed Kansas and settlers moved into the area. The railroads spurred development, encouraging new settlements along their routes, and an agricultural economy to fuel their shipping trade. Homesteaders faced harsh conditions in central Kansas including droughts, blizzards, tornadoes, prairie fires, swarms of grasshoppers, and loneliness in an unfamiliar environment. Not all, but enough settlers persisted that most counties in central Kansas had been organized by the end of the 1870s.¹⁵

¹⁰ "The Earliest Old Settler," *The Russell Informer*, (15 October 1909), 2.

¹¹ This nomination was prepared along with two other nominations that share a historic context. This portion of the nomination is the same as the Lucas School Gymnasium in Lucas, Russell County, and the Behrhorst Brothers Building in Sylvan Grove, Lincoln County.

¹² Grace Muilenburg and Ada Swineford, *Land of the Post Rock* (University of Kansas, 1975), 3-10.

¹³ Arthur Saylor and Larry Rutter. "Post Rock Cutting - Kansas Folk Art." *Kansapedia* (Created: February 2011; May 2012). Available electronically at: <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/post-rock-cutting-kansas-folk-art/16558>

¹⁴ David A. Grisafe, "Kansas Building Limestone," *Mineral Resources Series 4* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas Geological Survey, University of Kansas, 1976).

¹⁵ Muilenburg and Swineford, 18-25

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Unrest in Europe brought many immigrants to America in the 1870s.¹⁶ The early migrants to central Kansas struggled to make their homesteads into permanent settlements. Most pioneers were not farmers and resources were limited. With timber scarce or nonexistent, the earliest dwellings were built from prairie sod or clay molded into bricks. However, settlers soon discovered the merits of the abundantly available limestone material. Post rock limestone was employed for the construction of dwellings, agricultural buildings, commercial buildings, sidewalks, hitching posts, and fence posts from which the material's name originates. It acquired its name as a replacement for wooden fence posts. Early farmers, tending and forming their lands, ran in to conflict with cattlemen who were accustomed to giving their herds free range, which necessitated installation of fencing around property boundaries. As a result, post rock and barbed wire became the primary fencing method in Central Kansas.¹⁷

Central Kansas experienced a population boom beginning in the 1880s, and by that time, Post Rock limestone had proven its usefulness and versatility. After 1900, the need for efficient transportation increased, and post rock was used to build sturdy and lasting stone arch bridges. While expensive, the durability of these bridges was worth the price. By World War I the process had advanced enough so that building blocks were often smoothed on all faces or rusticated on the exposed side of the block. At this time, however, the frequency of post rock construction began to diminish. Transportation improvements provided for easier access to timber and other building construction materials, and a reduction in cattle grazing, as more of the area shifted to growing crops, similarly reduced the need for new agricultural fences. A resurgence of the material occurred in the 1930s when the Works Progress Administration commissioned schools, libraries, municipal buildings, bridges, and park shelters made of post rock.¹⁸

History of the Gernon House

Russell, Kansas had its inception in Ripon, Wisconsin. At a public meeting on January 17, 1871, an organization was formed with the purpose of emigrating to either Kansas or southern Nebraska. The association became known as the Northwestern Colony and aimed to move as a group so as to ensure desirable neighbors and quickly establish schools and churches. Members of the colony had to be a "good, sober, industrious person," and there was a \$20 membership fee. Each member was assured one residential lot and one business lot in the townsite. A committee was sent to locate an appropriate townsite, one with desirable and cheap land. They settled in Russell County, an area near Fossil Creek. The Kansas Pacific railroad had been built through the area in the summer of 1867 and established a station called Fossil. Approximately 70 new settlers arrived at the station from Ripon on April 19, 1871. The colony would live in railroad box cars until frame houses could be established. On May 2, 1871, a meeting voted to officially name the settlement Russell.¹⁹

Nicholas Gernon was born on February 21, 1845, in County Lough, Ireland. As a child, Gernon moved to Marquette, Wisconsin. Gernon trained as a blacksmith before becoming a part of the original Northwestern Colony that travelled by train from Ripon, Wisconsin. Gernon purchased Lots 18, 19, and 20 on Block 68 from the Russell Town Site Company on January 9, 1872, for the price of \$41.00 (\$20 of which was the membership fee for the Town Site Company). Nicholas Gernon constructed his home in 1872. The original building was a simple, square building constructed of locally sourced post rock limestone. Originally constructed as a two room, 1 ½ story building with a gable end roof running east-west, the building underwent several renovations during Gernon's ownership.

¹⁶ "Effort Begins to Preserve Buildings in Denmark," Live Lincoln County Kansas: Post Rock Capitol of Kansas. Available electronically at: <https://www.livelincolncounty.com/effort-begins-preserve-buildings-denmark/> Accessed July 2021.

¹⁷ Mulienburg and Swineford.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "The City of Russell is Fifty Years Old," *The Russell Record*, 14 April 1921, 3-8.

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Gernon quickly established his blacksmith business at the lot just south of his home, constructing a frame shop building before he began work on the residence.²⁰ The blacksmith shop was later replaced with a stone building.²¹ For approximately forty years, Gernon worked as the village blacksmith at the corner of Eighth and Kansas Streets.²² Gernon married Margret Lewis on September 4, 1872.²³

By October of 1876, Gernon began work expanding his residence. Local newspapers reported that Gernon was having stones hauled for the addition.²⁴ This would be the first of three major additions that the dwelling would undergo during his ownership. The 1876 renovation involved a one-story addition at the south elevation.²⁵ In June 1877, Gernon began collecting stones to construct a sidewalk on the east side of his property.²⁶ The Gernon House was used for Catholic Church services in the early years of Russell's settlement, up until at least 1882.²⁷ The second major renovation occurred in the early 1890's, again under Gernon's ownership. This renovation involved the removal of the roof and the construction of a full second floor. This construction also involved the addition of porch at the south elevation, the construction of the present access to the basement, and the addition of two chimneys.²⁸

Gernon was described as "a good citizen... - devoted to his family – a home man whose ambition was to see his children develop into useful lines."²⁹ Gernon, in addition to his work as blacksmith, served several terms as a councilman in Russell. He was described as hard working and frugal and was able to send all six of his children to university. His two sons, Nicholas A. Gernon and M.J. Gernon, went on to become attorneys. Gernon continued to live in Russell until his death on April 17, 1922, at age 77. His influence in Russell was felt as the mayor requested all businesses to close during his funeral service.³⁰

After Nicholas' death, the Gernon family consisted of Margaret Lewis Gernon, widow; Nicholas A. Gernon, son; Francis E. Gernon, daughter; Elizabeth J. Gernon, daughter; M.J. Gernon, son; Mary S. Beauchemin, daughter – husband Arthur Beauchemin; Anne Gernon Bishop, daughter – husband Floyd E. Bishop. On March 3, 1923, the Gernon family sold the property to Thomas W. Bowlus for the price of \$7,000. This purchase included "all of Lot 17 except 14 feet east and west and about 40 feet north and south in the southwest corner and all of Lots 18, 19, 20."³¹

Thomas W. Bowlus was born in 1861 to Warren and Josephine Bowlus.³² Thomas Bowlus, originally from Indiana, settled in Bunker Hill, Russell County, on September 18, 1873. He began working as a day laborer. In 1885, Bowlus formed a partnership with W.C. Hoopman and opened a lumberyard, a business venture that lasted one year. Bowlus was elected as register of deeds of Russell County in 1897, serving for nine consecutive years. He began studying undertaking and opened an undertaking parlor in 1907, quickly becoming known for his excellent service.³³ Bowlus married Emma L. Gross, from Bunker Hill, Kansas, on December 9, 1917.³⁴ He purchased the Gernon House in 1923 from Nicholas's Gernon's family.³⁵ In 1923, the

²⁰ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

²¹ *The Russell Record*, (April 20, 1922), p. 1.

²² "The City of Russell is Fifty Years Old," *The Russell Record*, (April 14, 1921), p. 3.

²³ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

²⁴ *The Russell County Record*, (October 19, 1876), p. 3.

²⁵ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

²⁶ *The Russell County Record*, (June 14, 1877), p. 3.

²⁷ *The Russell Record*, (March 18, 1882), p. 3.

²⁸ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

²⁹ *The Russell Record*, (April 20, 1922), p. 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner, Appendix II.

³² "Thomas W. Bowlus," *U.S. Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current, Ancestry.com*. Accessed 14 February 2022.

³³ "T.W. Bowlus," *The Russell Record*, 29 January 1914.

³⁴ "Weddings," *The Journal* (Russell, Kansas), (December 10, 1897), p. 1.

³⁵ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

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house underwent its third major renovation. This involved the clapboard addition at the north elevation.³⁶ Bowlus, assisted by Harry Gross, built a filling station at the space previously occupied by Gernon's blacksmith shop this same year.³⁷ Russell County Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for 1937 show the Gernon property operating as an undertaker business.³⁸

Bowlus passed away in 1941, leaving the property to his family. In 1948, the dwelling underwent another renovation. This included dividing the house into two apartments. Stairs leading to the second floor and the enclosed vestibule on the west elevation were constructed at this time. The interior door to the kitchen from the stairs was closed, and the two west bedrooms on the second floor were converted to a bath and kitchen. The property remained in the Bowlus family until October 2, 1972. In 1972, the property was sold to Dora H. Morrison.³⁹

In 1976, the Gernon House was one of four houses designated as local historical sites by the Russell County Historical Society. The Gernon House is the oldest of the four; the others being: the McConnell House at Main and 16th Street, the Ackerman-Copeland house, and Tusten-Cooper house at Hwy 40 and Front Street.⁴⁰ Morrison retained ownership until February 23, 1979 when the property was sold to the Russell County Historical Society.⁴¹

The property was purchased at auction for \$9,900 with the hopes of restoring the home and opening it to the public.⁴² In 1981, a restoration plan was created for the home in order to maintain and restore the 1890-1925 appearance of the building. The restoration team included Robert Burnham, John Limp, and Richard Wagner. A graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University, Burnham got his start as associate professor in 1976 and rose to be head of the Department of Architecture at Kansas State. Burnham became Director of the School Architecture and Interior Design at the University Cincinnati, in 1990. Richard Wagner, AIA, is founding director of the Master of Arts in Historic Preservation program at Goucher College. He is also a principal with the architectural firm of David H. Gleason Associates. Wagner helped to found and served as the first president of the Kansas Preservation Alliance, the state's nonprofit preservation organization. The home was restored to its form of the last significant historic alteration and has since operated as a public museum run by the Russell County Historical Society.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *The Bunker Hill Advertiser*, (September 21, 1923), p. 8.

³⁸ Russell County, Kansas, 1937. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps".

³⁹ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

⁴⁰ "Russell Names Historical Sites," *Great Bend Tribune* (Great Bend, Kansas), (July 02, 1976), p. 2.

⁴¹ Bernham, Limp, and Wagner.

⁴² "Russell History Society is the Bankers' Affair," *The Salina Journal*, (January 13, 1980), p. 27.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bernham, Robert; Limp, John; Wagner, Richard. *Restoration Study of The Nicholas Gernon House*. Russell County Historical Society, March 1981.

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Grisafe, David A. "Kansas Building Limestone," *Mineral Resources Series 4*. Lawrence, KS: Kansas Geological Survey, University of Kansas, 1976.

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"Russell History Society is the Bankers' Affair," *The Salina Journal*, 13 January 1980, p. 27.

"Russell Names Historical Sites," *Great Bend Tribune (Great Bend, Kansas)*, 02 July 1976, p. 2.

Saylor, Arthur; Rutter, Larry. "Post Rock Cutting - Kansas Folk Art." *Kansapedia* (Created: February 2011; May 2012). Available electronically at: <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/post-rock-cutting-kansas-folk-art/16558>.

The Bunker Hill Advertiser, 21 September 1923, p. 8.

"The City of Russell is Fifty Years Old," *The Russell Record*, 14 April 1921. p. 3-8.

"The Earliest Old Settler," *The Russell Informer*, 15 October 1909, p. 2.

The Russell County Record, 19 October 1876, p. 3.

The Russell County Record, 14 June 1877, p. 3.

The Russell County Record. 14 June 1877, p. 3.

The Russell Record, 20 April 1922, p. 1.

The Russell Record, 18 March 1882, p. 3.

"Thomas W Bowlus," *U.S. Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current, Ancestry.com*. Accessed 14 February 2022.

"T.W. Bowlus," *The Russell Record*, 29 January 1914.

University of Cincinnati. "Robert C Burnham, MArch; Professor Emeritus," Accessed March 4, 2022, <https://researchdirectory.uc.edu/p/burnhar>.

"Weddings," *The Journal (Russell, Kansas)*, 10 December 1897, p. 1.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ KHRI 167-202 _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.12 Acres

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

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Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>38°53'36.30"N</u> Latitude:	<u>98°51'31.78"W</u> Longitude:	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Gernon House is located on Lots 19 - 20, and part of Lot 18 Block 68 of the Russell Original Town, described as Russell County Parcel ID: 084-148-27-0-10-44-011.00-0, and noted on current legal descriptions. The nominated boundary includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Gernon House and includes the limestone sidewalk within the ROW of N. Kansas Street as shown on the attached map. The associated post rock sidewalk follows the east side of the property along Kansas Street and to the south and east entrances of the Gernon House. The north boundary is located in the center of the Block at approximately 145 ft and runs approximately 80 ft east-west following the parcel boundary. The east boundary runs north-south approximately 80 ft to capture the full length of the historic limestone sidewalk. The south and west boundaries jog around the property and match the parcel legal description.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated boundaries match boundaries shown on historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and current Russell County legal descriptions. This encompasses the 1872 Gernon House and the 1877 limestone sidewalk, which are both historically significant under the MPDF.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alexandrea Baker, MCP; Douglas E Kupel, Ph.D., RPA, Senior Historian
organization Urbana Preservation & Planning, LLC date March 2022
street & number 7705 E Cajon Boulevard #1 telephone (844) 872-2623
city or town La Mesa state CA zip code 91942
e-mail urbana@urbanapreservation.com

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Russell Co Historical Society
street & number PO Box 245 telephone _____
city or town Russell state KS zip code 67665

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Gernon House

City or Vicinity: Russell

County: Russell State: Kansas

Photographer: Alexandrea Baker

Date
Photographed: Photos 1-12: March 2022 & July 2022; Photos 13-15: July 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 15: View west of front (east) elevation of the Gernon House.
- 2 of 15: View west of front (east) elevation of the Gernon House.
- 3 of 15: View northwest of south elevation of the Gernon House.
- 4 of 15: View north of south elevation of the Gernon House.
- 5 of 15: Detail view north of second floor of south elevation of the Gernon House.
- 6 of 15: View east of west elevation of the Gernon House. Photo shows the post rock sidewalk leading to the rear of the property, and a metal pump added during the conversion of the property to a museum.
- 7 of 15: View east of west elevation of the Gernon House. Photo shows the post rock sidewalk leading to the rear of the property, and a metal pump added during the conversion of the property to a museum.
- 8 of 15: View northeast of southwest corner of the Gernon House. Photo shows the post rock sidewalk and a post rock cistern added during the conversion of the property to a museum.
- 9 of 15: View south of north elevation of the Gernon House.
- 10 of 15: View south of north elevation of the Gernon House.
- 11 of 15: View south of post rock sidewalk along Kansas Street.
- 12 of 15: View east of post rock sidewalk leading from Kansas Street to porch of Gernon House.
- 13 of 15: Interior view of the front room of the Gernon House.
- 14 of 15: Interior view of one bedroom in the Gernon House.
- 15 of 15: Interior view of one bedroom in the Gernon House.

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Photo 1 of 15.

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Photo 2 of 15.

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Photo 3 of 15.

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Photo 4 of 15.

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Figures

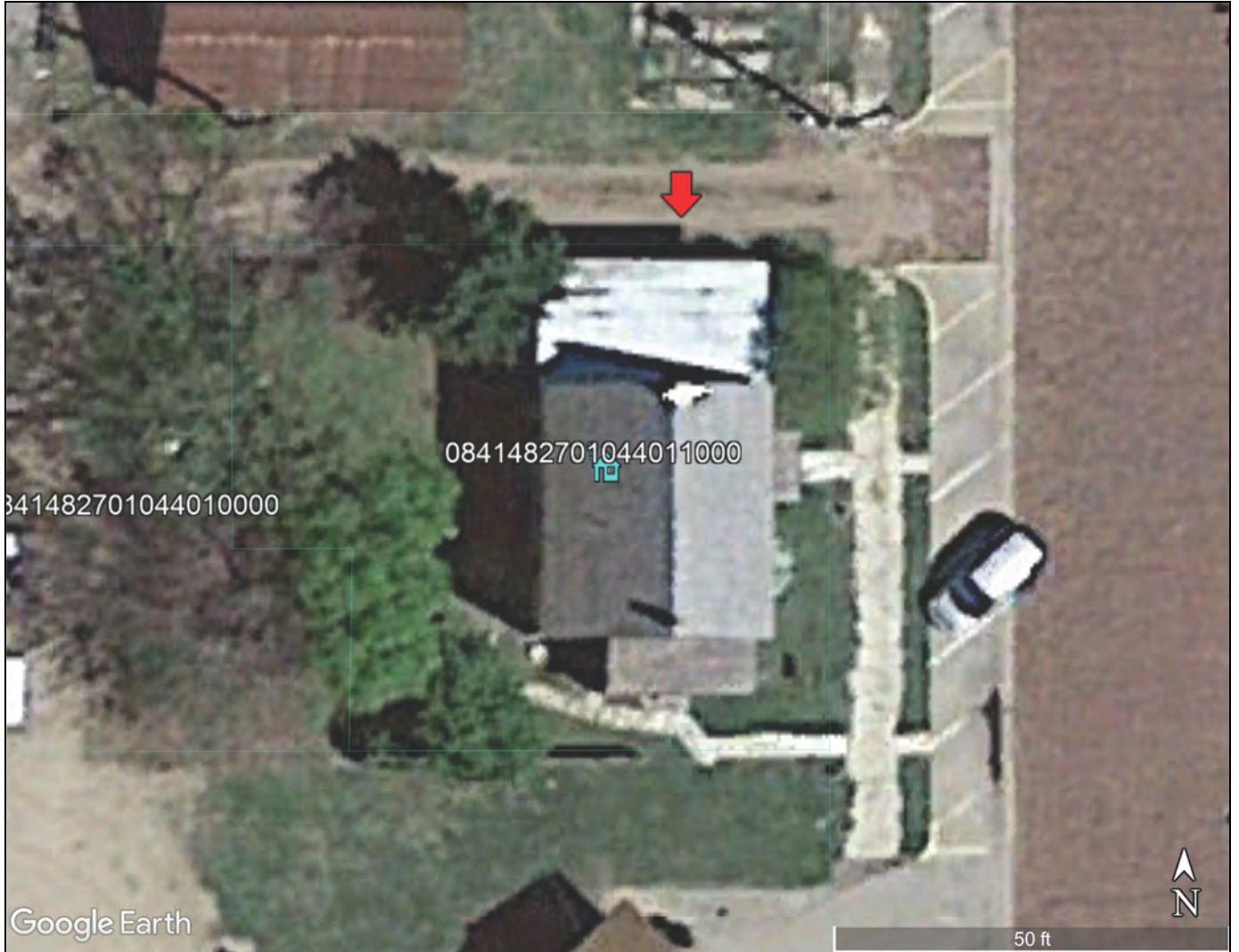
Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.



Location map of Gernon House and surrounding area. Source: 2016 Google Earth aerial image.

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Site Map of Gernon House, including location of contributing post rock limestone sidewalk. Source: 2016 *Google Earth* aerial image.

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Google Earth

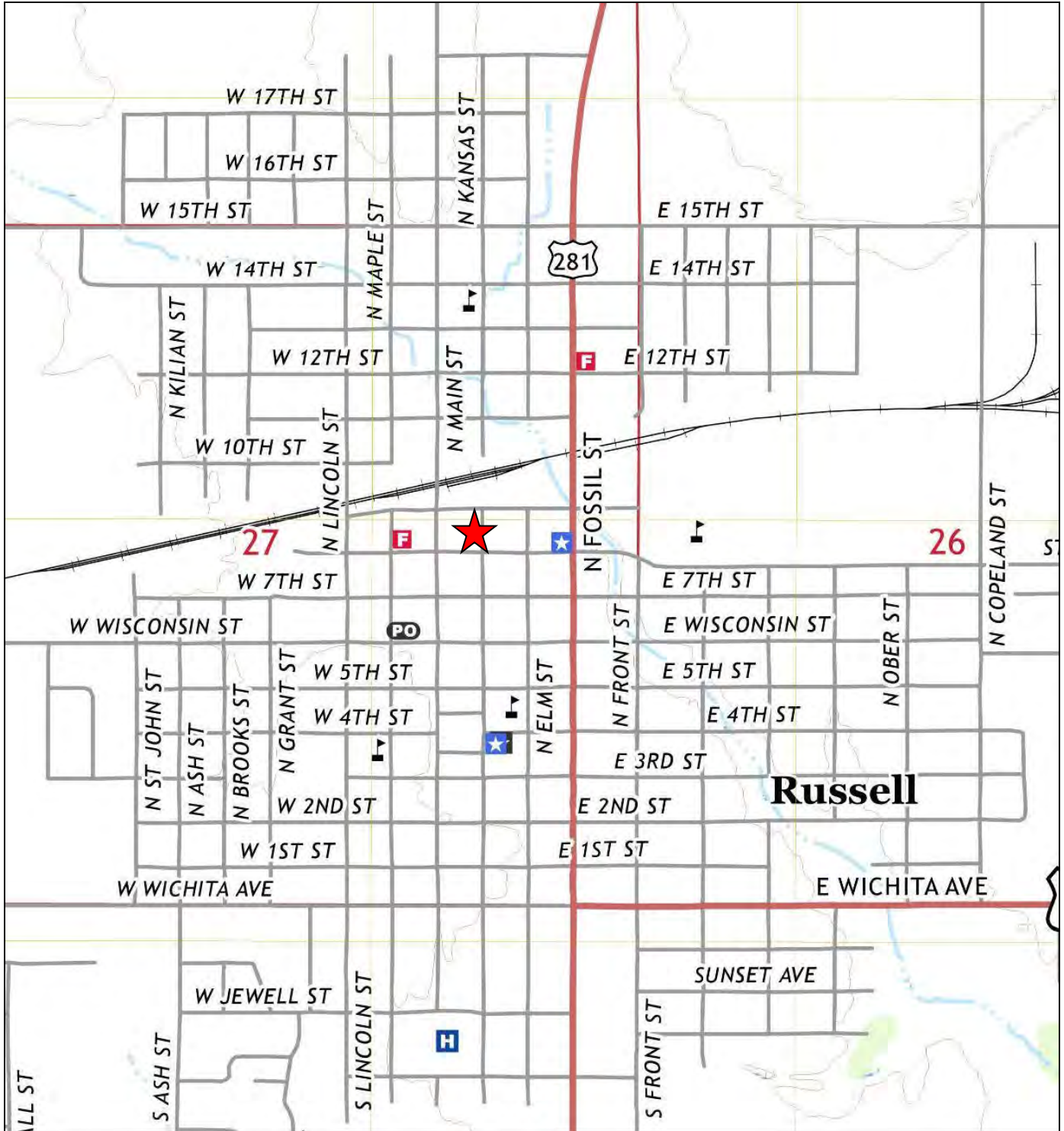
70 ft

Site Map of Gernon House, including location of contributing post rock limestone sidewalk. Source: 2016 Google Earth aerial image.

1. Post Rock Building
2. 1923 Addition
3. Post Rock Sidewalk
4. Russell County Historical Society Post Rock Sign
5. Russell County Historical Society Post Rock Sign
6. Russell County Historical Society Post Rock Sign
7. Russell County Historical Society Wood Sign
8. Post Rock Trough
9. Pump
10. Outhouse

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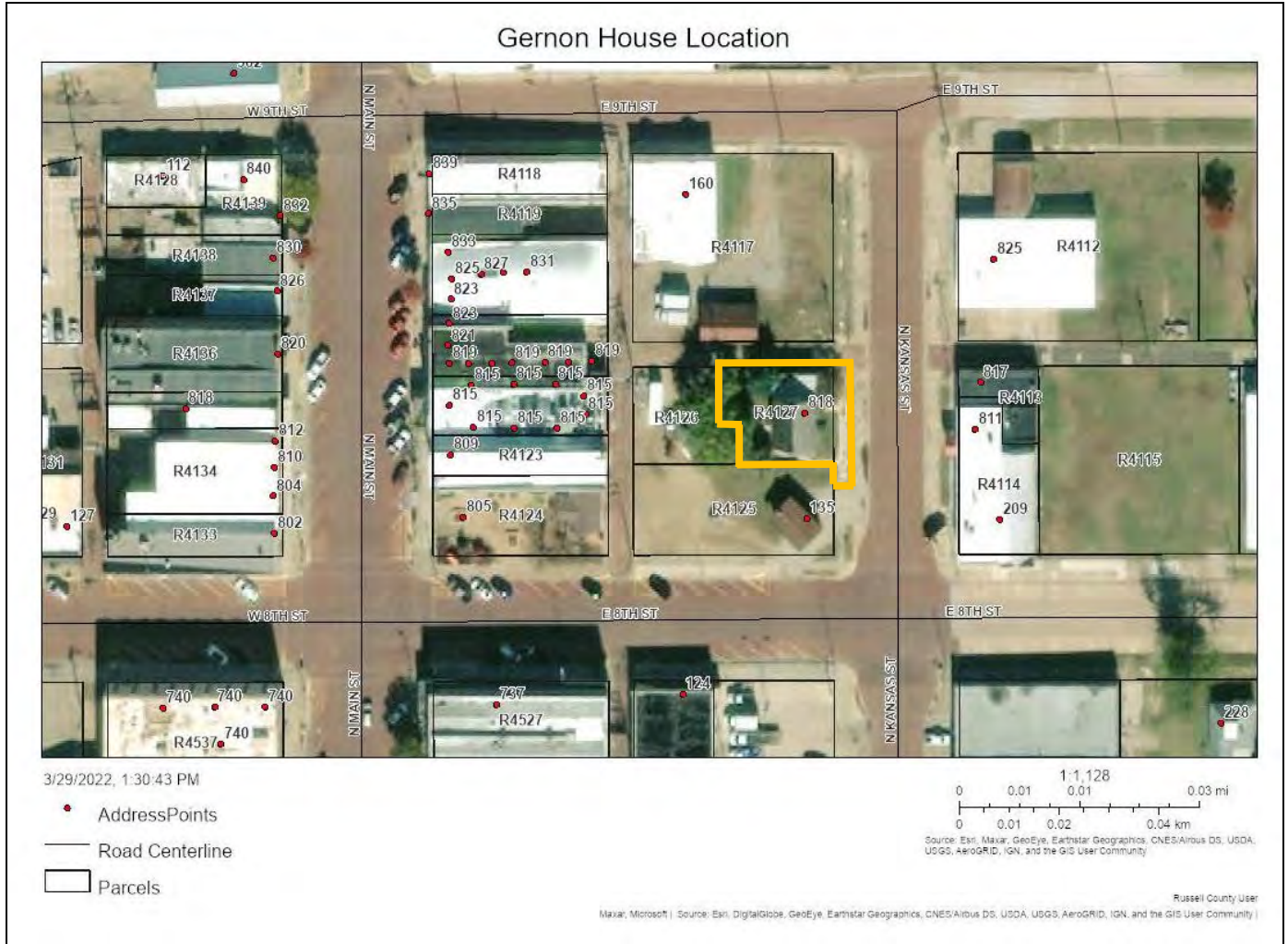
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Russell, Kansas Topo Map. 2018. USGS. General location of the Gernon House is delineated in red. Source: USGS TopoView.

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Boundary of the nominated property. Source: *Russell County GIS*.

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View of east elevation of Gernon House, 1981. Source: *Russell County Historical Society*.

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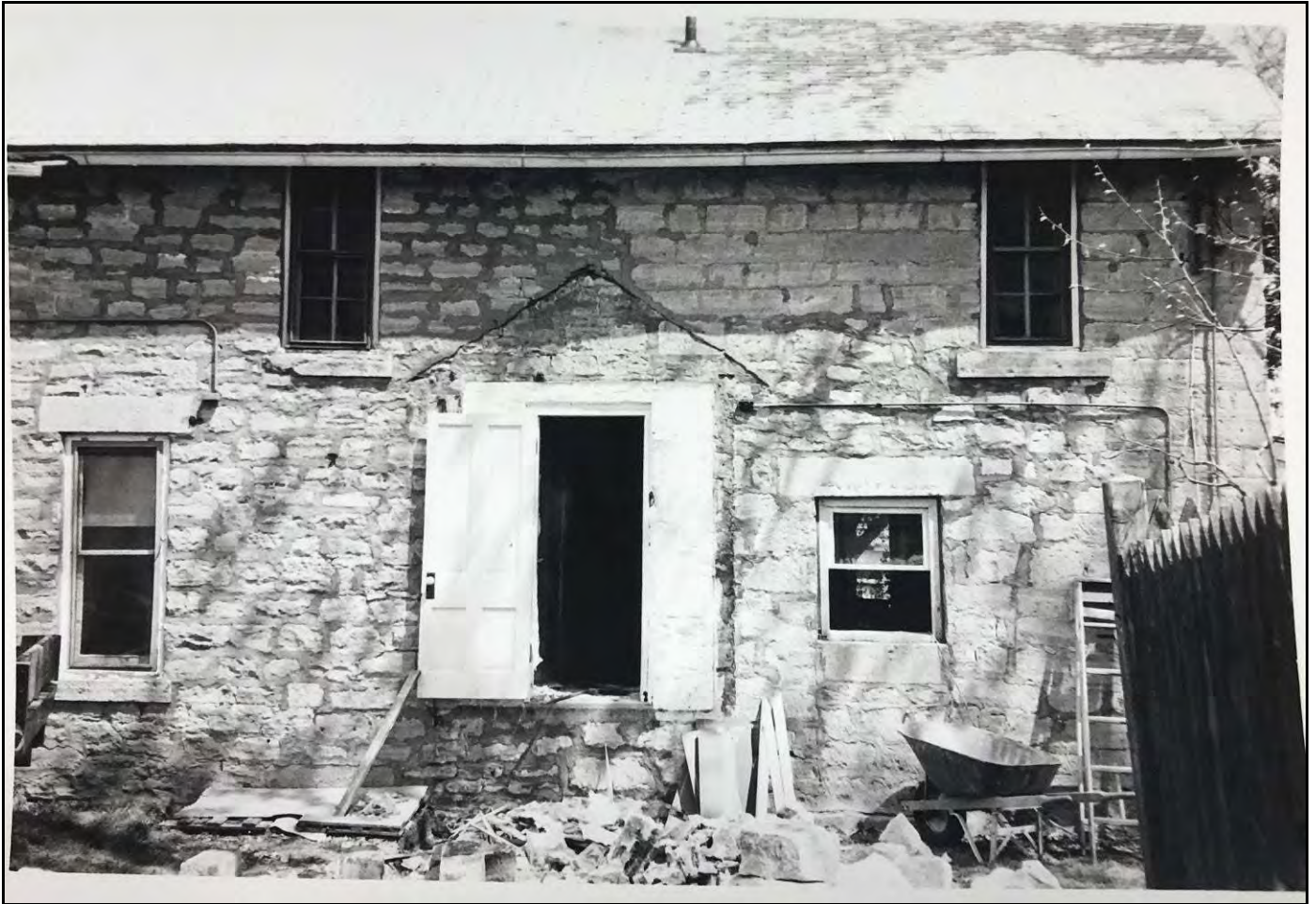
View of south elevation of Gernon House, 1981. Source: *Russell County Historical Society*.

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View of west elevation of Gernon House, 1981, before exterior entrance to second floor was removed. Source: *Russell County Historical Society*.

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View of west elevation of Gernon House, 1981, after renovation. Photo shows the west elevation after the entrance at the center was removed and replaced with a window. The original side entrance was restored. Source: *Russell County Historical Society*.

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View of east elevation of the Gernon House, 1981. Source: *Russell County Historical Society*.

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View of north and west elevations of Gernon House, 1981. Source: *Russell County Historical Society*.

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Daily News

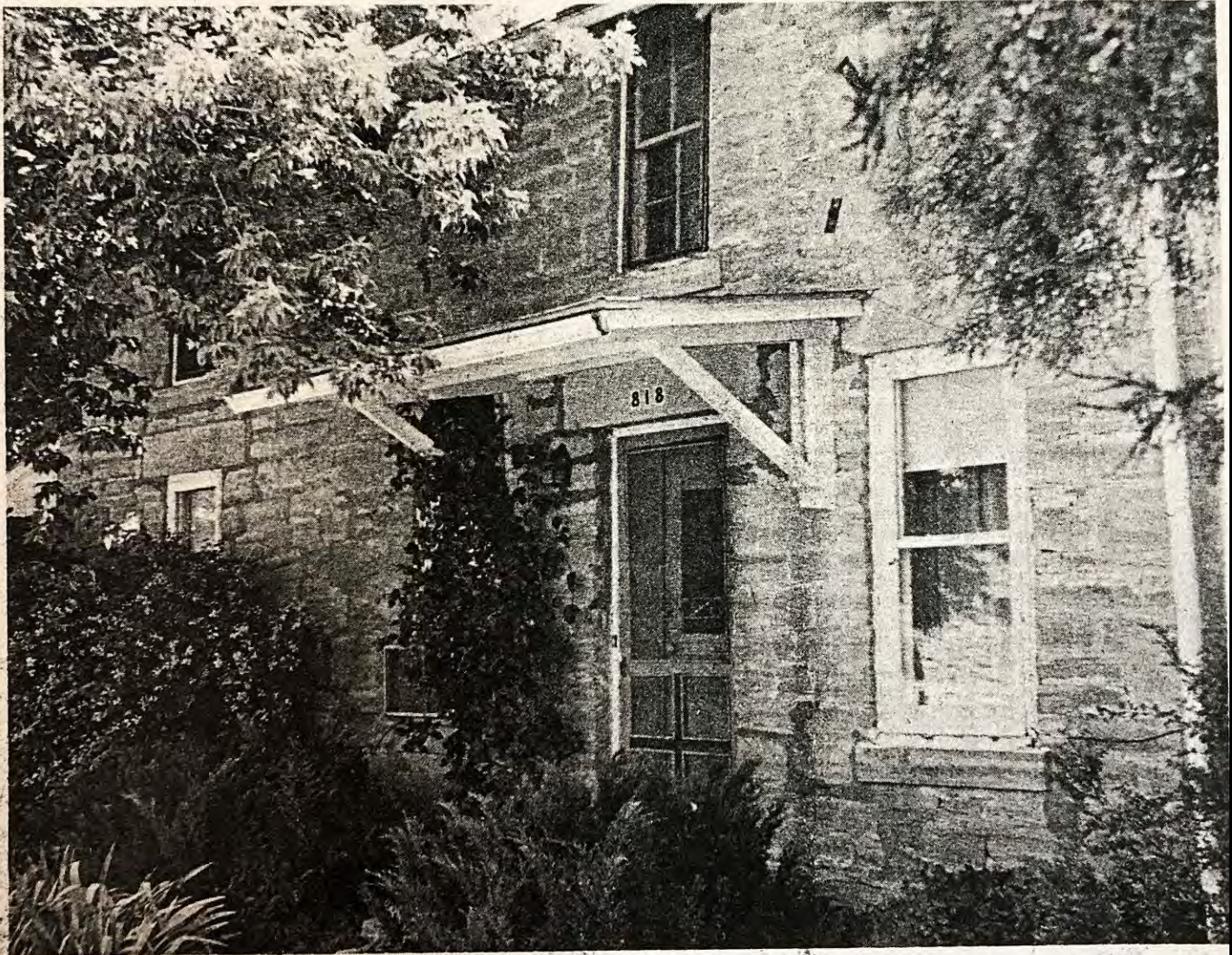
Cloudy through Friday.
Chance of showers increas-
ing throughout tonight and
Friday. Low tonight 60s.
High Friday 80s.

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1976

Official City Paper — Official County Paper

8 PAGES

Heritage Site



THE OLDEST HOUSE in Russell is said to be the H. Morrison lives. It was built in 1872 by Nicholas Gernon House, at 818 N. Kansas St., where Mrs. Dora Gernon. (Staff Photo)

Photo of the Gernon House, 1976. Source: *Daily News (Russell, Kansas)*, July 1, 1976.

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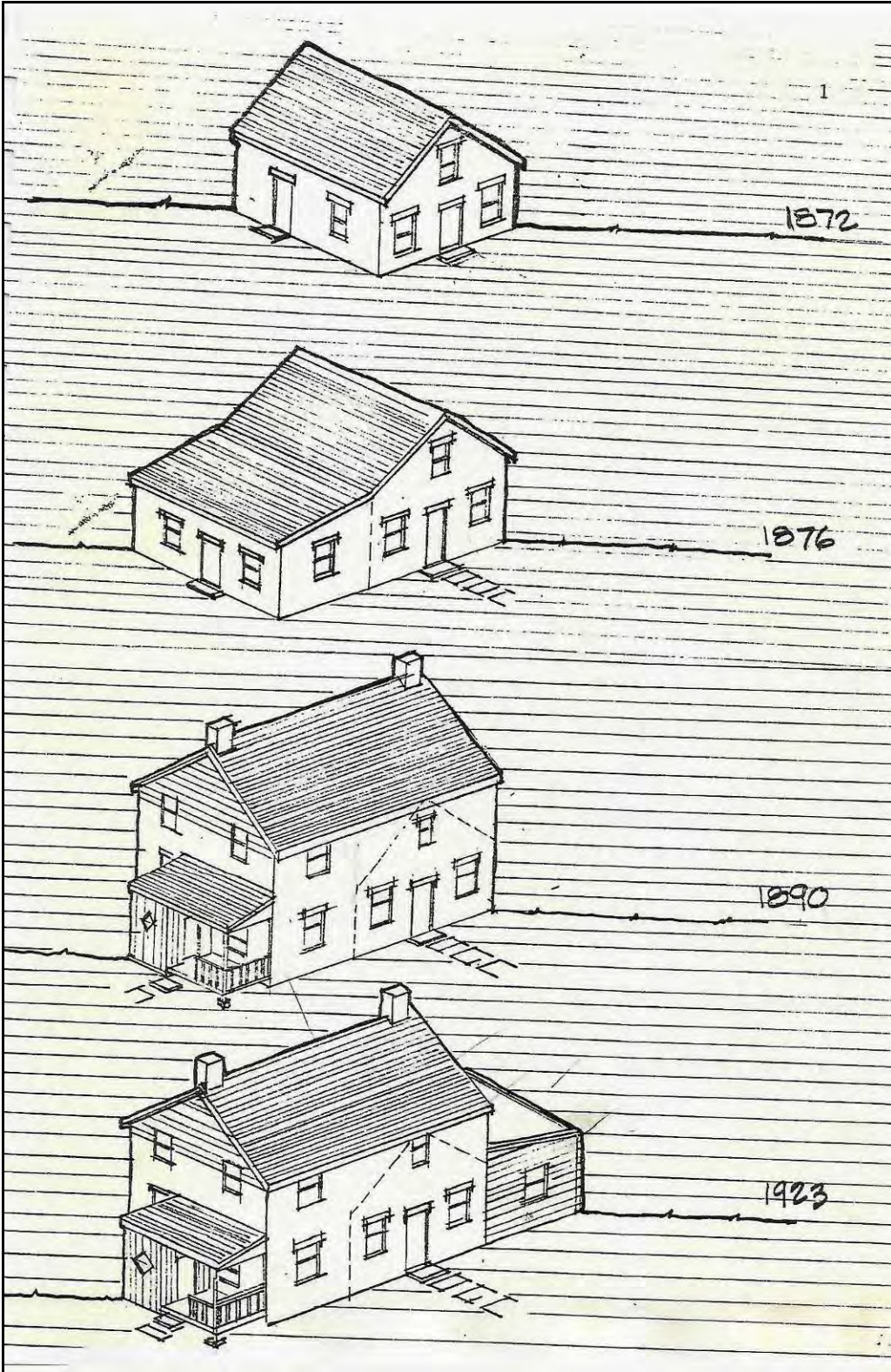


Illustration of Gernon House development. Source: *Restoration Study of The Nicholas Gernon House*. Russell County Historical Society, March 1981.

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Photo of Gernon House, pre-1981 restoration effort (1980). Source: *Hays Daily News*, October 8, 1980.

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Photo of original owner, Nicholas Gernon.
Source: *The Russell Record*, April 14, 1921.