

Crawford, Nelson Antrim, House
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

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

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

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

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

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

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC / Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: STUCCO
GLASS
roof: ASPHALT
other: _____

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Narrative Description

Summary

The 1938 Nelson Antrim Crawford House is located at 2202 SW 17th Street in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. Situated on the corner of 17th and Plass Avenue, the Crawford House distinctly stands out from the surrounding houses in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century College Hill neighborhood. Across 17th Street to the south is Washburn University (*Figures 1 & 2*). The two-story Crawford House is one of Topeka's only known International Style houses. It holds common stylistic characteristics such as an asymmetrical form, flat roofs, open interior spaces, merged cornered windows, and materials such as glass block (338 in total), steel, and concrete. The house's foundation is concrete slab with its frame consists of concrete masonry units, poured concrete, and precast concrete all covered with stucco panels.¹

Elaboration

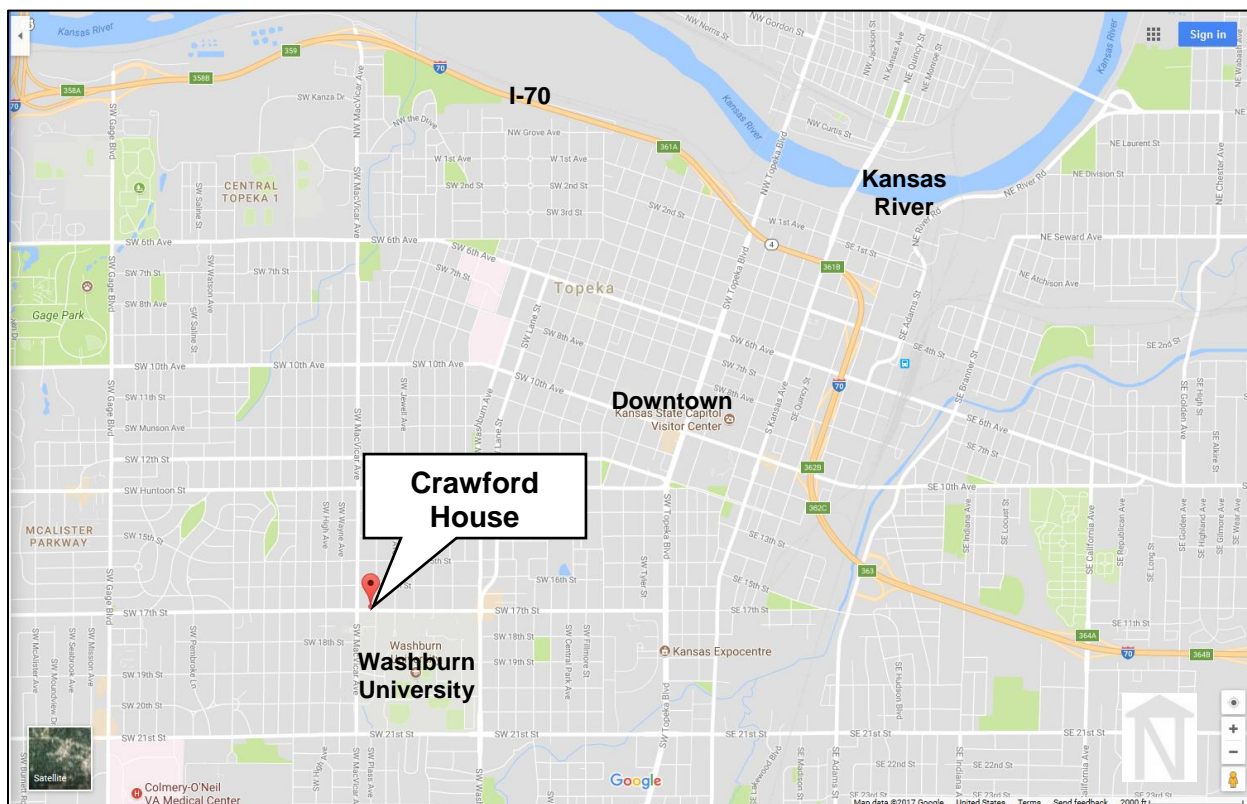


Figure 1: Contextual Map, showing the location of the house within the city of Topeka (Source: Google).

Setting and Site

The Crawford House is located on a rectangular city lot at the southern end of Topeka's College Hill neighborhood (*Figure 3*). The lot, which is the extent of the nominated resource, is bounded on the north by the north property line; on the east by SW Plass Avenue; on the south by SW 17th Street; and on the west by a mid-block alley. Surrounded by 1910s & 1920s revival styled single-family houses (*Figure 4*), the Crawford House conforms to the established set-backs and heights of the neighborhood. Further, the two-story house faces south toward SW 17th Street, as do the houses to its immediate east and west.

¹ The building plans call out the use of both Haydite blocks and "cinder concrete bricks." For clarity, this description uses the generic term "concrete masonry units" without reference to the specific aggregates used. Haydite is a light-weight aggregate used in concrete and CMU; the lighter-weight concrete is then used in places such as cantilevers and overhangs where a lighter structural load is desired. For more information see "Prominent Clay Men Organize to Make New Building Material," *Brick and Clay Record* 55 (September 9, 1919): 484-487.

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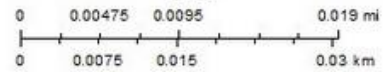
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February 23, 2017

Parcels

1:564



SNCO GIS
SNCO GIS



Shawnee County, KS

All data shown on the map is subject to the data disclaimer. User accepts all responsibility by using this map.

Figure 2 (Boundary Map): The nominated property is depicted by the outlined shape.

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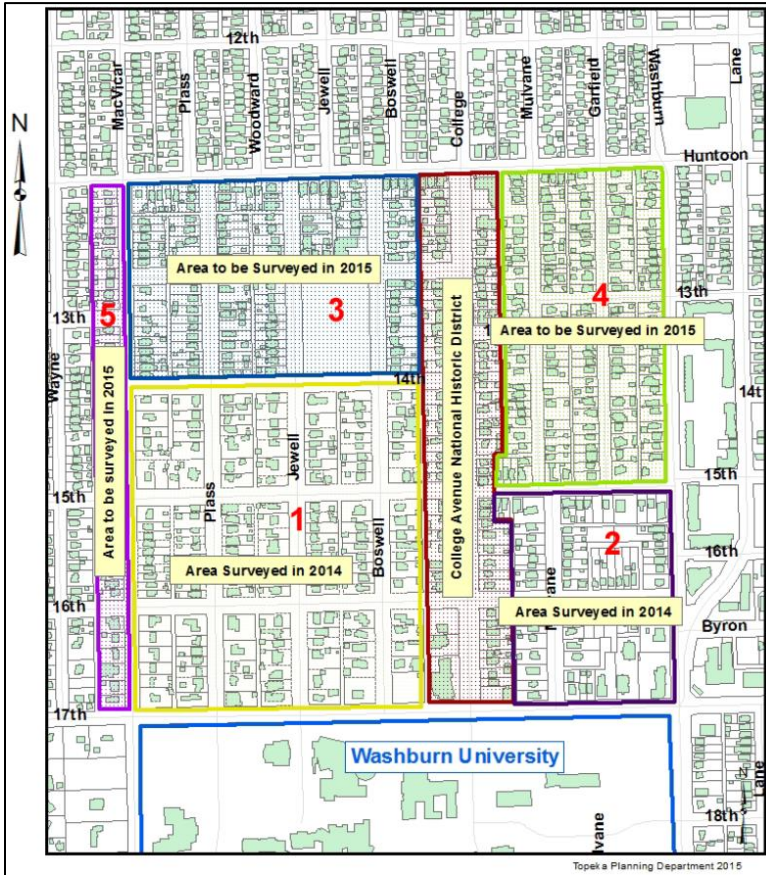


Figure 3: Map showing the extent of the College Hill Neighborhood. (Source: Rosin Preservation, “College Hill Historic Resources Survey Report, Phase II,” (2016): 3.)

west) by 28’ (north-south).² Atop this mass is a 39’ (east-west) by 22’ (north-south) mass that is slightly west of centered on the main level (*Plan 2*). The majority of the exterior is covered in white stucco; the entry bay is dove gray. Historic architectural plans denote the surface of the house to be covered in a continuous stucco coating, with the western half being a darker color than the eastern half (*Plan 2*). Today, the house is clad in rectangular stucco panels.

As previously mentioned, the house faces south. This primary façade is broken into three distinct bays (*Photo 1*). At the center is an angled bay that contains the main entrance. This bay extends two feet south of the main wall on both the east and west; however, the wall to the east of the center bay is inset two feet from the wall to the west of the center bay. This center bay is an L-shape in elevation, as the front door itself is flush with the south elevation’s east wall and is sheltered by the second floor. A simple steel pipe column supports the southeast corner of the overhang. The entryway is comprised of a trapezoidal concrete stoop that accesses a single door (non-historic) with historic glass block surround.³ Two rows of blocks (58 blocks total) surround the door. The original mail box is inset into the west wall of this entry bay. Besides the doorway, there are no openings in the south wall of this center bay. The east and west walls of this center bay are punched with a series of square openings that contain four glass blocks. The west wall contains nine openings (36 blocks); the east wall contains four (16 blocks), as it only occurs at the second level.

The western portion of the south façade is also L-shaped. The upper level wall does not extend fully west. The only opening in this façade is at the west corner of the upper wall. Although the window unit is not historic, its

Sitting at the northwest corner of SW 17th Street and SW Plass Avenue, the Crawford House is oriented on an east-west axis and sited toward the northern property line (*Plan 1*). The north, east, south, and most of the west property lines are denoted by a modern black metal fence. A gate near the center of the south fence allows access to a concrete sidewalk, leading to the house’s main entrance. The askew sidewalk is perpendicular to the house’s entry bay. Where the house departs from its surrounding context is its massing, form, and materials, which are hallmarks of its International Style. The lot contains small trees and shrubs in the southeast, southwest, and northwest corners, as well as to the south of the center of the house. A planting bed is located at the east end of the house.

While landscaped by the Crawfords, no known plantings survive today. A non-historic (1996) shed is located to the northwest of the house next to a non-historic patio. The concrete driveway from the alley is historic, as seen on the 1938 plot plan (*Plan 1*).

Exterior

The Crawford House contains two levels and no basement. The ground level is a T-shaped form with flat roof and roughly measures 65’ (east-

² Dimensions are rounded for clarity. True dimensions are found on the attached plans.

³ Two blocks have been replaced over the years with similar glass blocks.

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Figure 4: Contextual photos of SW Plass Avenue. Top photo: View SW, showing Crawford House in background. Bottom photo: View NE from west side of Crawford House (KSHS, May 2017).

design and size mimic the historic casements.⁴ Extending west from the western edge of the house to the alley is a historic concrete-block-and-stucco wall. This six-foot tall wall contains a gate near its eastern end to allow access from the historic driveway to the south yard. The eastern portion of the south façade is similar to the west in terms of its L-shaped design and upper level corner window. At the east end of the ground level wall is a window into the living room.

The east façade faces Plass Avenue (*Photo 2*). This elevation has a one-story curved wall at ground level composed entirely of glass blocks, all 228 of which are original. While a few blocks have cracks, the wall is still in excellent condition. The glass blocks are centered between three-foot-wide piers that extend upwards to form a portion of the parapet around the upper level east deck. Above the glass block is an original hollow metal tube handrail. The east wall of the upper level is set back from the ground level wall. A single doorway (non-historic door) is centered in the elevation; to the south is a corner window that corresponds to the corner window on the south elevation. To the north of the main house block and set back from the ground level wall is a one-story block that forms the stem of the T-shaped building footprint. The east wall contains a large window unit that is almost the width of the wall itself. This window lights the dining alcove.

The north façade contains few openings (*Photos 2 & 3*). At ground level, the dining & kitchen block extends north of the main house block and is slightly east of centered. The north wall of this block has a single square window in the west half. The main house block's upper level contains a single window almost centered in the elevation. To its east is a stuccoed chimney. The north side of the wall separating the driveway from the south yard contains no stucco; this is a historic treatment, as noted on the architectural plans.

The west façade faces the mid-block alley. The main house block's ground level façade is covered by a non-historic (ca. 1995) carport (*Photo 4*). This elevation historically contained two overhead garage doors that were replaced (after the Crawfords' tenure) (*Plan 2*). The door bays are still discernible but have been enclosed. In the former north garage bay is a non-historic one-over-one window; in the former south bay is a non-historic pedestrian door. Similar to the east elevation, the west wall of the upper level is set back from the ground level wall and contains a centered pedestrian doorway (non-historic door) with a corner window to the south (*Photo 5*). The door accesses the south roof deck, which is surrounded by a parapet; the western part of the parapet is a historic metal tube handrail. The west façade of the north kitchen/dining block contains four openings. A single doorway (non-historic door) is centered in the wall. A single casement window is located to the south of the door and against the house's north wall. Below this window is a historic cat door; a package delivery door is on the north side of the door at ground level.

Interior

The Crawford House is divided into two levels. The ground floor contains the public spaces while the smaller second level houses the bedrooms and full bath (*Plans 3 & 4*). Historically the floors of both levels were polished concrete, scored to give the illusion of large square tiles. This finish remains in the living room, dining alcove, and bedrooms. The walls are plaster on concrete/concrete block and wood studs with plain cove base. The ceiling heights throughout the house are 8'-6". Some door hardware and trim throughout are historic. Light fixtures are non-historic unless otherwise noted.

⁴ This is true for all windows in the house unless otherwise noted.

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Figure 5: Mail slot at stair landing (KSHS, May 2017).

Upon entering the south door, a small vestibule is encountered (*Photo 6*). To the west is the main stair and entry into the former garage; a pantry corridor is to the north, and to east is the living room. The vestibule's northwest corner is a curved wall (*Photo 7*). The floor consists of non-historic black-and-white tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern. The main stair is to the west of the door. This switch-back stair is concrete (covered with a slip-resistant coating) and retains its custom-designed metal handrails. This rail consists of no vertical spindles; instead two sets of three horizontal metal rods connect the metal newel posts with the stair's walls. The handrails were made in Topeka by Capitol Iron Works. The landing's east wall contains the mail slot at floor level (*Figure 5*). Under the stairs, on the ground level, is a small crawl space for storage and shelter from storms, as the house does not have a basement. This space benefits from natural light from eight glass blocks in its west wall.

To the east of the vestibule is the rectangular living room (*Photo 8*). This room's eastern wall is comprised of the curved glass-block wall that allows ample light into the space. The living room's west wall extends north and becomes the west wall of the dining alcove (*Photo 9*). This square space is tucked into the eastern third of the house's north block. The shared west wall contains historic built-in adjustable shelves. The shelves at the north end of the wall (in the dining alcove) flank an opening into the kitchen. These shelves retain their historic glass doors, two on each shelf with one door above the other door; the living room's shelves were historically open and remain so today.⁵ Together, the living room and dining alcove contain approximately 500 square feet in an L-shaped space.

The galley kitchen is located within the western two-thirds of the north block. This space is accessed from the east through the dining alcove, from the south through the pantry corridor connected to the vestibule, and from the west by an exterior door (*Plan 3*). Although the countertops, backsplash, and sink are contemporary, the kitchen's cabinets are historic and still contain their original hardware (*Photo 10*). The cabinets extend across the entire north wall. A double-height cabinet in the kitchen's northwest corner contains a metal hatch in the west wall that once served as a place to receive packages; the package door is extant but sealed shut.⁶ Like the vestibule, the floors in the kitchen are non-historic checkerboard tile.

Off the kitchen to south sits the utility room. In the west wall immediately upon entering the room is a small window that looks out to the garden on the west; below this window is the historic cat door (*Photo 11*), which is still used by the current feline residents. This room, which also functions as the laundry room, has a metal floor cover protecting all of the underground pipes running into the house. There were many shutoff valves that had rusted or were not working. All of these valves have since been replaced with new valves. The ceiling of this utility room is unfinished, showing the historic concrete structural system of the second floor.

Connecting the kitchen to the front entrance is a small pantry corridor. Lining this corridor's west wall are historic floor-to-ceiling adjustable shelves; the light fixture in this space is historic. In the center of the east wall is a door into a bathroom. The bathroom retains its original ceiling light fixture, built-in cabinet above the toilet, shower in south end, and vanity with recessed glass shelf above the sink in the east wall. The bathroom was renovated in 2008 with new tile, sink, and a fresh coat of paint.

Historically a two-car garage was accessed through a door in the vestibule's west wall. In 1991, the garage was converted into two living spaces. The south half is used for storage; in the north half is a guest bedroom. The floor is concrete with a white epoxy sealer. The storage area retains its historic storage closets in the east wall.

⁵ The glass was given a translucent finish by the current owners.

⁶ An air conditioning unit covers the hatch on the west elevation.

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The second level is accessed by the switch-back stair. The ceiling throughout the stairwell is the same height of the upstairs ceiling, creating a grandiose effect. At the top of the stairs is an east-west running hallway that organizes this level (*Plan 4*). A bedroom is located at the east and west ends of this hall. A storage closet is located directly north of the stairs, and to the east of this closet is the main bathroom. To the south of the bathroom, across the hall, is another closet. The floors upstairs with the exception of the bathroom have been sealed with bright white polyaspartic.

The upstairs bathroom was renovated in 2016 with new Italian tile and fresh paint; however, the original tub and sink are extant. The sink is a 1937 Crane Neuvogue Console sink designed by industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss (*Photo 12*).⁷ The sink faucets were repaired and restored in 2012 along with the sink pedestals in 2016.

There are two spacious bedrooms upstairs. The west bedroom has a walk-in closet along the entire north wall (*Photo 13*). This closet has historic built-in cabinets and drawers in excellent condition (*Photo 14*). The east bedroom has two separate closets. One is encountered within the south wall upon entering the room. The second is accessed through a door in the south wall. This closet is directly above the entry and vestibule. The trapezoidal space's eastern wall is comprised of 16 glass blocks. Both bedrooms have their own private walk-out porch surrounded by four-foot tall parapets, providing privacy from the north and south. Both bedrooms have large windows that connect to the southwest and southeast corners of the house.

Integrity

The Crawford House retains excellent integrity. Alterations to the floor plan have been contained within the former garage space. The remainder of the interior spaces remain as they were when the Crawfords lived here. Most historic materials and fixtures are in place, as well. Although the house was originally designed to have continuous stucco coating, the house currently contains stucco panels. The date of this alteration is unknown. Overall the house continues to communicate its historic association with the Crawfords, as it has changed little since they resided here.

⁷ For particulars on the sink, see https://deabath.com/Original/Or_whs1/or_whs1.html

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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.

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.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

LITERATURE

Period of Significance

1938-1963

Significant Dates

1938

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Crawford, Nelson Antrim

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Wolfenbarger, Floyd Orson (architect)

Senne, George (builder)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1938, the year this house was built and ends in 1963, the year Nelson Antrim Crawford passed away. The period incorporates the years Crawford lived in this house during the latter half of his career.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

Journalist and editor Nelson Antrim Crawford lived at 2202 SW 17th Street from 1938 until his death in 1963. Crawford wrote the first college textbook on journalism ethics in 1924, managed the popular monthly magazine *Household Magazine* for over 20 years, and co-authored books with friend and fellow Topekan, Dr. Karl Menninger. Crawford's International style house was designed by Kansas architect Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger, and it was the first of its kind in the city of Topeka. The house is nominated for its local architectural significance and for its association with the notable Kansan, Nelson Antrim Crawford. The period of significance spans the years of construction, 1938, through Crawford's death in 1963, covering important years in the latter half of his career. This house is the resource best associated with Nelson Crawford during his lifetime.

Elaboration



Figure 6: Undated photo (1920s) of Nelson Antrim Crawford (Kansas State University Archives).

Criterion B: Nelson Antrim Crawford

There is in the United States no phenomenon more threatening to popular government than the unwillingness of newspapers to give the facts to their readers.

--Nelson Antrim Crawford, 1922⁸

Nelson Antrim Crawford, Jr. was born May 4, 1888 in Miller, South Dakota. Early in his youth he moved to Iowa where he attended Council Bluff High School.⁹ He began his career in Iowa and Nebraska, writing for newspapers.¹⁰ He earned his Bachelor of Arts (no concentration) degree from the State University of Iowa in 1910 and later moved to Kansas where he earned his Master of Fine Arts in 1914 from the University of Kansas.¹¹ Upon graduation and at the age of 26, he became an Associate Professor of English and Journalism at Kansas State Agricultural College (now Kansas State University) in Manhattan.¹²

The decade between 1914 and 1924 was foundational for Crawford. According to one biographer, "In those early teaching days, Antrim [as he known to almost everyone] Crawford took on a prodigious amount of magazine work and journalistic projects peripheral to his classroom work."¹³ He served as the managing editor of the *Kansas Industrialist*, the first newspaper published at Kansas State University (from 1875 to 1955), during this time period, and was also made head of the university's printing department and

⁸ Nelson Antrim Crawford, "The American Newspaper and the People: A Psychological Examination," *The Nation* (September 13, 1922): 249.

⁹ William F. Ryan, "Nelson Antrim Crawford: A Lost Savant of the Blue Book Era," *The Little Balkans Review* 2, no. 2 (1982): 46. See also William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* Vol. IV (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 1741.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Albert Nelson Marquis, ed., *Who's Who in America*, Vol. XI (Chicago: A.N. Marquis & Co., 1920-1921), 663 [digitized online] Available from *Hathi Trust Digital Library* <<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015039596591>> (accessed 24 February 2017).

¹² Ryan, 46 & 48. The 1920-21 *Who's Who* entry reads, "Daily newspaper work, 1906-09; instr. English, later asst. prof., 1910-1914...." This seems to indicate he was teaching in Manhattan while pursuing his master's degree in Lawrence, 80 miles to the east.

¹³ Ryan, 48. The quote within brackets is found in Ryan's essay on page 46.

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Figure 7: Cover of *Household Magazine* for October 1932 (image from Abe Books online).

press service where he published two texts related to agriculture and the press.¹⁴ Between 1916 & 1918 Crawford was also editor of *Kansas Churchman*, the official paper of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, a denomination to which Crawford belonged.

During America's World War I years (1917-1918), Crawford "served on the Kansas Council of Defense and was publicity director for the U.S. Food Administration in Kansas."¹⁵ It was likely during this tenure that Crawford first worked closely with William Jardine, then Dean of Agriculture at the college; although, as Jardine also wrote extensively on agricultural issues, Crawford and he likely crossed paths before the war. When Jardine became president of Kansas State Agricultural College in 1918, he appointed Crawford head of the newly formed Department of Industrial Journalism. This department was designed to instruct journalists on how to accurately report on specific areas—industries—common to American readers, including agriculture, labor, finance, and law.¹⁶ Crawford's interest and work in this department enabled him to pen, *The Ethics of Journalism*, the first college textbook on journalism ethics in 1924. Crawford pointed to journalists' "ignorance, lack of inertia, and fear" as a main cause of failure of "American newspapers in giving the public the facts which the public has a right to demand."¹⁷ He further stated, "Such ignorance, though lamentable, would not present so serious a face were it not for the fact that the average reporter does not seek enlightenment."¹⁸ This ignorance is what the Department of Industrial Journalism sought to combat under Crawford's tenure.

Crawford contributed stories, poems, and essays to magazines such as *The Nation*, *New Republic*, *Look*, *American*, *Coronet*, *The American Mercury*, *The Nation's Business*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Rotarian*, and *Reader's Digest*. He also contributed editorial work on *Farm and Fireside* and the *Midland*, a well-respected literary quarterly in America's heartland established in 1914 "for the purpose of presenting the literary ideals of the middle west."¹⁹ He held onto his editorship of *Midland* until 1933.

In the 1920s Crawford met a number of influential Kansans who became close friends and colleagues, including Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius, Dr. Karl Menninger, and Senator Arthur Capper. At a meeting of the Kansas Authors' Club in 1920, Crawford met Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius.²⁰ Emanuel Haldeman-Julius was a fellow publisher, author, and editor, who, with his wife, Marcet, was best known for his connection to Girard, Kansas's socialist press *Appeal to Reason*.²¹ The Haldeman-Juliuses and Crawford became life-long

¹⁴ Ryan, 48. "Preparation for Editorial Work on Farm Papers" was published in 1917; "Editing the Agricultural Bulletin" was published in 1918.

¹⁵ Ryan, 48; *Who's Who*, 633.

¹⁶ Nelson Antrim Crawford, "Schools of Journalism Today," *American Mercury* 6 (October 1925): 197. Crawford writes "In the best schools, students are being encouraged to specialize in finance, labor, agriculture, law, or some other subject."

¹⁷ Nelson Antrim Crawford, *The Ethics of Journalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924), 74.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁹ *Kansas Industrialist* (June 21, 1917): n.p. From Crawford, N.A., files at Kansas State University Archives.

²⁰ Ryan, 49. Crawford served as the 12th president for the, which is still in existence today (*Who's Who*, 663).

²¹ "Who Was Emanuel Haldeman-Julius?" Haldeman-Julius: Pocket Series and the Little Blue Books website,

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friends and colleagues following their initial meeting: Crawford served as a long-time editor for E. Haldeman-Julius's Little Blue Books and contributed articles to other of Haldeman-Julius's publications.²²

Crawford's belief that reporters of medicine and science should understand the subject upon which they are reporting, led to his meeting of Dr. Karl Menninger in the 1920s. Menninger, a pioneer in the field of psychiatry, was likely also interested in the psychological aspects of Crawford's views on journalism, on which he wrote in the years leading up to publishing *The Ethics of Journalism*.

In 1925 a newly-married Crawford relocated to Washington, D.C., to become the first Director of Information for the U.S. Department of Agriculture when President Calvin Coolidge appointed William Jardine Secretary of Agriculture. During these three years, Crawford continued as editor of several publications in Kansas, including the *Midland*, and became good friends with Arthur Capper, U.S. Senator from Kansas. He held his position with the Department of Agriculture until 1928 when he returned to Kansas alone, his wife having left him.²³

Upon his return to Kansas, Crawford settled in Topeka, becoming editor in chief of *Household Magazine*, one of the nation's largest magazines. Senator Capper—who, as president of Capper Publications, was the previous editor—offered this position to Crawford, who served as editor from 1928 to 1951. *Household Magazine*, established in 1926, was “profusely illustrated, and packed with light, briskly written house-and-garden helps” and “enjoyed a broad circulation nationwide, with many rural subscribers. Its appeal was as an unsophisticated suburban and farm standby.”²⁴ Crawford's view of the magazine's purpose was shared in a 1931 interview:

I have an ideal that I think is not impossible—good literature that at the same time will appeal to the average reader. I am sick of the theory that the average reader wants third-rate stuff; I believe he takes it just because some editors sling it into his eyes. The average reader does not want formula stuff. He wants stuff that is interesting and varied, and he recognizes good literature even if he can't define it.²⁵

Household Magazine's circulation increased 62% to well over two and a half million copies with two million subscribers during Crawford's editorship. A significant contributing factor to this growth was Crawford including first-rate contributors such as Edward L. Bernays, L. Morgan Yost, and other widely-known writers like Carl Sandburg, William Bison, Sinclair Lewis, Sara Haardt, and Karl Menninger to name a few. *Household* was the first magazine of national circulation to print the work of Jesse Stuart, best-selling novelist.²⁶ Crawford published more new fiction and more short stories in the magazine than had been included before he became editor.

Already known for his short stories, essays, and editorial prowess, once Crawford settled back in Kansas, he began publishing books. *A Man of Learning* (1928) was a satire in which a fictional character, Dr. Redfield, wrote self-help books. Many readers mistook the satire for reality. One wrote Crawford asking where they could obtain Dr. Redfield's books.²⁷ In 1930 Crawford co-authored Dr. Karl Menninger's *The Healthy-Minded Child*, as well

²² According to the Haldeman-Julius organization, these books “were a series of popular 3½ x 5 inch volumes, designed to be affordable, approachable, and convenient for all readers. The publishing plant, established in 1919, was located in Girard, Kansas. The books became widely popular and sold over 300,000,000 books by 1949. Crawford contributed to more than 100+ books. Promoted as a “University in Print,” the Little Blue Books covered a vast range of subjects including literature, politics, religion, history, sexuality, economics, self-help, and fine arts. As the popularity of the Little Blue Books grew, so did the scope of material, eventually bringing in to the fold volumes on cooking, stock prices, and contemporary humor, to name but a few. At the time of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius' death on July 31, 1951, the Little Blue Book series boasted an inventory of over 1,800 booklets, and had seen some 2,300 unique titles grace the ranks.”

²³ Ryan, 55. The couple were divorced in 1931. Milton Eisenhower succeeded him as Director of Information.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁵ “Household Magazine Editor is Featured,” *Topeka Capital Journal* (April 19, 1931): n.p.

²⁶ Ryan, 55-56.

²⁷ Peggy Greene, “Nelson Antrim Crawford Doesn't Fit Readily Into Just Any Pattern,” *Topeka Daily Capital* (August 17, 1958): 16A.

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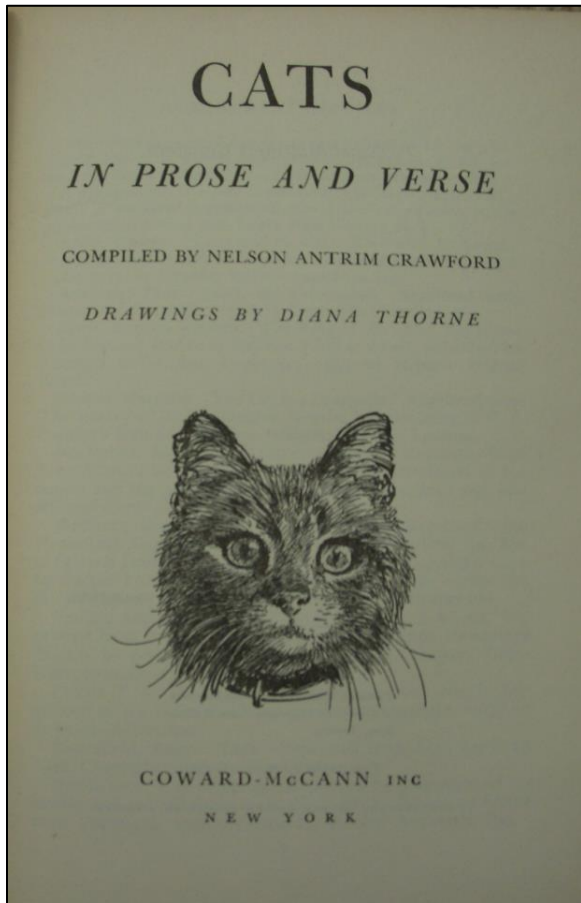


Figure 8: Title page to *Cats*, published in 1947 (image from author).

as contributed significant editorial comments on Menninger's own seminal work, *The Human Mind*.²⁸ Crawford also published his second novel in 1930, *Unhappy Wind*, a book exploring the world of synesthesia. Two additional books followed toward the end of the 1930s. *We Liberals* (1936) is a collection of satirical essays; *Your Child Faces War* (1937) is an informational guide on how to discuss serious matters with children, which was well received.²⁹ The late 1930s were also a time of personal joy for Crawford. In February 1938, Crawford married his second wife, Ethel Mattingly.³⁰

The Crawfords shared many interests, but perhaps the one for which Nelson Crawford is best known is a love of cats. As early as 1934, Crawford published an article in *Psychoanalytical Review* entitled, "Cats Holy and Profane," in which he discusses the psychoanalytical basis for the love and hate of cats and became one of the few non-medical writers to appear in this journal.³¹ The article "offers a history of cats and a debunking of cat myths, superstitions, and neurotic fears."³² He also contributed writings to the *American Feline Society, Inc.* to which he and Ethel belonged. In 1947 Crawford published what is arguably his most-loved book, *Cats in Prose and Verse* (Figure 8):

The cat lives his own life; he expects you to live yours. He respects you, if you are worthy of respect, as a different type of being, but he has no desire to imitate you. He wants to be, not a person, but a cat; he is satisfied in his own cathood.³³

He inscribed the book to his wife. The Crawfords had many cats throughout their life together, but one that stands out in particular is his Persian cat, Huckle, who lived to be 17½ years old. Crawford often left cards and notes to Ethel, signing them "Huckle."³⁴ Names of other cats he had were Blue Wind and Chica.

In June 1951 at the age of 63, Crawford resigned his editorship of *Household Magazine*.³⁵ Shortly thereafter the Crawfords purchased a trade magazine for writers called *Author & Journalist* and relocated the headquarters from Boulder, Colorado, to Topeka. Mrs. Crawford helped Nelson with the publication. As Crawford explained, "She has a sure sense of the public reaction and I value her opinion."³⁶ After they purchased the magazine the

²⁸ Ryan, 56.

²⁹ Leon Whipple, "Review of *Your Child Faces War*," *Survey Graphic* 26 (October 1937): 535. Whipple was a well-known journalist and educator from New York.

³⁰ Wedding announcement in the Crawfords' Scrapbook housed in the Topeka Room, Topeka Public Library. According to a note Crawford wrote to Ethel (and pasted in the scrapbook), the two went on their first date in 1929.

³¹ Greene, 16A.

³² Ryan 56.

³³ Nelson Antrim Crawford, *Cats in Prose and Verse* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1947), n.p.

³⁴ Two of the Crawfords' scrapbooks are now in the Topeka Room at the Topeka Public Library. One scrapbook is filled with love notes and cards mainly addressed to Ethel from Crawford and their cat Huckle. The other scrapbook is from their wedding and honeymoon travels.

³⁵ "Crawford Quits as Household Editor," *Topeka Capital Journal* (June 5, 1951): n.p.

³⁶ Greene, 16A.

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publication grew steadily. Crawford's personal qualities of critical literary taste, wide cultural interests and liberal mind, is what set the tone and attracted well-known contributors to the magazine.

The Crawfords sold *Author & Journalist* in July 1959 in order for Nelson to take up "a professorship at Dr. Karl Menninger's School of Psychiatry in Topeka."³⁷ Crawford's career came full circle with this job, as his main focus was teaching scientific writing to the psychiatry students. Crawford continued in this role until his death in June 1963 at the age of 75.³⁸ Ethel passed away in 1969.³⁹ Both Nelson and Ethel are buried at the Topeka Cemetery in Plot 88. Between them is another tombstone, containing an "H" for Huckle.⁴⁰

Nelson Antrim Crawford spent his entire career dedicated to creating journalism that was factual and readable for the average person. He contributed to more than 200 magazines and journals, edited thousands of articles and books, and edited the *Encyclopedia of Britannica*, the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, and the *Columbia Encyclopedia*. Well-known to his national contemporaries, Crawford was also respected by a wide range of authors and thinkers of the day, ranging from H.L. Mencken to Sinclair Lewis to Arthur Capper. But it was perhaps in his adopted state of Kansas where his impact is most felt and seen, especially in the house he and Ethel resided in at 2202 SW 17th Street, Topeka.

Criterion C: The Crawford House

College Hill Neighborhood⁴¹

Designed by notable Kansas architect, Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger, the International style house at the corner of 17th and Plass was the first to appear on this lot within the historic College Hill neighborhood. This residential neighborhood evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the sponsorship of what was then known as Washburn College (now Washburn University). Washburn College began as Lincoln College in 1866. In 1865, John Ritchie, a well-known Congregationalist, free state advocate, and Topeka investor, donated 160 acres of land for a college site about one-and-a-half miles southwest of town. This distance initially presented an obstacle to development of a campus. With no public transportation available to access the site, the college trustees opted instead to temporarily locate in a new building facing the state capitol grounds. In 1868, Ichabod Washburn donated \$25,000 to form an endowment for the college and the trustees renamed it in honor of this benefactor. In 1871, the college trustees began the process of developing the new campus on Ritchie's donated land.

Under the direction of President Peter McVicar, the college's trustees initiated speculative development on land owned by the college in an effort to raise money to support the college. Following Washburn's donation and Ritchie's gift of a quarter section of land, the assets of the college had increased to an endowment of over \$60,000, and 480 acres of land. The latter, lying north of the campus adjacent to the city limits, had a value of \$700 per acre. This property served as a revenue source for the college. The college trustees leased some of the land, setting other parcels aside for campus growth and others for sale to residential developers.

In addition to the revenues the sale of lots would provide to the college, President McVicar hoped the platting of residential neighborhoods near the college would attract people who were associated with the college or interested in supporting the college, including sharing their houses with students who needed room and board. It was a matter of general practice for the trustees to compensate professors by deeding them lots, further stimulating house building. All of the houses on both sides of College and Boswell Avenues between 17th Street

³⁷ Ryan, 59.

³⁸ "Nelson Crawford, Noted Author, Dies," *Topeka Daily Capital* (July 1, 1963): 1; Ryan 59.

³⁹ "Ethel M. Crawford Dies at Age of 76," *Topeka Daily Capital* (July 17, 1969): 11.

⁴⁰ While it is currently unknown, Huckle may have been buried in Topeka Cemetery's pet cemetery plot.

⁴¹ The following section is adapted from Sally Schwenk, "College Avenue Historic District," National Register Nomination (2007): 81-83.

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and Huntoon Street occupied lots initially owned by the college. For nearly 30 years, proceeds from the sale of lots in what became generally known as "College Hill" helped balance the college budget, added to the college endowment, and attracted new residents. A portion of the College Hill neighborhood is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the College Avenue Historic District (*Figure 3*).

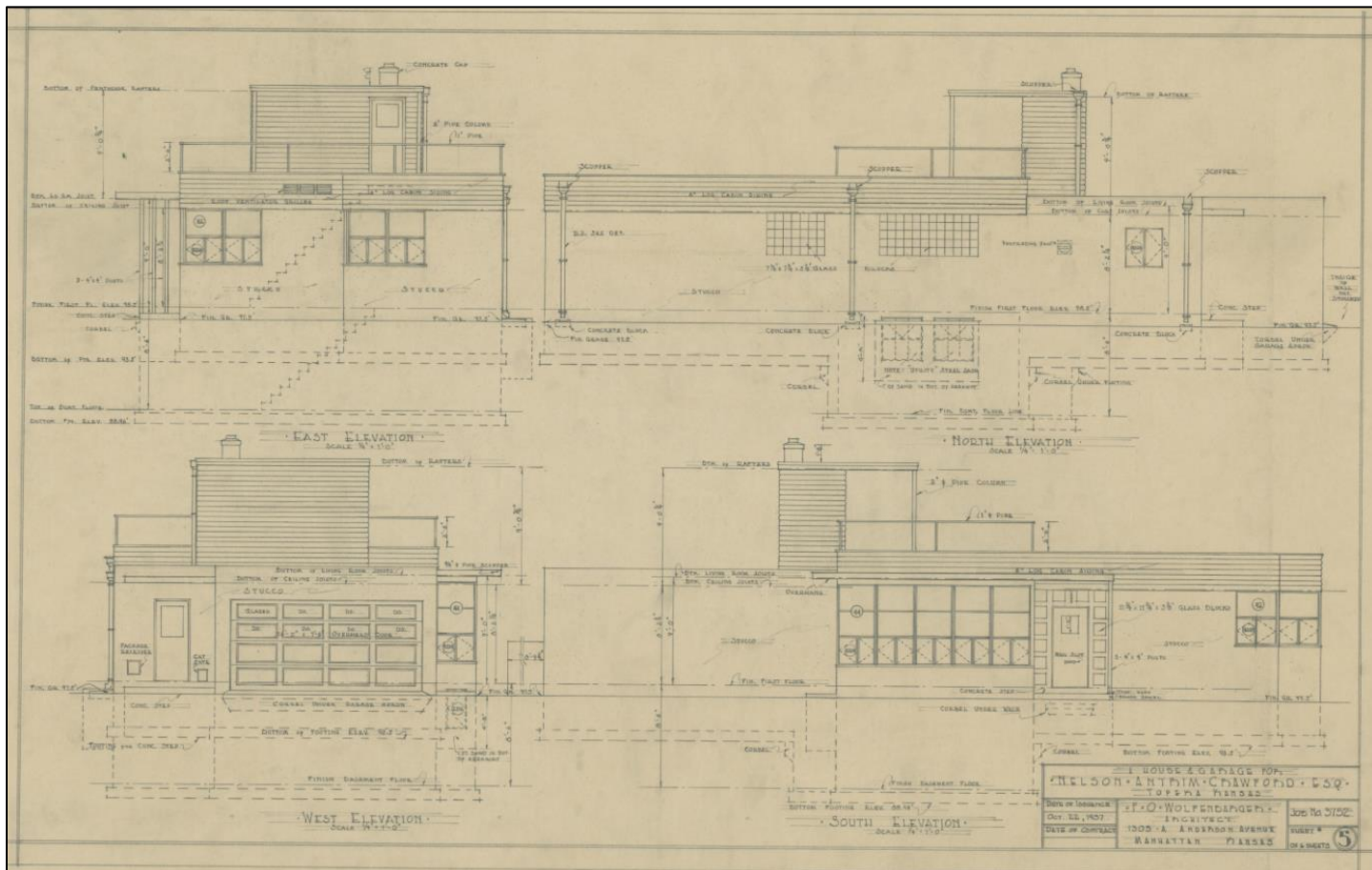


Figure 9: Floyd Wolfenbarger's first design of the Crawford House. Plans available at the Kansas Historical Society Archives.

The Crawfords' House

Nelson Crawford purchased three lots at the northwest corner of 17th and Plass on April 12, 1937.⁴² The following autumn, Crawford appears to have hired Floyd Wolfenbarger to design a modern house at this location. Plans on file with the Kansas Historical Society Archives dated October 22, 1937 show the first iteration of the Crawfords' house (*Figure 9*). While the proposed form mimics the house that would be constructed, notable differences can be seen. For instance, the upper story is significantly smaller and there is a partial basement; the exterior also was called out as "log cabin siding" at least in the upper story. One common feature of the two sets of plans, however, is the presence of the cat door.

Plans were revised in the summer of 1938. While speculative at this point, circumstantial evidence points to the Crawfords' being influenced by the 1936 Contemporary House showcased at Dallas, Texas' Centennial Exposition (*Figure 10*), which was a world's fair, celebrating Texas' independence from Mexico in 1836. After their wedding in February 1938, Nelson and Ethel took a long road trip down through Louisiana and Texas; the couple kept a meticulous scrapbook of their journey, including itineraries for each day. On Friday, February 11,

⁴² Deed information in possession of current owners.

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Figure 10: 1936 Contemporary House as photographed by the Crawfords in 1938 (from their wedding scrapbook).

1938, the couple arrived in Dallas and visited the Exposition Grounds, which still contained several buildings constructed for the fair.⁴³

The Contemporary House is described in a July 5, 1936 *Dallas Morning News* article:

The architects, in designing Contemporary House, felt there was a need during many months of the year for the sense of outdoor living—yet, with the changing climate of the winter season, the house must be easily warmed and easily closed before the cold blasts of a norther. It must be a roomy house, spacious, without covering too much ground. Practically every room has two exposures. The master suite has windows on three sides. The living room and dining room are a unit which can be separated with curtains into two district rooms, or can, on occasion—without any delay—be thrown into one room of unusually generous proportions.⁴⁴

Finishes in the house included aluminum, stucco, and steel pipe. The architects were DeWitt & Washburn of Dallas.⁴⁵ No doubt, Wolfenbarger was familiar with the Contemporary House, and it is possible he advised the newly-weds to tour the house while on their honeymoon. The architect's revised plans from August 1938 show a house of smaller but similar design to the one the Crawfords saw in Dallas.

Construction appears to have been completed by the fall of 1938, as the Crawfords received a mortgage loan of \$7,400 (approximately \$129,000 in 2017) through Prudential Investment Company on October 6, 1938. The house, built by Topeka builder George Senne, was the first such house to be constructed in Topeka.⁴⁶

When Crawford passed away his wife Ethel continued to live in the house until her death in 1969. Esley L. Simmons received the property from Ethel Mattingly Crawford estate in 1971. In 1976, the property was sold to the Kaw Valley Association and then shortly after sold to Thomas L. Steinhoff in 1977. Five years later A.W. & Diane C. Eskridge purchased the property in 1983. In 1990, the Eskridges sold the property to Jerry L. & Tania J. Gray. Cecily M. Richardson purchased the property in 1997. The house stood vacant for several years before Brandi J. Brueggeman-Makda and Mohammad F. Makda purchased the house in 2002.

⁴³ Crawford Wedding Scrapbook, Topeka Room, Topeka Public Library.

⁴⁴ "Model Home Uses Modern American Decoration Motif," *Dallas Morning News* (July 5, 1936): 9. Information about the Contemporary House was shared by Gregory Smith, National Register Coordinator, Texas Historical Commission.

⁴⁵ "Contemporary House for Use of Southwesterners to be Dedicated Sunday," *Dallas Morning News* (July 5, 1936): 9.

⁴⁶ Greene, 16A. At least three other International style houses are known in Topeka. 1820 SW Pembroke Lane was constructed in 1946; 1945 SW Pembroke Lane was constructed in 1948; and 1626 SW Medford Ave was built in 1949. Dates are from county appraiser; while dates pri

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Figure 11: Nelson Crawford in the west bedroom of the house at 2202 SW 17th Street (unknown source, provided by author).

Architect of the Crawford House⁴⁷

Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger (1905-1979) attended Kansas State Agricultural College from 1922 to 1926, with a focus of Architectural Engineering. He never graduated and instead left college early to pursue his architectural career.⁴⁸ He established his practice in Manhattan in 1935 and was the only full-time architect in the late 1930s. Wolfenbarger designed a number of residences and buildings in Kansas City and Manhattan, quickly becoming a prominent and recognized architect in the community. He is responsible for the design of the Lee Elementary School, the Riley County Memorial Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, the Manhattan Country Club, the Manhattan City building and auditorium, the Mutual Insurance Building, the Manhattan Senior High School building, the Riley County Jail, a couple of swimming pools, numerous buildings on the Kansas State campus and helped design the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas. He was

part of the Chi Gamma Chi Fraternity at Kansas State University. Wolfenbarger was a member of the Fellow of American Institute of Architects (FAIA) which was recognized with the highest honor for their exceptional work and contributions to architecture and society. He also served on the Board of Directors for the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Summary

The Crawford House is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B and C. The house's architectural significance as the first of only a few International style houses in Topeka meets Criterion C. Author-educator, Nelson Antrim Crawford had a significant impact on educational institutions, writers, and readers not only locally but nationally, and resided in this house, which he commissioned, during his later career. This house is the best resource associated with Crawford and therefore meets Criterion B.

⁴⁷ Historic Preservation Services, LLC., "Manhattan, Kansas, Survey Report," (2004): 92; Kansas State University Archives files; the AIA Historical Directory of American Architects.

⁴⁸ From Kansas State University Archivist, Cliff Hight, in October 20, 2016 email to author, "Further, the registrar's office could confirm Floyd Orson Wolfenbarger (born 11/29/1905) attended Kansas State Agricultural College beginning the Summer of 1922 and attended until 11/12/1926, but did not graduate. There is a note on the transcript that he left for 'Outside Work.' His major was Engineering and Architecture with the curriculum of Architecture."

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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: Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property Less than one

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|---|-----------|------------|
| 1 | <u>39.037180</u> | <u>-95.705139</u> | 3 | _____ | _____ |
| | Latitude: | Longitude: | | Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2 | _____ | _____ | 4 | _____ | _____ |
| | Latitude: | Longitude: | | Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated boundary includes the entire parcel on which the Crawford House is located. This urban parcel is described as: Campus Front Addition, Plass Avenue lots 31, 33, & 35 in Section 1, Township 12 South, Range 15 East.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

This boundary represents the historic size of the lot when the house was constructed in 1938.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brandi Jewel Brueggeman-Makda with Amanda K. Loughlin (KSHS)

organization _____ date Spring 2017

street & number 2202 SW 17th St. telephone 785-256-0007

city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66604

e-mail jewel.makda@gmail.com

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

name Mr. Mohammad Farhan Makda & Mrs. Brandi Jewel Brueggeman-Makda

street & number 2202 SW 17th St. telephone 785-256-0747 / 785-256-0007

city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66604

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: Crawford, Nelson Antrim, House

City or Vicinity: Topeka

County: Shawnee State: Kansas

Photographer: Amanda K. Loughlin, unless otherwise noted

Date
Photographed: May 23, 2017, unless otherwise noted

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera. See attached photo keys.

- 01 of 14:** South elevation, looking NW (Brad Finch, November 2014)
- 02 of 14:** East and partial north elevations, looking SW
- 03 of 14:** North elevation, looking SE (Brandi Jewel Brueggeman-Makda, October 2016)
- 04 of 14:** West elevation, looking ESE
- 05 of 14:** Looking SE atop west roof deck
- 06 of 14:** Vestibule, looking west from living room. Door to former garage is in background; pantry hall door is at right
- 07 of 14:** Looking SW from living room into vestibule, showing curved wall. Shelves at left are non-historic.
- 08 of 14:** Looking NE into living room from living room's SW corner
- 09 of 14:** Looking NW at dining alcove and historic shelving
- 10 of 14:** Historic kitchen cabinets along kitchen's north wall
- 11 of 14:** Cat door from inside utility room
- 12 of 14:** Original 1937 Crane Neuvogue Console sink in SW corner of upstairs bathroom (Brandi Jewel Brueggeman-Makda, October 2016)
- 13 of 14:** West bedroom, looking NE; walk-in closet accessed through two doors along north wall
- 14 of 14:** Historic built-in cabinetry in west bedroom closet

Plan Log

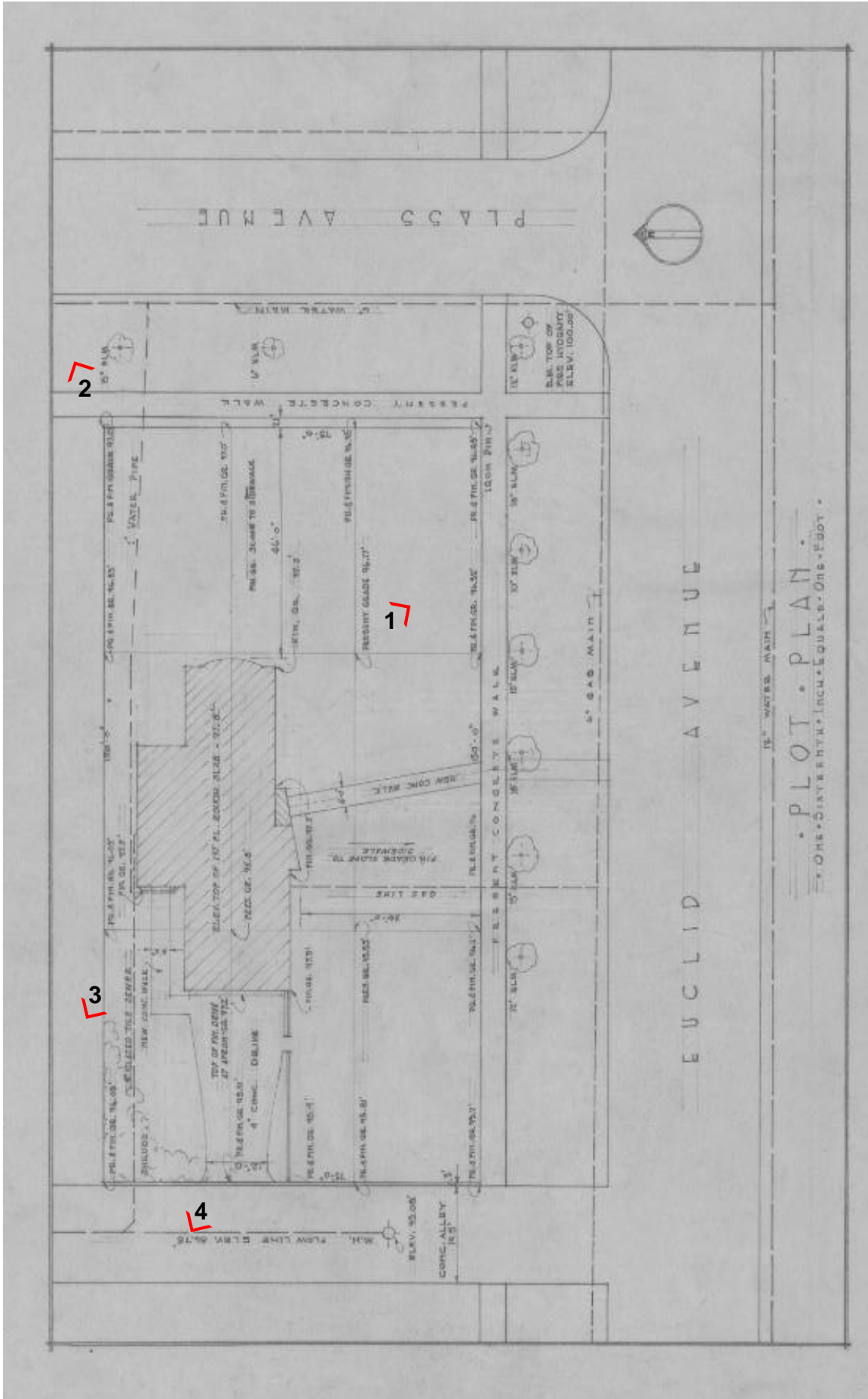
The following plans are housed at the Kansas Historical Society Archives, Wolfenbarger Architectural Drawings Collection, M222R, Crawford Residence.

- 1 of 4:** Plot Plan, August 1938, F.O. Wolfenbarger
- 2 of 4:** Elevations, August 1938, F.O. Wolfenbarger
- 3 of 4:** First Floor Plan and details, August 1938, F.O. Wolfenbarger
- 4 of 4:** Second Floor Plan and details, August 1938, F.O. Wolfenbarger

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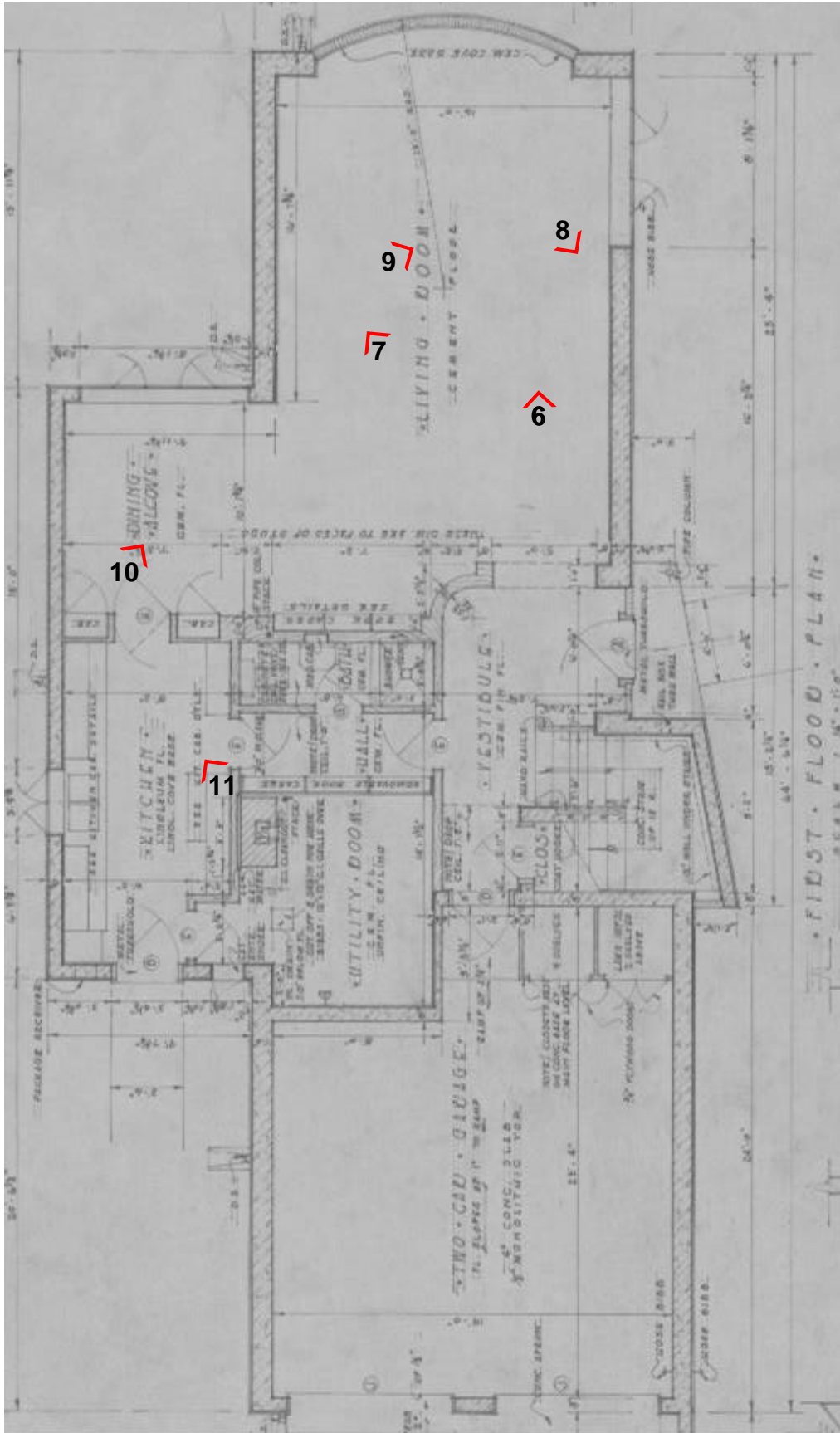
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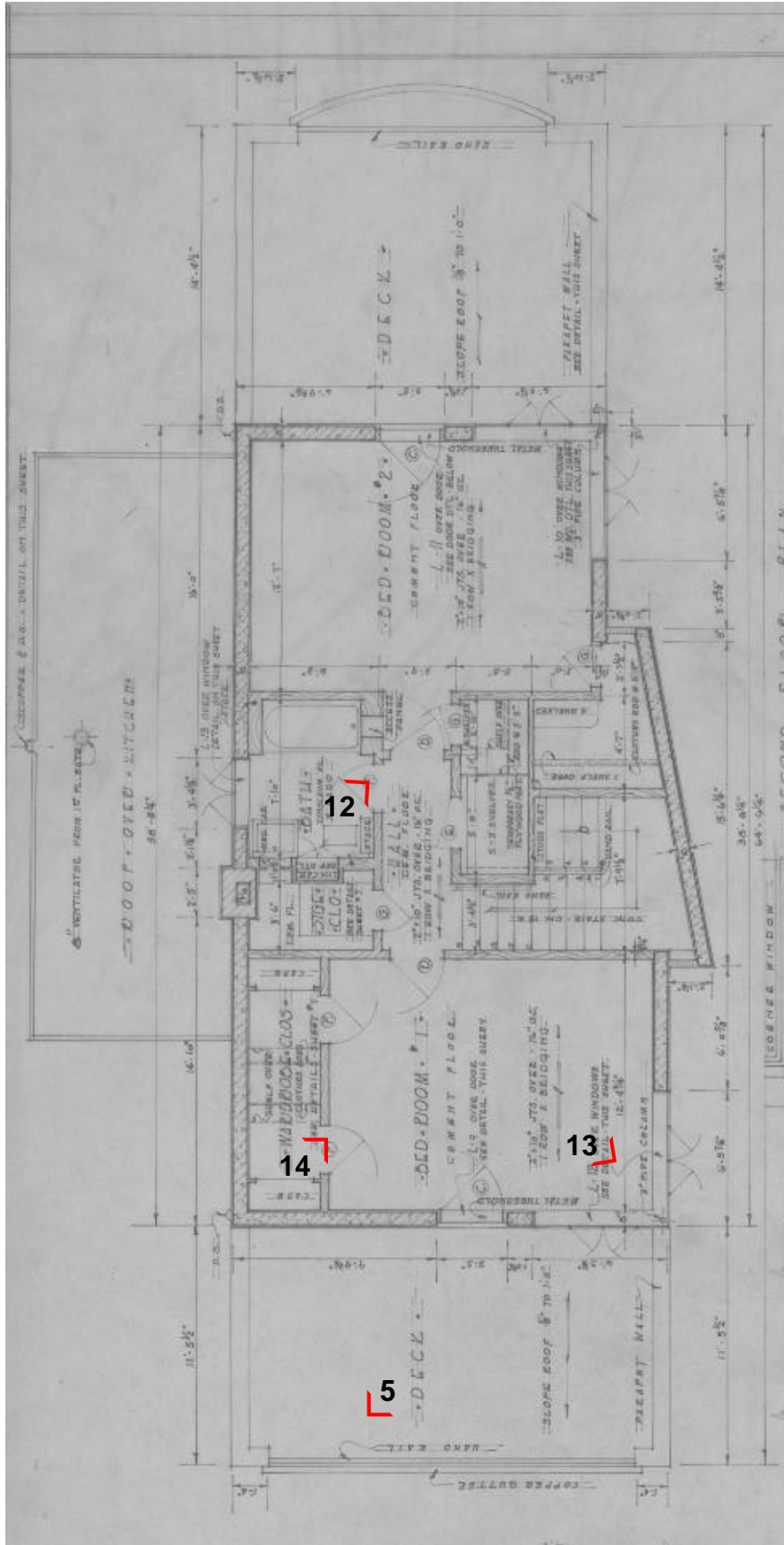
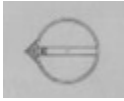
Photo
Key 2.



Crawford, Nelson Antrim, House
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Photo
Key 3.



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