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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name GILES-NELLIS HOUSE

other names/site number 177-5400-0562

2. Location

street & number 915 SW MUNSON

not for publication

city, town TOPEKA

vicinity

state KANSAS

code KS

county SHAWNEE

code 177

zip code 66604

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

*Ramon Powers* STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

MARCH 12, 1992

Signature of certifying official  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Entered in the  
National Register

*Alouis Byers*

4/28/92

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC; single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC; single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

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LATE VICTORIAN; Queen Anne

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone  
walls WOOD: weatherboard; shingle

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roof ASPHALT

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other GLASS

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Giles-Nellis House (c. 1887, 1892) The property is located at 915 S. W. Munson in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas (pop. 115,266). The two-and-a-half story, frame, front-gabled, Queen Anne house sits on a rusticated limestone block foundation; its main body is surmounted by an asphalt shingled, cross gabled roof, the rear addition is surmounted a jerkin head, gabled roof. The building maintains a northern facade orientation, and is comprised of the prominent, character defining, 1887 unit which fronts onto S. W. Munson and the less prominent 1892 addition to its rear. The overall dimensions of the 1887 unit are twenty-eight feet from east to west and thirty-four feet from north to south. The overall dimensions of the 1892 addition are sixteen feet from east to west and sixteen feet from north to south.

The building's front-gabled facade is complemented on both the east and west elevations by prominent projecting gabled bays; these bays receive the most decorative attention. Narrow clapboarding covers the main body of the building, corner posts terminate each planar expanse. Shingles cover the gable faces, the entablature frieze, the second story window hoods, open wall planes on the western bay, and a small amount of wall surface below the facade's second story sun porch. A wooden cross-hatched design accentuates the gable peaks of the facade and western elevations, the cut-backs underneath the attic windows on the facade and eastern elevation, the stair well window surrounds on the eastern elevation, the panels above and below the bay windows on the facade and western elevation, and the wall plane above the facade's sun porch. A bull's eye motif fills the cross-hatch squares on the facade's gable. Sunbursts augment the decorative detailing employed for the western gabled bay.

The rear elevation of the main unit and the addition are functionally clad with clapboarding and finished with corner posts. The jerkin head gable face of the addition's southern elevation is clad with shingles.

Fenestration is comprised primarily of double hung sash, with a sash of multiple panes of clear and colored glass surmounting a single clear pane of glass. The windows are grouped together in

See continuation sheet

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sets of two and three and employed singly. Stationary art glass windows with rectangular and diamond configurations are employed in the front parlour and the main stairwell. The rear addition employs 1/1 double hung sash.

The building maintains its brick chimney stacks, however they have been truncated. When constructed, the house exhibited two tall, panelled chimney stacks with corbelled pots. The chimneys rise from the main unit's roof peak and the western roof slope.

The facade's original half-span, Queen Anne porch has been replaced with a full-span, classically inspired porch. The porch was probably replaced in the 1920s, and while it changes the appearance of the house, its massing and design blend well enough with the main body of the house to allow it a contributing status. The full-span porch obscures the facade's northeastern bay, covering most of the shingling below the sun porch and eliminating the visual connection between the first story bay window and the second story sun porch.

A tall double door provides access from the porch into the building's front hall. The doors display a repetitive pattern of recessed squares on their lower panels, single pane glazing fills the upper half of each door, a pair of recessed squares surmounts each window. Additional access is provided through several rear entries.

A small, gable roofed, board and batten garage stands just south of the house, fronting the alley. The building appears on the 1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Topeka, and may date from either the 1887 construction of the main unit or the 1892 construction of the rear addition.

The house exhibits an asymmetrical floorplan, with the two front parlours and the main stair well contained in the first floor of the facade gable. The first floor space expands with the projection of the eastern bay, this area contains the dining room and an addition room. A kitchen and bathroom are housed on the first floor of the addition. The floorplan follows a similar pattern on the second floor, which houses bedrooms in the main unit and recreational rooms in the addition. The attic story of the main unit contains four rooms, one in each gable.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1887, 1892  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1887, 1892  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

GILES, FRY W.- Builder  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Giles-Nellis House (c. 1887, 1892) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance as a transitional, Queen Anne style house. The property maintains a high degree of architectural integrity and is currently being restored by its owners, who purchased the property in 1989.

The Giles-Nellis House is a textbook example of a front-gabled roof, Queen Anne house with spindlework detailing. "About 20 percent of Queen Anne houses have a full-width front gable which dominates the front facade. This form occurs most frequently in detached urban houses." (McAlester, 1984, p. 263) The irregular roof shape, dominant facade gable, and asymmetrical form are hallmarks of this style.

The Queen Anne style uses wall surfaces as primary decorative elements, avoiding plain flat walls through projections and multiple wall coverings. The combination of cut shingle siding, clapboards, cross-hatching, bull's eye blocks, and sunbursts, projecting bays, and stained glass windows provide the Giles-Nellis House with a rich textural diversity. The interior features an irregular floorplan and detailed woodwork, reflecting the care and craftsmanship of the builder.

"About 50 percent of Queen Anne houses have delicate turned porch supports and spindlework ornamentation, which most commonly occurs in porch balustrades or as a frieze suspended from the porch ceiling. Spindlework detailing is also used in gables and under the wall overhangs left by cutaway bay windows. Lacy, decorative spandrels and knob-like beads are also common ornamental elements in this subtype. Spindlework detailing is sometimes referred to as gingerbread ornamentation, or as Eastlake detailing." (McAlester, 1984, p. 264)

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property LESS THAN ONE ACRE

UTM References

A 

1	5
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2	6	7	4	2	1	0
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4	3	2	5	2	6	1	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots 109 and 111 in the Giles Subdivision of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. The property is bounded to the north by Munson, to the east by an alley, and to the south and west by adjacent property lines.

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Boundary Justification

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

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title MARTHA HAGEDORN-KRASS, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN  
organization KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY date MARCH 12, 1992  
street & number 120 W. 10th telephone 913-296-5264  
city or town TOPEKA state KANSAS zip code 66612

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The Queen Anne "was the dominant style of domestic building during the period from about 1880 until 1900; it persisted with decreasing popularity through the first decade of this century .... In the decade of the 1890s the free classic adaptation became widespread. It was but a short step from these to the early, asymmetrical Colonial Revival houses which, along with other competing styles, fully supplanted the Queen Anne style after about 1910." (McAlester, 1984, pp. 266- 268) The Giles-Nellis House was constructed at the beginning of the transitional Queen Anne period, and thus lacks the curvilinear aspects more commonly associated with the Queen Anne style.

The Giles-Nellis House was built as a speculative venture by Fry W. Giles (1819-1898), a Topeka financier and developer. This house, along with two others, formed the basis of the Giles Subdivision, which was developed in 1886 and 1887. Topeka experience great growth and development during the late 1880s, and the Giles development was, in part, a response to the boom. The Giles-Nellis House cost \$4500 to construct, Giles the sold the house to Clarence Wells in December, 1887.

Wells sold the house to Daniel W. Nellis (1845-1924) in 1891. Nellis founded Topeka's first insurance agency, the Nellis and McCune Agency. The Nellis family built the rear addition to the house in 1892. The Nellis family lived in the house until 1908, when it was sold to William Fisher and then passed to Dr. J. H. Close in 1912. The house remained in the Close family until 1989, when it was sold by Ferris Akey to the present owners.

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Building Permits. City of Topeka, Kansas. #5174- Residential Dwelling House (1887). #7634- Dwelling House Addition (1892).

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. (New York: Knopf, 1984).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Topeka, Kansas. 1896.

Stringer, Michael and Brian Eakes. "Giles-Nellis House." (National Register nomination draft, 1991).

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The interior of the house maintains its original floorplan and most of its woodwork, mantles, and plaster ceiling medallions and entablatures. Many of the light fixtures are period replacements, as most of the fixtures were stolen prior to 1989. During the restoration, many of the plaster walls were taken down to the lathe, and the walls were either replastered or sheetrocked. Much of the woodwork has been refinished, including the floors. Character defining motifs employed in the house include the bull's eyes that decorate the corner blocks in the door and window surrounds and the newel posts, and the sunflowers which decorate the front parlour's wooden mantle and glazed fireplace tiles. Classically inspired, plaster entablatures and medallions accentuate the two parlours, the main hall, and the dining room.

Fluted members are employed for the door and window surrounds. Four panelled, hinged doors predominate the doorways, pocket doors which retain their original cherry finish stand between the front parlour and the dining room. Many of the doors were oak grained in the 1900s, and this graining is retained. Incised brass hardware is evident on first floor the hinges and door knobs; glass, porcelin and and burled maple door knobs are evident on the second and third floors.

Both the front parlour and the dining room contain fireplaces with wooden mantles and glazed tile surrounds and hearths. Two incised slate fireplaces stand in the respective bedrooms above the front parlour and dining room. These fireplaces have unglazed tile hearths.