

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received **JUL 13 1983**
date entered

1. Name

historic Kress Building

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 702 Commercial St. N/A not for publication

city, town Emporia N/A vicinity of

state Kansas code 20 county Lyon code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Roger and Gwen Peatling

street & number 2014 Briarcliff Lane

city, town Emporia N/A vicinity of state Kansas 66801

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Lyon County Courthouse

city, town Emporia state Kansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NONE has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	Check one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	Check one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins							
	<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed							

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Kress store at the northeast corner of Commercial and Seventh streets in downtown Emporia was built in 1929. It is a two story red brick structure with a full basement. The building is in very good condition and makes a major contribution to the historic streetscape of Emporia.

The 50 feet by 130 feet commercial structure is very distinctive with its crenellated parapet and decorative terra cotta trim. Terra cotta caps the parapet, forms belt courses above and below the second story, creates elaborate window surrounds, and was used for the crests and name plaques that decorate the parapet. The brick work on the second story below the parapet is all diapered.

On the ground floor the Kress building has a typical storefront. It retains its original curved display windows at two west entrances and at the entrance at the east end of the south facade. It also still has its "verde antique marble" base panels. There are aluminum frame doors in each of the three entrances. The transom areas have been covered with modern signage, but these can be removed without damaging the building.

The interior of the Kress building also has a high level of integrity. On the ground floor in the store area the beams are covered with molded decorative plaster. The columns are finished with Corinthian capitals. Small Gothic arch windows remain throughout the first and second floors. Upstairs the ceiling is covered with decorative pressed metal panels. There is a narrow egg and dart cornice molding. The original elevator is still in place at the east end of the building.

The second floor of the Kress store is currently being used for a dance studio. The ground floor was divided into two commercial spaces and only the north space is occupied at this time.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below							
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				
Specific dates	1929	Builder/Architect	G.E. Mackey, New York, architect					
Messenger & Dalton, Pittsburg, KS, contractor								

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Kress building is a significant piece of period commercial architecture in Emporia. Throughout its chain of stores the Kress Company integrated traditional storefront design with distinctive historical decorative elements. As the designer expected it would, the Kress stood out from surrounding commercial structures. Construction of the Kress in 1929 was indicative of the prosperity that Emporia was experiencing in the 1920's.

Emporia was the rising star of the midwest in the 1920's. At the time the Kress building was being constructed, structures were going up throughout the downtown, William Allen White was at the height of his career, and Emporia was emerging from a small country town to a city of the third class. The construction of a new Kress store was a statement of faith on the part of the company in the future of Emporia. The September 12, 1929 Emporia Gazette pointed out the "Chain stores do not come into a town unless they know the business will justify the expenditures."

Although not designed in any particular style, Kress stores throughout the chain employed vaguely Gothic or Elizabethan design motifs translated into brick and terra cotta. The overall effect was very eye-catching. Just as McDonald's golden arches serve as advertising for that fast food chain, so the Kress stores themselves served the same purpose.

The exotic appearance of the Kress store above ground level was not continued in the storefront. There the traditional base panel, display window and transom composition was followed. The storefront was set apart from the average local operation by its distinctive curved windows at the entryway and its marble base panels.

The Kress building is a pivotal structure in downtown Emporia. Local preservationists are interested in creating a downtown historic district, but the political climate is not right for such a move yet. In the meantime, it is appropriate that the special contribution that the Kress building makes be recognized.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Emporia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 4	7 4 1	3 0 0	4 2 5 4 4 7 0		
Zone	Easting					
Northing						
C						
E						
G						

B						
Zone						
Easting						
Northing						
D						
F						
H						

Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 202 and 204 on Commercial street. The Kress building has occupied these lots since its construction in 1929.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nora Pat Small, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date June 29, 1983

street & number 120 West Tenth telephone (913) 296-5294

city or town Topeka state Kansas

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Nora Pat Small

title Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society date June 29, 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 6/29/83

Beth Giovencar
keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet

Item number

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Lebhar, Godfrey M. Chain Stores in America, 1859-1950. N.Y.: Chain Store Publishing Corporation, 1952.

Emporia City Directory. 1907, 1930

Emporia Gazette. Jan. 22, 1929, Jan. 23, 1929, Jan. 31, 1929, March 7, 1929, May 2, 1929, May 30, 1929, Sept. 13, 1929, Oct. 24, 1929.

This form was prepared from materials submitted by Steve Hanschu of Emporians for Historic Preservation.