



## STAFF REPORT

### Planning Commission Meeting: January 26, 2026

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| <b>Application:</b>     | <b>HL25-0001: A nomination to the Olathe Register of Historic Places for 126 S. Cherry, located northeast of E. Loula and S. Cherry Street.</b> |
| <b>Location:</b>        | 126 S. Cherry Street – Original Olathe Post Office  |
| <b>Owner/Applicant:</b> | Amar Singh; Gurdwara Nanak Darbar Sahib, Inc.   |
| <b>Staff Contact:</b>   | Emily Carrillo; Senior Planner  |

**Site Area:** 0.51 acres      **Existing Use:** Religious Institution

**Current Zoning:** C-2 (Community Center)      **Plat:** Olathe (1866)

#### 1. Introduction

The following is a request for nomination to the Olathe Register of Historic Places. The purpose of the nomination is procedural in nature to recognize and honor Olathe's historic properties at a local level. The register assists local efforts to identify, promote and protect local historic resources.

This nomination was prepared by FEMA in conjunction with an active Nonprofit Security Grant project in partnership with Gurdwara Nanak Darbar Sahib, located at 126 S. Cherry in downtown Olathe. The scope of the project includes the replacement of the original main entry doors and front-facing windows. The application process requires Section 106 review, a federal historic preservation process required for projects involving federal funding, permits, or approvals that may affect historic properties.

FEMA met with the Olathe Historic Preservation Board in August 2024 to review the proposed project and determined that modifications to the scope which would avoid or minimize adverse effects were appropriate in order to proceed. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlining mitigation measures was drafted and signed by all parties. The MOA also includes a stipulation requiring the property owner to complete a nomination to the Olathe Register of Historic Places as a condition of approval. Any original doors and windows will be stored in a manner that maintains their historic integrity, and new doors and windows will be custom designed to replicate the original framing and historic features.

## 2. History

The subject property, located at 126 S. Cherry, was originally constructed as Olathe's first permanent post office. The building was constructed in 1938 at a cost of \$90,000 as part of the federal New Deal program, with Louis A. Simon serving as the supervising architect. The post office was officially dedicated on Old Settlers Day in 1939.

The need for a new post office arose after the previous facility, located on N. Cherry Street, was destroyed in the 1936 Grange Building fire. Postmaster Cecil Pember received orders for the new post office site in early 1937.

Historic aerial photographs and archival images indicate that flat-roofed additions to the sides and rear of the building were constructed in the late 1940s to 1950s.

The building was acquired by the City of Olathe in 1990 and used for government offices until 2010, when it was acquired by Gurdwara Nanak Darbar Sahib.



*View of subject property circa 1950.*

## 3. Existing Conditions

The Gurdwara Nanak Sikh Worship Center, located at 126 S. Cherry Street, currently serves as a place of worship, providing religious services as well as educational and community-oriented activities.

The subject property occupies a single commercial lot and is surrounded by a public parking garage and office buildings, including the Johnson County Administration Building. The brick-clad building is symmetrical in form and features a central cupola on a low-pitched, side-gabled roof. Early flat-roofed additions to both sides and the rear of the building incorporate historic materials and architectural details consistent with the original structure.

The primary (west, street-facing) façade is characterized by eight (8) double-hung, twelve-over-twelve, true divided-light windows. A centrally located entrance features paneled double doors, each with six (6) true divided-light windows, and is surmounted by a fanlight transom. The entrance is flanked by Doric columns and detailed with an architrave and brick arch.

Since its original construction, the building has undergone several additions and renovations, including the installation of new interior finishes, interior and exterior security systems, and combination storm windows. Despite these changes, the subject property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and sense of time and place. While modifications have occurred over time to accommodate changing ownership and uses, the building continues to convey its historic character as a New Deal-era Colonial Revival post office.

The building does not contribute to a National Register of Historic Places eligible or listed historic district. The building is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns in history and Criterion C for architecture.

A signed Exterior Preservation Easement Agreement was recorded with the Johnson County Register of Deeds in 2013 to ensure the preservation of the historic building's exterior façade. A copy of the recorded agreement is included in the packet.



*Subject property highlighted in yellow.*



*View of subject property looking east from S. Cherry Street.*

#### **4. Public Notification and Neighborhood Meeting**

Certified public notification letters were mailed to surrounding properties within 200 feet of the subject property per UDO requirements. Staff nor and the applicant have received any inquiries regarding the property nomination.

#### **5. Historic Landmark Designation Criteria**

As outlined in Chapter 2.84.050 of the Olathe Municipal Code, the designation of buildings, structures, and objects as historic landmarks, certain criteria must be met, including properties must be fifty (50) years or older. In addition, the property must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) *Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history of the city, county, state or nation;*
- (2) *Is associated with a significant person or group of persons in the history of the city, county, state or nation;*
- (3) *Embodyes distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master builder/architect; possesses high artistic values; or represents a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;*
- (4) *Yields or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history; or*
- (5) *Possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship.*

## 6. Analysis

Chapter 2.84 of the Olathe Municipal Code requires public hearings before the Olathe Historic Preservation Board, an appointed advisory body, and the Planning Commission, both of which provide recommendations to the Olathe City Council for final consideration.

A meeting of the Preservation Board was held on December 10, 2025, to consider the landmark nomination. A public hearing was conducted, and no members of the public were in attendance. Meeting minutes are included in the packet. The Board voted 7–0 to recommend approval of the landmark application based on the following criteria for inclusion on the Olathe Register of Historic Places:

- Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history of the city, county, state or nation;
- Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master builder/architect; possesses high artistic values; or represents a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

Staff's analysis of this application is based on the findings of the Preservation Board, as well as conformance with approved plans. The proposed historic landmark nomination meets the following policy elements of the PlanOlathe Comprehensive Plan and Olathe Historic Master Plan:

**CRL-2.1 Preservation Board.** Engage input from the Olathe Historic Preservation Board.

**CRL-2.3: Historic Resource Identification.** Identify and protect buildings, districts and sites of historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance. Encourage a survey of local historic resources on a local, state, or federal level and incorporate results and recommendations of a historic resource survey into a preservation plan for the City.

**CRL-2.4: Local Historic Register.** Consider the establishment of a local historic register or other local historic designation for local historic sites and landmarks.

**Policy 1.2: Utilize Survey information to further preservation goals in Olathe**  
**Strategy 1.2.3: Nominate eligible resources to national ,state and/or local historic registers, with owner consent.**

## 7. Recommendation

A. Staff recommends approval of HL25-0001 for the following reasons:

1. The proposed nomination complies with the policies and goals of the PlanOlathe Comprehensive Plan and the Olathe Historic Preservation Master Plan.
2. The nomination meets the Municipal Code preservation criteria for considering historic landmark applications.

B. The Olathe Historic Preservation Board recommends approval of the historic landmark nomination (HL25-0001) to the Olathe Register of Historic Places by a vote of 6-0.

C. Staff recommends approval of the proposed landmark nomination (HL25-0001) to the Olathe Register of Historic Places with the following stipulation(s):

1. Section 2.84.130 of the Olathe Municipal Code requires a Certificate of Appropriateness Review to be completed by City staff and the Olathe Historic Preservation Board prior to any permits being issued for the site, including but not limited to demolition, addition or other construction activity.