The downtown area of Manhattan, Kansas has missed a huge opportunity for a very long time in improving the frightful and vibrancy of the core of the community. Along Poyntz Avenue in downtown Manhattan, many small boutique shops and restaurants line an attractive thoroughfare. The first floor of these magnificent historic buildings lend a quasi set of historical significance to the district. The second stories of these buildings, however, offer nothing to the public other than a charming façade from the street level.

Many of these buildings have unused second and even third stories that could offer up a unique dwelling to students and young professionals in the area. The location of these properties could lend a sense of culture and well-being to their occupants. With enrollment at Kansas State University on the rise as well as the upcoming construction of the NBAF facility in Manhattan, Kansas, there will be a huge rise in the demand for affordable housing in the area for a highly educated population.

Bounded on two sides by the rivers upon which Manhattan was founded, the surrounding high hills, Manhattan is not left with much room for expansion by spread. The limits one to consider urban infill and re-development of the core. Why not repurpose this unused land that could be beneficial to others when there are spaces already contributing being unused in the downtown core?

A trend has become mainstream in the design of mixed-use districts that contain many of the conveniences one would need for everyday life including; housing, shopping, retail, use districts that contain many of the conveniences one would need for everyday life including; housing, shopping, retail, businesses in the area, will have a chance to create a nightlife that is more people into the downtown and with more than just 9-5 businesses in the area, will have a chance to create a nightlife that is more vibrant along Poyntz.

In the design of small, efficient apartments there are many suggested design solutions to make the most of a small space. Through research I have found many different variations of these solutions and decided to make a checklist pertaining to the design of the small apartment in downtown Manhattan, Kansas. The checklist is completed objectives of design that are important before work begins, and must be continuously checked against throughout the design process.

Designing a small dwelling:
1. Open great room: containing living room, dining room and kitchen.
2. Avoid single use rooms: allow multiple purposes for hallways, guest rooms, and other spaces.
3. Built-in furniture using stationary furniture, the design can be more compact by restricting the options for furnishing.
4. Light and color contrast using lighting and wall treatments to make space recede or advance.
5. Create visual flow: by connecting spaces with similar tools and features, the spaces seem larger.

Poyntz Avenue:

Poyntz Avenue would be considered the “main street” for Manhattan. In 2007, a six square block district surrounding Poyntz Avenue was submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. Listed on the Historic Registry in October 2010, the historic district covers the six blocks between 4th and 10th Street.

The collection of sixty-six buildings in the district vary in architectural style and range in dates of construction between 1880 and 1930. Along Poyntz, a total of forty-nine buildings front the street and are used for various commercial and retail purposes on the first floor.

The “Downtown” The downtown district consists of many small commercial buildings. As office buildings, the buildings are occupied by a variety of businesses and professionals. These buildings, such as the Eames Building at the corner of 4th Street and Poyntz are occupied as offices of the second story.

A potential feature for housing a residential program on the second story of these buildings would be a separate access to the second story. Sixteen of the available buildings offer second story currently offer separate access, making them prime opportunities to be a sustainable example of the mixed-use redevelopment of the Downtown District.

The “Downtown” Poyntz Avenue, would be considered the “main street” for Manhattan. In 2007, a six square block district surrounding Poyntz Avenue was submitted to the National Register of Historic Places. Listed on the Historic Registry in October 2010, the historic district covers the six blocks between 4th and 5th Street, from Harmsworth (5th) to Peers (3rd Street).

The collection of sixty-six buildings in the district vary in architectural style and range in dates of construction between 1860 and 1950. Along Poyntz, a total of forty-nine buildings front the street and are used for various commercial and retail purposes on the first floor.

The Olive-Ruthe Building (Building 13) and the adjoining commercial building adjacent to the north pose an opportunity, the creation of second story apartments in the downtown core of Manhattan. Currently, these spaces are used as a yam company and to cor on the first floor with commercial occupants of the second story. The occupants upstairs are an art studio and an appliance store. The second story of these buildings offer plenty of space in which four second story apartments could be built. By building small apartments, a very efficient and more sustainable use for the land can be used by the community.

The buildings (two structures built of different time periods linked by single access to both second stories) are located at 360 Poyntz Avenue and 103 North 3rd Street in Manhattan. The access to the second story is open to 3rd Street, and currently contains a large steel staircase and the owner plans on adding an elevator inside of the C-shaped stair.

Architectural details of the buildings include being one of very few remaining examples of 1880s Italianate architecture on Olive-Ruthe Building. There is a beautiful Huittys stained glass arch transom windows on the second story of the Commercial Building. The building dates back to 1881 and 1888 respectively, and offer this corner lot a nice architectural landmark and a great place to make a living for young emerging professionals.

Through various phases of construction, three spaces are formed within the second story of these two adjoining buildings. These spaces naturally form apartments of (1) 1336 square feet, (2) 1173 square feet, and (3) 750 square feet, with strategic wall placement apartment 2 will become two smaller efficient apartments. Apartment 1, containing 1336 square feet, will offer extra storage side by side. Apartment 2, containing 1173 square feet, will have two separate access points to each of the two sections of the building over the yam store. Apartment 2 offers a challenge in remodeling an apartment in a long room space. Apartment 3 and 4 will allow the east side of the building over Ma’s Tavern and will incorporate the three arched stained glass windows. Incorporating design techniques to make a small space feel larger can be used in the design of all four units.

Using environmental techniques will be essential to promote the sustainable lifestyle needed for existence in a world with far fewer natural resources. Cross ventilation in spaces within the apartment is key for natural cooling and ventilation, incorporating skylights and solar tubes to bring natural daylight into interior spaces will also offer an energy-saving solution.