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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Peoria, seat of Peoria County and third largest city in Illinois, is located on the right bank of the Illinois River at the lower end of a wide section in the river known as Peoria Lake, 153 miles southwest of Chicago and 166 miles northeast of St.Louis, Mo. The surface of the county was originally nearly equally divided between timber and prairie, with the latter generally confined to the highest lands between the watercourses and a narrow strip along the sandy terrace of the Illinois River. With the exception of the major river valleys and a number of smaller ravines, the topography is quite level and may best be described as slightly undulating.

The older part of the city of Peoria is built on two terraces, with the lower one consisting of yellow sand gradually sloping from the river bank to a height of 83 feet above the low water mark at the base of the second. The width of this first terrace varies from about three-quarters of a mile at the upper end of the city to a mile and a half at the lower from 75 to 100 feet above the first.

The West Bluff Historic District is confined to the face and plateau of these bluffs and, excepting the actual face, is quite flat throughout. Specific boundaries not actually determined by the bluff line were established dependant on visual cohesion and circumscribe the maximum extent of a generally homogeneous architectural quality. The southern boundary extends , northeast along 7th avenue from Aiken to Union and continues in the same direction from Union along interior property lines below Moss and High to the first property line east of the intersection of High and Main, then striking north on this line to Main. This generally coincides with the beginning of the sharpest rise in the bluff. From North and Main, the boundary follows the first property line east of North, interior property lines southeast and east of Randolph, and then the east line of Linn to the right-of-way of Interstate 74, thus more closely paralleling the verge of the bluff. This departure from the base is occasioned by recent, unfortunate developments on Crescent. The northern boundary follows the r.o.w. of Interstate 74 to the line of Amber, turns south on Amber to the interior property lines north of Armstrong and then west on these lines to the west line of 607 W.Armstrong. It then extends south along this line. the west line of 606 W.Armstrong, and the first property line east of Sheridan to Columbia, further south along the alley between Sheridan and Ellis to the interior property lines north of Main, west on these lines to Sheridan, south on Sheridan to Windom, west on Windom to the alley west of Frink, south on this alley to Bradley, west and south on Bradley and Bourland/MacArthur to the alley north of Moss and then west on this alley to University. From University it runs west along the alley north of Barker to Cooper, south on Cooper to the alley south of Barker, east on this alley to the property lines first west of Glenwood, south on these lines to Ayres and the alley north of Moss, southwest on this alley to the west line of 1819 W. Moss and then southeast on this and the east line of 1820 W.Moss to 7th. This excludes the extreme western end of Moss, whose character changes abruptly at 1820.

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Land use within the district is predominantly residential and almost exclusively so west of Sheridan. Commercial uses are limited to W.Main, an extension of Peoria's central business district, and a short stretch of North. There are no industrial uses, a modicum of vacant land, no apparent federal properties, and a scattering of religious, educational, social, and other such uses well within the norm of a residential neighborhood. A significant feature of the land use is the amount of open space attached to residences along the edge of the bluff, especially those on the south side of Moss west of Mac Arthur.

The main source of transportation is the private automobile, with traffic concentrated on Main, MacArthur, and Moss west of Union. Most streets in and around the district are laid out on a strict north-south rectangular grid, though some, notably Hamilton and MacArthur, are determined by an earlier grid established parallel to the river bank. The routes of the three most significant residential streets, Moss, High, and Randolph, however, as well as that of 7th, are clearly derived from the line of the bluff.

Residential density within the district is quite moderate throughout, though the south side of Moss, with its large lots, presents at least the appearance of considerably lower density. Single-family detached residences are the dominant building type, although a number of multiple-dwelling structures are scattered throughout the district. Masonry and frame construction are about equally represented, with the former concentrated nearest the edge of the bluff and the latter more in evidence as one moves toward the interior of the plateau. Street setbacks, lot size, and dwelling size all follow the same basic pattern: the more splendid structures, with all their associated space, dominate the crest of the bluff; the more modest, requiring far less room for display, are located above it.

Architectural styles best represented in the district are those popular between ca.1850 and 1930, with those whoch reached their zenith of fashionability before 1890 more in evidence on High, Randolph, and North than on Moss. Among the earliest are some good examples of Italianate (v.Nos.6, 17, 21 below) and French Second Empire (v.Nos.8-9,15,30). In terms of both quantity and quality, nowever, the eastern part of the district is characterized by the Queen Anne (v.Nos.2-4,7,14-15,19). Moss, which developed relatively slowly from east to west, displays a great variety of styles -- mainly revival -- achieving currency after 1890. Of special note are two works of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School (Nos.11 & 12). The north side of Moss and the adjoining streets west of University seem to have been developed rapidly during the 1890's and reveal an interesting mixture of late Queen Anne and Classical Revival.

Intrusions in the West Bluff Historic District are relatively few and mainly confined east of Sheridan. Most of these have arisen as a result of this area's proximity to the central business district and the Methodist despital of Central Illinois and consist of new, inappropriate commercial structures along North, a health clinic at Randolph and Hamilton, and some parking lots on Hamilton. The intrusions on Randolph are particularly regretable, since it is architecturally on of the most significant streets in the district. To the west, the only prominent intrusion is a new parish

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house at Malvern and Moss, unsympathetic to its surroundings in both scale and design. A few recent apartment buildings along Moss and the western end of High are visually unfortunate but at least continue the neighborhood's residential tradition.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area of Peoria described within the West Bluff Historic District is a significant, well-preserved reminder of the opulence once common to a certain class of American society and bears excellent witness to the wealth and tastes of the city's notables during the 19th and earlier 20th centuries. Of better than average architectural quality throughout, the district also embraces specific areas -- on Randolph, High, and Moss -where that quality achieves a distinction both in ensemble and in individual structures unsurpassed in the state.

Working in concert with the general architectural excellence, the manner in which the structures are integrated into the landscape provides a further mark of distinction. The face of the bluff has remained essentially undeveloped and thus provides both a strong point of separation from the lower town as well as an open setting for the palatial residences on the crest.

Though the area itself does not play a decisive role in the historical development of the city, the men and women who lived here did, particularly during the period when Peoria grew of age as a major industrial center. And their residency has left an unmistakable imprint on the district.

HISTORY

The history of settlement in the Peoria area is one of the longest in the state of Illinois, though unlike its chief rival for the title of oldest town, Cahokia, it has not been continuously occupied. Marquette and Jolliet were the first Europeans to reach the site, passing northward through Lake Peoria in the fall of 1673. The area was then controlled by the Peoria Indians, and Indian control which, later assumed by the Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawotami, lasted until about 1819 despite increasing European activity after 1680 and actual cession of the land to the United States government in 1795.

The first French efforts to establish themselves permanently one Lake Peoria were directed by Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, under whose command the short-lived Fort Creve Coeur was erected on the left bank in In 1691, the post at Fort St.Louis on Starved Rock was transferred to Lake Peoria, where it became known as Fort Pimiteoui, and engendered a small, semi-permanent settlement. Though virtually abandoned early in the Revolutionary War, a French colony returned in 1779 under Hypolite Maillet and established the village known variously as Au Pe, Le Pe, Opa, La Ville

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de Maillet and New Piorias. The few inhabitants withdrew temporarily in 1781, but returned two years later and enjoyed a period of tranquility that lasted until the village was permanently destroyed by Capt. Thomas E. Craig in November 1813.

Despite the erection of Fort Clark by Capt.Craig's troops in late 1813, the history of Peoria's American settlement does not begin until 1819. At that, it represents a completely new development, since none of the previous French residents were ever known to have returned. Fort Clark itself, though garrisoned until June 1818, produced no adjacent settlement and was finally burned by Indians about six months after its evacuation. But on April 17 and 19, 1819, the first seven American civilians arrived to form the earliest nucleus of modern Peoria.

The growth of this settlement, situated near the ruins of Ft.Clark on the riverfront, was extremely slow. An Indian trading post was established by John Hamlin as a station of the American Fur Company in 1822 and the first school opened in the same year. Other signs of vitality are lacking. On 13 January 1825, though, the state legislature established the County of Peoria, fixing its seat of justice at Fort Clark, soon to be known as Peoria City. The county's jurisdiction included the entire northern half of the state and contained the grand population of 1,236.

Peoria was surveyed and platted by William S. Hamilton, Alexander Hamilton's son, on 10 July 1826 and a public auction of lots under the auspices of William Clark was held the following day. Only 17 purchasers responded. Another auction was ordered for November, a third in 1832 and several others subsequently So few people settled in Peoria, however, that it was governed as a rural precinct despite its role as county seat. In 1833, the population—totalled roughly 150. The town-fraction was then re-surveyed by Charles Ballance on 27 May 1834 and finally incorporated as a village 11 March 1835. On 5 May 1845, though numbering only 1,619 inhabitants, Peoria incorporated as a city and embarked on a period of rapid and sustained growth: 11,858 in 1855; 14,045 in 1860; 22,849 in 1870; 29,259 in 1880; 41,024 in 1890; 56,100 in 1900; and 66,950 in 1910. The 1970 population was 126,963. The priginal quarter section town-site has been enlarged several times, the most important extensions occurring in 1863 with the inclusion of the entire township and around 1900 when West, South, and North Peoria were annexed.

Peoria's growth as an industrial and transportation center kept pace with its accretions in population and area. By 1844, the town's manufactures included a variety of agricultural machinery, copper and tinware, wagons, and crass and iron foundry products. That same year, however, Almiran S.Cole started an operation, than which "no business has proved to be more profitable:" the distilling of whisky. In 1864, there were twelve distilleries in the city with a daily production exceeding 36,000 gallons. The extent of production by 1911 can be gauged by the federal tax revenue it generated that year: approx. 30 million. Though consolidated into fewer firms, Peoria's whisky production is still a major economic factor: in 1973, one firm alone was producing 125,000 gallons daily. Another industry of early importance, conditioned like that of distilling by Peoria's location in a rich agricultural region, was flour-milling. The first mills in the area were crected in 1830 & 1837

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on the Kickapoo Creek west of the settlement. By 1850, four mills were producing nearly 35,000 bbls. for export, a figure that rose to 575,000 bbls. from eight producing mills by 1870, when milling was the city's leading manufacturing interest. From that year on, milling interests began to decline. Numerous other industries located in Peoria during the 19th century, bringing the total number of manufacturing plants in the city to over 400 by 1912. Chief among their products were farm implements (Kingman Plow Co., Avery Co., R.Herschel, Acme Harvesters), stoves (Cutler and Proctor), automobiles (Glide), binder twine, crackers, and pottery. An immense 20th century addition to the industrial base came with the location of the Caterpillar Tractor Co. in the city.

The first Peoria railroad, the Peoria and Oquawka, was chartered in 1849 and completed the western half of its line from Peoria to Burlington early in 1857, while the eastern extension to the Indiana state line was delayed until 1859. The second line chartered (1853), but the first to begin service was the Peoria and Bureau Valley, which ran the first regular passenger train into the city in Nov.1854. Other roads soon followed, notable among them the Peoria and Rock Island (1871), Peoria, Pekin and Jacksonville (1868), and Peoria and SPringfield (1871), and by 1879 40-50 daily passenger trains served the city over ten lines. By 1912, 14 roads entered the city, making it the most important railroad center in the state after Chicago. Rail business, however, suffered a rapid decline and by 1970 passenger service was limited to one train daily.

The area of the West Bluff Historic District was not a part of the original town plat, that having been confined to the immediate vicinity of the river. Nor has it ever played a major role in the economic development of the city. The bluff seems to have remained relatively undeveloped at least until 1841 when I.Francis Proctor purchased a quarter section to engage in stock raising and fruit growing. Tobias Bradley (v.No.27 below) located on the bluff in 1843 and also initially pursued a variety of agricultural activities. More intensive residential exploitation set in around mid-century as the city's commercial center expanded and forced those interested in prime residential property to look elsewhere. Both the West Bluff and the East Bluff -- together with the valley lying below the latter -- benefited and developed, along with an area of N.Knoxville Avenue, as the city's most exclusive residential neighborhoods.

Settlement of the West Bluff proceeded primarily along the brink of the bluff from the eastern end around High, Randolph and North, where the earliest residences of a non-agricultural cast date from the 1850's (v.Nos. 17 & 28), southwesterly along Moss. Though described in 1880 as the site of "numerous princely residences surrounded by ample and richly decorated grounds," the West Bluff did not reach residential maturity until about 1930, particularly along western Moss. The area above the bluff, including the north side of Moss was intensively developed along more modest lines in the decades 1890-1910 and attained its maturity before World War I.

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SITES AND STRUCTURES OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE Numbers refer to map. Areas of Significance, where more than one applies, in order of priority.

- 1. Sarah Holman & George Root Residence 111 Roanoke Built ca.1896 ARchitectural Significance
- 2. Residence 259 North Randolph Architectural Significance
- 3. Residence 255 North Randolph Architectural Significance
- 4. Residence 204 North Randolph Architectural Significance
- 5. Residence 128 North Randolph Architectural Significance
- 6. Residence 1101 North North Architectural Significance
- 7. Judge Jacob Gale Residence 1007 North North Built ca.1877

Jacob Gale settled in Peoria in 1834 and was long active in the civic affairs of the town. He was twice elected mayor and also served several years as superintendent of schools.

Architectural and Historical Significance

8. Henry R.Woodward Residence 1120 Moss Built in 1871

H.R.Woodward was prominent in various business pursuits, primarily in pharmaceutics. He was also one of the organizers of the Peoria Street Railway company and served as its president. Architectural and Historical Significance

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9. Moses Pettingill (Morron) Residence 1212 Moss

Built in 1862; rebuilt in 1868 after fire

Moses Pettengill was an early settler, prominent as merchant,
temperance advocate, and abolitionist. The house is now a museum
of the Peoria Historical Society.

Architectural and Historical Significance

.10. Residence . 1230 Moss Architectural Significance

11. Residence 1316 Moss Architectural Significance

12. Francis W.Little Residence and Coach House 1505 Moss

Designed in 1902 by architect Frank Lloyd WRIGHT
Francis Little was vice-president and general manager of the
Peoria Gas and Electric company and lived in the house only one
year. The second resident was Robert D. Clarke, a builder and
manufacturer.

Architectural Significance

13. Edward S.Easton Residence 1125 West Main Built ca.1882

Edward Easton was one of Peoria's wealthiest citizens, active in grain dealing, transportation, and real estate. He took a major role in the organization of the Peoria Board of Trade and served as its president in 1877. The house is now a mortuary. Architectural and Historical Significance

14. John H.Francis Residence

429 High

Built ca. 1874

John H. Francis was a prominent citizen engaged primarily in the cooperage and distilling business but also very active in civic affairs.

Architectural and Historical Significance

15. Residence
443 High
Architectural Significance

16. Residence
509 High
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17. Erastus D. Hardin Residence 511 High

Built in 1859; porch alterred later

Erastus Hardin was a notable citizen of Peoria active in banking and real estate.

Architectural and Historical Significance

18. Residence

518 High

Architectural Significance

19. Residence

604 High

Architectural Significance

20. D.H.Bethard Residence

611 High

Built before 1916 by architects Hewitt & Emerson

Architectural Significance

21. Residence

909 North Douglas

Architectural Significance

22. Hale Methodist Church (Now: Grace Bible Church)

Southwest Corner Main and High

Built in 1900 by contractor Harrison Johns

The original Hale Chapel was built in 1868 in accord with the will of Asahel Hale. Hale, at his death in 1864, owned most of the bluff area between High, Sheridan, North and Columbia.

Architectural and Historical SIgnificance

23. Westminster Presbyterian Church

1420 Moss

Dedicated 4 June 1900

The congregation was organized in 1897.

Architectural Significance

24. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

West corner Randolph and Hamilton

Built in 1922-25

The congregation was organized in 1857.

Architectural Significance

25. Residence

1714 Moss

Architectural Significance

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26. Residence

510 High

Architectural Significance

27. Tobias S.Bradley Residence

802 Moss

Built in 1843; totally remodelled and enlarged

Tobias Bradley was a noted distiller and banker. After his death in 1867, his widow, Lydia Moss Bradley, continued his enterprises, amassing a substantial fortune. She founded Bradley University in Peoris in 1897.

Historical Significance

28. Phelps-Bourland Residence

519 High

Built before 1852; alterred

Benjamin L.T. Bourland occupied an important place in the development of Peoria and was most active in banking and real estate. William R.Phelps, an erstwhile partner of Bourland, was the first resident of the house.

Historical Significance

29. Charles D.Clark Residence

1221 North North

Built ca.1879

C.D.Clark was a very prominent businessman, active in flour-milling, hardware, coal and pottery. He was also deeply involved in local and national politics.

Historical and Architectural SIgnificance

30. Henry E.Sieberns Residence

1119 North North

Built ca.1875

H.E.Sieberns was vice-president of the German Fire Insurance Co. He also engaged in various other business ventures and was, all in all, a very wealthy and respected citizen.

Historical and Architectural Significance

31. Residence (Henry Means Pindell)

240 North Randolph

H.E.Pindell was a widely-known Peoria publisher, prominent in political circles throughout Illinois. He founded the Peoria <u>Herald</u> in 1889 and subsequently purchased the <u>Transcript</u> and the <u>Journal</u> (in 1902). He lived in this house from ca.1898 until his death in 1924.

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32. William Fremont Wolfner Residence 1205 Moss

Built ca.1891; sided

W.F.Wolfner was one of the most prominent citizens of Peoria, noted for his business accomplishments and his public service. He was a director and manager of a number of distilleries and also represented various distilling interests at the government dissolution of the Whisky Trust in 1895.

Historical Significance

33. Charles E. Duryea Residence

1512 West Barker

Built ca.1892

Charles Duryea designed and built the first American automobile in 1893-4 wh-le living in this house. The actual work was carried out in a frame barn, since razed, in the rear of the property. Duryea's further accomplishments in the early automobile industry are a matter of record and need not be rehearsed here. He lived at this address from 1893 to ca.1902.

Historical Significance

34. Joseph B. Greenhut Residence (A) and Coach House (B)

802 (A) & 816 (B) North Sheridan

Built ca.1886; residence (A) totally alterred

J.B.Greenhut was a Peoria distiller and citizen of international reputation. In 1887, he organized the Distillers and Cattle
Feeders Company ("Whisky Trust") and served as president until its dissolution in 1895. His wealth and influence were immense and his friends and house guests included at least one U.S.President, McKinley. The house (A) has since been stuccoed and otherwise extensively alterred into apartments. The coach house (B), while also converted into apartments, retains most of its original architecture.

Historical (A) and Architectural (B) Significance

35. Frederick Streibich Residence

1812 Moss

Built in 1866; alterred

Frederieck Streibich was an early inn keeper and merchant. In 1865, he developed this property as a vineyard, added a very popular and fashionable wine garden ("Streibich's Grove") and, finally, his own home.

Historical Significance

36. Horace Clark, Jr., Residence 305 Columbia

Built ca. 1895 by Mr. Clark

Horace Clark, Jr., was a prominent member of a prominent family.

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ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered DEC 1 / 1976

Name

Location

West Bluff Historic District

Peoria County

Also Notified

Hon. Charles H. Percy Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson Hon. Robert H. Michael

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