

INTERIM REPORT FOR THE BUCHANAN WEDGE IN ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

David Denman
July 1987

INTRODUCTION

The survey of what euphemistically is called the "Buchanan Wedge" was born out of a recognition that the survey of the Harris Addition Neighborhood was inadequate to determine the north boundary of the potential National Register Historic District. Moreover, several past surveys had been carried out skirting the area now called the Buchanan Wedge.

It was decided that it would be advantageous to survey the wedge shaped area and thus integrate all former surveys into a continuous whole. By doing so it would be possible to more easily define the north boundary of the Harris Addition Nomination.

On April 15th, 1987 a survey was begun in the Buchanan Wedge area of St. Joseph, an area bounded by Buchanan street on the north, parts of Jules and Francis streets on the south, parts of N. 15th and N. 16th streets on the west and parts of N. 17th and N. 18th streets on the east. The area is almost exclusively free-standing residential with houses on lots of varying sizes with a variety of setbacks from the street. There were 158 forms produced during the survey of which 65 were done to National Register level of detail.

METHODOLOGY

All buildings regardless of age or condition were noted on the site map. All buildings fifty years old or older were photographed and a form created. Positive identification of the site was made with the aid of the field map and a street address. For 35 of the buildings thus surveyed the above information is all that is present--a minimal survey with street address and a photograph appended.

For the 65 buildings executed to the National Register level of detail a more thorough survey yielded more information-- This began with a legal description of the property. With this unique site information at hand it was possible to examine the building permit record on each discreet parcel. These records extend back to 1887. The records give the name of the person taking out the permit [generally but not always the owner] the date of the permit, the type of permit [e.g. residence, place of business, repair, garage, etc.] and the dollar amount of construction. Almost all of the 83 properties date to post-1887, and thus a positive date was available in most cases, though occasionally the permits were missing. The building records yielded the name of the person taking out the the permit for repair or construction. City Directories were consulted for relevant years to determine yield biographical information on the builder or occupant of the dwelling. The Insurance maps were consulted to confirm the configuration of the existant building.

On each inventory a relevant architectural description was made

of the existing condition of the building with an analysis of significant alterations and additions. A 5X7 photograph [occasionally two photographs] was attached under the written description as a separate page to the inventory sheet.

GENERAL RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Almost all of the surveyed buildings are freestanding single family dwellings. Over fifty percent are brick or masonry [tile and stucco] and the rest of frame construction.

The Buchanan Wedge area was not part of the initial settlement of St. Joseph in the pre and immediately post Civil War years. During that time it was farmland adjacent to and overlooking Frederick Avenue, the primary overland artery into St. Joseph from the east. Development was intermittent in the nineteenth century. There is at least one pre Civil War dwelling still standing in the area, and there are a few good examples of Queen Anne architecture in the area of the survey, however the predominate styles date to the turn of the century and thereafter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the opinion of the surveyor that there is no district in this survey area. The building history and the quality of the architecture does not follow any coherent pattern. However, one of the primary aims of the survey was to determine the north boundary of the Harris Addition district. On the basis of the Buchanan Wedge survey I believe that it is possible to include at least two or more blocks to the nomination--these are the blocks immediately west along Faraon street from the present proposed line of the district which ends near N. 18th street. This would push the north line from its present location on Jules street to Faraon street. It is also possible that the line may be drawn to include a portion of N. 17th street north of Faraon street. I will say that there are still problems of integrity with this area and it may be decided at a future time that it is not possible to include these areas despite the presence of several outstanding buildings therein.

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METHODOLOGY

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