

FINAL REPORT
CLAY STREET AREA
ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

St. Joseph Landmarks Commission
David Denman--Preservation Coordinator

December 1986

On September 15th 1986 a survey was begun in the Clay street area of St. Joseph, an area bounded by Union street on the north, Dalton street on the south, Kemper on the west and 22nd street 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. A minimum of 70 inventory forms were called for and 83 were actually produced.

METHODOLOGY

All buildings regardless of age or condition were noted on the site map and an inventory sheet created. All buildings fifty years old or older were photographed. Positive identification of the site was made with the aid of the field map and a street address and legal description of the property made. 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. Where it was necessary other record groups were consulted to create a basic historical context.

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. House size varies considerably. On Clay street [and a few other isolated locations in the survey area] there are several large houses built by immensely wealthy families. On Bolton and other side streets the houses are generally two story and of moderate size, built for the mid-range of the middle class. On the extreme west edge of the survey area [and in a few isolated instances] are a number of small single story frame houses. Lot size varies dramatically as does the setback line of the houses from the street. For example, on Mulberry and Bolton streets the lots are some 40 feet across the front with the houses built with narrow yards at the front of

ca. 10 feet at most. However, many of the houses on Clay street sit on multiple lots in some cases over one hundred feet front with set backs of 30 or more feet.

There is one large ca. 1920 two building multi-story apartment complex at the west end of the surveyed area. At the extreme east edge, on 22nd street, is a small one story commercial building dating to the 1930s.

The area of the survey is more or less geographically uniform. The area is level to rolling and thus is inconsistent with many of the other neighborhoods in St. Joseph. The area is on a broad ridge overlooking the valley to the north through which Frederick Avenue passes. Thus to the north of the surveyed area the ground falls away rapidly. It also falls away at the extreme west edge of the surveyed area in a zone where a small drainage pattern joins that of the larger valley.

Street curbs are stone. North 20th street is paved with a herringbone patterned brick and it is possible that the asphalt covering on the remaining streets covers additional brick paving.

The following is a breakdown of the findings of the survey within construction date ranges:

CONSTRUCTION DATE	NUMBER BUILT	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
1940+	3	4%
1920-1939	3	4%
1900-1919	32	39%
1880-1899	45	54%
before 1880	-0-	-0-

The Clay street 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 overlooking Frederick Avenue, the primary overland artery into St. Joseph from the east. However,

The survey area began a rapid development phase in the early 1880s concomitant with the boom experienced in the inner ring of neighborhoods on the hills overlooking the Central Business District. As in these neighborhoods the Clay street area was the province of the wealthy and near wealthy. The Clay street neighborhood is related to the development of the inner ring neighborhoods could may be viewed as a distortion of the ring development stretched in a linear fashion along the hill line overlooking Frederick Avenue. The building phase lasted some 35 years at which point it abruptly ceased as the impetus to new development moved further to the east in St. Joseph.

CHARACTERIZATION OF HISTORIC HOUSE TYPES IN THE SURVEY AREA

ITALIANATE

There are approximately half a dozen Italianate period houses in the survey area, all of which date to the 1880s. Most have been extensively altered through the years. The house at 1955 Clay street is the least altered [see #35], except for the ca. 1915 addition on the east elevation and facade porch. The house is two story brick with low truncated hip roof, projected and labeled window lintels with segmental shape and keystones--all typical Italianate features in St. Joseph. There is a small one story frame Italianate period house at 1850 Clay street which dates to ca. 1885. The strongest design feature is the rectangular bay on the facade gable wing [see #16].

QUEEN ANNE

The Queen Anne style is by far the dominant style in the survey area. There are several outstanding houses of the period built by St. Joseph's economic and social elite. Architecturally they stand out above the rest. The earliest is the McIntosh home built ca. 1885 with unusual offset wall gables and recessed pavillion bays executed in brick with a wealth of wood and brick ornament [see #37]. The Nave house at 2121 Clay street was built in 1889 in an eclectic Romanesque style sub-group [see #38], and is arguably one of the select group of exceptional houses in St. Joseph. The richly detail two story brick house with red clay tile roof sprawls over its multiple lot corner location. A huge carriage house dominates the rear of the lot.

More typical of the style in St. Joseph as built for the middle and upper middle classes is the Lutz house built in 1889 [#70] and the Scott house also built in 1889 [#68], the former of brick construction and the latter of brick construction. Both are two story with irregular plan shape and prominent gable wings. Also typical is the dominance of the facade porch which fills the facade and wraps around a side elevation on both houses.

The two story frame house at 625 BonTon built in 1899 is a good representative of a Queen Anne house as built for the more modest middle class. There is the standard irregular plan shape; gabled wings; and the all important richly detailed wrap around front porch [see #49]. The ca. 1910 late Queen Anne house at 519 N.20th [#39] is an example of the mix of styles sometimes found during the overlap of style periods--this house has definite Queen Anne features, but a shape more reminiscent of the increasingly popular Bungalow style.

Bungalows are rare in the survey area and surrounding section of the city, yet there are two examples in the survey area which are of exceptional architectural interest. The first is the 1906 house at 632 BonTon [#59] designed and built by local architect Rudolph Heim. The sweeping lines of the broad dormer are

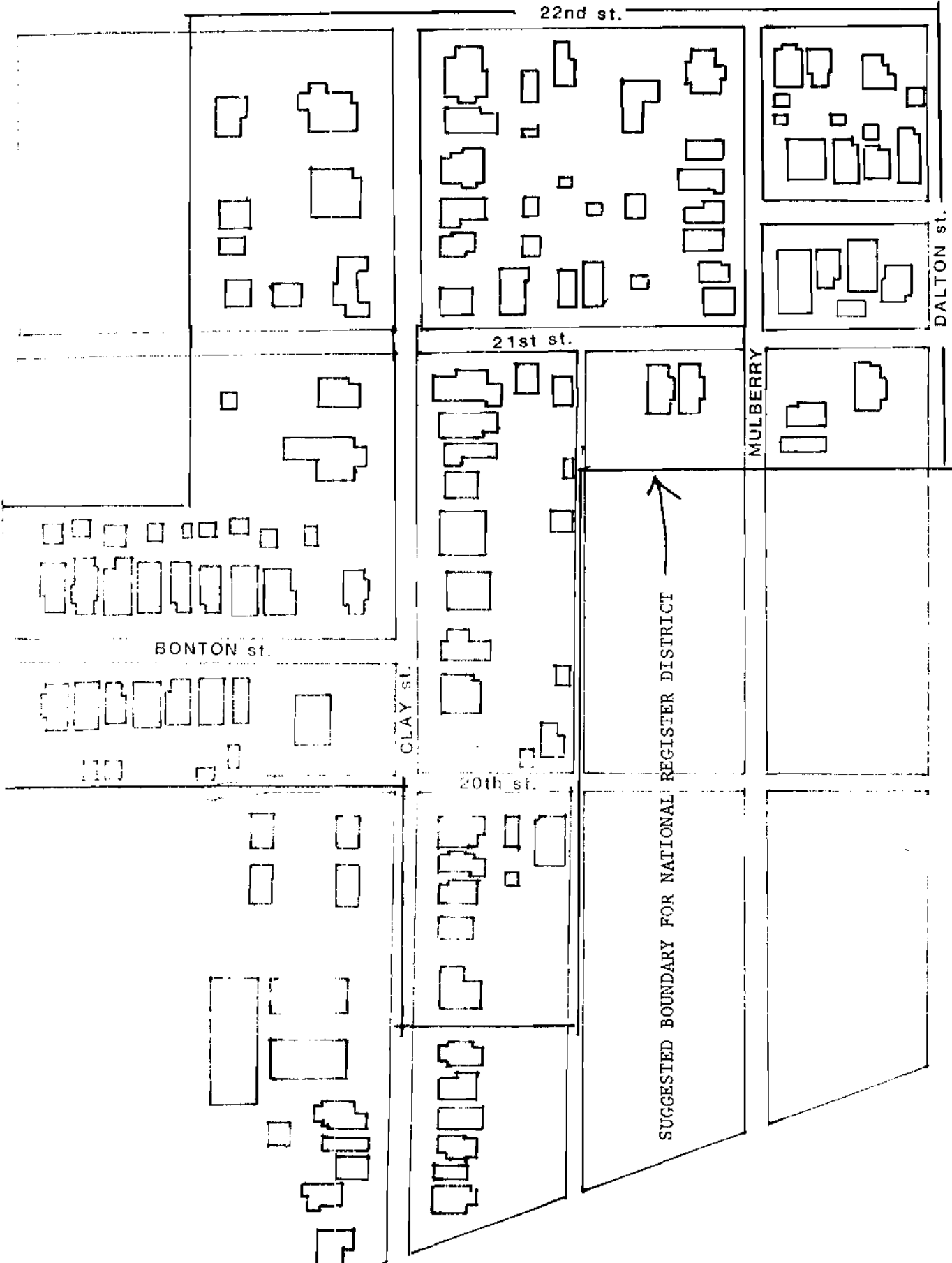
particularly notable. The second is a 1905 bungalow at 1912 Clay street with its sweeping roof line and prominent rock faced chimney and porch pillars.

The Neo-Classical influence was felt in the district during the first decade of this century. Perhaps the best example is the McCord House built in 1910 [#32]. Built of stucco faced tile construction with rectangle shape and strongly stated Classical design motifs with a severe symmetry. Likewise the Colonial Revival is represented in the district with one of the finest surviving houses in all of St. Joseph executed in this style. The 1900 David Bartlett house at 1923 Clay street [#34] dominates its portion of the street with an immense property fence, imposing pedimented and columned portico, behind which is a richly detailed fanlighted entry, consoled second story balcony flanked by well detailed Palladian style window boys.

An unusual house on the street is the 1899/1915 house at 1908 Clay street. First built as a two story frame Queen house in 1899 it was completely altered in 1915 as an Elizabethan Revival house with tile roof, half-timbered stucco exterior with elaborately mullioned windows [#14]. Another unusual house is the 'shotgun' plan house at 1808 Clay street with its gable to the street plan and well detailed Queen Anne porch on an otherwise unadorned house [#24].

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a National Register District within the survey area and it is recommended to proceed with its nomination. The boundary would include the entire survey area excepting the area on Clay street from the middle of the block on the south side between N.20th and Kemper Avenue and on the north side of Clay terminating at 20th street.



CLAY STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT