

Main Street Commercial District II Survey

Themis Street to Merriwether Street

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Conducted by
Students of the Historic Preservation Program
Southeast Missouri State University

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HP 588: Legal and Economic Principles of Historic Preservation
Dr. Steven J. Hoffman

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Students in the Legal and Economic Principles of Historic Preservation class (HP 588), under the guidance of Dr. Steven Hoffman, conducted an architectural survey of commercial buildings in the Main Street Historic Commercial District II in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.. The main purpose of this survey was to construct an inventory of the commercial buildings in the Riverfront District south of Themis Street for the Historic Preservation Commission of Cape Girardeau.

The area surveyed is bounded by Themis Street on the north, Spanish Street on the West, Water Street on the East, and extends along Main Street (but not Spanish Street) south to Merriwether Street.

The Main Street Commercial District II represents the multitude of businesses built in Cape Girardeau during the late nineteenth and up to the early twentieth centuries. This district contains various examples of historic commercial architecture. One and two part commercial buildings predominate. Despite the commercial growth of Cape Girardeau, and the alterations that have accompanied it, much of this historic commercial district retains its late 19th and 20th century sense of time and place.

Methodology

At the request of the Cape Girardeau Historic Preservation Commission, in the Spring of 2007, students in HP 588: Legal and Economic Principles of Historic Preservation extended their Historic Resource Survey to include the Main Street Historic Commercial District south of Themis Street in Cape Girardeau. The Commission asked the class to survey the area bounded by Themis Street on the north, Spanish Street on the West, Water Street on the East, and extends along Main Street (but not Spanish Street) south to Merriwether Street. Archival research and reconnaissance survey was utilized to survey, photograph, and inventory the buildings in this entire area. Due to the limited time available, only a reconnaissance level survey could be conducted by this class, which will assist the city in future Preservation Planning.

Students worked in teams of two each, with each team assigned ten to twenty buildings. Flyers were posted to inform business as well as homeowners of the survey. The students documented their assigned buildings which, included taking photographs, researching the history of the building with the use of property tax records, and filling out State of Missouri Historic Resource Survey forms based on observations of the building from the street.

This information was compiled, photocopied, and bound. One copy was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission of Cape Girardeau, one copy deposited in the Regional Archives of Southeast Missouri State University, and one copy retained by the Historic Preservation Program, Department of History, Southeast Missouri State University. Upon completion of the survey of the entire district, the original forms and photographs will be forwarded to the State Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources in Jefferson City, MO.



Themis

N. Spanish

Main Street

Water Street

Independence St.

S. Spanish

Merriwether

Main St.

William Street

R

0 50 100 200 Feet

Acknowledgments

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- ◇ District Property and Business owners for their cooperation and assistance.
- ◇ The staff of University Printing and Duplicating for their help duplicating and binding the final report.
- ◇ Employees of Cape Girardeau City Hall, especially Ms. Brenda Schloss, for providing assistance and maps of the survey area.
- ◇ Cape Girardeau Historic Preservation Commission for providing assistance and support for continuing survey work in Cape Girardeau.