

Survey Report



HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

Jefferson City, Missouri

**ZHA, Inc.
J. Dennis Wilson & Associates**

August, 1990

**SURVEY REPORT FOR
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI
CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The Survey Report for Jefferson City, Missouri has been prepared by ZHA, Inc./J. Dennis Wilson & Associates in order to summarize the methodology and findings of a comprehensive survey of downtown Jefferson City, Missouri conducted by the consultants beginning in September, 1989 and concluding in August, 1990.

This project was funded in part by the Historic Preservation office of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the City of Jefferson Planning Department. Assistance was given in the research and documentation phases of this project by the Cole County Historical Society, the Historic Preservation staff of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Planning Department of the City of Jefferson, the museum staff at the Lohmann's Landing state historical site, and the staff of the Missouri Historical Society. Particular thanks are due to Mr. Guy Barrett and Mrs. Elizabeth Rozier of the Cole County Historical Society, who provided invaluable assistance to the consultants and access to the collections of the Society.

The undertaking of a historic resources survey is an important step in the management of a city's historic built environment. The final survey conclusions provide an inventory of and information on significant properties that assists and encourages future historic preservation efforts and local and/or federal designation programs. The survey results will aid the city and state, as well as local preservation groups and other interested parties, in the development of a comprehensive preservation plan and provide the basis for any future National Register of Historic Places nominations or revisions.

SURVEY PRIORITIES

The local authorities and State Historic Preservation Office established a target survey area roughly bounded by the Missouri River on the north, McCarty Street on the south, Mulberry Street on the west and Adams Street on the east. A National Register nomination prepared in 1975 for the State Capitol District provides the basis for these further preservation planning efforts, which required expanding both the comprehensiveness of the survey information and development of historic contexts to which the resources are related.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Preparation of a Survey Plan, submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office in Autumn, 1989, summarized the methodological design of the project.

The entire land area within the survey project boundary was canvassed to locate structures built before 1945, although architecturally significant buildings dating to approximately 1955 were ultimately noted in the survey forms. The survey team located structures by walking each street and examining and recording structures in a systematic manner. For all properties, data was recorded for inclusion on individual Missouri Architectural/Historic Inventory Survey Forms. Information recorded included:

- * Building name and address
- * Estimated and/or actual construction date
- * Architect/Engineer
- * Building use
- * Architectural description codes and text
- * History and significance

Each property's original use dictated the typology of the building or structure. Property types identified in the Survey Plan developed at the beginning of the project were used to categorize resources ultimately identified in the survey.

Black-and-white photographs of each recorded resource were taken and 5x7 prints attached to completed survey forms. A key map locating each of the surveyed structures was prepared, using a numbering system that begins at the northeast corner of the survey area, noting surveyed structures in order along east/west oriented streets beginning with the streets' north sides, then south sides, then beginning in the survey area's northwest corner and noting properties along north/south oriented streets.

Research and evaluation was conducted by the professional team, relying on local historical organizations and individuals who provided already prepared or discovered documentation and historical information. Research resources included the Cole County Historical Society, the Cole County records, the Missouri State Library and local Thomas Jefferson Public Library, the Missouri State Preservation Office and Missouri Historical Society. Previously published materials, such as the 1975 National Register Historic District nomination and the 1970 downtown preservation plan for Jefferson City were also reviewed.

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

The Survey Plan phase of the project included development of historic contexts, the broad patterns of historical development within the community as represented by its historic resources. These broad cultural topics, expressed as historic contexts, were considered in the evaluation of each inventoried resource, as well as the survey area as a whole:

Early Settlement in Cole County and Jefferson City 1822 - 1860, The Railroad and Commercial Expansion 1860 - 1930, and Government and Politics 1822 - 1940.

Early Settlement in Cole County and Jefferson City 1822 - 1860. In 1820, the first Missouri legislature appointed a commission to identify an appropriate state capitol site, "within 40 miles of the mouth of the Osage" River, near the geographic center of the fledgling state. Competing real estate interests and boosters promoted several sites along the Missouri River, many of which were either deemed unsuitable due to fears of flooding or had clouded ownership titles.

The site finally selected, "Howard's Bluff" on the south bank of the river at Weir's Creek, was laid out as a townsite by the Commission in March of 1822, and an initial offering of 1,000 building lots was made soon after. The town site was officially named The City of Jefferson, in honor of the American President who was regarded as most responsible for the westward expansion of the nation. Thirty-one Cole County pioneer families were firmly established at Jefferson City by 1826, when the state legislature first met in the new capitol there.

Steamboats plying the Missouri River (26 in regular traffic by 1841) landed at Jefferson City and provided the principal means of transporting goods and people to and from the capital. Among the passengers were significant numbers of German immigrants, attracted to the central Missouri lands south of the river by reports of the area's rich resources and similarity to the Rhineland at home. The German settlers brought with them many social traditions and architectural and cultural influences that were markedly different from those of the Americans from the Upper South that had migrated to Missouri lands north of the river.

By 1860, the Pacific railroad had reached Jefferson City, and its terminus there, linked with steamboat traffic on west to Omaha, brought increased commercial importance and hope of prosperity to the community.

The Railroad and Commercial Expansion 1860 - 1930. The confused years of the Civil War saw the capital become the focus of considerable military and political activity as the pro-Union German and Yankee population south of the river and the pro-Confederate slave holders to the north vied for control of the state. Following the war, gradual expansion of Jefferson City's economy continued. Several railroads -- the Missouri Pacific, Missouri Kansas & Texas and the Chicago and Alton -- met at Jefferson City, and the Pacific railroad established shops and yards in the city.

Like most central Missouri counties, Cole County, established in 1820, flourished with an essentially agrarian economy. However, by the latter years of the 19th century, the Jefferson City area was characterized more by industrial and manufacturing enterprises, with coal and lead mining, timber exploitation and manufacturing of a variety of consumer goods prevalent.

The uncertainty brought by constant efforts on the part of other Missouri communities, most frequently Sedalia, to move the seat of state government to their cities, was noted by observers as a major obstacle to significant commercial investment in Jefferson City until after 1911. Thus, the town grew slowly, albeit taking advantage of its location nearly midway between Kansas City and St. Louis and its transportation opportunities of river and railroad.

The town's physical growth reflected the influence of the river trade and the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which ran along the river's edge. From the traditional boat landing area at the foot of Jefferson Street and the new, late 19th century railroad depot at the bottom of Monroe Street, commercial development expanded southward into the original townsite area, reaching the retail center of High Street, along the brow of the hill above the capitol and paralleling the river.

Following the fire in 1911 that destroyed the second state capitol, and the subsequent public decision that firmly laid to rest the issue of Jefferson City's continued role as the seat of Missouri government, the rate of industrial and manufacturing expansion increased. By 1938, the city was home to shoe and clothing factories, printing and publishing companies, breweries and milling enterprises, as well as expanded Missouri Pacific Railroad shops and yards. The town's population, increased from 11,800 in 1910 to 25,000 in 1930, for the most part lived outside the original boundaries of the townsite in newer annexed areas, while commercial and institutional users occupied the streets surrounding the capitol.

Government and Politics 1822 - 1940. While statewide debate about the preferred location of the capital raged on and off for decades after 1830, the Missouri state government continued to operate and expand in Jefferson City throughout the city's history. Three successive capitol buildings (the second significantly added to in the 1880s), state supreme court and various related offices and departments continued to see the need for new and expanded quarters.

Hotels and boardinghouses have, since the 1830s, been an important part of the built landscape in the city, serving not only commercial travelers but political ones as well. Strategically located mid-state, firmly between the major metropolitan centers of Kansas City and St. Louis, Jefferson City each legislative session saw the influx of elected officials, lobbyists and other political participants from throughout the state. The city became the temporary home of a political system which has been described as essentially conservative and rural-based. The capital's location in the rural heartland was symbolic of the outstate, conservative interests' ability to control state government and outmaneuver the metropolitan delegations. Much of the city's development reflects this regularly transient population.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey area actually consists of much of the original townsite of the City of Jefferson, as defined in its 1822 platting. Therefore, the entire developmental history of the city is reflected in the properties remaining within the survey boundaries. Scattered structures along the river's edge, which is defined by the multiple railroad tracks of the Missouri Pacific lines, give way to the denser, almost continuous streetwall of the High Street commercial core two blocks uphill to the south. Below the ridge, one block farther south, the density of remaining structures along the McCarty Street edge of the survey area suggest the beginnings of the detached, residential neighborhoods beyond.

Remnants of the earliest commercial development of the city, related to the steamboat era prior to 1860, are found along the river's edge on State/Water Street. These resources, including Lohman's Landing, the Union Hotel and the Christopher Maus House, along with the Israel Reed Building at 201 East High, are among the few remaining fragments of the pre-Civil War period in the core of Jefferson City. While the latter has been fairly well maintained in private hands, the former three properties are owned and managed by the State of Missouri, and exhibit a high degree of historic integrity, reflecting ongoing restoration and interpretation. These earliest remaining commercial structures reflect European architectural influences.

