

602-604 SOUTH NINTH STREET (HOUSE)
St. Joseph
Buchanan County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1884

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, NE 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

602-604 SOUTH NINTH STREET (HOUSE)

HABS No. MO-1884

Location: 602-604 South 9th Street
North half Lot 5, Block 2, Patee Addition
St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri

Present Owner: David A. LaFollette

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: This duplex residence, 602-604 South 9th Street, has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing property in a potential extension of the Museum Hill Historic District. Although it is vacant and deteriorated, the building retains sufficient integrity of design and association to demonstrate a sense of time and place and thus is significant as an element of the district.

The building is moderately significant as a relatively early example from the mid-nineteenth century of the vernacular Italianate duplex residential property type. The property type was described in the multiple-property context statement, "Historic Resources of St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri."

Duplexes are significant in the areas of commerce and architecture. The building type is a "noteworthy reflection of discretionary wealth, due to the booming economy, which was invested in real estate during St. Joseph's period of greatest expansion." Duplexes, such as 602-604 South 9th Street, are significant because of their historical association with the development forces which played a major role in shaping St. Joseph. The number and quality of duplexes found in St. Joseph are unique to this area. As illustrations of a distinctive type and/or style, many examples are also architecturally significant.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of erection: ca. 1865

Architect: Unknown

Original owner: Daniel A. Meadows

Historical context:

In July of 1843, Joseph Robidoux filed the town plat for St. Joseph with the Clerk of Common Pleas in St. Louis. Robidoux had operated a trading post at this location, where Blacksnake Creek joins the Missouri River, for several years. At first he was an employee of the American Fur Company, but in 1830 he purchased the company's goods and interest in the post and became sole proprietor. When the town plan was recorded in 1843, the population of the settlement was about 200 people. By December the population had increased to 500 as settlers learned of the establishment of a town.

The discovery of gold in California greatly benefitted St. Joseph. As the northern and westernmost point that could be reached by steamboat before embarking on the arduous overland trip, St. Joseph had an advantage over Independence, the settlement that had been the main point of departure for the Santa Fe Trail. The needs of outfitting the thousands of emigrants passing through St. Joseph led to the establishment of several outfitting and mercantile businesses. Many emigrants, in fact, chose to remain in St. Joseph to share in the fortunes that were being made. The population, which was 800 in 1846, had jumped to 3,460 by 1850. During the 1850s, nearby Fort Leavenworth was the general depot for the distribution of supplies to all forts throughout the west. Supplying the military was another lucrative economic opportunity which helped establish St. Joseph as a regional trade and outfitting center.

By 1860 the town grew to a population of 8,932 and citizens began to build residences in what was to become a more prestigious area--the hills overlooking the original town site near the Missouri River. Robidoux Hill to the north, Cathedral Hill to the northeast, and Museum Hill to the east were neighborhoods that were subdivided and developed after this time as the original town evolved into a commercial and industrial district. One more essential step in securing St. Joseph's prominence as a city and a major outfitter to the west was the completion of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad line in 1859. St. Joseph was the westernmost railroad terminus for more than ten years until the transcontinental Union Pacific railroad was completed through Omaha and Council Bluffs in 1869.

With the beginning of the Civil War, most business and construction in St. Joseph came to a halt. Residents were divided in their sympathies, as was much of Missouri, and United States troops occupied the town. Although St. Joseph served as a military supply and mobilization center, residents were not allowed to participate in this trade. Virtually no structures were built or improvements made to the town infrastructure during this period. In general the town declined, as evidenced by a decrease in population from approximately 10,000 in 1861 to 7,500 at the close of the war.

Prosperity returned quickly to St. Joseph after hostilities actually ended. By 1870 the population had increased to 19,565, more than twice that in 1860. In the late 1860s railroad construction connected St. Joseph to Council Bluffs and Kansas City and opened a new route to Chicago and the east. In the 1880s about ten railroads built lines to St. Joseph making important connections with St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago, Denver, and many other markets. The rail lines serviced the city center, yet skirted around it. The first depot was built south of the original river trade complex, as were several other passenger stations and freight depots. These rail lines slowly directed some of the city's growth south.

Commercial success, particularly in the wholesale distribution business, was predominant in the history of St. Joseph. With a national (and in some cases, international) reputation as a distribution center, the city progressed steadily from frontier days through the industrialization period to the early twentieth century, serving as one of the largest and most profitable commercial centers in the country. The city's location and transportation advantages earned it the name "Queen City of the West" by the 1880s. During this period the city's population continued to grow at a remarkable rate--to 32,431 in 1880 and 52,324 in 1890. The 1880s and 1890s became known as the "Golden Age" of St. Joseph.

Patee's Addition (now PENN Neighborhood)

The duplex residence at 602-604 South 9th Street is associated with the development of St. Joseph in the mid and late nineteenth century. When the property was determined to be eligible for the National Register November 27, 1989, it was considered architecturally significant as a contributing property in a potential extension of the proposed Museum Hill Historic District. Since then the deterioration of buildings in the area has continued and the Museum Hill District has been listed without including any properties in the area south of Messanie Street.

When the historic preservation survey of this area was performed in 1988, it became apparent that much of the neighborhood had been in a state of continuous decline for decades. Demolition of numerous buildings had resulted in gaps in the streetscape that diminished, at least in parts, the ambiance that historically was present. This decline was most obvious on 9th and 10th Streets. Overall, the survey area probably never was considered one of the more prominent or economically viable sections of St. Joseph.

Located in Patee's Addition, an amalgamation of four successive plats, this residence is typical of the modest single-family or multi-unit dwellings common in the area. In his inaugural speech of 1858 Mayor Jeff Thompson specified that a market be located in the south ward of the city for the convenience of the working class so it would be close to areas where land was affordable to them. This remark gives the impression that early in the city's history there was a trend toward a lower social/economic class neighborhood here than in the areas on the hills north of Messanie Street (i.e. Museum Hill, Cathedral Hill, Hall Street, and Robidoux Hill). By the early 1880s, industrial and commercial areas were well-established along the south and west periphery of Patee's Addition. This presence and the preference for housing on the higher land north and northeast of "Pateetown" by the more affluent citizens had a noticeable effect on the architectural character of this area.

The duplex at 602-604 South 9th Street was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century only four-and-a-half blocks north of the Patee Market. Also, the property was not far from the Union Railroad Depot at 6th and Mitchell Streets. The city's main passenger depot was completed in 1882, burned and rebuilt in 1895. It was the major structure in a sprawling railroad-industrial district west of 9th Street paralleling the Missouri River. Most of the residents of Patee's Addition had economic associations with this district as employees or business owners.

The Duplex Residence Property Type in St. Joseph

During the "Golden Age" in St. Joseph, the expansion of wholesale trade, banking, and manufacturing created wealth which was manifested in the construction of many large and elaborate residences during this period. There was also a large market for rental properties including modest single-family residences, duplexes, and apartment buildings. If the duplex was the owner's primary residence, it represented a vehicle by which an aspiring member of the middle class could afford a more elaborate home in a fashionable district. In Patee's Addition a more important factor was the fact that the city's burgeoning population put a strain on the existing housing stock and duplexes were a cost efficient way of providing residences for the growing middle class. Duplexes are significant in the areas of commerce and architecture for their historical associations with the development forces which shaped St. Joseph.

Duplexes were built for three primary reasons: to allow members of the same family to reside together in a fashionable district and still have affordable private quarters, to provide income for the owner living in one half of the structure (often a widow), or as a purely speculative and income-producing venture for its owner who resided in another building, frequently just next door. The wealth earned by those associated with wholesaling and related industries allowed them to invest in other areas of the local economy. Real estate was a favored form of investment in St. Joseph,

both directly through the construction of income-producing properties and indirectly through the large number of banks, building associations, and other financial institutions. To afford a speculative duplex required "discretionary" income on the part of the investor. Most large personal fortunes were established in St. Joseph after 1880, so most duplexes were constructed after that date.

The number and quality of duplexes found in St. Joseph are unique in the region. This property type is usually part of a district and has many of the stylistic features of the surrounding single-family homes. The majority of duplexes were two-story and constructed of brick, although there are isolated one-story and wood frame and weatherboard examples. They were generally on narrow lots, often with only a few feet between them and the structures on either side. All were built to conform to the surrounding neighborhood and have the same setback as the residences. This setback is often within ten feet of the property line.

To be architecturally significant, examples of this property type should retain integrity of association and location as well as design and materials. Facade arrangement and fenestration is especially important. The original roof shape and exterior building materials should remain intact. Architectural features characteristic of the Italianate style, most of which are evidenced in the property at 602-604 South 9th, include a one-story entrance porch with square posts, a low-pitched roof with overhanging eaves and decorative brackets, and tall narrow windows with elaborate or molded crowns.

Of the 194 contributing residential buildings in the survey area, 139 were single family dwellings, 46 were duplexes, and 9 were multi-family buildings. The largest group of residences (95) was constructed between 1891 and 1915. The next largest group (57) was constructed between 1865 and 1890, and another significant group (36) was constructed before 1865. In terms of style, the Italianate/Gothic Revival was relatively common with 26 single-family examples, 12 duplexes, and 1 multi-family example.

602-604 South 9th Street

According to the surveyor in 1988, the stylistic features of this building indicated an original construction date of ca. 1860. While that is possible, a more conservative assessment that is still consistent with the physical evidence would place the structure's construction in the period soon after the Civil War when the city began to grow and prosper once again. The building was recorded in the earliest Sanborn map of the city published in 1883, so the property was constructed before city building permits were required beginning in 1886.

It appears that the property owner was Daniel A. Meadows. He received a building permit May 7, 1892 for construction of an "open wood shed" (\$100) on the property. Later in 1899 Mrs. Verona E. Meadows, widow of D.A., was listed as the resident at 602 North 9th in the north half of the duplex. Daniel Meadows was a partner with Fountain L. Maupin in the Maupin and Meadows livery stable from ca. 1883 until 1893. The stable was located at 522-524 South 5th Street. D.A. Meadows lived at the same location, probably above the stable, in 1883. Apparently, he died about ten years later, because in the 1894 directory J. T. Meadows (a son?) was listed as the partner with Maupin in the stable. Another building permit was issued November 12, 1909 to Meadows (no first name recorded) for minor residential repairs or remodeling (\$50). More extensive research in the manuscript census schedules would be necessary to determine the Meadows family structure and origins.

Since he was never recorded as a resident, it appears that Daniel Meadows had this duplex constructed as an investment and income property close to his place of business. Besides the widow Meadows, those listed in 1899 as residing in the south half of the duplex structure were Nellie Smith, a clerk at the B.F. Herr department store, and Charles Beems, proprietor of a saloon at 421 South 6th Street. Thus the owners and residents of this property were associated with business activity in the city's central business district and the railroad-industrial district to the south.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The duplex residence located at 602-604 South 9th Street has moderate significance as a contributing building in a potential extension of a proposed historic district. Constructed ca. 1870, this structure is a relatively early example of the duplex residential property type. It has architectural features characteristic of the vernacular Italianate style.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor (to be demolished). The building is vacant and deteriorated due to neglect. Where the roof has failed in the rear, there are noticeable cracks and missing bricks.

B. Summary Description:

602-604 South 9th Street

This is a two-story brick masonry building with a low hipped roof, cruciform plan, and recessed side entrances. There is a one-story rear wing with a hipped roof. The building is approximately 55 feet long from east to west and 40 feet wide from north to south. It has a basement and brick foundation. The brick walls are laid in running bond. There are two small one-story front entry porches on each side. These porches have ornamental frieze boards and are supported on square chamfered wooden posts. The porches have modern concrete decks. In the rear ell to the northwest, there is a two-story shed porch with turned posts and an open railing on the first floor and modern square posts and open railing on the second floor. This porch has a concrete deck. In the ell to the southwest, there is a one story shed porch supported on a turned post.

There are central interior brick chimneys on either side of the main block and a large end chimney in the rear wing. The rear chimney has been parged. The front entrances have segmental arched brick lintels, transoms, and glazed wooden doors with wooden screen doors. Window openings have arched heads and smooth-cut stone sills. Most of the windows have 1/1 double-hung sash, but there are some original 4/4 sash in the south unit. Three openings in the north wall have been filled with recessed brick. The main block has a low hipped roof covered with deteriorated asphalt shingles. The rear wing has a hipped roof covered with roll roofing. The wooden eaves are deteriorated with rotten sections in the front corners and rear center. A crown molding ornaments the eave.

Interior

Both units of this duplex residential building have identical mirror-image interior plans. There are front and rear entrances in the projecting ell. In the main block on the first floor, there is a front parlor, parlor, bathroom, and dining room. The bathroom appears to be a historical alteration. The second floor hall and stairway is located above the bathroom next to the exterior wall. Another early bathroom remains in the second floor of the south unit above the stair; it has a beaded board and batten door. Kitchens are located in the rear wing; the kitchen to the north has a hatch entrance in the floor leading to the basement. The interiors of both units have been recently altered with unsystematic results. The second floor has been subdivided with modern kitchens and bathrooms installed.

The stairs have turned spindles and a molded handrail. There is wooden tongue and grooved flooring, probably pine, throughout the building. The walls and ceilings are lath and plaster in deteriorated condition. There are original wooden raised four-panel doors in most openings. Passage doorways have overhead transoms. In the south unit the opening between parlors has been altered with Craftsman style tapered posts and built-in cabinets. Generally, the windows have arched heads. In the parlors where historic moldings remain, there is a molded baseboard with a crown molding cap. The door and window casings are built-up with a projecting molding. However, in the rooms to the rear and on the second floor, the woodwork is unornamented.

C. Site

This property is located on a major north-south street in a neighborhood with numerous deteriorated buildings and vacant lots. The neighborhood is situated between the historic commercial-industrial district to the west near the Missouri River and residential developments to the east on higher land.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Bibliography:

Building Permit file: North half Lot 5, Block 2, Patee Addition.

Sanborn Insurance Company maps: 1883, 1888, 1911.

St. Joseph City Directories: 1869-70, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1899.

Winder, Mary Jo. "PENN Neighborhood Survey Report" (July, 1988). Prepared for the City of St. Joseph Community Development Department, Landmark Commission, and the Missouri Historic Preservation Program.

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Prepared by: Dale E. Nimz
Associate Planner for Historic Preservation
City of St. Joseph Community Development Department
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