

Columbus Near East Side Historic District  
Bounded by I-71 on the west, East Broad  
Street on the north, the Norfolk and  
Western Railroad on the east, and East  
Main Street on the south  
Columbus  
Franklin County  
Ohio

HABS No. OH-654

HABS  
0410,  
25-COLB,  
8-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
OHIO  
25-COLB  
8-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

COLUMBUS NEAR EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT HABS No. OH-654

- Location: Bounded roughly by I-71 on the west, East Broad Street on the north, the Norfolk and Western Railroad right-of-way on the east and East Main Street on the south, Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio.
- Present Owner: Multiple-public and private
- Present Use: Commercial, educational, park, private, residential, religious
- Significance: The district represents the range of architectural styles prevalent in affluent Columbus residential areas from the 1880s through the 1930s.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

The Near East Side Historic District is a large residential area located immediately east of downtown Columbus. The district is bounded roughly by East Broad Street on the north, railroad right of way on the east, East Main Street on the south and I-71 on the west. These boundaries measure 1.6 miles on the north, .7 on the east, 1.7 on the south and .3 on the west. Franklin Park, located in the northeast portion of the district, covers nearly 100 acres. The six principal streets which extend east-west through the district are Madison Avenue, Fair Avenue, Oak Street, Franklin Avenue, Bryden Road and Rich Street.

Parsons Avenue, which is now the westernmost north-south street, was originally called East Public Lane and until the 1860s served as the city's eastern boundary; all land to the east was still farmland. Only the Parsons Mansion stood at the end of a farm lane that would become Town Street. Town Street, which becomes Bryden Road at Parsons Avenue, takes a jog at Parsons because of the mansion, which stood until 1946. Public Lane was renamed Parsons Avenue in 1872, and by 1889 houses were being erected in great numbers.

In 1876 a street railroad which remained functional well into the twentieth century was installed on Oak Street to carry passengers from the downtown to the new residential areas. By 1899 the area east to Miller Avenue was heavily developed. By 1920 development had accelerated so that all the area to the Norfolk and Western railroad right of way was fully occupied. This push eastward had been prompted by the coming of the automobile. Most of the large and

opulent homes in the western part of the district were left behind in the flight to the newly fashionable suburbs. Franklin Park, originally the Franklin County Fairgrounds, had been a considerable carriage ride from the city. In 1882 the Columbus Electric Trolley Car Barns were constructed nearby and by 1910 the area subdivided for dwellings.

During the years after World War I the neighborhood gradually declined in importance, and in the early 1960s construction of I-71 separated the area from the downtown to the west.

After years of gradual decline community groups are now working to restore the neighborhood in cooperation with the City.

#### B. Historical Context

The Columbus Near East Side Historic District emerged in the late nineteenth century as Columbus' most fashionable residential area. The newly affluent and predominantly Jewish upper class built eclectic, stylish residences on farmland where, prior to 1880, only a few brick farmhouses had been located. After World War I rapid growth pushed development eastward. However the construction of freeways to the west and south isolated the area, discouraging interest in the neighborhood. The district reached its nadir in the 1960s. Many single family structures were converted for use as institutions, apartments and rooming houses.

Many prominent families resided in the area during its heyday: the Deshlers (the district was originally platted as part of the Deshler-Sinks subdivision), Huntington (Huntington National Bank), Wolfe (the Wolfe family controls the local media conglomerate), and Lazarus (the Lazarus Department Store is now part of Federated Department Stores). Another famous Columbus family is associated with a Richardsonian Romanesque building in the district: George Bellows, Sr. was the architect for the old First Methodist Church on Bryden Road, which was dedicated in 1900. It contains a memorial window designed by George Bellows, Jr. Charles Frederick Myers, a German immigrant who founded the U.S. Carriage Company built his showcase mansion in 1896 to resemble a castle in his homeland. Florence Kenyon Haydon Rector, one of Ohio's first women architects, designed and occupied a home on Franklin Avenue. J.W. Yost, a partner in the prominent Columbus firm of Yost and Packard, occupied a home which he designed at 1216 Bryden Road. Yost and Packard were responsible for a number of late nineteenth century courthouses, schools, institutions, commercial buildings and residences across the Midwest. While the birthplace of James Thurber at 251 Parsons Avenue has been demolished, the neighborhood is commemorated in his writings. The 1884 Italianate home of Thurber's grandfather William M. Fisher, a commission merchant, still stands.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Columbus Near East Side Historic District contains an extensive collection of those styles favored by the newly affluent and predominantly Jewish upper middle class from the 1880s to 1930s. In the late nineteenth century, examples of the Queen Anne, Italianate and Second Empire styles are prevalent. The homes are large in scale and employ primarily brick and stone as building materials. Slate roofs are very common. Recurring architectural features include carved hoodmolds, oriel windows, towers, iron cresting, stained glass, stone carving and ornate front porches. The most elaborate residences are clustered along Bryden Road. This street along with East Town and East Broad were the city's best residential streets where the affluent chose to demonstrate their wealth. Modest vernacular residences can be found on adjacent streets, but even these are generally 2 1/2 stories tall and are built of brick and stone. Occupied by the professionals of the middle class, the houses are less ornamented versions of their high style neighbors.

In those areas that developed between 1910 and 1930, the foursquare, Colonial Revival and Craftsman bungalow modes were popular. Lots become more spacious, but the same building materials are employed.

Many imposing institutional buildings are located in the district. The Fair Avenue Public School, designed by well-known Columbus architect Frank Packard, was built in 1890 and is one of the city's best examples of the Romanesque Revival style. Engine House #12 was built in 1880 at a location on the north side of Oak Street east of its intersection with Parsons Avenue in order to service the newly developing neighborhood. The largest and most elaborate institutional building is the Ohio Asylum for the Blind, built between 1869 and 1874 in the French Second Empire Style. A massive four-story plus mansard sandstone building, the institution forms a large E adjacent to Parsons Avenue. The plain walls are laid in random ashlar with smooth-finished stone forming corner quoins and window frames. Since the 1950s, the building has served as the headquarters for the Ohio Department of Highway Safety.

Small commercial buildings are located along Parsons Avenue between East Broad Street and Bryden Road and at intersections along Oak Street. They are generally small scale brick structures with minimal ornamentation ranging in style from the Italianate to the Tudor Revival; however, most were built around the turn of the century. They use vernacular forms with very little decoration; if decoration does occur, it is usually located at the cornice, parapet or at window openings.

Other building types that are represented in the district are carriage houses, rowhouses and apartment buildings. Again brick is the preferred material. Carriage houses vary from one to two stories and can sometimes be quite elaborate. Late nineteenth century rowhouses, which are two stories in height, repeat many of the decorative elements of single family residences. However, early twentieth century rowhouses are relatively plain and generally have parapet roofs. Apartment buildings are generally two to three stories and vary from plain vernacular to elaborate Tudor Revival.

Because the area had been isolated by interstate construction, new construction has been minimal. The area has suffered more from inappropriate alterations, demolition and neglect.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Arter, Bill. Columbus Vignettes. Columbus: Nida - Eckstein Printing, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971 (4 volumes).

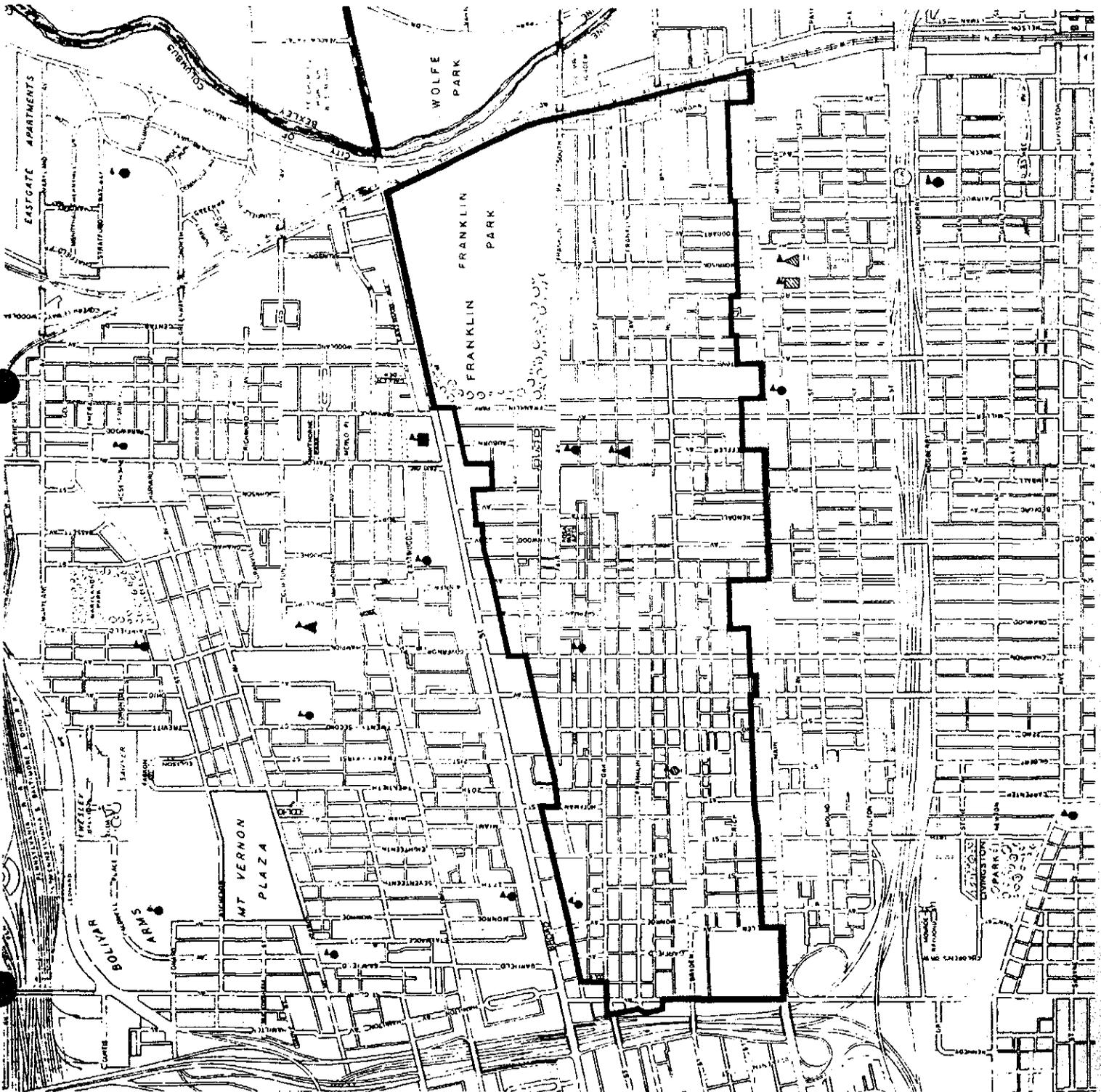
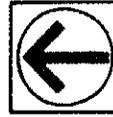
Baist, William G. Baist's Property Atlas of the City of Columbus. Philadelphia: G. William Baist, 1819 and 1910.

Bryden Road Land Use Study. Columbus: Ohio Department of Transportation, July 1976.

Bland, Art, Pam Unger and Fred Mayer. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Columbus Near East Side Historic District. Columbus: Olde Towne East Development Association, September 1976.

Samuelson, Robert. Architecture Columbus. Columbus: The Foundation of the Columbus Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, 1976.

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Jobs Development Department  
September 28, 1984



Individual structures in the Columbus Near East Side Historic District have been entered in the HABS collection under separate HABS numbers. The structures documented as of May 13, 1985 are listed below. Structures documented by HABS after this date will be identified by address only.

OH-668 250-252 Kelton Avenue (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 9-  
OH-669 1156-1158 East Rich Street (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 10-  
OH-670 1326-1328 Fair Avenue (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 11-  
OH-671 29 South Monroe Avenue (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 12-  
OH-672 168-170 Latta Avenue (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 13-  
OH-673 1310 Oak Street (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 15-  
OH-674 270 South 21st Street (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 19-  
OH-675 1600 East Rich Street (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 22-  
OH-677 1566-1568 Franklin Avenue (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 21-  
OH-679 1092 Franklin Avenue (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 20-  
OH-680 158 Linwood Avenue (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 23-  
OH-681 347-349 Loeffler Avenue (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 24-  
OH-682 361 Loeffler Avenue (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 25-  
OH-683 1372-1374 Oak Street (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 16-  
OH-684 1540-1542 Oak Street (Houses) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 18-  
OH-685 212 South Ohio Avenue (House) HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 26-  
OH-687 The Boylston, 1228 East Main Street HABS OHIO, 25-COLB, 28-