

The [City of Cape Girardeau Historic Preservation Commission](#) recently approved its Endangered Buildings list below.



#### BROADWAY THEATER – 805 BROADWAY

In its heyday, the Broadway Theater was associated with both Twentieth-Century Fox and Paramount Pictures. It originally opened with a showing of the motion picture *The Sheik*, starring Rudolph Valentino. It was first-rate, with state-of-the-art equipment, an orchestra pit, stage facilities, and a grand marquee. The main floor and the balcony had a total seating capacity for 1,200 persons. Today, the 1921 theatre stands vacant, and the marquee is long gone. The building has not had a viable use for several years, and is showing signs of deterioration.

#### ESQUIRE THEATER – 824 BROADWAY

On its opening night of January 21, 1947, over 1,300 movie goers flocked to this modernistic movie theater to watch Bing Crosby in *Blue Skies*. Featuring an Art Deco design (with over one mile of neon lights), the theater quickly became a landmark to many locals. Its doors closed in October of 1984, the last of the grand neighborhood movie houses in Cape Girardeau. The theater was re-opened briefly for second-run movies, but by the end of

1985 it had again become vacant. The building, including the marquee, has been damaged over the years. The theater was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

#### FORT D BLOCKHOUSE – 920 FORT STREET

The block building located on the Fort D historic site was built by the Works Progress Administration around 1936. It was used as a meeting house for various groups and also as a private residence, but by the mid 1980's the building stood vacant. In 2005, the deteriorated roof was removed and major stabilization improvements were made. Today, the building is used annually as part of Civil War living history demonstrations by the Friends of Fort D. Aside from such events, the building is rarely utilized and is showing signs of disrepair. The Cape Girardeau City Council approved funding to repair the blockhouse, including construction of a new roof. At the time of release of this list, work had not yet commenced.

#### LORIMIER APARTMENTS – 150 SOUTH LORIMIER STREET

This two-story brick apartment building was built in 1925 and features a U-shaped floor plan with a courtyard. The building features wood doors and eight-over-one wood windows in each bay. The building is no longer occupied, and many of the doors and windows have been boarded over. The apartment building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010.

#### P.H. DEMPSEY BUILDINGS – 127 NORTH WATER STREET

127 North Water Street consists of three attached one-part and two-part brick commercial block buildings that once housed P.H. Dempsey's wholesale and retail grocery business. Built ca. 1870 and ca. 1896, these buildings were used as a grocery, commissary, and forwarding business by Mr. Dempsey. The store occupied the central building, with warehouses in the other two buildings. Their intact architectural elements represent a type of construction from the steamboat era. They are among the last standing 19th century one-part and two-part brick commercial block buildings in Cape Girardeau. "Dempsey Grocery Co." can still be seen painted in white on the side of the central building. A restaurant and bar occupied the buildings in recent years. Today, they are vacant and lacking a viable use.

#### WOOLWORTH'S STORE – 1 NORTH MAIN STREET



The building at 1 North Main Street is the end cap of a block of storefront buildings in the downtown district. The building has changed looks and owners many times over the years. The building gained historic significance in 1914, when F.W. Woolworth's original store was opened. In 1950, the store expanded and when it was completed, the building extended the width of the entire block and had openings on Main, Spanish, and Independence Streets. This expansion reflected a surge in commercial shopping activity in the downtown district. The building is now vacant and deteriorating, with no apparent plans for its future.

#### 635 GOOD HOPE STREET

Located at the southeast corner of Good Hope and South Sprigg Streets, this ca. 1884 building served as a German saloon from the 1880's through the 1910's and was one of the first saloons in Cape Girardeau to cease liquor sales during the Prohibition era. Throughout the 1920's and 30's, it functioned as a gathering place for community discussion, much as it had when it was a saloon. It eventually became the official meeting site of the local German American Alliance as well as several local unions related to the construction industry in Cape Girardeau. The saloon itself was owned by Anton and Joe Haas, two important figures in the development of Cape Girardeau. The brothers were involved in the construction of the old Saint Francis Hospital and Saint Mary's School, among others. In addition, Anton's concrete company was responsible for the pouring of the courthouse steps – one of the earliest uses of concrete in Cape Girardeau. The building, along with others on the same block, shows signs of structural degradation, among other issues. It is partially occupied at the moment, but if major stabilization work is not made soon, the building may become uninhabitable.

#### 127 SOUTH LORIMIER STREET

The brick house at 127 South Lorimier Street reflects the Missouri German Vernacular style, which was once prevalent in Cape Girardeau. Unlike most houses of this style, it features two stories. The house, now vacant, shows significant deterioration.

## 112-114 NORTH MAIN STREET

Constructed in 1880, this three-story structure contains two recessed storefronts and exemplifies the mixed-use character of Cape Girardeau's downtown buildings. The upper floors have been used as apartments. Several of the building's historic elements remain, including the "hood" arches over the windows, the mansard roof, and the brackets under the eave. The exterior of the vacant building is deteriorating, particularly the area above the storefronts, which shows evidence of moisture damage.

## 230 NORTH MIDDLE STREET

This unique residence was built as a duplex and features elements of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, including decorative brick arches and quoins, and terra cotta shingles. Although it has retained its historic and architectural integrity over the years, it is vacant and vulnerable to vandalism, as evidenced by the broken windows.

## 513 WILLIAM STREET

This Queen Anne style house dates to 1914 and represents an architectural style that was popular during Cape Girardeau's boom period from 1880-1950. The vacant house has been neglected over the years, leading to structural failures and other damage. It has been condemned by the City and is likely to be demolished.

## 818 NORTH FOUNTAIN STREET

The original portion of this house was built ca. 1860 as a log cabin. It is believed the cabin's builder was Franz Schmidt, who served as a blacksmith during the Civil War. The cabin, made from mud-and-straw daub covered logs with notched joints, had a full stucco exterior – a German vernacular technique – which was rare among log structures of the period. Less than a decade later, a German vernacular addition was constructed, which wrapped two sides of the cabin, and the entire structure sided with clapboard. The house, now vacant, is deteriorating rapidly. It was condemned by the City in 2011. A group of volunteers was organized with the hopes of saving the cabin, but little progress has been made except for removing a portion of the exterior to expose the log construction.

## 412 ASHER STREET

This small brick house was built in the Missouri German Vernacular style. It features a side gable and a centered door with a transom, flanked by pairs of two-over-two vertical light double hung windows. The house, which is currently vacant, shows signs of early deterioration in the walls, foundation, windows, and roof. Given its proximity to the expanding River Campus, the future of the house is uncertain.

## Updates – Removed from the List

### *STURDIVANT BANK – 101 NORTH MAIN STREET*



*Built in the mid-to-late 1800's, this multi-story, brick storefront building was originally owned by banker Robert Sturdivant. The bank occupied the ground floor, with other offices on the upper floors. One of the offices on the second floor housed Cape Girardeau's first telephone company and switchboard in 1896. The bank closed in 1932 during the Great Depression. Thereafter, the building was occupied by various retailers until the City condemned it in late 2011 due to structural failures. It has since been repaired and stabilized, and the ground floor is occupied by a formal wear store. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.*

### *15 SOUTH FREDERICK STREET*

*This one-and-a-half story Missouri German Vernacular house (ca. 1882) had a side gable with a center front gable wall dormer, emulating Queen Ann fishscale shingles, and a symmetrical façade containing two front doors with transoms, flanked by pairs of two-over-two vertical light double hung windows. It was vacant and neglected for many years, leading to substantial deterioration and vagrancy. The house was demolished last year.*

## Watch List

### *BUCKNER – RAGSDALE BUILDING – 132 NORTH MAIN STREET*

*This two-story brick building at the southeast corner of Broadway and Main Street originally served as the home of the Buckner-Ragsdale Company, starting in 1916. The clothing company*

*played a major role in Cape Girardeau's economic growth period from 1910 to 1940. During the Great Depression, the company extended credit to customers who were experiencing financial hardship. The building was constructed using steel-reinforced concrete, which has helped it survive two major fires. The building was most recently occupied by Buckner Brewing Company. It has been vacant since last year. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.*

#### *KAGE SCHOOL – 3110 KAGE ROAD*

*Opened in 1880, this one-room brick schoolhouse once housed classes for as many as 110 students. It was used as a school until 1966. Since that time, the vacant building has suffered significant damage to the walls, chimney, and windows. The property was recently sold, and the schoolhouse is being rehabilitated for use as a two-bedroom home. The building exhibits characteristics of the Missouri German Vernacular style. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.*

#### *REYNOLDS HOUSE – 623 NORTH MAIN STREET*

*This French Colonial and Georgian style house was built ca. 1857 and was designed by architect Edwin Branch Deane, who designed several homes in Cape Girardeau. The house is named after James Reynolds, who operated a steam mill on the Mississippi River. The house remained in the Reynolds family ownership until the 1940's. At the time the Isle Casino development was approved by the City, a private foundation was formed with intentions to rehabilitate the house and use it as a venue for group gatherings and educational functions. To date, the house remains vacant and no improvements have been made. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 and designated a Local Historic Landmark by the City of Cape Girardeau in 1996.*