

= Old Louisville =

Old Louisville is a historic district and neighborhood in central Louisville , Kentucky , USA . It is the third largest such district in the United States , and the largest preservation district featuring almost entirely Victorian architecture . It is also unique in that a majority of its structures are made of brick , and the neighborhood contains the highest concentration of residential homes with stained glass windows in the U.S. Many of the buildings are in the Victorian @-@ era styles of Romanesque , Queen Anne , Italianate , among others ; and a large number of blocks have had few or no buildings razed . There are also several 20th @-@ century buildings from 15 to 20 stories .

Old Louisville consists of about 48 city blocks and is located north of the University of Louisville 's main campus and south of Broadway and Downtown Louisville , in the central portion of the modern city . The neighborhood hosts the renowned St. James Court Art Show on the first weekend in October .

Despite its name , Old Louisville was actually built as a suburb of Louisville starting in the 1870s , nearly a century after Louisville was founded . It was initially called the Southern Extension , and the name Old Louisville did not come until the 1960s . Old Louisville was initially home to some of Louisville 's wealthiest residents , but saw a decline in the early and mid @-@ 20th century . Following revitalization efforts and gentrification , Old Louisville is currently home to a diverse population with a high concentration of students and young professionals .

= = History = =

Old Louisville is not actually the oldest part of Louisville . In fact , large @-@ scale development south of Broadway did not begin until the 1870s , nearly a century after what is now Downtown Louisville was first settled . The area was initially part of three different military land grants issued in 1773 , and throughout the early and mid @-@ 19th century the land passed through the hands of several speculators , meanwhile much of it was used as farmland . Some of the land south of Broadway was still in its natural state during this time , such as the 50 @-@ acre (200 @,@ 000 m²) tract between Broadway and Breckenridge , known as Jacob 's Woods , a popular picnic ground as late as 1845 . A major attraction was Oakland Race Track , near today 's Seventh and Ormsby , built in 1839 and an early forerunner to Churchill Downs .

Country estates had been built in the area as early as the 1830s , and some of Louisville 's great early mansions , predominantly in the Italianate style , were built along Broadway , very near Old Louisville , before the Civil War . Development from 1850 to 1870 occurred between Broadway and Kentucky Street , the northern extreme of what came to be called Old Louisville . North @-@ south city streets were extended throughout the area in the 1850s , and a mulecar line was extended down Fourth to Oak in 1865 .

The land south of Broadway that became Old Louisville was annexed by the city in 1868 , as a part of larger expansion efforts . This annexation moved the southern boundary of the city as far south as the city 's House of Refuge , an area which is now the University of Louisville campus and the southern border of Old Louisville . A year later , architect Gideon Shryock called the area " a growing and beautiful suburban locality " . By 1876 about a quarter of the area was occupied .

Development continued as lots were sold southward to present day Oak Street , about a third of the way between Broadway and the House of Refuge . The principal road through the suburb at this time was Central Plank Road , which became Third Street . The emerging area was called the Southern Extension by this time . Growth south of Oak was very slow until the Southern Exposition was held annually in the area from 1883 to 1887 .

At the urging of Courier @-@ Journal editor Henry Watterson , the city held the Southern Exposition , which in the words of Watterson , was meant to " advance the material welfare of the producing classes of the South and West . " It was held on 45 acres (180 @,@ 000 m²) at the heart of Old Louisville , where St. James Court and Central Park (originally Dupont Square) would eventually be located , and included a 600 by 900 @-@ foot (270 m) enclosed exhibition building . The Exposition was opened by President Chester Arthur and attracted nearly one million visitors in

its first year . The exhibition featured the first public display of Thomas Edison 's light bulb , as well as what was billed as the largest artificial lighting display in history with 4 @,@ 600 lamps , in a time when electric lighting was considered a novelty .

During the 1880s , after the exposition ended , the area between Oak and Hill Streets rapidly developed and became one of the city 's most fashionable neighborhoods . According to historian Young E. Allison , 260 homes valued at a total of \$ 1 @.@ 6 million were constructed in Old Louisville from 1883 to 1886 . The dominant styles by this time were Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque . An example of the latter , which was known for its turrets , towers and bay windows , was the Conrad house at St. James Court .

These styles became less prevalent in the 1890s as the remaining southern portions of Old Louisville , between Ormsby and the House of refuge , were filled in , predominantly with buildings in the Chateausque and Renaissance Revival styles . This included one of Old Louisville 's most famous sections , St. James Court , developed starting in 1890 and envisioned as a haven for the upper class , and was completely occupied by 1905 . Described as " the epitome of Victorian eclecticism " , the area included houses in such styles as Venetian , Colonial , Gothic and others .

From 1890 to 1905 the area was home to the Amphitheatre Auditorium , which claimed the second largest stage in the United States and showcased many of the day 's best actors . The structure , located at the corner of 4th and Hill Streets , was razed after its owner , William Norton , Jr . , died . Another form of entertainment in the area was baseball , with the game first being played by 1860 and an early ballpark at Fourth and Ormsby emerging after the Civil War . By 1875 , a new park had been built near St. James Court .

Old Louisville is also home to the Ferguson Mansion , built by Edwin Hite Ferguson . Ferguson commissioned the Louisville architectural firm of Cobb and Dodd ? the same firm responsible for designing the Seelbach Hotel and the new capitol building in Frankfort ? to design his home in 1901 . Construction of the mansion took four years (1901 ? 1905) and cost \$ 100 @,@ 000 , which was approximately ten times the cost of the neighboring Victorian homes . At the time , the mansion was the most expensive home in Louisville . In the 1920s , the Fergusons sold the home to the Pearson family , and it served as the Pearson Funeral Home until the mid @-@ 1970s . The house also provided the headquarters for John Y. Brown , Jr . ' s successful 1979 gubernatorial campaign . In 1986 , the mansion became the headquarters of The Filson Historical Society .

In its peak in the late 19th century , Old Louisville was the center of Louisville 's social life , with nearly all persons listed in the Society Directory of Louisville having Old Louisville addresses . The directory even listed the reception days and hours of Old Louisville 's leading ladies , which varied by street , such as Tuesdays on Fourth Street or Thursdays on Second .

= = = Decline = = =

The area gradually declined as the affluent moved to newer streetcar suburbs , such as Cherokee Triangle , or built estates in areas east of Louisville recently connected by railroad , such as Anchorage and Glenview . Accelerated by the Great Depression , many of the large homes in Old Louisville were converted to boarding houses during the 1930s . The Ohio River flood of 1937 caused a great number of the remaining wealthy households to move above the flood plain .

The gradual abandonment of Old Louisville by the wealthy was a reflection of changing lifestyles brought on by technology . Many homes of Old Louisville were originally built as mansions that would require several servants to maintain . Because of the relatively high wages offered by manufacturing jobs , servants were no longer affordable to all but the wealthiest families by the mid @-@ 20th century . Interurban rail lines , and increasingly automobiles , meant that the wealthy no longer had to live so close to their businesses , and many chose to live in what had previously been summer homes in the county 's east end . The lifestyle that created Old Louisville was effectively obsolete .

During the years between World War I and World War II , many of the old mansions were hastily converted into apartments to house the growing labor supply , a practice encouraged by the federal government at the time through low @-@ interest loans . However , after World War II , with the

housing shortage solved by large @-@ scale suburban development affordable to the middle class , vacancy rates in Old Louisville surged . To attract renters , landlords had to lower rents dramatically , attracting less affluent tenants with less funds to maintain the homes .

A large section of the neighborhood , from around Kentucky Street to Broadway , was razed . Many buildings south of Lee Street , and nearly all south of Avery Street (renamed Cardinal Boulevard) were razed for the construction of Noe Middle School , expansions to Manual High School and a major expansion of the University of Louisville , as well as to expand local industry east of Floyd Street . From 1965 to 1971 , 639 buildings were razed as a part of this effort . However , the plan did spur the restoration of over 100 buildings in other parts of Old Louisville .

During the 1960s many low income residents downtown who were displaced as a result of urban renewal moved into the newly converted apartments , especially on the north side of the neighborhood . The area was now considered drug ridden and undesirable by most Louisvillians . The very term Old Louisville , first becoming associated with the area in the 1940s , had mostly negative connotations initially , as historian Samuel W. Thomas put it , " In an Era where architectural styles were changing dramatically , old meant out of fashion " .

= = = Revitalization = = =

One of the first to take an active role in preserving and revitalizing Old Louisville was Courier @-@ Journal writer J. Douglass Nunn . In 1960 he began a vigorous public information campaign concerning the area . Nunn compared it to neighborhoods like D.C. ' s Georgetown and Boston ' s Beacon Hill . In 1961 Nunn took a leave of absence from his job and started " Restoration , Inc . " , a group that restored ten homes in Old Louisville ' s St. James Court in 1961 , spurring interest in preservation that would lead many local activists to move to the area . This effort also led to the first use of the name Old Louisville in print in that year , as a reflection of the interest in preservation . With the activists ' efforts the area was made into a historic preservation district in 1975 . The area has continued to improve , with new restaurants and shops opening and many students , and young professionals moving into the area . Property owners , who once cheaply converted the old houses to apartments , have invested more in improvements since the 1980s , and several properties have been converted into luxury condominiums . The median home value more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 , increasing at a faster rate than Louisville as a whole . This overall process of improvement and rising property values has been described as gentrification .

The area is now one of the most ethnically and economically diverse in Louisville . Crime is becoming less of a problem . While in 2003 there were 11 @.@ 5 crimes per 1 @,@ 000 residents , over twice the average for the city of Louisville as a whole , which was 5 @.@ 0 crimes per 1 @,@ 000 residents Old Louisville now has a similar number of calls for police assistance as other parts of Louisville . The Louisville Metro Police 4th Division is responsible for a large portion of Louisville beyond Old Louisville , but is conveniently located in Central Park in Old Louisville . It had 134 officers assigned to it in 2006 . Most calls are related to car break @-@ ins and non @-@ violent crimes . Murders are still rare , with one or two per year . Overall crime rates for both Old Louisville and the city as a whole increased sharply in 2005 over the 2004 rate , although there was a decline again the first half of 2006 .

= = Features and attractions = =

Old Louisville features the largest collection of pedestrian @-@ only streets of any U.S. neighborhood . Eleven such " courts " , where houses face each other across a grass median with sidewalks , were built in the neighborhood from 1891 to the 1920s . Most of the courts are centered off of 4th Street . Belgravia Court and Fountain Court were the first ones to be built in 1891 and are the most well known . Later ones included Reeser and Kensington (1910) , which were built with large Victorian styled apartments instead of single family homes ; and Eutopia and Rose Courts , which were the last ones built in the 1920s and featured small , single story houses . Belgravia and St. James Court were completely rehabilitated as a part of the urban renewal that began in the

1960s . These developments are apparently unique to Louisville .

Two of the three major four @-@ year universities in Louisville are located adjacent to Old Louisville , with Spalding University to the north and the University of Louisville to the south . DuPont Manual High School , a public magnet school , and Presentation Academy , an all @-@ girls Catholic high school , are two other well @-@ known schools located in Old Louisville .

The neighborhood contains The Filson Historical Society , Louisville 's Central Park , which features the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival every summer , the Actors Theatre of Louisville Production Studio , and the Conrad @-@ Caldwell House . The area of 6th and Hill Streets in the neighborhood was the setting of the best selling novel Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch by Louisvillian Alice Hegan Rice . Today there is a non @-@ profit counseling and services center , named Cabbage Patch Settlement House for the novel , on 6th Street at Magnolia Avenue , which serves children of low @-@ income families . During the Christmas holiday season a number of private homes are toured in the Old Louisville Holiday Home Tour . With the publication of books about the spirited past of Old Louisville , the area has recently gained a reputation for being " the most haunted neighborhood in the country . "

Old Louisville 's boundaries are Kentucky Street to the north , Avery Street (Cardinal Boulevard) to the south , I @-@ 65 to the east , the CSX railroad tracks to the west . Originally , the neighborhood extended all the way to Broadway on the north , Attwood Street on the south , and Floyd Street on the East ; but the northern part was mostly razed for parking lots and light industry , the southern area between Attwood and Avery Streets (now Cardinal Blvd) was razed when the University of Louisville doubled the size of its main campus , and I @-@ 65 was built through the area in the 1960s , which created a physical barrier between it and Shelby Park neighborhood .

= = = Architecture = = =

Old Louisville is well known for its architecture , with styles ranging from Federal to Queen Anne . Very few antebellum buildings remain , and the most impressive buildings were built in the late 19th century . There are a few Italianate , Beaux @-@ Arts and Second Empire @-@ style houses , but Victorian styles dominate . Victorian Gothic styles are commonly seen . Many styles in Old Louisville are united by their use of red sandstone trim , which became popular by the 1880s to the point that the Courier @-@ Journal said " few new residences are going up in Louisville in which it is not being used " . Another common Victorian style is the Richardsonian .

Aside from the best represented styles of architecture listed above , Old Louisville also has several great examples of the Chateausque style of architecture in select buildings throughout the area . For example , one of these examples is a residential building , a mansion , at 400 Belgravia Court , which is a " walking court " where the mansions face a park like walk rather than a street . This specific building was completed in 1897 and one of its first residents was William H. Wathen , M.D. , an eminent medical educator in Louisville from a family of successful distillers .

Although some portions have been razed , many entire blocks remain almost untouched , and historian Theodore M. Brown said " it remains the only nineteenth @-@ century segment of the city that is mostly intact " . As infills , some American Craftsman style houses can be found in Old Louisville .

= = = Tallest buildings = = =

= = Demographics = =

As of 2000 , the population of Old Louisville was 11 @, @ 043 , of which 55 @. @ 9 % are white , 35 @. @ 0 % are black , 6 @. @ 3 % are listed as other , and 2 @. @ 3 % are Hispanic . College graduates are 24 @. @ 5 % , people without a high school degree are 22 @. @ 6 % , and people with college experience without a bachelor 's degree are 28 @. @ 4 % . Females are 52 @. @ 3 % of the population , males are 47 @. @ 7 % . Households making less than \$ 15 @, @ 000 a year are 40

@. @ 8 % ; although that is largely a function of the 27 % of residents who are full @-@ time college students . Ironically , Old Louisville has the youngest median age of any Louisville neighborhood and the highest percent of people between the ages of 20 @-@ 29 (25 %) .

Old Louisville 's area is about 1 @. @ 7 square miles (4 @. @ 4 km²) , and its population density is 7 @, @ 800 persons per square mile . The best preserved portions , between Kentucky and Hill streets , have a density of over 10 @, @ 000 persons per square mile .

= = Regions = =

Old Louisville is broken up into five different census tracts by the US Census Bureau . There are stark differences revealed by the different tracts from North to South

In addition , there are eight different neighborhood associations , each of which provides different levels of infrastructure on each street . For example , on 4th Street the street lights are designed as old lamp posts and there are ornamented trash cans with a fleur @-@ de @-@ lis symbol at frequent intervals , while on St. James Court there are gas lamp posts , 3rd and 2nd Streets have small light posts on the sidewalks , Ouerbacker Court has cast iron decorative gates , and several other streets have basic infrastructure .

= = Culture = =

After years of decline with abandoned buildings and high elderly populations , the demographics of Old Louisville began to change noticeably in the 1990s . New residents were not just college students using the area as housing , but also young professionals who wanted to live in Old Louisville . The Courier @-@ Journal 's Velocity weekly has reported the area as a hip , emerging center of culture in Louisville . This change is reflected in numerous coffeehouses , restaurants and bars opening in Old Louisville in the 1990s and early 2000s targeting at the younger crowd .

Old Louisville is one of the most liberal neighborhoods in Louisville , as evidenced by the General Election results in 2004 , where it voted for John Kerry by a 60 % margin and against a proposal to amend the state constitution to define marriage as " between one man and one woman " by a 66 % margin (the proposal passed 75 % to 25 % in Kentucky) .

= = Images = =