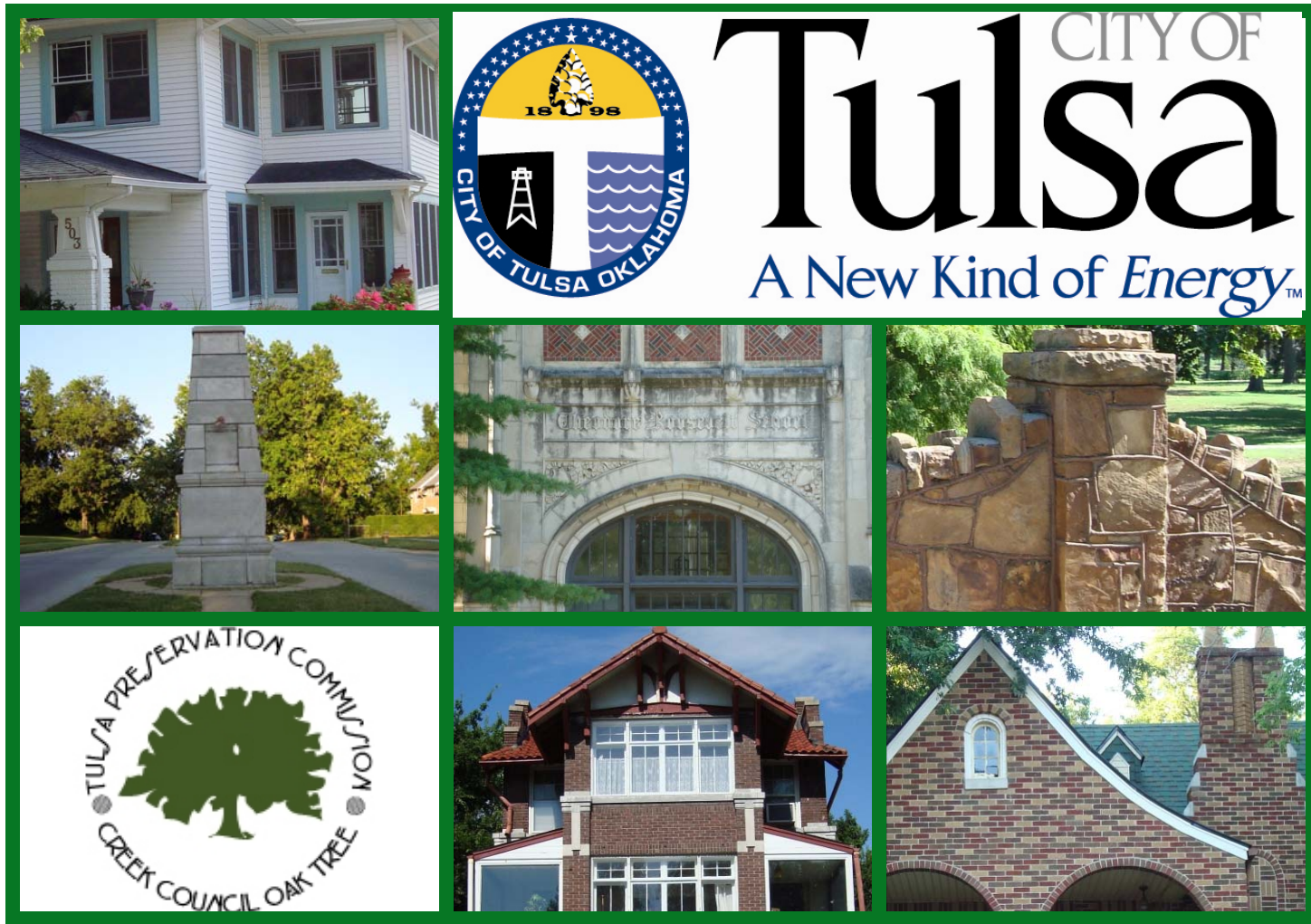


Tulsa's Historic Neighborhood Series: Owen Park



Tulsa's Historic Neighborhood Series: Owen Park Summer 2009

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NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING

Hidden by its strong residential character, narrow tree-lined streets, and rolling hills, the Owen Park Neighborhood lies just northwest of downtown Tulsa, separated from the city's central business district only by U.S. Highway 75.

Created from two Creek tribal allotments, the neighborhood's primary focus is its namesake: Owen Park. Opened in 1910, Owen Park was Tulsa's first public park and is today nearly 24 acres. Situated on the east side of the neighborhood, Owen Park has many historic features, including numerous mature trees, Owen Lake, a rustic stone bridge, tennis courts, and stone monuments.

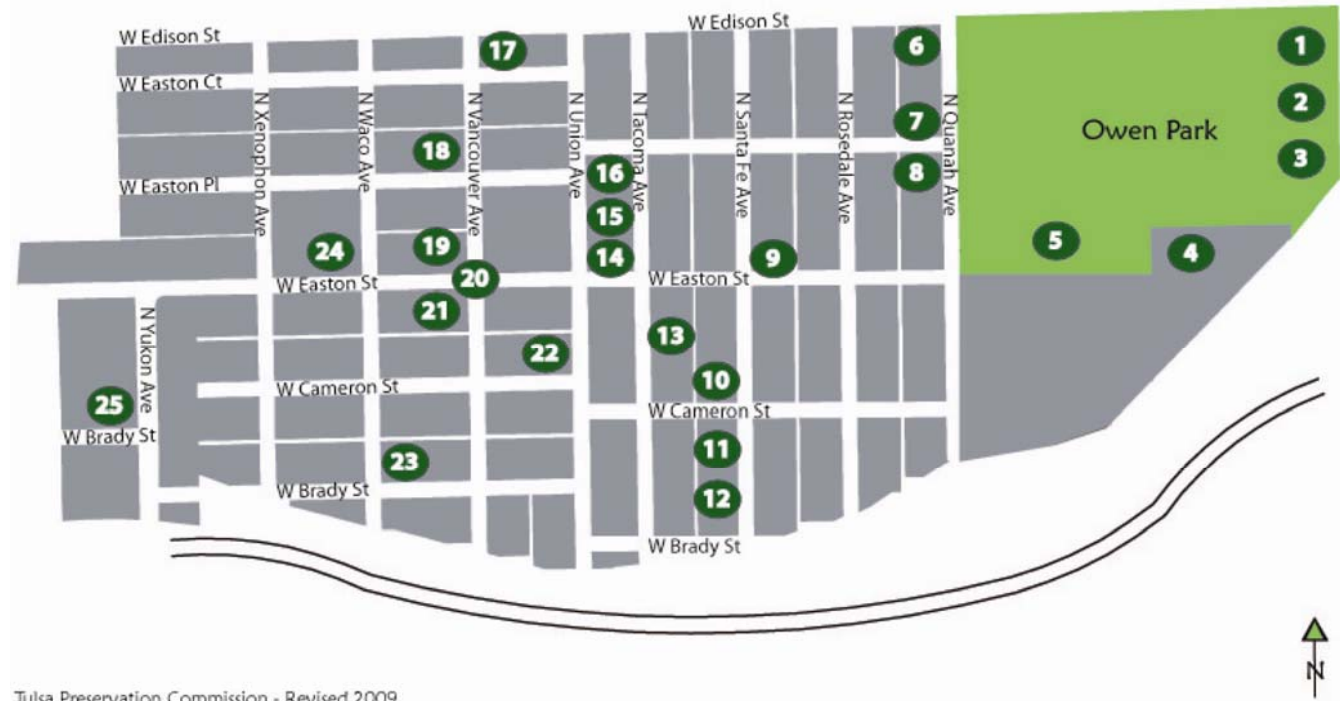
Popular in Tulsa during the 1910s and the 1920s, the Bungalow/Craftsman architectural style is the predominant style of residences in Owen Park Neighborhood. Although the southern end of the neighborhood has been impacted by the construction of I-244, overall, the neighborhood retains a high degree of its historic and architectural integrity.



Take a walk through historic Owen Park!

1. Indian Nations Monument
2. Pioneer Memorial
3. Tulsa's Oldest House
4. Roosevelt School
5. Owen Lake Bridge
6. 532 North Quannah Avenue
7. 544 North Quannah Avenue
8. 560 North Quannah Avenue
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21. Washington Irving Monument
22. 1804 West Easton Street
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24. Pershing School
25. 230 North Yukon Avenue

Owen Park Historic District Tulsa, Oklahoma



Tulsa Preservation Commission - Revised 2009



Owen Park

HISTORY OF OWEN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The history of the Owen Park neighborhood can be traced to early territorial days. In 1825, preparing for the arrival of the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory, the U.S. Government made a treaty with the Osage Indians. The Osage conceded lands for the use of the Cherokee and Creek Tribes. Although the Osage were to vacate their land in Oklahoma, they were still present in 1832 when U.S. Rangers arrived with civilian observers. Among them was Washington Irving, perhaps the best known American author of the time. On October 14, the party was traveling to their camp destination at the convergence of the Cimarron and Arkansas Rivers. Pausing briefly at a lookout point, Irving enjoyed the panorama from the hilltop in the Owen Park neighborhood. The descriptions of the view can be found in his book, *Tour of the Prairies*. A monument to this event stands at the corner of Easton Boulevard and Vancouver Avenue.



Indian Nations Monument

By 1834, the Osage Tribe had been convinced to move to a reservation in Kansas.

Following this period, it has been suggested that Owen Park was the location of a Creek settlement called Big Springs Town. After the Civil War, the Osage were relocated back to the land which is now Osage County. The point where the three great nations of the Osage, Cherokee and Creek joined is commemorated by a monument in Owen Park.

No account of the historical significance of Owen Park would be complete without homage being paid to the man for which it is named. Chauncey A. Owen, a Pennsylvanian entrepreneur and Civil War veteran, married to a Creek woman, conducted a freighting business in Kansas before coming to Indian Territory. During the 1870s, Owen established himself as a leading rancher and farmer in the Broken Arrow area. Using imported white labor, he planted peach trees, cultivated large areas of fertile land, owned herds of cattle and harvested walnut timber on the Verdigris. He built a ranch home known throughout the region as the "Big House."



In 1882, the railroad was on the way from Vinita across the Verdigris to the Arkansas River. Owen followed the railroad grading work, hauling a large tent which he used as a boarding establishment. With beef and produce from his farm, he supplied hundreds of rail workers, including James Monroe Hall and his brother, Harry C. Hall. James was in charge of the railroad contracting company and Harry was one of the contracting suppliers. Although the Hall brothers are considered to be the founders of modern Tulsa, Chauncey Owen was already in the boardinghouse business at the nearby riverbank. After pitching the company store tent near the future terminal site on a summer evening in 1882, the Halls made their way to Owen's tent to sample his wife's home cooking. Owen immediately moved his tent boardinghouse near the new terminal location, and soon after began to build the first hotel in Tulsa. The six-room wood frame building was also Tulsa's first two-story building. Appropriately named the Tulsa Hotel, it began business in the winter of 1882. The hotel was managed by Owen until 1890 when it was leased and renamed the St. Elmo.



Owen Lake today

In 1892, Owen leased 80 acres of his wife's Creek land to J. P. Goumaz, who built a home at Brady Street and Santa Fe Avenue. Around 1895, the Goumaz family planted 7,000 peach trees, an apple orchard, strawberry fields, and established a large concord grape vineyard from the top of the hill east to Quanah Avenue. Some remnants of the vineyard are still evident on alley fences.

Chauncey Owen's wife, Martha, died in 1902. Her heirs received an allotment of 160 acres from the Creek Nation, which encompassed the present Owen Park and neighborhood. In the early twentieth century, the lands of Owen Park were often used for public events, even before the park received official designation. Fourth of July celebrations took place there, with firework displays entertaining crowds who sometimes

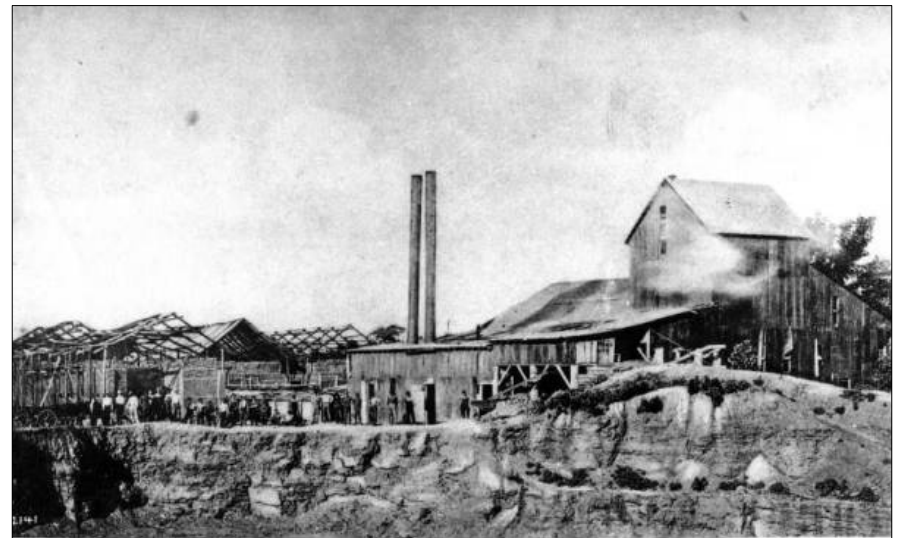
numbered in the thousands. One explosion on Saturday, January 23, 1904, however, was unplanned. The Western Torpedo Company of Chanute, Kansas, had about 875 quarts of nitroglycerine stored in a magazine building built in a little ravine. Used for shooting oil wells, this highly explosive substance was so unstable that railroads refused to handle it. The torpedo company had it hauled by wagon from Kansas. An unfortunate worker by the



name of McDonald, apparently a substitute for a regular employee, was last seen about 4:00 p.m. going into the magazine with a load of things from the wagon. Fifteen minutes later a tremendous detonation shook the countryside. The terrible blast broke the door locks at Dr. Sam G. Kennedy's country estate a quarter mile north. It stunned workers at the brick plant 800 yards away, and shattered glass in the business district one mile east. The boom was reportedly heard as far away as Claremore. When the dust settled, the previous location of the magazine was a great crater, and all that was found of McDonald could be fit into a shoe box. McDonald's legacy was, perhaps, that he helped prepare the site for the future Owen Park Lake.

Following the discovery of oil in the summer of 1901 at Red Fork, Tulsa began to rapidly grow and prosper. Owen wanted to divide and sell his land, but at over an acre, there was scant public interest. Perhaps he believed he could capitalize on the growing recreational movement in the country. He offered more than twenty acres of park land to the city. In March of 1909, the city held its first Park Commission meeting and, by August 18, 1909, decided to purchase the land for \$500. The decision met with criticism due to the land's price and distance from downtown. In those days, many considered it to be too far out in the country. Most were placated, though, when it was announced that a streetcar line would be run to the park, running west on Archer and turning north on Rosedale to Easton Boulevard. Owen Park officially opened on June 8, 1910.

Also in 1910, the city sold five acres of the park land to the nearby Tulsa Vitrified Brick Company, located at the southeast edge of the park, now the site of the Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School. Owen attempted to prohibit the sale. He contended that the brick company would "excavate large quantities of earth which will make a dangerous hole for the accumulation of water and the production of sickness..." and would be a "detriment to the health and comfort of the citizens." He lost an appeal to the State Supreme Court, who held that the deed did not specify that the land would be used for



*Photo courtesy the Beryl Ford Collection:
Tulsa Vitrified Brick and Tile Company, 1907*



park purposes only. Owen's concern proved to be prophetic when nine-year old Gary Glenn Furr fell into the abandoned brick pit with its 75-foot deep banks and drowned on January 25, 1954. The city soon repurchased and filled the pit. The reclaimed property was again added to Owen Park.

In 1913, the ravine in Owen Park was dammed to create a small lake which was used as a city swimming pool, although "swimmin hole" was probably a more appropriate name. In spite of annual efforts each spring to line the pond with sand hauled by wagons from Sand Springs, it was never long before rains and usage negated those attempts. The muddy bottom, however, did not detract from its popularity. The major problem occurred when bathers, jumping from the twelve-foot tower, sometimes missed the diving hole. Lifeguards would then be called upon to rescue victims stuck in the mud. During the winter, the lake served as a skating rink. In August of 1920, the opening of the bathing pool at Owen Lake was announced by park board president, N.G. Henthorn. The lake's use as a swimming pool continued through the 1920s. Today, although bathing and swimming are prohibited, fishing is a

popular pastime and the lake is home to a thriving population of ducks and geese.

By 1915, the neighborhood was growing rapidly. The boulevard had been paved and the Irving monument was dedicated on April 30th. An advertisement in the Tulsa World on July 4th announced that, "Lots are going fast in Tulsa's most beautiful residence suburb—Irrving Place and Park Hill." The oil boom that had made many wealthy also provided abundant jobs for a burgeoning middle class. New homes were in high demand and residential construction progressed rapidly. By the end of the 1920s, the lots were filled with homes ranging from Craftsman bungalows to estate mansions. Schools had been built in the neighborhood.



Photo courtesy the Beryl Ford Collection: Picnic in Owen Park, 1911





Indian Nations Memorial Owen Park, Maybelle & Edison Avenues

(Map Location #1)

In 1935, the Tulsa Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution erected this stone monument to commemorate the meeting point of the Creek, Cherokee, and Osage nations, which is 700 feet to the east of the monument's current location. The monument's inscription reads: "On June 2, 1825, the Osage Nation, under treaty with the United States, granted certain lands to the Government for the use and benefit of the Cherokee and Creek tribes who were being removed from the Southern States. This monument is to commemorate that treaty and to mark that spot where lands of the three great nations joined."





Tulsa Association of Pioneers Memorial Owen Park, Maybelle & Edison Avenues

(Map Location #2)

This monument was moved from its original location at the farm of Dr. Sam G. Kennedy, the first president of the Tulsa Association of Pioneers, to the north entrance of Owen Park in 1950. In 1947, Dr. Kennedy's heirs donated five acres to the Owen Park grounds, and the memorial was moved shortly thereafter. The monument bears the names of numerous Tulsa pioneer families. The memorial's inscription reads: "This monument was erected by the Tulsa Association of Pioneers in honor of the charter members of the association living in Tulsa, Indian Territory and vicinity for thirty years from 1881 to 1921 and other pioneer families."





Tulsa's Oldest Surviving House

Owen Park, Maybelle & Edison Avenues

(Map Location #3)

Originally located on the 400 block of Cheyenne, this primitive National Folk side-gable house with board-and-batten siding was the parsonage home of Reverend Sylvester Morris. It was moved to its present location after a 1976 fire. The fire brought the house to the attention of historian Beryl D. Ford. Within the house's plaster walls, Ford found letters to Morris dated 1895 and a photograph of the house. Reverend Morris, a Methodist minister, was reportedly shot and killed by lawmen who had mistaken him for a whiskey peddler. After the shooting, his horses continued on their way home, carrying the minister's body in the carriage.





Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School 1202 West Easton Street

(Map Location #4)

Built adjacent to Owen Park in 1926, Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School was designed by architect Leland Scheumay in the Commercial style with a modified Collegiate Gothic influence. Although relatively utilitarian in design, the building does exhibit a number of Collegiate Gothic characteristics, most notably the Gothic arched doorway of the main entrance located at the center of the primary façade. Decorative vertical concrete bands flank the entrance on all three floors, rising into a central front parapet. Each side elevation features a similar, though slightly less ornate doorway, flanked by brick and concrete buttresses which rise to all three levels. Several horizontal concrete bands surround the building: one separating the first and second floors and another topping the third floor windows. A number of one-story brick additions have been attached to the rear of the building over the years, including a gymnasium, cafeteria, and several classroom wings. The school currently serves as an elementary school in the Tulsa Public Schools system.





Stone Bridge in Owen Park
Near Easton Street & Quanah Avenue Intersection
(Map Location #5)

This irregularly coursed stone bridge, built circa 1915, is marked by four rough stone arches, demarcated by capped stone piers on each side. Photographs from the late 1910s show that these piers were originally topped with glass globes. A narrow pedestrian walkway on the north side of the bridge is bordered by a lower stone wall that is not present in early photographs. Perhaps the walkway was an addition made by the employees of the Works Progress Administration when they made improvements to the park in the 1930s.





532 North Quannah Avenue

(Map Location #6)

Built circa 1920, this multi-gabled Bungalow features a partial wrap-around porch with large rusticated concrete-block supports and a concrete railing with wooden balustrades. The house has plain weatherboard siding and prominent multi-pane, triple windows in the front. The home is set apart by its decorative large boards, wide and open eaves with long exposed rafter ends, and decorative timbers in the gables. The house is elevated on a tall brick foundation with a basement-level garage on the front of the house.





Van Deldon Apartments 544 North Quanah Avenue

(Map Location #7)

Designed by architect Fred R. Van Deldon and built circa 1923, the Van Deldon Apartments reflect a late 19th and early 20th century Revival style with Craftsman influence. Within this unique three-story brick building, each floor is a separate apartment with high ceilings, oak and tile floors, and elaborate molding and trim work. Topped with a tile roof, the building consists of a front-facing gable wing on all three levels and a hip-roofed block to the rear. The first level of the front block is marked by a Palladin-style entrance with double French doors, flanked by sidelights and arched windows on either side of this entrance. Later owners, Dr. William G. Chote and his wife Dorothy, may have used the ground floor as a medical clinic and the upstairs as their residence. The second and third levels are lighted by bands of casement windows. Two shed-roofed porches enclosed by glass flank the sides of the gable wing on the second level, adding to the building's aesthetic appeal. A sweeping curved stairway leads to the third story on the south side of the building.





Hart House

560 North Quannah Avenue

(Map Location #8)

An excellent example of the simple Bungalow style that predominates in the neighborhood, the Hart home was built circa 1923. During recent renovation, the original lap siding was stripped bare and repainted, accentuating the clean lines of the structure. The view from the open porch is of the Owen Park Lake. A cooling breeze is provided by an attic fan exhaust vent in the porch ceiling, a feature typical of many homes in this area.





210 North Santa Fe Avenue

(Map Location #9)

Standing apart stylistically in Owen Park, this home is of the Dutch Colonial style with a side gambrel roof and a full-width shed dormer. The house is adorned with a multitude of nine-over-one windows. Although the porch has been rebuilt at some point in the building's history, this home traditionally would have had rounded columns surrounding the entryway, as entrances were greatly important to the Dutch Colonial style.



Owen Park



Downing House

232 North Santa Fe Avenue

(Map Location #10)

Seated further back from the street than its neighbors, this “Belle of the Neighborhood,” was one of the first houses constructed in the area. Built by Robert E. Downing circa 1918, the massive brick Prairie School home with Colonial Revival influences has twenty rooms amidst a large wooded lot. The home boasts a dominating three-story gabled center entry tower with Palladian windows in the upper story pediment. A large south wing projects out over a single bay porte cochère. The home was vacated twice after the 1929 stock market crash, and again in the 1970s. Eventually, the structure was declared uninhabitable and the City-County Health Department condemned the home, but a courageous renovation by B.J. Atchison saved this Owen Park landmark.





302 North Santa Fe Avenue

(Map Location #11)

Built circa 1928, this Craftsman-style home is a nicely preserved example of the prevalent style in the Owen Park neighborhood. Topped by a cross-gable roof and clad in plain weatherboards, the home carries wonderful detail work. Along the southern wall, the house's large porch is supported by four-post columns on stone piers. The now screened-in porch gable displays a wide frieze in addition to triangular brackets and exposed rafter ends, two details which are echoed throughout the rest of the house.





503 North Santa Fe Avenue

(Map Location #12)

This home is an exquisite example of an American four-square Prairie-style house. The home's low-pitched hipped roofline is mimicked above the full-width porch which has an asymmetrical entrance and steps both in the front and to the side and is supported by sturdy tall piers and short columns. Adding dimension to the structure, one side of the house sports a two-story sleeping porch with a covered side-entry. Every side of the house bears numerous banks of Prairie-style and unique nine-over-one windows, providing a great deal of natural light to the home's interior. The home has an additional sleeping porch in the rear of the house with a second-story balcony above which is cantilevered and covered by the principle roof, adding to the home's elegance.





532 North Tacoma Avenue

(Map Location #13)

Positioned on a large corner lot, this Colonial Revival house is topped with a clipped-gable roof. Built circa 1920, the five-bay home's front façade features a front entrance flanked by side lights which are now filled with glass bricks. Supported by triple-fluted Doric columns, the front porch shelters the home's entrance. The house retains its original weatherboard siding with its wide frieze band surrounding the house which separates the upper and lower levels in the gable ends. One of the home's most interesting features is its unique set of brick steps which is angled toward the house diagonally from the corner intersection.





G.N. Wright House

518 North Tacoma Avenue

(Map Location #14)

One of the most prominent homes on Tacoma Avenue, this Colonial Revival house was built circa 1925. Adhering to its stylistic details, the home features a symmetrical front façade and Doric porch columns. Set slightly back from the main block of the house is a side wing of sun rooms and sleeping porches. With its low-pitched hip roof, the house's main block features a central front entrance covered by a small porch canopy, which is topped on the second level by a large bay window.





1601 West Easton Street

(Map Location #15)

Built in 1910, this exemplary Prairie School-style brick house has a typically low-pitched roof, wide eaves, and numerous banks of multi-pane windows. Topped with a clipped gable roof, the home's most prominent feature is its full-width porch which spans the front façade on the lower level, and is a two-tiered covered porch at the entrance bay. The porch, which shelters entry doors, is bordered by a simple wood balustrade. Adding to the home's appeal, a sleeping porch over a porte cochère extends from the east end of the house. Photo provided by C. Trudeaux.





319 North Tacoma Avenue

(Map Location #16)

Built circa 1928, this Colonial Revival house features a symmetrical façade with a side-gabled roof which extends into an engaged front porch supported by double and triple square columns and is accentuated with a simple wood balustrade. The roof has two gabled dormers that display Palladian windows.





1719 West Easton Court

(Map Location #17)

Built circa 1919, this Craftsman-style home is typical of the Owen Park neighborhood. The home bears common stylistic features, such as its bracketed eaves, exposed rafter tails, and the wide entry porch, supported by heavy squared piers. But this home's focus is assuredly its welcoming front porch and unique entry. Although the home's entrance is now comprised of a set of French doors with similarly styled sidelights, it was originally a fully operational double set of French doors which let all four doors to be opened, allowing fresh air to circulate throughout the home.





1719 Cameron Street

(Map Location #18)

This Craftsman bungalow home was built circa 1903, making it not only one of the oldest houses in Tulsa, but one of the earliest examples of the Craftsman-style. The home features wide-overhanging eaves with decorative braces and exposed rafter tails. One of the most prominent features of the house is its wide L-shaped front porch which is supported by square columns. The home's entrance boasts beautiful beveled-glass sidelights. The Craftsman details, with its cross-gabled roof, create a horizontal emphasis for the home, which became typical for the style.





1801 West Easton Place

(Map Location #19)

Built circa 1920, this stucco-clad Prairie School-style house has an extremely low-pitched roof with multiple levels, broad overhanging eaves, and horizontal lines. The home features a gable-front central section with side-gabled wings. Mimicking the roofline pattern, the home's entrance and small front porch in the center of the main block is sheltered by a low-pitched canopy. Abundant windows, particularly on the side wings, and exposed beams lend the home both beauty and charm.





1805 West Easton Street

(Map Location #20)

Although a thoroughly common style of the time and in Owen Park, this is a beautiful example of a four-square Prairie-style home. The home's low-pitched roof includes wide overhanging eaves, one of which creates a roof for the full-width front-entry porch, which is supported by prominent columns upon large brick piers. Currently, the home's welcoming wide porch, and indeed nearly the entire front of the house, are somewhat obscured from view by a lovely and extensive garden.

Picture provided by Carolyn Wickstrom and credited to Photography by Kell.





Washington Irving Monument Easton Street and Vancouver Avenue Intersection

(Map Location #21)

Erected and donated to the public by Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel Norman Wright around 1915, this monument commemorates a visit to this location on October 14, 1832 by the great American author, Washington Irving. In the company of U.S. Rangers from Cantonment Gibson, Irving was part of a group surveying the area in anticipation of the removal of Indians from the southern states. The monument's massive square base supports a stone plinth block with a bas relief wreath which encircles Washington Irving's profile. Above this block is a rusticated stone obelisk which bears brass inscription plaques describing the monument's history.





1804 West Easton Street

(Map Location #22)

A later addition to the neighborhood, this Tudor Revival house was built circa 1946, and was a less common style than the majority of homes in Owen Park. With its brick veneer exterior walls, the home's most prominent Tudor Revival features are the steeply-pitched, multi-gabled roof, prominent front chimney, and an asymmetrical façade. The charming entry walk and close relation to the Washington Irving Monument are just two of the features that make this home unique.





1807 West Brady Street

(Map Location #23)

Built circa 1939, this house is an elaborate example of Tudor Revival architecture in Owen Park. The house's multiple gables are ornamented with round and pointed arched windows and vents. Adorning the front of the house, the porch is marked by three arches, a flared gable, and a prominent multi-potted chimney which is embellished with a decorative, brickwork-patterned arch.





Pershing School

1903 West Easton Street

(Map Location #24)

Although construction of the school began circa 1918, the Pershing School campus was built in stages. The Commercial style campus was named after General John J. Pershing, the World War I hero for whom a small monument was dedicated outside the school's main entrance. The school campus consists of several classroom buildings, an auditorium, gymnasium, and a cafeteria. The first three buildings were constructed in an L-shaped pattern along West Easton Street and Waco Avenue, with the gymnasium in the center. The campus was later expanded with wings down the west end and an infill connecting the freestanding older buildings, creating a rear-facing U-shaped structure.





230 North Yukon Avenue

(Map Location #25)

In the late 1910s, the owner of Tate Brady Realty Company and developer of New Irving Place addition, W. Tate Brady, built this home for his daughter. The eclectic house shows the influence of several architectural styles, including Tudor Revival, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival. Comprised of dark red bricks in a common bond pattern, the L-shaped structure has an asymmetrical shape, decorative brick chimneys, an arched entryway and several arched windows and attic vents, lending a Tudor flavor to the house. The exposed rafter ends and wide overhanging eaves are examples of the home's more Craftsman-style details, while details such as the brick quoins are most commonly found on Colonial Revival-style buildings. Additionally, this house is possibly the best example of brick craftsmanship in the Owen Park neighborhood.



Tulsa's Historic Neighborhood Series: Owen Park

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