

Pasadena Apartments
97-103 Orchard Lake Avenue
Pontiac
Oakland County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-411

HABS
MICH
63-PONT,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

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PASADENA APARTMENTS

HABS No. MI-411

Location: 97, 99, 101, 103 Orchard Lake Avenue
Pontiac, Oakland County, Michigan

Quad: Pontiac, North, Michigan 1:24,000
UTM: 17.311790.4722570

Present Owner: City of Pontiac, Michigan

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of Significance: The Pasadena is a modest example of several dozen "terrace apartments" constructed in the 1910s and 1920s in the booming industrial city of Pontiac, Michigan. This style of apartments, much like townhouses, featured two-story living units and generous floorspace. They were built to attract white-collar and skilled industrial workers.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

Date of Erection: 1914. The surviving historical evidence strongly suggests that the building was constructed during the second half of 1914. Roy Thompson and Ed Stout bought the property from Harry Ten Eyck on 24 June 1914.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company atlases for this area show a large frame dwelling at 87 Orchard Lake Avenue in 1903 and 1909, but the Sanborn Atlas dated January 1915 shows the Pasadena Apartments with the addresses of 87, 89, 91, and 93 Orchard Lake Avenue.

The Pontiac City Directories show 95 Orchard Lake Avenue occupied by Mrs. M. E. Ten Eyck in 1904; Mrs. Marion Ten Eyck and Carl Anthony in 1907; and Mrs. Anna M. Moriarity, Peter S. Trask, and William H. Eckalbar in 1912. The directory for 1915 shows three of the four units of the Pasadena Apartments occupied: John J. h. Graham in 87; William G. Eaton in 89; Donald S. Taylor in 93; while 91 was vacant.

A. Physical History (Continued):

Architect: Unknown

Owners, Occupants, and Uses: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the building stands, Lot 13 of Assessors Plat No. 15 (recorded 4/21/1932), previously composed of Lots 1, 2 and the East 40 feet of Lot 3 of the Subdivision of Outlot 17 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 29.

1858 Property purchased by Junius Ten Eyck, a local attorney, 10 April 1858.

1909 Marion Ten Eyck (widow of Junius Ten Eyck), sold the land to her son, Harry Ten Eyck, 9 August 1909.

1914 Harry Ten Eyck sold the property to Roy Thompson and Ed Stout, 24 June 1914.

1914 Roy Thompson sold his interest to Ed Stout, 6 October 1914

The Pontiac city directories allow researchers to track the apartment tenants on nearly an annual basis from 1914 until the mid-1960s, when publication of the directories stopped. The 1915 directory shows one vacant apartment and the other three occupied by John Graham, a dentist; William Eaton, a barber; and Donald Taylor, a draftsman. The building has served as an apartment house from its original construction to the present.

Builder, Contractor, Suppliers: Unknown

Original Plans and Construction: No plans have survived, but there is no evidence that the exterior appearance of the building has been altered significantly since 1914.

A. Physical History (Continued)

Alterations and Additions: The only major alteration involved subdividing three of the four units into two apartments each in ca. 1957 (103 was not subdivided). Separate entrances to the second floors of 97, 99, and 101 were created by enclosing the (formerly) open staircases leading from the first to the second floor and creating two locked entrance doors inside the vestibule, one leading to the second-floor apartment and the other leading to the first-floor apartment. To provide the first-floor apartments with bathrooms, a three-quarters bath (with shower) was built under the staircases. Only four addresses are shown in city directories until 1960, when the building first showed seven addresses - 97, 97 1/2, 99, 99 1/2, 101, 101 1/2, and 103. The Pontiac City Directory for 1957 showed two of the four units as vacant, presumably because they were being subdivided, to be occupied by new tenants.

One minor change took place sometime between 1915 and February 1919, when the City of Pontiac altered its numbering system for buildings throughout the city. The original addresses (87, 89, 91, 93 Orchard Lake Avenue) were changed to the current addresses (97, 99, 101, 103 Orchard Lake Avenue). The Sanborn insurance maps issued in February 1919 show the new addresses.

B. Historical Context:

The City of Pontiac, Michigan, experienced rapid population growth in the early twentieth century as a result of a rapidly-expanding automobile industry. The Oakland Motor Car Company (later the Pontiac Division of General Motors Corporation) began production in 1907 and was an instant success. Pontiac also attracted manufacturers of trucks, automobile bodies, and related components in the 1910s and 1920s. Pontiac's population, stood at 9,769 in 1900, jumped to 14,532 in 1910, and then exploded to 34,532 by 1920. Ten years later, it stood at 64,928. There was a parallel growth in the city's housing stock, including apartment buildings. Today, fifteen similar terrace apartments, ranging in size from two units to twenty-eight units, remain standing in Pontiac.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Pasadena is a typical example of early 20th century middle-class townhouse architecture as evidenced by the relative spaciousness of the units (1,372 square feet) and a modest amount of ornamentation on the exterior.
2. Condition of fabric: The exterior is in fair condition. No original interior fabric has survived in the kitchens and bathrooms, while the rest of the interior is in poor condition, the result of vandalism and neglect.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This is a symmetrical, two-story (plus full basement), rectangular structure that measures 87' x 32". Front porches extend 8' from the facade and rear porches 6'. The two largest porches, located in the middle of the front and rear of the structure, measure 20' and 22' in length respectively. The smaller porches located at the front are 10' across and those at the rear are 8' across.
2. Foundations: A concrete foundation.
3. Walls: Exterior walls consist of a brick veneer laid in stretcher bond courses. The brick is dark brown on the front, but a polychromatic blend of red with light and dark brown bricks appears on the three other facades. Two brick courses surround the structure: a soldier course located just above the basement windows, and a sill course of headers located at the second story. The front of the building has a corbeled brick cornice with concrete coping. Most remaining wall ornamentation is concentrated on the front facade and is made of concrete. This includes the quoin-like small blocks on the brick courses found at each corner of the structure; the rectangular block with bold letters spelling "PASADENA" located midway along the roofline; a cornice-level belt course; and the six tablet-style blocks that intersect the belt course.

B. Description of Exterior (continued):

4. Structural system, framing: The Pasadena is a wood frame structure with curtain walls, timber floor joists, and timber posts.
5. Porches: The three one-story entry porches on the front facade are similar in style, albeit the middle porch extends over two entrances. The middle porch has a deck-styled hipped roof, while those on the ends utilize the pyramidal shape. Porch roofs are covered with shingles and are decorated with wood brackets on the soffits. Gutters made of galvanized sheet metal surround the porch roofs; downspouts are located adjacent to the facade. The roofs are supported by Ionic-style columns with tapered fluted wood shafts and plaster capitals that feature volutes, bead-and-reel astragal moldings, egg-and-dart echinus moldings, and rosettes on the abacuses. The concrete bases of the columns rest on brick piers. Five steps lead from grade-level to the concrete floor surfaces of the porches. Concrete coping is used on the top of the brick walls that surround the porches and flank the staircases. The uncovered wood porches on the rear, with one located at each level, are entirely functional.
6. Chimneys: A pair of brick chimneys rise from the roof. Each is located midway between the end and interior units.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Each unit has a main entrance at the front of the structure. In addition, there is a stairwell and entrance to the basement located below the living room picture window of the western-most interior unit. On the rear, four doorway entrances appear at each level of the structure. This is evidence of the prior subdivision of the Pasadena into upper and lower-level flats. Most of the extant doors on the front and rear facades are newer steel security doors.

B. Description of Exterior (continued):

7. Openings (continued)

- b. Windows: Most windows are aluminum-framed, double-hung, sash windows with concrete sills. The first floor of each unit has a pair of front and rear basement windows; a large living room picture window with a narrow transom light; and a kitchen and/or dining room window on the rear. The second story has bedroom and bathroom windows. The upper sashes of many of these are divided vertically into five or six lights. Noteworthy are the two wood bays that project from the front facade. Each bay contains four bedroom windows (i.e., two per unit). Wood brackets are positioned on the soffits below the bays and the shingled-covered hipped roofs. The end units also have windows on the sides of the structure.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The flat roof is surrounded on the front and sides by a parapet wall with concrete coping.
- b. Gutter system: Roof water is carried off the rear of the structure by means of a roof-line gutter that extends the length of the building, along with the help of a pair of downspouts. The gutter and downspouts are made of galvanized sheet metal.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: A typical unit of the Pasadena has a front entrance that opens into the living room. From the latter one can proceed into either the dining area or kitchen. Walls separate the dining room and kitchen. In two of the units, these rooms are linked by a doorway. But in the other two units access to the dining room from the kitchen is possible only indirectly by way of the living room. Off from the kitchen is a lavatory and the doorway to the rear porch. On the second floor a large and small bedroom face the front of the building. Located across the hallway is the bathroom and the largest of the three bedrooms.
2. Stairways: The stairways that lead from the first to the second stories are found along either the eastern or western ends of the living rooms. Each has stairs and a staircase made entirely of wood. The handrail is supported by thin rectilinear banisters. The balustrade is attached to a square wood newel post at the floor level.
3. Flooring: Oak floors cover the floor surfaces of the Pasadena.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: None have been located.
- B. Early Views: Searches of the Oakland County Historical Society, the Pontiac Public Library, and the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library have produced no historic views.
- C. Bibliography:
1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Oakland County, Tract Indexes, Register of Deeds,
1200 North Telegraph Avenue, Pontiac, MI 48341
 2. Secondary and published sources:

Avery, Lillian Drake. Historic Michigan, Land of the Great Lakes, Volume III: Oakland County (New York: National Historical Association, 1928).

Board of Commerce, Pontiac, Michigan. Pictorial Description of Pontiac, Michigan and Vicinity (Pontiac: Board of Commerce, ca. 1928).

May, George S., editor. Encyclopedia of American Business History and Biography: The Automobile Industry, 1896-1920 (New York: Bruccoli Clark Layman, 1990).

Polk, Ralph L. and Company. Pontiac City Directory (Detroit: R.L. Polk and Company, 1922-1962).

Pontiac City Directory (Pontiac: Michigan Printing Company, 1902, 1904, 1907, 1912, 1915).

Pontiac Press. Greater Pontiac Centennial Edition, 1861-1962, June 19, 1961.

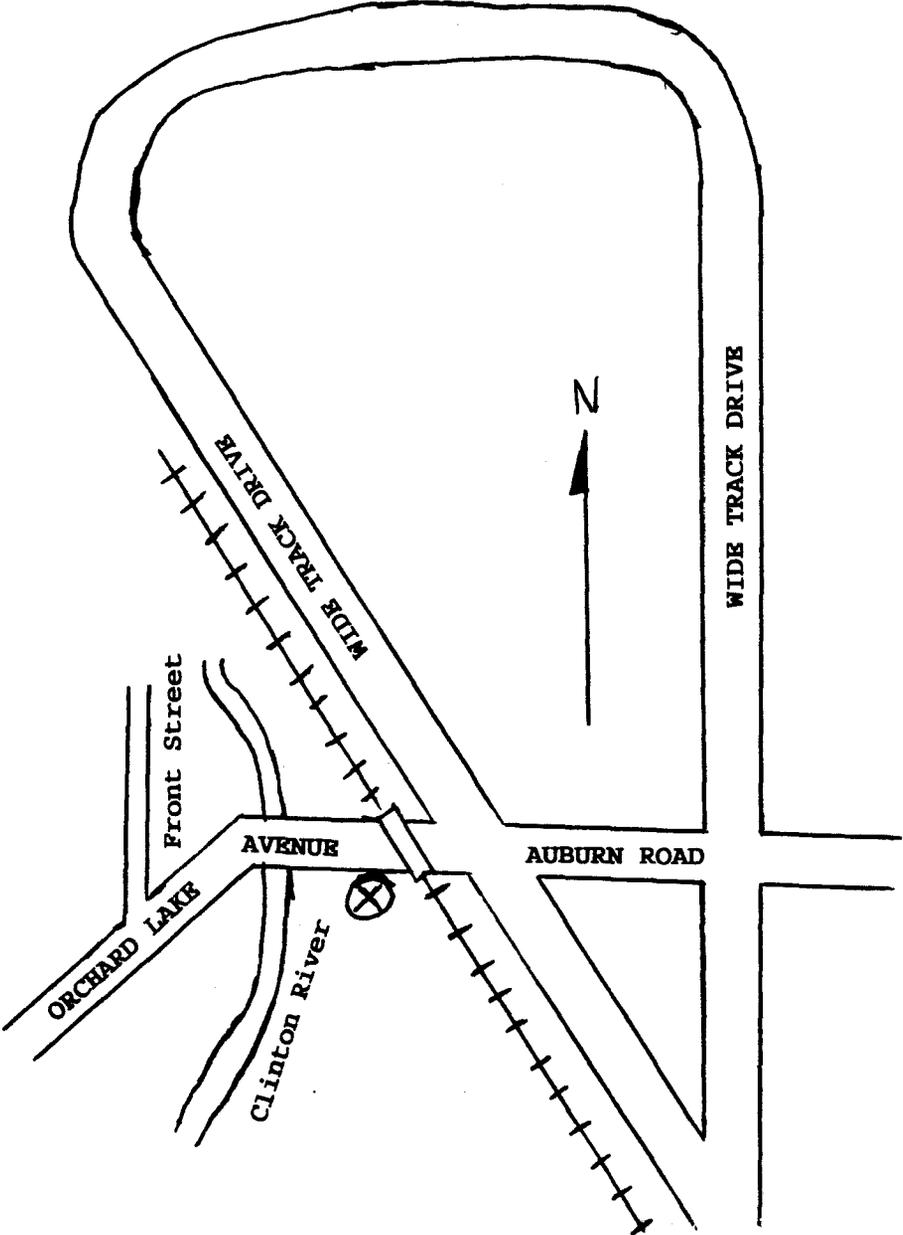
Sanborn Map and Publishing Company. Insurance Maps of Pontiac, Michigan, (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1903, 1909, 1915, 1919, 1924).
- D. Supplemental Materials:

PONTIAC, NORTH, MICHIGAN QUADRANGLE, 1:24,000

UTM: 17.311790.4722570

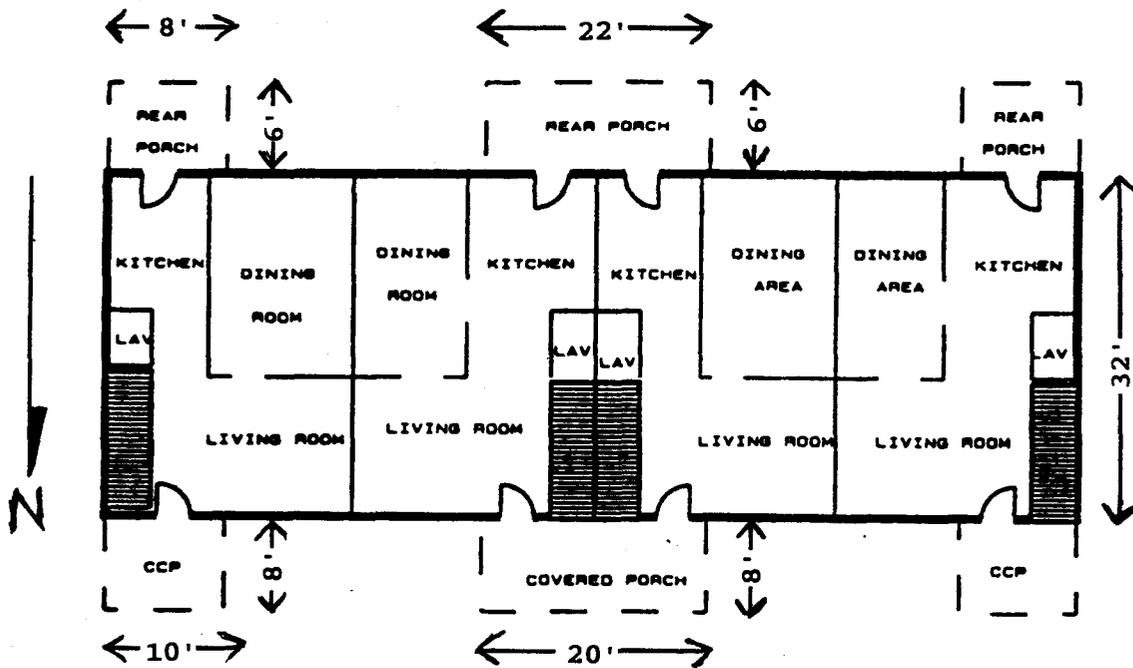
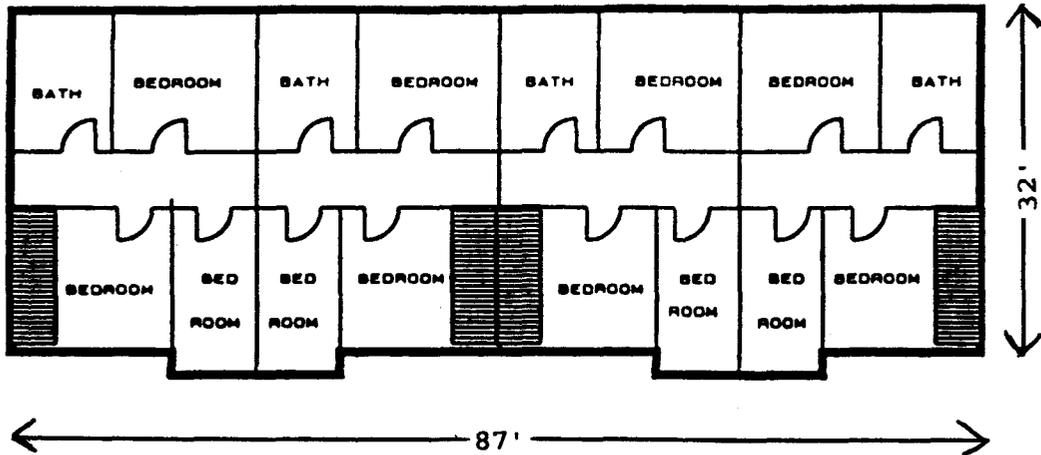


GENERAL SITE PLAN



FLOOR PLANS

SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Pasadena Apartments building is to be demolished as part of a project to widen Orchard Lake Avenue from Ottawa Street to Wide Track Drive in Pontiac, Oakland County, Michigan. This documentation is the result of a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Pontiac, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative measure before demolition of the building. It was completed in February 1997 by Dr. Charles K. Hyde, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202