

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

## DePauw Avenue Historic District

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### DESCRIPTION

The DePauw Avenue Historic District is located along DePauw Avenue, and portions of Vance Avenue, and Beechwood Avenue in the city of New Albany, Indiana. The district is residential in character and contains dwellings constructed from ca. 1906 to ca. 1950 with the majority built during the 1920s. Representative architectural styles include Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman/Bungalow. Also within the district are examples of vernacular Folk Victorian styles in the gabled ell and pyramid square forms. In addition to single-family dwellings, the district contains one apartment building constructed in 1925. The district contains a total of seventy-one primary buildings, of which sixty-eight or 99% are considered to be contributing to the character of the district. In addition to the primary buildings, there are eighteen contributing outbuildings and twenty-two non-contributing outbuildings. Dwellings within the district retain much of their historic character and have not been significantly altered. The district possesses a high degree of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. There are very few modern intrusions in the district, and the neighborhood retains a strong sense of time and place of the early twentieth century.

The DePauw Avenue Historic District developed in the early twentieth century on lands that originally belonged to the DePauws, a wealthy local family that had used the land for a summer residence. Four initial dwellings were built between 1906 and 1908 followed by another four in 1911. The remainder of the neighborhood began to be rapidly developed in the 1920s after the area was annexed to the city proper and city sewer services became available. Construction slowed during the Depression years and then picked up again in the 1940s. The development of the neighborhood coincided with the rise of the automobile age in New Albany and modern improvements and developments throughout the city.

The DePauw Avenue Historic District sits one mile northeast of the city's downtown commercial district and approximately one mile north of the Ohio River. DePauw Avenue is three blocks in length running east to west and is a narrow thoroughfare with parking limited to one side. Houses in the district set far back from the street and have sizeable front lawns. The district is

bordered on the east by Vincennes Street, a major, largely commercial corridor extending from the uptown area. Additional residential development extends to the north for two blocks to Charlestown Road, which is also a major roadway with commercial development. To the south of the district is the campus of New Albany High School. An alley runs behind the dwellings on the south side of DePauw Avenue and a portion of the north side. Dwellings on the eastern half of the north side of the street have long lots and a small creekbed extends through them. The portions of the district that extend along Vance and Beechwood Avenues include those dwellings that sit south of the creek, between the creek and DePauw Avenue.

A variety of architectural styles are represented in the DePauw Historic District. The earliest dwelling constructed in the district is the two- and one-half story Queen Anne style dwelling at 1718 DePauw Avenue built in 1906. The Queen Anne style was the dominant residential architectural style during the late nineteenth century. Its popularity began to diminish during the first decade of the twentieth century and few examples were built after 1910. The Shine-Thomas House at 1718 reflects the style through its corner tower and asymmetrical façade. The Beck-Wilt House at 1722 DePauw Avenue was built in 1908 and is a more modest example of the Queen Anne style demonstrated in a Folk Victorian form. The dwelling's projected bay with chamfered corners and wraparound porch are typical characteristics.

The district also contains dwellings built in a pyramid square form. This common vernacular design is characterized by a square house plan with a hipped or pyramidal roof. These dwellings were often built with decorative porches on the main façade and with dormers at the roofline. These dwellings often have windows and detailing reflective of the Bungalow/Craftsman style that emerged in the early twentieth century and are often a blend of the two designs. Both 1734 and 1814 DePauw Avenue were built in the pyramid square design ca. 1922. The dwellings have pyramidal roofs and full-width porches. The house at 814 has a hipped roof dormer on the main elevation, and the dwelling at 1734 has an original garage, also with a pyramidal roof.

The Colonial Revival style emerged around the turn of the century reflecting a renewed interest in the building designs of colonial America. The style marked a return to more symmetrical forms and classical detailing, and it remained widely popular throughout the first half of the century. Colonial Revival style dwellings were often built in rectangular plans with porch columns in Tuscan, Doric, or Ionic orders. Windows are generally multi-light sash design and commonly come in pairs and frame an accentuated entrance, often with a decorative crown or pedimented entry porch. The DePauw Avenue Historic District contains several examples of the Colonial Revival style. One of the best examples of the design is the Morris Best House at 1744 DePauw Avenue. This dwelling was built ca. 1928 and features large entry porch with Tuscan

columns and an oversized gable roof, paired six-over-six sash windows, and gable roof dormers. Another good example is the Fleischer-Worley House at 1923 DePauw Avenue, built in 1927. The dwelling's central entry porch has Tuscan columns and pilasters, which are replicated in its gable roof dormers. Windows are six-over-one sash design and are accented with arched brick lintels with concrete keystones and cornerstones. A later, more modest example of the Colonial Revival style is found at 2025 DePauw Avenue. Built ca. 1940, this home has a projecting gable bay that contains the main entrance and multi-light windows.

The American Foursquare plan expresses a simpler version of the Colonial Revival style. These two-story houses are rectangular or square in massing and form, have one-story front porches, hipped roofs, and details such as eave dentils and Tuscan porch columns. These dwellings were often designed with hipped roof dormers at the roofline. A representative example of this design in the DePauw Avenue district is the Elmer N. Dreyer House at 1922 DePauw Avenue. This dwelling was built ca. 1926 and features a full-width porch with square columns and a hipped roof dormer at the roofline.

The Tudor Revival style was also popular from the 1920s through the 1940s, and examples of this style were constructed in the DePauw Avenue Historic District. The Tudor Revival style is loosely based on early English building traditions and is characterized by steeply pitched gable roofs, decorative half-timbering, large exterior wall chimneys, and narrow casement design windows. Exteriors are commonly a mixture of stucco and brick. One of the best examples of the Tudor Revival style in the district is the Tighe House at 1801 DePauw Avenue. This two-story home was built in 1929 and features patterned brick and half timbering as well as stone on the exterior. The dwelling retains its original rounded arch batten wood door and its chimneys have chimney pots and patterned brick. Another example of the Tudor Revival style is the Harris-Strange-Meyer House at 1701 DePauw Avenue. This two-story dwelling was built ca. 1924 and has a stucco exterior with half timbering, a steeply pitched gable roof, and original Tudor style arched batten door, and casement as well as sash-style windows.

The overwhelming architectural style found in the neighborhood, however, is the Craftsman/Bungalow design. This style largely defines the district and gives it its overall character. The Craftsman/Bungalow style was one of the most popular residential architectural styles throughout the country in the early twentieth century at the time the DePauw neighborhood was being established, and homeowners in the district quickly made it the preferred style in the area. This style of dwelling was widely built throughout the district from ca. 1910 through the 1920s and into the 1930s. Common features of this style include a horizontal form with wide eaves, exposed roof rafters, and large porches with tapered columns and column piers or pedestals. Windows in these dwellings often have decorative upper sashes

often in various geometric designs. The historic district contains numerous examples of this style, including both brick and frame examples with varying degrees of elaboration. The Zeller-Farish House at 1705 DePauw Avenue is a brick veneer Bungalow built ca. 1924. It has a full-width gable roof porch with a decorative cutout frame valance, tapered brick columns, and knee brace brackets. The Ira Shine House at 1903 DePauw Avenue is a frame example built ca. 1924 and has a side gable roof with an incised full-width porch and a shed roof dormer. The ca. 1926 Bungalow at 1920 DePauw Avenue has a jerkinhead roof and dormer, a shed roof porch, and an exterior brick chimney with stone detailing. The district's one apartment building was also designed in the Craftsman style in 1925 and features a hipped roof entry porch, paired windows and two gable dormers at the roofline of the main elevation.

The architectural styles found in the DePauw Avenue Historic District reflect common, popular styles of the early twentieth century. Overall dwellings within the district have not been significantly altered and retain a high degree of their historic character. Collectively, they form a solid representation of the city's residential architecture of the period and convey a strong sense of time and place as an early twentieth-century neighborhood.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Historical Overview

The DePauw Avenue Historic District developed as an upper-class neighborhood in the early twentieth century as New Albany entered the modern era of growth and expansion. The city had experienced a period of economic depression in the 1890s and spent the first decade of the new century recovering and rebuilding its industrial strength. As the new leading industries of plywood and veneer production breathed new life into the city's economy, New Albany began to grow as a number of new neighborhoods emerged. The DePauw Avenue Historic District, located in the northeast section of the city near expanding residential, commercial, and industrial development, quickly became a preferred residential community. The district was largely developed during the 1920s as land and city services became available. The neighborhood's history, however, reaches back to the nineteenth century and the life of one of the most prominent men in the city's history.

Founded in 1813, New Albany developed as a major shipbuilding center and shipping port by the 1840s. Its position on the Ohio River supported a lucrative shipping and wholesale trade, and ample raw timber in the surrounding hillsides supplied a productive and profitable steamboat building industry. Steamboat construction served as the backbone of the local economy. It employed hundreds of carpenters, shipwrights, and laborers, and supported

numerous related industries such as lumber yards, mills, and foundries. Between 1825 and 1867, New Albany produced 353 steamboats and was second only to Pittsburgh in production of the vessels.

By 1830, New Albany was the largest town in Indiana with a population of 2,079. It continued to grow over the next decade and incorporated as a city in 1839. Described as the “largest and most commercial business point in the state,” New Albany was home to over 8,000 by 1850 and had over 120 shops and stores and seven financial institutions. Its steamboat building industry generated a million dollars a year while wholesalers and merchants generated another three million annually. By this time the city had also gained its first railroad, the New Albany and Salem line, which was constructed from 1847 to 1851.

But by the end of the 1860s, the bottom had fallen out of the steamboat industry. The rise of railroads revolutionized transportation, and as the number and efficiency of lines increased, reliance on steamboats faded. In New Albany, production of steamboats peaked in 1856. The Civil War hastened the decline of the local shipbuilding industry due to the city’s strong commercial ties to southern markets. Contracts from southern states on which the industry heavily depended came to a halt. Following the war, the industry struggled but never recovered.

Having learned their lesson on relying too heavily on one industry, New Albany’s business leaders promoted the development of a diverse array of industries in the late nineteenth century. By the 1880s, the city once again was experiencing an era of prosperity as extensive manufacturing development provided jobs, strengthened the economy, and spurred growth of the city. Furniture manufacturers, breweries, tanneries, and producers of soap, candles, tobacco, pottery, and marble all contributed to the local economy. Chief among the new industrial developments were textile mills, iron works, and the manufacture of plate glass. The Ohio Falls Iron Works and New Albany Rail Mill were founded ca. 1865 and employed 600 workers in the 1880s. New Albany Woolen and Cotton Mills, located on Vincennes Street, was the largest textile operation in the Midwest and employed 800 workers. The New Albany Hosiery Mill, established in 1879, had 150 employees.

By far the largest and most important plant in New Albany was the American Plate Glass Works. Established in 1865 as the New Albany Glassworks by John B. Ford, the firm initially produced bottles and jars, but soon also became a pioneer in the manufacture of plate glass. The company was the first to produce plate glass in the United States and installed the first American-made plate glass in a New Albany tailor shop in 1870. By the 1880s, under Washington C. DePauw, the American Plate Glass Works was the largest factory of its type in

the country and employed over 1,200 individuals. It occupied over thirty acres along the riverbank and had its own power plant, water works, barge line, foundries, warehouses, sawmill, and box factory.

These numerous concerns resulted in an increase in New Albany manufacturing sales from \$2 million in 1868 to \$20 million in the 1880s. The city experienced a number of improvements during these boom years. By 1882, five railroad lines traveled through the city, and in 1886 the Kentucky and Indiana (K&I) bridge was constructed across the Ohio River to accommodate rail traffic. Telephone service arrived in the city in 1883, and electricity followed in 1887. The city's mule-driven street car system, established in 1867, was expanded to eastern industrial developments along Vincennes Street.

The era was one of opulence due to the success of area industries, and New Albany became home to some of the wealthiest families in the state. Men of power and wealth built lavish homes along East Main Street in what became known as "mansion row". In 1870, a minimum of twenty-one men in the city were worth over \$100,000, and some were millionaires. One of the wealthiest and most influential men in the city was Washington C. DePauw, who was heavily involved in a variety of New Albany enterprises. DePauw was a native of Salem, Indiana and earned his initial fortune through the grain trade and banking. A wealthy man prior to the Civil War, DePauw moved to New Albany in the 1850s to be closer to the economic and business center of the state. He invested in numerous industries and often came to the rescue of failing companies, which he then reorganized and revitalized. DePauw was an original investor in the New Albany Woolen and Cotton Mills and controlled the plant by 1884. He also was a considerable shareholder in the New Albany Rolling Mill and the Ohio Falls Iron Works, and initiated the New Albany Gas Light & Coke Company. He held more than half of the interest in both the New Albany National Bank and the New Albany Banking Company, as well as over a third interest of the Merchants National Bank. He also owned a significant amount of stock in banks in Louisville and Indianapolis.

Greater than all of these interests was DePauw's involvement in the New Albany Glass Works. The company was suffering financially, and DePauw purchased the business from his cousin John Ford in time to rescue the operation from the economic depression brought on by the Panic of 1873. DePauw curbed a potentially devastating labor strike, and saved the company millions in taxes by convincing city officials to de-annex the thirty-acre factory site. He renamed the company DePauw American Glass Works and made it a financial success while significantly reducing the price of American-made plate glass for consumers. By 1890, it produced two-thirds of the plate glass made in the United States.