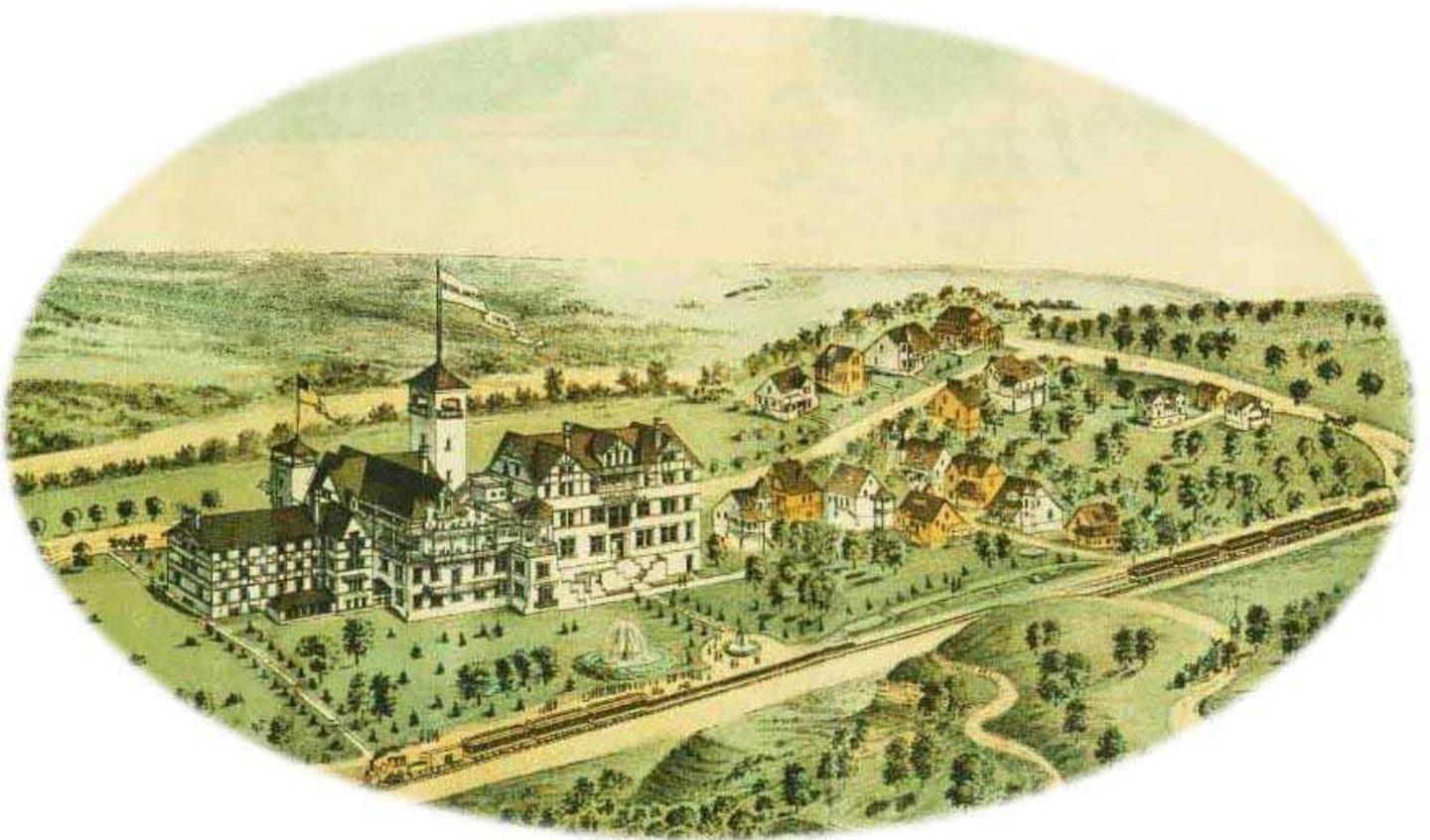
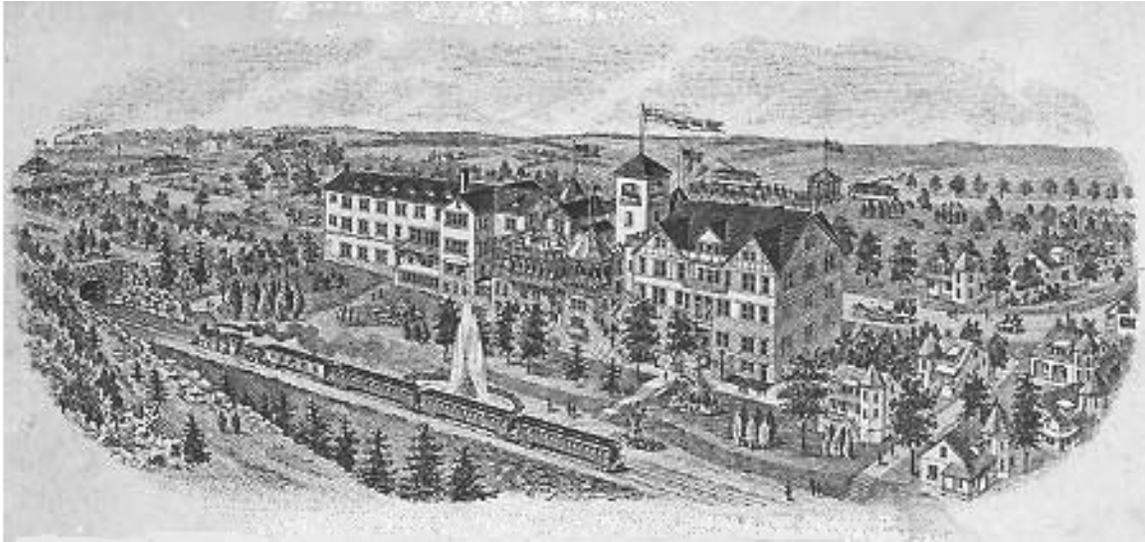


Meramec Highlands Historic District



An Informational Booklet for Residents



A BRIEF HISTORY

Meramec Highlands, at the end of the Manchester line, was developed in about 1895 as a summer resort. The Frisco Railroad also ran close by and served people from St. Louis who wanted a pleasant stay in the country. The Frisco Railroad built a station close to the resort, and they made nine stops daily in each direction and four trips on Sundays.

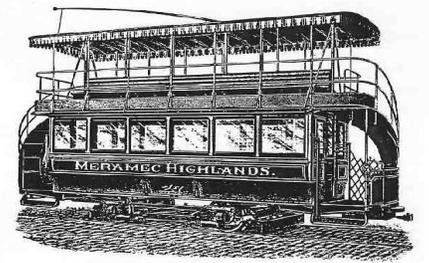


There was also a tunnel through which the trains ran, but because of a wreck in 1920 this tunnel was closed and the rails rerouted. Later this tunnel was used for growing mushrooms.

The resort consisted of a hotel with 125 rooms, a bathhouse, and fifteen summer cottages, and across the road was a dance pavilion called Sunset Pagoda. Later, after rowdy crowds began to attend, the pavilion became known as Eden Park.



Beer flowed freely, and the dances cost a mere five cents each. This brought many people to the dance pavilion on the streetcars, as the fare was only five cents. The streetcars had their share of trouble too, such as, gangs putting grease on the tracks and pulling trolleys off the tracks. At one time, the cars were rerouted in an attempt to avoid such trouble, but they were later rerouted again where they stayed until the end in 1950. Police often rode on the cars to try to stop the vandalism.



There was a sulphur spring, which flowed in the center of this resort area of 438 acres. It served the bathhouse situated at the end of the complex. This water was piped from the spring and held in a large, tall water tank located at the end of the loop where the streetcars turned around for their trip back east. The circular drive at the entrance of the Greenbriar Country Club marks the site of the streetcar loop.



This water, called "Nature's Remedy," was advertised as being helpful for kidney and bladder ailments, gout, and rheumatism. It was sulphur-lithia, water which came from far off through a long and devious trail through the rocks. It freed itself of poisons gathered along the way and came out pure. Some years later after the inn was closed, this water

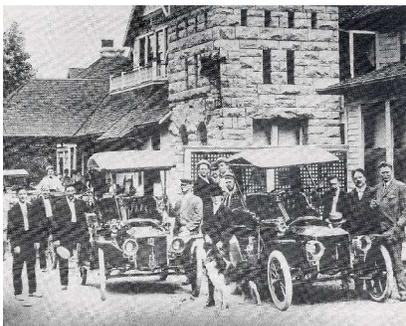
served several swimming pools around the area. It had a very strong smell of sulphur, and was as cold as ice as it flowed out of the pipes. The water for the inn and cottages came from the Meramec River, and 850,000 gallons a day were brought in by a complex water plant.

The charge for a room at the hotel ranged from \$15.00 to \$17.50 per week, and the cottages rented for the same amount. The success of the Highlands was the bathhouse. The demise of the Highlands was the dance pavilion. The inn closed in 1908, reopened in 1910 for a few years, and then closed permanently in 1912. A fire destroyed it in 1926.



There was a trail from the hotel grounds to the Meramec River. People came on Sundays and holidays to walk the distance from the loop where the streetcars turned around. They brought picnic baskets and spent the day on the banks of the river. This was a rather rough trail but shady and pleasant on summer days. The trail was made for the resort complex, but anyone could use it.

There was an abandoned quarry near by where many wiener roasts and picnics were held. There was also a place where young lovers spent time. It was within walking distance of the dance floor, the hotel grounds and the car loop. On the river was an excursion boat named "The Columbia" which took people up and down the river in the summer. Small boats and canoes could also be rented.



In 1908, the first run of the Ford Club, organized by Dr. S.A. Peake and friends, began in St. Louis on Lindell Boulevard Near Spring Avenue and proceeded to the Meramec Highlands Hotel where those who successfully completed the run posed for a photo.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The original summer cottages of the Meramec Highlands Resort have many common design features, though alternations over the years have brought about variations that were not originally intended. These cottages tend to be one-and-a-half story structures of limited size. The buildings are of wooden frame construction resting upon foundations of rock-faced ashlar.

The geometric complexity shown by the cottages is reflective of both late nineteenth century Romanticism and the limiting building sites. The steep roofs, often containing dormers, sweep down over first floor elements typically resolving with great overhangs. Porches of various plans and levels are common. Wood facings such as beveled siding, molded trim, sawn wood shingles and stick-type half timbers are characteristic of the exteriors.

Siding is typically horizontally placed, excepting the diagonals found on the gable ends. The double hung windows are decorated with Queen Anne features and vary in size, shape, and muntin arrangement. Originally, roofing was sawn wood shingles, some having since been replaced by asphalt shingles. Plaques displaying the cottage name (since replaced by the address) were found on the ground floor of the street side of the buildings.

Design Guidelines: Original Cottages

When renovating or altering the original cottages, preserving their character must be a concern. In general, repair of architectural features is preferred over their replacement. In the case in which replacement is demanded, sympathy regarding the original style and period should be exercised.

Alterations without historical basis are discouraged. Removal of existing, non-conforming alterations are encouraged, providing removal leaves relatively undamaged original work.

Some specific guidelines deserve mention:

Cleaning of the existing exterior masonry should be done only with the gentlest means possible.

Roofing ideally should consist of sawn wood shingles. Asphalt shingles may be substituted, though it is suggested that they be in natural colors (brown to gray) and have as much texture as possible.

Windows are to be tall with variations in size and shape. Unusual details and muntin arrangements are encouraged. Storm windows should be of design and materials compatible with the original style of the cottage.

Coloring of the original cottages at the time of construction is uncertain, though contrasting trim was found and is encouraged in current decoration.

Resurfacing with new materials (those not available at the time of original construction) is discouraged, since, in addition to being historically inappropriate, it can result in accelerated moisture and insect damage to the building. When using materials appropriate to the period, replicating the original smooth finished, 3-½ or 4-inch wide clapboards are suggested.

Additions to original cottages should not attempt to replicate the historic work, but be 21st-century designs related to the existing structure by scale, material, and general character.

Plaques originals or replicas crafted in accordance with the enclosed plan, are encouraged to be placed on the street side first floor, neighboring the double windows. These should carry the cottage name (name list enclosed).

Landscaping is a significant aspect in the character of the Meramec Highlands area. The informality of the area should be maintained. Terracing, using railroad ties or, preferable, stonework can be used to create an informal, uneven terrain. Curving walks and informal planting arrangements are recommended. Potential unusual planting arrangements can be found classified as Victorian plantings in stylebooks. The heavily wooded nature of the area should be preserved.

Design Guidelines: Existing Non-Cottage Homes

Existing, non-resort structures that do not conform to the style of the historic structures are problematic, since they often violate the mentioned recommendations for additions, in that they predate the historic district designation. Alterations and additions can attempt to bridge gaps between the original building's design characteristics and those of the resort cottages. Siding can be changed to a scale nearer to those of the cottages. Colors sympathetic to those of other cottages could be chosen.

The most conspicuous and cost-effective changes that could be recommended would involve landscaping. Addition of retaining walls, curving walks, and unusual plantings can enhance the non-cottage structure while making lots in the district more cohesive.

Design Guidelines: New Construction

Future development should meet the criteria laid out for alterations and additions to the historic structures, not mimicking the cottages, but being 21st -century designs related to them by scale, material, and general character.

Other aspects not applicable to additions and alterations need to be considered in working with undeveloped land:

Platting & Landscaping should be done to allow character similar to the developed areas. Street extensions should be laid out with curving right-of-ways. Small setbacks are also encouraged. Grading to a flat site is strongly discouraged. The wooded nature of the district can be maintained by adding trees where they are lacking.

Unusual plantings and winding walks can be used to enhance the informal character of the district.

Massing of the structures should be comparable to the irregular massing of the original cottages. New buildings should be one or two stories high and have complicated, asymmetric floor plans. Steeply pitched roofs with deeply projecting eaves are recommended. Bay windows and porches incorporated into the roof are also potential compatible features.

Materials for new buildings ought to be compatible with those of the original cottages. Wood siding, stone, and brick are acceptable materials. Rustic materials, such as rough sawn shingles and rough sawn lumber may conflict with those of the cottages.

Concrete foundations should be concealed or avoided. Roofing should be done in natural colors and be highly textured. Roofing materials can be either wood shingles or asphalt.



Unusual muntin arrangement on dormer

Steep roof

Porch beneath roof

Multi-story bay windows



Applied half-timbers and diagonal siding on gable ends

Dormer

Steep roof

Porch beneath roof

Plaque



Original Meramec Highlands Cottage Names with Current Addresses

Belleglade - 24 Ponca Trail

Edgewood - 17 Ponca Trail

Elmwood - 28 Ponca Trail

Fairview - no longer extant

Ferndale - 22 Ponca Trail

Hillside - 33 Ponca Trail

Idlewild - 14 Ponca Trail

Laurel - 30 Ponca Trail

Maplewood - 15 Ponca Trail

Miramor - 13 Ponca Trail

Myrtle - 19 Ponca Trail

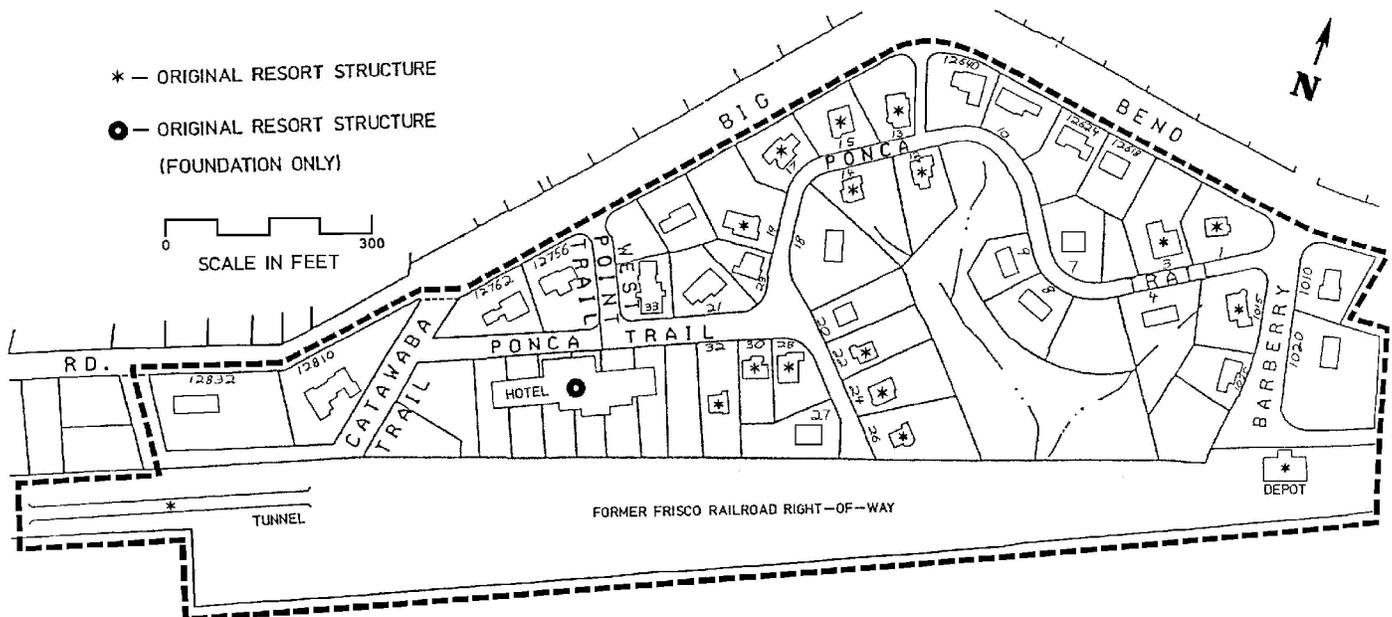
Riverview - 26 Ponca Trail

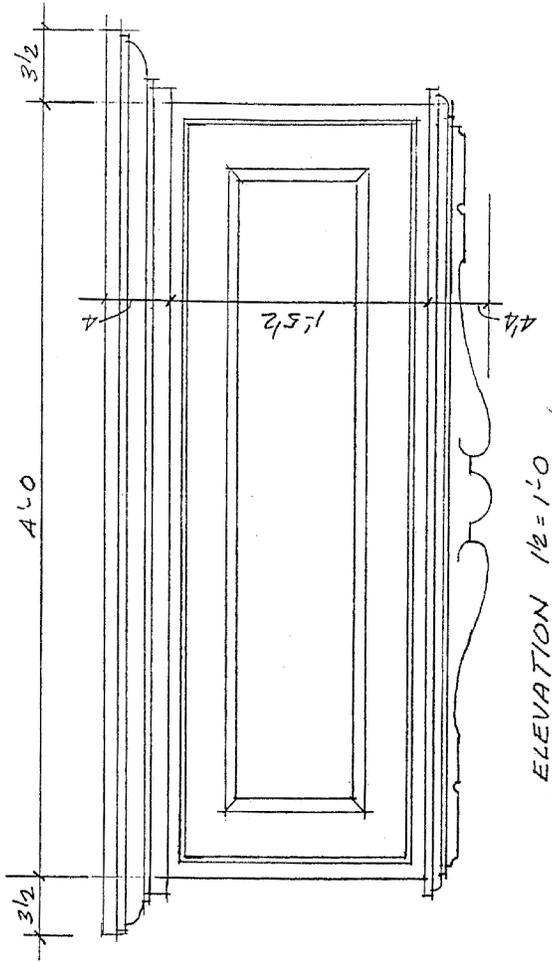
Rockledge - 12 Ponca Trail

Rosemount - No longer extant

Oakwood - No longer extant

MERAMEC HIGHLANDS HISTORIC DISTRICT

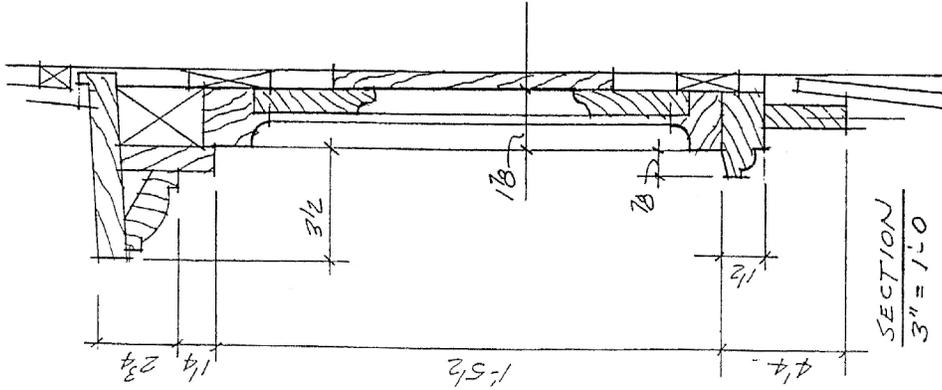




ELEVATION 1/2" = 1'-0"

COTTAGE SIGN
 MERAMEC HIGHLANDS
 KIRKWOOD, MO.

RL BLISS
 6-8-88



SECTION
 3" = 1'-0"