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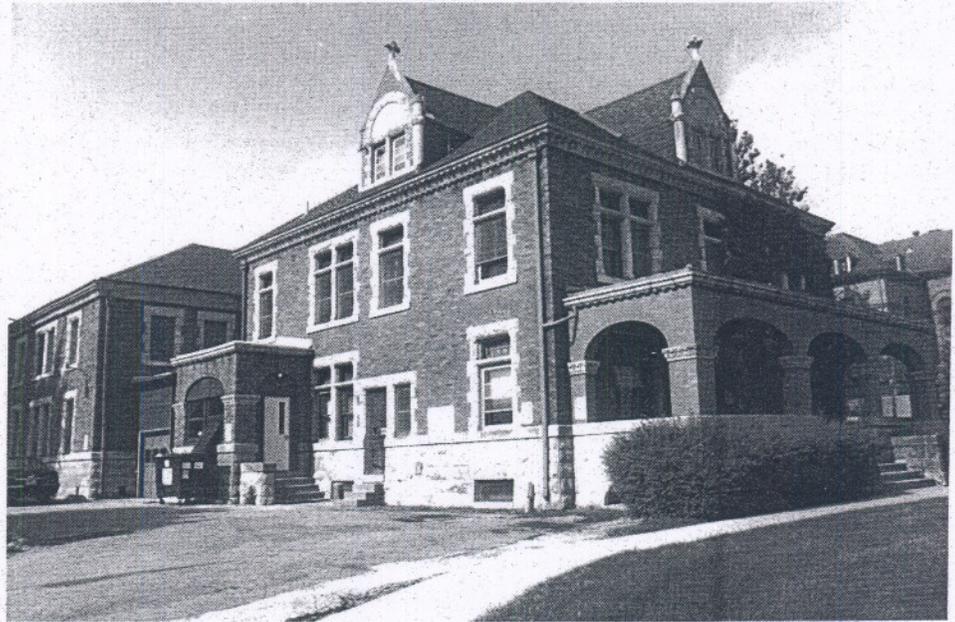
Champaign County Sheriff's Residence and Jail

The Residence and Jail were constructed in 1905 from designs by the noted Urbana architect, Joseph Royer, who also designed the adjacent Courthouse in 1901 among other important civic buildings. The building is an example of the Romanesque Revival architectural style, an architectural style that has few examples in Champaign County. Located on its original site, the Sheriff's Residence and Jail are an increasingly rare example of county jurisprudence wherein a courthouse and sheriff's residence with attached jail share a common location—Courthouse Square. Although not used as a jail since 1980 and as a residence since the 1960s, the building retains a very high degree of integrity.

Architectural Description

The Sheriff's Residence and Jail is divided into two distinct sections with the Residence facing Main Street and the Jail recessed to the rear (south). Two and one-half stories in height above a raised and battered limestone foundation, the rectangular-shaped Residence is of pressed brick construction (shades of light brown/orange in color) laid in a running bond with prominent limestone detailing around the window and door openings. The limestone foundation consists of large coursed quarry-faced ashlar blocks laid up in five slightly battered courses below a slightly projecting smooth limestone watertable; grade level rectangular sash openings, covered by metal grilles, puncture the foundation plane. A tall asphalt-shingled hip roof with three gable roof dormers covers the residential section of the building.

An almost full-width brick porch with a very shallow clay tile hip roof enhances the main (north) facade. The porch has four short brick piers and two engaged piers with very decorative, incised Romanesque-detailed stone capitals. The piers rest on a high stone foundation and



The Champaign County Sheriff's Residence and Jail, 201 East Main, Urbana, was built in 1905 from the design of Joseph Royer. The County Board plans to demolish the building this fall.

watertable that is a continuation of the Residence's foundation and watertable; however, at-grade round arch openings with exaggerated stone voussoirs interrupt this section of the foundation. Very wide center concrete steps are buttressed on either side by stone cheek pieces with stone caps that are only slightly lower than the porch's foundation; the porch deck is concrete. Springing from the six decorative stone cushion capitals are five arches constructed of three brick rows; the three arches to the front/north are very wide, depressed three-centered arches, while the single side arches are segmental. A molded terra cotta cornice with brick dentils completes the porch details.

Entry to the Sheriff's Residence is through slightly recessed one-light beveled-glass double doors below a rectangular one-light transom. The doorway itself has no surround, but the entrance is embellished by flanking smooth stone pilasters with stone capitals decorated by corner anthemion ornaments and molded

stone bases set on low pedestals with corner anthemion ornaments. The pilasters carry a large stone lintel that extends into the doorway opening and is also decorated by large corner anthemions. Flanking the entrance are wide one-light double-hung sash set below sixteen-light rectangular transoms. A continuous stone stringcourse/sill joins the stone watertable at the facade's edge. On the second story, two paired one-over-one-light double-hung windows with eight-light transoms flank a similar single center window. All of the windows have elaborate stone surrounds with chamfered inner edges, quoins, stone sills, dressed stone transom bars, and stone lintels; the paired windows also have dressed stone mullions. An intricate entablature encircles the building and is composed of brick dentils, a curved frieze decorated with alternating anthemion and acanthus leaves, and a molded terra cotta cornice. Centered in the roof is a tall brick and stone dormer with rounded

stone edges that originally rose as pinnacles with finials; the pinnacles are now truncated at the bottom of the gable by a stone cap. Paired three-over-six-light double-hung windows are centered in the gable and have a stone quoin surround, continuous dressed stone sill, and rough-faced stone lintel that abuts the pinnacles. A blind stone round arch is set above the lintel with stone voussiors. The gable tympanum is brick with stone rakes and is topped by a stone finial.

The west elevation continues the details of the main facade including the high stone foundation, smooth water-table, decorative stone window surrounds, and stone entablature. However, two semi-hexagonal bays enliven this side. A single story bay is positioned at the north edge of the elevation with one-over-one-light windows and multi-light transoms set directly above the water-table. A cornice, comparable to the porch cornice, is above the windows' surround with a scalloped brick parapet above; the parapet has stone coping and ball finials in the center. The center of the elevation is blind, but a paired window group with transoms is to the south. Projecting from the Residence's southwest corner is the second bay: a two-story semi-hexagonal bay with details similar to the one-story bay including the scalloped parapet with stone ball finials. However, the Annex (built as a series of additions between 1957 and 1980) to the Courthouse now connects to the Residence through the center window of the bay; the annex is lower than the bay and does not interfere with its cornice or parapet. A gable roof dormer is also located on this elevation with details similar to the main gable; two cross finials are extant on this dormer.

The east side of the building is more utilitarian in design, although all of the decorative stone and terra cotta details of the main facade are repeated on this elevation. One-over-one-light double-hung windows with multi-light transoms are located on both stories at the north end of the building. A three-course rowlock relieving arch, however, is set above the first story window's surround. Centered in this elevation is a one-light over two-panel door with a stone threshold and concrete steps; a one-over-one-light window is directly adjacent to the north. These openings are joined through a common stone surround that also merges with a paired window group that is to the immediate south; a second relieving arch is above the paired windows. A single window is above the doorway ensemble on the second story, while a paired window group is to the south. The details of the north and west gables

are repeated on the east elevation gable that has a single finial. A very shallow roof porch projects from the southeast corner; originally open, it is now infilled. Its details are similar to the main porch with a stone foundation, smooth water-table, brick piers with decorative stone capitals, three-point arches, and terra cotta cornice. The entrance faces north with concrete steps and a single stone cheek piece to the east; the infilled doorway has a modern door with a wood surround. On the east, the arch opening has been infilled with modern paired two-light windows and wood.

A recessed hyphen connects the Sheriff's Residence with the Jail to the south. A modern one-car garage now infills the recessed area and blocks the south side of the east porch. Paired second story windows are above the garage in the hyphen; these one-over-one-light double-hung windows are barred and have lintels only, no decorative surrounds. The cornice of the Residence, however, continues on the hyphen. A very wide and very tall chimney sits between the Residence and Jail, presumably above the hyphen. The chimney has four flue openings, although the west opening has been infilled with a chimney pipe and stone cap. Corbelled brickwork in an arch pattern decorates the sides and ends of the chimney.

The Jail is also rectangular in shape, two stories in height, and has an asphalt shingled hip roof. The high quarry-faced stone foundation with ventilation grilles and smooth stone watertable continue around the Jail and the running bond brickwork matches that of the Sheriff's Residence. The windows are one-over-one-light double-hung sash with sturdy metal bars and thick metallic screens; quarry-faced stone surrounds with quoins decorate the windows, but the second story sills are smooth dressed stone (the watertable serves as the first story sill). On the north side are three second story windows, set above the infilled garage and to the east of the hyphen; on the east elevation, single windows flank center paired windows on each story; and on the south there are five symmetrically placed single windows. The west elevation is hidden by the Courthouse annex. Relieving arches are found above the first story windows on the east elevation. An entablature also encircles the building, but it is simpler than that seen on the Residence: brick dentils, a cavetto frieze without embellishment, and cornice.

History

Three jails have served Champaign County since 1833, when the county was established; this number does not include the current 1980 jail, nor the 1996 satellite jail. Colonel M.W. Busey built the first jail in 1839-40 for \$850; it was of hewn logs, 18 feet square and two-stories high. The only entrance was by way of an outside stairway to the second floor and the worst prisoners were taken through a trap door into the dark cell below via a ladder that was then removed. The cell was lighted only by narrow grated windows in the lower story and there was no means of heating either room.

After some escapes, the County Court appointed a building committee in 1856 that drew up specifications for a new brick and iron jail and jailor's residence. The residence was to be 28 x 25 feet and two stories high, while the adjacent jail was to be 28 x 27 feet with a hip roof and ten twelve-light windows; additional specifications for the cells were also made. In September, 1856, E. Jacobs and Company's bid for \$7,000 was accepted. Many additions and improvements were made, both to the jail and the attached jailor's residence, according to J.R. Stewart's *History of Champaign County*. But these changes were not sufficient to meet the requirements of a "wealthy and advanced" county so a new building was erected in 1905.

In 1902 a resolution was passed authorizing the Buildings and Grounds Committee to purchase a lot for a new jail site; the necessity of building a new jail and residence was also supported. The Committee was instructed to prepare plans and specifications, and if necessary, to view other jails. The cost of the new jail and residence was not to exceed \$40,000.

Bids for the new jail were opened on April 18, 1903; Frank Jahr had the lowest bid of \$42,000. The contract included heating, plumbing, cells, residence, and jail building to be built in pressed brick with a Bedford limestone foundation.

Urbana architect Joseph Royer designed the new jail and sheriff's residence in the Romanesque style to compliment the recently completed Courthouse. *The Urbana Courier* described the building as follows in its opening day article.

In the composition of the exterior, rock face Bedford stone is used for the foundation and extends up to the first story window sills. The windows and door openings are also treated with rock face stone burnt to accentuate the design. The cornices are of terra cotta with relief ornament. The roof is of red tile in harmony with the pressed brick used for facing the building. A special feature of the building is the construction of porches. The

porches are three in number and consist of cement floors and brick columns and arches. The columns are ornamented by stone capitals.

The interior of the building contains the sheriff's residence and the different apartments of the jail proper. The residence portion of the building contains large rooms, together with halls, closets, pantries and bath rooms, all of which are very commodious and finely finished in hardwood. The walls of the residence portion are handsomely decorated in very pleasing colors.

The *Champaign Daily Gazette* also described the jail.

As to the construction of the jail itself, there is none stronger in the country. In the minds of people who have examined its equipment, it seems impossible for a prisoner to escape from the building. To escape there are five locks and bars that must be made way with, before freedom is gained. There are twenty-six cells, including a padded cell for insanes, a debtor's cell and womens and boys' cells. The debtor's cell, as provided by the statute, is furnished befitting a residence. It is set apart from the jail by itself, and should they have occasion to use it, the prisoner will in most cases fare better than if he had not offended. A trap has been placed between the first and second floors in case of an execution. A hospital room is on the second floor. The construction of the building is model in every detail being erected at a cost of \$42,000. The specifications drawn up by the board of supervisors allowed for no extras.

After the opening of the new jail complex, a County committee was formed to ask the Urbana City Council to vacate Walnut Street between Main and Elm streets. This would allow for a large, unimpeded Courthouse Square. An agreement with Urbana was reached whereby the City vacated Walnut Street and deeded it to the County for \$1.00 and the County deed to the City seventeen feet along Market (Broadway) Street south of the Courthouse so that the street could be widened to fifty feet. Twenty-eight feet east of the new jail was also acquired so that an alley (Bennett Ave.) could be made forty feet wide. Although the old jail was advertised for sale and moving, it was apparently decided to move the building to the Poor Farm.

Deputy Sheriff W.H. Roughton and his family were the first occupants of the residence and prisoners were transferred to the new facility in late March, 1905. The residence was used by sheriffs or their deputies until Russ Chaney was elected in the 1960s. After that, the residence was used as office space. Changing jail regulations and a need for increased space necessitated a new jail that was constructed across the street from the historic jail in 1979.

Architect and Builder

Joseph Royer was the leading architect in Urbana at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. Royer graduated from the University of Illinois in 1895 with a degree in architectural engineering. He was city engineer for the City of Urbana from 1898 to 1906, during which time he designed the 1901 Champaign County Courthouse. Among his firm's other projects are the Urbana High School (1914), Urbana Lincoln Hotel (1924), Urbana Christian Church (1910), the Urbana Free Library (1918), as well as numerous private residences in both Urbana and Champaign. Royer was also the architect for the Franklin County Sheriff's Residence and Jail in Benton, Illinois (1907) that was recently placed on the National Register. Although Classical Revival in architectural style, it has many similarities to the Champaign County Sheriff's Residence and Jail.

Not much is known about Frank Jahr, the contractor for the Sheriff's Residence and Jail. He was born in Mahomet, Illinois and worked as a contractor at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century, mostly in Champaign and Urbana. After 1908 he is no longer listed in the City Directories and he may have moved to Decatur. Other buildings constructed by him included the Monticello Library and Opera House (1896), the Robert D. Burnham House (Champaign, 1896), the Kaufman House (Champaign, 1898), and the Band Stand in West Side Park.

Architectural Significance

The Champaign County Sheriff's Residence and Jail were designed in the Romanesque Revival architectural style. A fairly rare style in Champaign County, two other public buildings are readily identified as Romanesque Revival in style: the Champaign County Courthouse (1901) in Urbana, and Altgeld Hall (1897) on the University of Illinois campus.

European Romanesque buildings were sometimes used as models for American public and commercial buildings as early as the middle of the nineteenth century. The style's use for residential buildings was largely shaped by the strong personality of one architect, Henry Hobson Richardson of Boston. During the 1870s a distinctive personal style evolved, which was applied mainly to large public buildings such as the monumental Trinity Church in Boston and the Thomas Crane Public Library in Quincy, Massachusetts. A late work, completed after his death, was the Allegheny County Court House and Jail, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1884-1887). This work, one of Richardson best known, showed how the Roman-

esque style could work effectively for civic buildings such as court houses and jails. In 1879-80 Richardson designed the first of his Romanesque residential adaptations, but he completed only a few more before his death in 1886. A monograph on Richardson's life and work was published in 1888 which greatly increased the popularity of the style.

Characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style include masonry construction, usually with heavy, rock-faced ashlar stone or pressed brickwork with red-tinted mortar joints; brick or rusticated stone arches or lintels; battered lower walls; heavy, thick walls with deep window reveals or door openings; cushioned and foliated capitals; short, squat columns; deep-set one-over-one-light windows often with transoms and stone mullions, frequently paired or tripled; stained glass windows; steep hipped roofs with slate or tile shingles; and heavy round arches. Often two or more colors or textures of stone and brick are combined for a decorative wall effect. A key element of the style are wide rounded arches that may occur above windows, porches or entryways. These arches spring from squat columns or massive piers or can be incorporated directly into the wall plane. Wall surfaces or column capitals are often decorated with foliated ornament. Dormers are often present and can be parapeted or gable wall dormers.

Many of the above characteristics can be seen on the Sheriff's Residence. The building is of pressed brick construction with a very heavy battered quarry/rock-faced ashlar stone foundation. Its thick walls have deep set one-over-one-light windows with transoms and stone mullions divide the paired window groups. A combination of textures is achieved through the use of brick accented by heavy window surrounds with quoins and a decorative terra cotta cornice. The porch's wide arches spring from short brick piers that are embellished with cushion capitals with foliated ornamentation. Foliated ornament is also found on the main door pilasters and lintel and on the decorative cornice. The steeply pitched hip roof originally was covered by red clay tiles and the three very decorative gable roof dormers have stone ornament, blind round arches, corner colonnettes, and elaborate finials. All of these details compliment the nearby Courthouse which was finished four years earlier (1901) and was also designed in the Romanesque Revival style.

Article by Robert Nemeth, architect, and taken from the landmark nomination submitted to the City of Urbana.

Urbana Preservation

The Sheriff's Residence was recently nominated for status as an Urbana Landmark by Champaign County resident and architect, Robert Nemeth. His filing of the nomination application had the potential to delay the demolition of the building as the Urbana Preservation Commission and the City Council debated the merits of the nomination. However, City staff rejected the application for technical reasons and notified the County administration of the submission. A request for a demolition permit was quickly submitted by the County and granted by the City, before a revised application could be submitted, thus voiding any future attempts to nominate the building.

The nomination was rejected for three reasons. First, a tax parcel number was not included. According to Assessor Joanne Chester, County properties do not have tax parcel numbers because they are not taxable properties. Second, the legal description potentially included some City right-of-way. This was true, but included only 28 feet of Bennet Ave. and was part of the original lot on which the Sheriff's House was constructed. Historically, it belonged with the property. Lastly, the required map that was submitted with the nomination was ruled insufficient, although the map requirements in the ordinance are rather vague. These errors in the nomination were not relayed to Nemeth immediately, rather they were mailed on a Friday, four days after the application was submitted, and requiring him to wait until Monday morning to submit a corrected nomination.

This application was also rejected due to the fact that a demolition permit for the building had been approved that morning.

In all actuality, there was little probability that the nomination to landmark the Sheriff's Residence and Jail would have passed the City Council as a majority of the Council members would not have approved the nomination over the County's objection. However, it is interesting that the City administration felt the need to circumvent their own ordinance and not even allow the nomination to go through the process. This incident does not bode well for historic preservation in Urbana, nor for the standing of the newly appointed Historic Preservation Commission.

The Champaign County Sheriff's Residence and Jail clearly met the criteria for designation as an Urbana Landmark. The building has significant value as part of the architectural, civic, and social heritage of Urbana, as the county seat, and Champaign County as a whole. It is a fairly rare Champaign County example of an architectural style that is inherently valuable for the study of a period and style and the building retains a remarkable degree of integrity. The Residence and Jail are also a notable work of a master Urbana architect, Joseph Royer, whose designs have influenced greatly the look of downtown Urbana and Champaign County.

Heritage Award Nominations Sought

The Heritage Award Committee is seeking nominations for the 2000 Heritage Awards. Categories include residential, commercial, institutional, landscape, and landmark projects. Special Heritage Awards are also given to individuals who have worked to preserve a special aspect of our heritage or who have advanced the cause of historic preservation in our community. The nomination process is quick and easy; a form is enclosed with this newsletter. Self nominations are encouraged, especially for construction related projects. Contact PACA if you have any questions or would like to serve on the Selection Committee.

Salvage Update

Recently, PACA members Betty Swisher, Bob Swisher, and Rich Cahill conducted a "hands-on" salvage workshop for members of the Old House Society of Bloomington-Normal. An 1890s era house had been donated to the group after efforts to relocate the building failed. Loaded with interesting architectural artifacts, the house was salvaged by OHS members under the guidance of PACA experts. Over four truck loads of materials was saved including pocket doors, a walnut staircase, a clawfoot tub and an unusual toilet with a round tank. PACA donated money to the OHS in exchange for the items which are now for sale at the warehouse.

Membership Application P.A.C.A.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

- Adult\$15.00
- Student (1/2 time or more)\$10.00
- Senior Citizen\$10.00
- Family\$20.00

- Corporate\$75.00

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Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Bob Swisher hard at work at a Bloomington salvage site with a nail-pulling volunteer.

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New & Renewing Memberships

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Over Ten Year Members

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 Gail A. Merritt
 Mr. & Mrs. Dan McCulley
 Elizabeth Cardman
 Karen Werth

Remember to check your mailing label for your membership renewal date. The date shown indicates when you last renewed; membership runs for one year from that date.

PACA Newsletter

P.O. Box 2555, Station A, Champaign, IL 61825

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