

SOULARD (21)

LOCATION

Soulard's triangular boundaries are defined by 7th Street and Broadway to the Southeast and I-55 to the West and North.

HISTORY

The Soulard neighborhood received its name from Antoine Soulard, a refugee from the French Revolution who arrived in St. Louis in 1794. He married Julia Cerre. The couple acquired the Cerre Farm, as well as more land given to Antoine as a gift for his service during the regime of Governor Carlos Selassus. The widowed Soulard eventually gave two acres to the City for the Soulard Market, as well as more land to Bishop Rosati for the construction of St. Vincent de Paul's Church. The City did not purchase the actual Soulard area until 1841. It was during this time that development occurred rapidly to the south of St. Louis. Country estates were developed by Gabriel Cerre, Benito Vasquez, Eugene Poure, and the Papin Family. Immigrants that settled in the area lived in row or "half" houses. The earliest homes in the area were built in Greek Revival style. These were generally farmhouses. Homes built after 1850 were more highly decorated. After the Civil War, many of the large mansions were built. Some these mansions belonged to Max J. Feuerbacher, Dr. Franz Artzt, Thomas Allen, Julia C. Soulard and Benjamin J. Soulard, Adam Lemp, and Eberhard Anheuser.

The first people to settle the area were the French, which is evident from the names of many of the churches and streets, and, most noticeably, the name of the city. Later to arrive were large numbers of German immigrants, mostly during political upheavals in Germany and Bohemia in 1848. Other immigrants that arrived were Syrian, Hungarian, Croatian, Italian, Serbian, Irish, Slovak, and Czech. The nickname for the area soon became Bohemian Hill because of the large number of Eastern European immigrants. The principle industry in the area was the production of beer. Natural caves beneath Soulard provided ideal locations for storing beer during summer. There were more than 50 breweries in the mid-1800s, some of which included Eberhard Anheuser's Bavarian, Adam Lemp's Western, Arsenal, Anthony and Huhn's, Excelsior, Green Tree, and English Breweries. The only remaining brewery is Anheuser-Busch.

The first Soulard Market building was erected in the 1840s and was enlarged in 1865. Farmers from all over the area traveled to town to sell their products. It was sold to the City in 1867 and continued in use until 1896, when a tornado destroyed the Soulard Market, as well as many of the surrounding buildings and churches. The present building was constructed in 1929 in the Italian Renaissance style by city architect Albert Osbury. The Soulard Market is said to have been inspired by the Florentine Hospital designed by the Renaissance sculptor and architect, Filippo Brunelleschi.

The earliest activity in the area was along the riverfront. It provided close proximity to the City's central area and facilities for shipping by steamboat. The St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad (now Missouri Pacific) was built along the riverfront in the mid-1850s. More industrial development ensued rapidly, including the Helmbacher Forge and Rolling Mill, Home Cotton Mill, St. Louis Woodward Works, and St. Louis Cotton Compress Company. The major thoroughfare through Soulard was Carondelet Avenue (later named Broadway), running parallel with the Mississippi River. It was here that

commercial activity originated. Public markets were located in or near the Soulard Market. Another farmers' market flourished in Frenchtown, near Carondelet Avenue and Chouteau, well into the twentieth century. Horsecar lines allowed commercial and business districts to proliferate. Many new businesses, shops, and other facilities began to spring up in more residential area. One of the first major horsecar lines ran from Carondelet Avenue to Russell to 12th Street to Gravois.

CHARACTERISTICS

Soulard is conveniently located five minutes from downtown, and minutes away from major employers such as Anheuser-Busch and Ralston Purina. It also provides easy access to all major interstates in the City. Soulard is one of the oldest residential neighborhoods still standing in the City and boasts some of the most well-preserved historic buildings in the City. The architecture in the neighborhood is heavily influenced by the European immigrants that settled the area in the 1800s. Among the architectural styles to be found is nineteenth-century Flounder and French Second Empire. Later construction, mainly that which took place in the late 1800s, is of Germanic influence. Red brick rowhouses, built close to the sidewalks in the European style, line the streets. It is obvious by looking at the construction of the buildings that Soulard was densely populated, as the numerous brick rowhouses are situated very close to one another. The size of most residential units ranges from 1500 to 3000 square feet, with approximately six to eight rooms. There exists a large use of wrought-iron and cast-iron fences and ornamentation, with an interesting variety of brick and wooden cornices.

Soulard is on the National Register of Historic Places, and residents have taken great care in maintaining and preserving their property. Within the neighborhood boundary lies the Historic Soulard Market, which is one of the oldest farmer's markets in the United States. Historic landmarks can be found on almost any corner, such as the old Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, which was founded in 1849 and whose Gothic edifice was consecrated in 1875. There is also the Anheuser-Busch brewery, which was founded in 1860 when Eberhard Anheuser acquired the Bavarian Brewery. By 1940, it was the world's largest brewery and it has continued to grow ever since. The 100-plus acre complex has three buildings that have been registered as National Historic Landmarks.

One finds a variety of specialty shops and businesses located within the neighborhood. Soulard also has a number of active neighborhood organizations: the Soulard Restoration Group, the Soulard Neighborhood Improvement Association, the Soulard Business Association and the Soulard Home Owners Association. There is a variety of schools found in the area, many of which provide after school programs for the area's youth. Parks and playgrounds are scattered throughout the community, providing areas of recreation for young and old alike. Several well-maintained community gardens are also be found in the area.

An obvious presence in Soulard is Anheuser-Busch. Over the years, the brewery has grown in size, providing the City with a large number of jobs and incorporating some of the surrounding buildings in Soulard. In most cases, Anheuser Busch has restored the historic buildings they have acquired and improved the appearance of the property. They have also assisted the community in retaining important structures.

INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Soulard has many community institutions, assets, and annual festivals for both residents and visitors. Commemorating its rich history of many ethnic backgrounds, Soulard hosts the nation's second-largest Mardi Gras Festival, a Bastille Day Celebration, and a St. Patrick's Day Celebration. These are popular attractions among St. Louis' residents. There are also house tours, garden tours, and an annual kite festival. Other popular attractions include pubs, wine bars, art galleries, and historic buildings and churches. One of the more popular attractions in Soulard is the Soulard Farmer's Market, which is one of the country's oldest in existence. Farmers and vendors from all over the metro area travel to the market to sell their products, whether they be vegetables, fruit, nuts, or meat. The most popular and famous tourist attraction is the Anheuser-Busch brewery, which offers tours to the public.

Area churches include Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church (1849), Trinity Lutheran Church (1865), St. Agatha Roman Catholic Church (1871), and St. Joseph's Croatian Church (1927). Educational facilities located within Soulard include Lafayette School and Humboldt School. The Boys and Girls Club of St. Louis offers after-school programs for the area's youth.

Area parks and recreation facilities include Pontiac Square Park, 7th Street Playground, Soulard Playground, Aboussie Park (smallest City park in St. Louis), Lyons (located across Broadway), and the Soulard Recreation Center.

The Soulard Restoration Group has created several community flower gardens. The organization also has a safety committee that hires off-duty police officers to patrol city streets. Lye mainly stivight spots Aenewl comm(unity)12vorganization is the Soulard eOwnwer Association,(which woark)18.9(, with resident, and(prperity)18.9 ownwens in thy)TJT0.0015 Tc-0.0015 Tw[er rk ir the are(for sev)12.9(e)0.2(raley)12.9e bars, rehabcilirating ones.

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Major plans in the neighborhood include redevelopment of the old Welsh Baby Carriage building. A developer has purchased the building and has plans to create 150 loft apartments and street-level retail. The project's projected cost is \$25 million. The developers plan to attract young professionals, small families, downtown workers, and County-dwellers interested in living near downtown.

Another plan still in the works is the renovation of the existing Soulard Market. This idea is controversial, as many residents fear that the plan will change the flavor and overall diversity of the market—perhaps even Soulard. Vendors and patrons also fear that prices will inevitably rise. On the other hand, the market's plumbing and electrical wiring have been in place since the building's construction in 1929. Furthermore, the building does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. A statement released earlier this summer by the Historic Soulard Farmers Market Merchant's Association stated that the plan is still a concept and not a finished product.