

2.2.26 Poverty Ridge Historic District

Ordinance # 85-076
July 30, 1985

Poverty Ridge Historic District

Poverty Ridge is one of the most distinctive neighborhoods in the Old City for several reasons—it is built on a slight hill, the houses are large and typically set on broad lots, and it was the wealthiest part of Sacramento when it was built. In addition, there are many houses which that show influences from the Prairie Style with long horizontal roof lines, banding of windows, and characteristic detail which give the District a unique architectural character. When it was built it would have been an up-to-date neighborhood in almost any city in the United States.

The neighborhood dates from the turn of the century to about 1915, although there are some fine later houses as well. The focal point of the District was originally along 21st and 22nd Streets although there have been serious losses on 21st Street in recent years. Other important houses on the cross streets are mostly at the corners. There are also many Craftsman houses in the neighborhood including many bungalows in the block bounded by S and T, 20th and 21st Streets. While not a part of Poverty Ridge proper, this block was developed within its sphere, apparently as a middle-class effort to associate with the prestige of the wealthier Poverty Ridge.

The boundaries of the District are naturally defined by the contours of the geographic ridge for which the neighborhood is named. Below the ridge to the east is a large less cohesive neighborhood of bungalows and other post-1920 houses. The freeway runs near the natural southern boundary and industrial development begins above S Street near the natural northern boundary. On the west, the boundary line is drawn irregularly to include two important houses on the west side of 21st Street but to exclude the modern intrusions that have eroded the quality of the area. The square block at the north-west corner between S and T, 20th and 21st Streets, is bound on three sides by industrial land uses, and on the east by a part of Poverty Ridge which has suffered commercial intrusions on the east side of 21st Street.

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