

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 14 1985
date entered DEC 12 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic John Pearson Soda Works

and/or common John Pearson Soda Works

2. Location

street & number 594 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Placerville

N/A vicinity of

14th Congress. District

state California

code 06

county El Dorado

code 017

3. Classification

Category

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

Ownership

- public
 - private
 - both
- Public Acquisition
- in process
 - being considered

Status

- occupied
 - unoccupied
 - work in progress
- Accessible
- yes: restricted
 - yes: unrestricted
 - no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

4. Owner of Property

name Suzanne Douvres Bickel

street & number 594 Main Street

city, town Placerville

N/A vicinity of

state California 95667

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. El Dorado County Records Office

street & number 360 Fair Lane

city, town Placerville

state California 95667

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Placerville Historical Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date In Progress federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Placerville Planning Department

city, town Placerville

state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Pearson Soda Works Building is located at the upper end of Placerville's Main Street. The two-story brick and stone building was constructed in two stages: the original 1859 stone building forms the lower floor, while the second story of brick and stone was added in 1897. Integrity is fair; the ground floor was altered in 1974 with the addition of a central stone pillar flanked by two doors which replaced the earlier storefront bay.

The building fronts Main Street facing north. It is 20 feet wide at the sidewalk, and goes back to the hillside 70 feet. The front wall and the east wall are squared to each other, but the west wall foundation angles away to the west, causing a 2-foot divergence of the side walls at the back of the front room.

The building is two stories in height with a gabled metal roof. The original building was built by John Pearson in 1859 as a single story structure of dressed stone blocks. As the business grew, a second story was added in 1897 as a bottling room. This story is constructed of brick, but is faced with rough cut stone laid in regular courses. Three windows are placed symmetrically in the upper story; a keystone with the 1897 date appears over the central window. A triangular pediment centrally placed at the roof line contains the name of the owner, "J. F. Pearson". A heavy belt course divides upper and lower stories. The ground floor has two tall doorways separated by heavy stone piers; this configuration replaced the earlier storefront in a 1974 renovation.

The east wall is stone in the lower story and brick on the upper. To the back of the upper east wall a doorway was constructed in 1974, with a steel shutter fashioned for the outside door to match the shutters on the windows. The original Wielands Beer sign on the east upper wall was repainted in 1974. Near the bottom of the lower east wall are two brick lintels. The first about 10 feet from the front of the building appears to be a doorway between the original building and an adjacent building (now demolished), built also by Pearson in 1861. The opening was filled in with brick. Another ten feet back, where the hydraulic elevator is located, inside the building, is another arched brick lintel just above the grade of the parking lot. This one, being so low, suggests a cellar door. The west wall is solid Mariposa slate, and is common with the building next door.

There are two main rooms on each floor; the front room, converted into a soda parlor in 1974, goes back 41 feet, 6 inches, to a dividing wall, or south wall, which was the original wall when the lower portion was built. The rear room goes back another 18 feet, to another south wall, with a 6-foot high doorway that leads into a tunnel and caves, used for storing ice. The front portion of the tunnel and the caves are shored up with iron shutters, iron railroad rails, and wagon frame parts. The vertical supporting pillars are of cemented stone and brick masonry. The main tunnel goes back about 150 feet into the hillside.

Upstairs the front room, originally the bottling room, is now used as a dining room. The rear room has two restrooms, a restaurant kitchen, and work area with storage which goes back another 40 feet. A spiral iron stairway in the center of the building connects the upper and lower stories.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1859/1897 **Builder/Architect** J. Pearson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This property, one of several early Soda Works in Placerville, is a significant reminder of one of the city's important 19th century economic activities. It is associated with an important local merchant and his family who used the property for ice storage, bottled beverage production, and liquor sales. The building is a notable local example of its type and method of construction, with an 1859 lower story of cut stone and an 1897 upper story of stone and brick; it remains as one of the city's oldest commercial buildings without major alterations. The building has been identified in the current survey as historically significant to the local community.

John McFarland Pearson, a native of Scotland, came to Placerville in the early 1850s. He established himself as an ice merchant, and in 1859 he purchased the old Fountain House property from John and James Kitto. The site had a mine going back into the hill. He built a single story stone building on the property that same year. Pearson moved his ice depot from Bedford Avenue into the new building, which would become the famous John Pearson Soda Works, and stored the ice in the tunnel. The natural refrigeration in the tunnel allowed him to store other perishable items, primarily butter. Existing deeds and mortgages indicate that he was an aggressive businessman. Over a period of 50 years, the business continued to grow. In 1884 an item appeared in the Mountain Democrat newspaper...."A gentleman here from Chicago, who travels for a large drug house declared that Pearson's Creme Soda was the best in the United States". In 1891, John died, and his sons, John Jr. and William, continued the business and expanded in 1897 by adding the second story containing a bottling room and installing the water-powered elevator. The 1898 Souvenir Edition of the Mountain Democrat stated that the firm kept a depot for ice and butter, manufactured soda, syrups, and cider, dealt in wines, liquors, and imported English ales and porter, as well as being the local agent for Wielands, Enterprise, and Pabst beers and agents for the Royal and Norwich Union Insurance Co.

A notice of intended sale dated 11/1/1904 shows the Pearsons selling the Soda Works "machinery and stock" to Julius Scherrer and Thomas Hayden; the Pearsons retained the building and rented it to the new operators. The new owners changed the name to Placerville Soda Works. They remained in the building until 1911.

The property remained in the Pearson family until 1971 when it was sold to V. Bullard and T. J. Murphy. They in turn sold it 6 months later, in January 1972, to Roger Douvres, who renovated it and opened it as an old fashioned ice cream soda parlor and lunch house (lower floor), in 1975. The upper floor was opened in 1978 as a dinner house. Title passed to Douvres' daughter in 1980 through probate and is presently still operated as a restaurant.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Mountain Democrat (newspaper), 1898 souvenir edition; Mountain Democrat, August 17, 1861.
Marilyn Ferguson and Jane Schlappi, A Walking Tour of Historic Placerville.
Larry N. Allen, "Pearson's Soda Works," HABS worksheet (unpublished), Department of Art,
University of California, Davis, June 13, 1978.

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property .06

Quadrangle name Placerville, CA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	6	9	1	6	1	0	4	2	8	8	7	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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E

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification Assessors Parcel Number 03:171:03.

All of Lot 4, in Block 21, City of Placerville, as shown on the Official Map and in the field notes of the Official Survey of said City of Placerville, now on file and of record in the office of the County Recorder of El Dorado.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susie Bickel (OHP Staff Revision, 4/85)

organization N/A date 3/1/85

street & number 594 Main Street telephone (916) 626-3319/677-4897

city or town Placerville state California 95667

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/17/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 12/2/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

Representation in Existing Surveys (Continued)

"Pearson's Soda Works" (HABS Worksheet)
June 13, 1978
c/o Dr. Joseph Armstrong Baird, Jr.
Department of Art
University of California
Davis, California

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

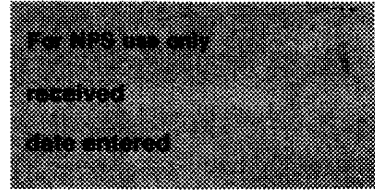
Page 1

Inside the downstairs front room is the rebuilt hydraulic elevator which was restored in 1974. Around the fully operable elevator is iron work for safety reasons. The elevator rises up to the second floor through a hinged trapdoor set into the ceiling and floor above. There is a hand-turned railing around the doorway upstairs in the dining room.

Alterations: The building was renovated in 1974. The ground floor was extensively rebuilt, and now resembles the original 1859 appearance. Two tall narrow doorways were created with a 3-foot thick middle pillar made of dressed rhyolite stone. The multi-paned double-hung French doors are recessed. This configuration replaced a single wide central storefront bay which was probably added during the 1897 expansion of the building. The work area and storage room floor, which was dirt, was replaced with slate in 1974. The ceiling downstairs was redone with old shiplap and antique fixtures were installed to create an old fashioned soda parlor. The floors upstairs were replaced with old wood, and the ceiling replaced with new milled redwood shiplap.

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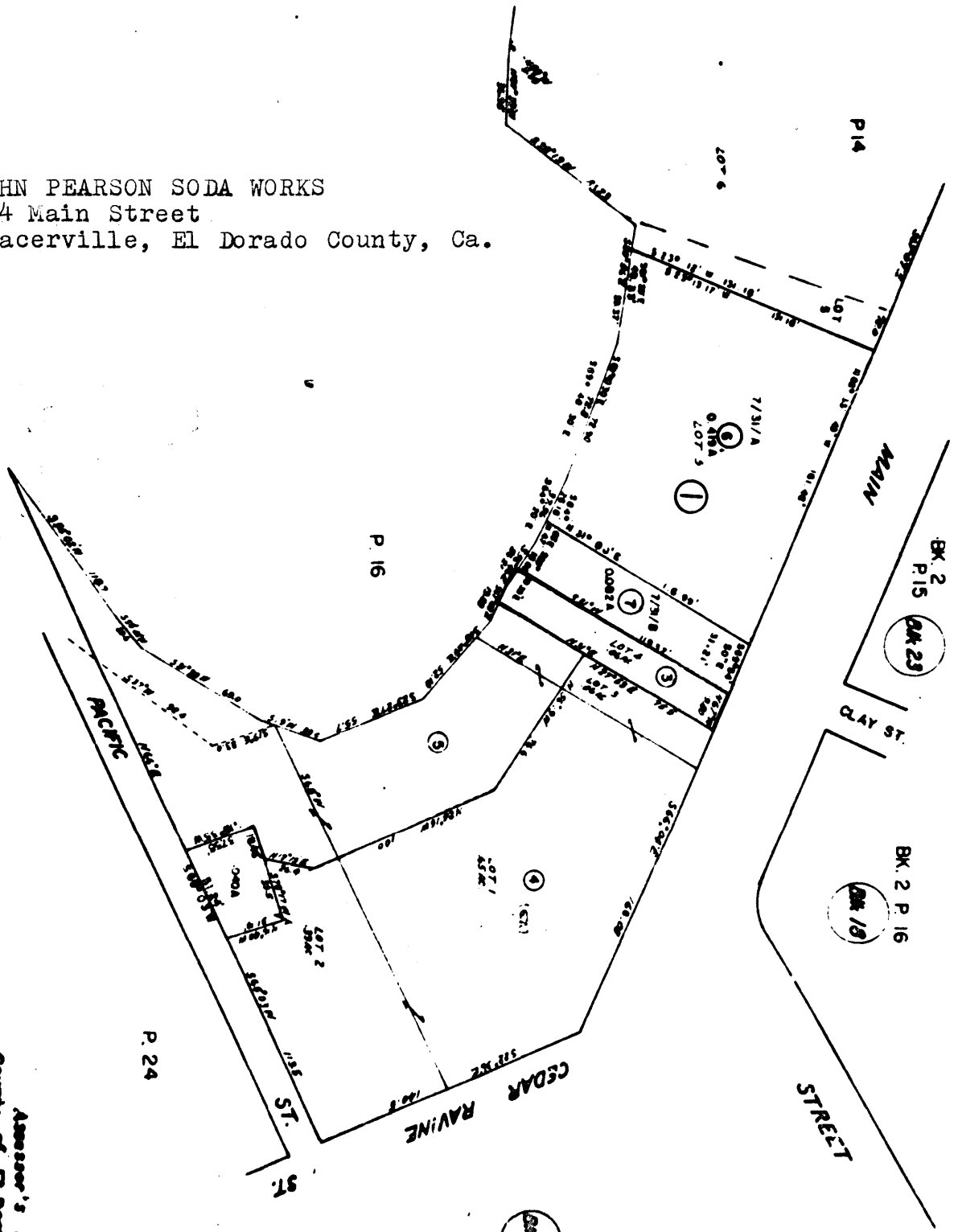
Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

County, State of California Book 2025 Page 328. Boundaries encompass the building and grounds on the original and present lot.

JOHN PEARSON SODA WORKS
594 Main Street
Placerville, El Dorado County, Ca.



BLOCK 21 LOTS 1 TO 6.
CITY OF PLACERVILLE

Sheet 1
of
2 Sheets

Assessor's Map
County of El Dorado, Calif.

3:1

JOHN PEARSON SODA WORKS
594 Main Street
Placerville, El Dorado County, California

