
NAME: ~~The Plaza~~
LOCATION: 902 ~~North Pennsylvania Street~~, 36 ~~East 9th Street~~
OWNER: The Plaza Apartment Company
ADDRESS: 423 Massachusetts Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

MAP NUMBER: 21

7. DESCRIPTION:

The Plaza is a three-story, U-shaped, glazed orange brick and gray limestone apartment/flats building on a raised basement of banded rustication. The main entrance facade (Photo 22 of 42) facing east on North Pennsylvania Street has eight bays of vertical framed windows with a double glass door entrance asymmetrically placed in the fifth bay. The first, second, fourth and seventh bays have two-story projecting polygonal "oriel" bay windows at the second and third floor levels. The east facade is raised six feet on a banded limestone basement. This facade and the south elevation terminate in horizontal attic grills, festoon panels, and small lion heads on the projecting dentil cornice. The most outstanding feature is the full facade Renaissance Revival style Ionic limestone entrance. Two smooth shaft engaged Ionic columns on plinths support a large three part entablature and balustrade which frame the semicircular arched opening of the entrance and the clear glass transom. Smaller paired Ionic pilasters support the arch. The name PLAZA in opaque white letters is worked into the beveled glass transom. The Ionic entrance in turn supports two distinctly inventive Ionic pilasters which frame the interior hall windows. The unusual motifs include palm leaves in the pendentives, a large scroll cartouche, a festooned spandrel, and two interlaced ribbons. Smaller festoons and cartouches are repeated in the recessed panels of the bay windows. The east elevation of the Plaza is unique in Indianapolis.

The south elevation (Photo 23 of 42) on 9th (once Pratt) Street is asymmetrically arranged around a deep court or "plaza" with Ionic entrances on the northeast and northwest corners. The east wing facade of five bays uses second and third story polygonal bay windows; the west wing of three bays does not. A ground level court door on the west wing is not repeated on the east wing. The north and west elevations now face empty lots used for parking. The iron balconies and stairs are used for fire escape. Most of the windows have segmental rowlock brick lintels.

8. SIGNIFICANCE:

The Plaza, an enlarged "Eastern" flat type apartment possesses significance for its architecture and for its contribution to the commercial/real estate development of the city.

Levi S. Pierson, a respected contractor, procured a building permit on April 29, 1907 to construct a two-story double at the corner of Pratt (now 9th) and Pennsylvania Streets. His son and partner in the small family operated business, Ora, was to be the contractor for the project. Since both men owned their own homes it may be assumed that this was an investment project for them. On June 22 an extension on the same April permit was purchased allowing for the construction of a three-story brick and limestone apartment valued at \$60,000.

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The change in the permit was most likely due to the commercial development of the blocks of Pennsylvania Street immediately adjacent to Pratt Street. Between 1905 and 1907 three new apartments had been constructed, the Lodge, the Pennsylvania, and the Sylvania, all replacing single family dwellings. The decision of the Piersons to construct a large apartment at this site reflects the importance of the area as a developing multi-unit residential area.

Pierson was a long-time resident of the city. Son of a successful builder, Levi was only four at the time of his father's death and was trained in his craft by his uncle. Levi, a successful small contractor, was respected by his peers and for many years served as president of the Builder's Exchange. Although his business remained small, never achieving the size or popularity of the Jungclaus (see 8. Significance, page 20) or Schumaker (see 8. Significance, page 20) enterprises, he was active in the building of many Indianapolis structures including the interesting Cyclorama Building.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Name: Indianapolis West

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES:

16	572290	4403390
Zone	Easting	Northing

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Parcel 1-01-81237. A. M. Robertson's Subdivision, Pratt's Subdivision, Lot Three, Outlot One Hundred Seventy-two. Key Code 81-009-027.