

CHEYENNE'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Downtown Historic District

The Downtown Historic District was first nominated for and placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1974. The district boundaries have been modified twice since then to include additional sections and are now as appears on the included map. The key anchor for the downtown district is the historic Union Pacific Depot, a National Historic Landmark, located on the corner of 15th Street and Capitol Avenue.

Cheyenne was originally established in 1867 with the westward advance of the railroad. It was laid out as two mile square city angled northwest to southeast to maximize sun exposure during the winter months.

The Cheyenne Walking Tour brochure provides some interesting information about the various buildings in this district. Unfortunately most of the true early structures in Cheyenne were wooden and were lost to various fires within the city.

Capitol North Historic District

The Capitol North Historic District was added to the NRHP in 1980. This district is comprised of mostly residential and has been home to many Territorial and State government workers, bankers, lawyers, and other prominent businessmen who helped to transform Cheyenne into the "Magic City of the Plains" it is today.

By the 1930s most of the construction within this district had been completed. Many of the homes had carriage barns and large yards or gardens. Some of the homes in this district have been restored while others have been maintained over the years and retain their original splendor.

Rainsford Historic District

The Rainsford Historic District was added to the NRHP in 1984. This district is also primarily residential; however, over the years many of the individual homes have been converted to multi-family apartments, small businesses, or other commercial establishments.

Named for one of Cheyenne's early and prolific architects, George Rainsford, the Rainsford District was known as 'Cattle Baron's Row' and was the residence of the City's upper-class businessmen. The District boasted of having a tennis club and was the social center of the city. In later years the district became the home of prominent local businessmen because of its proximity to the downtown area.

This district can best be described as eclectic in its architecture, as the residences span a wide range of styles to include French, Italian, Greek, Gothic, Romanesque, and Classic.

Lakeview Historic District

The Lakeview Historic District was added to the NRHP in 1996. This district reflects the natural extension to the north and east as the city grew and developed from 1900 through the late 1930s.

The homes in this district are similar to the types that exist in the Rainsford District but are smaller in scale and size as many were built for the working-class citizens in the community. Many are classified as cottages and bungalows, and some buildings in the district have become apartments or small businesses.

The District gets its name from the nearby Lakeview Cemetery, which in turn derived its name from the fact that this area of the city overlooked Lake

Minnehaha, which at the turn of the century was on the eastern boundary of Cheyenne.

South Cheyenne Historic District

The South Cheyenne Historic District was added to the NRHP in 2006. This district is representative of the working-class neighborhood that developed south of the Union Pacific Railroad from the 1880s to the 1940s. This neighborhood was multi-cultural, being home to Greeks, Italians, Czechs, Poles, Russians, Romanians, Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans.

Railroad workers, craftsmen, and even some wranglers lived and worked together to make South Cheyenne a cohesive and enterprising neighborhood. Before the expansion of the rail yard in the early 1920s, it included two additional blocks to the north, up to 12th Street. In the 1960s the District lost most of its commercial blocks with the introduction of the I-80 corridor and the dual viaducts over the railroad. Lost were a public library, a fire station, a drug store, and several small local businesses.

Moore Haven Heights District

The Moore Haven Heights District was added to the NRHP in 2008. This district is representative of the housing booms that occurred between 1926, when first platted, through the mid to late 1950s when the neighborhood was essentially complete. This district was one of the first expansions of the city to the north.

Most of the residences in this district are one and one-half story brick masonry houses primarily of the mid-century ranch style. As one approaches the northern portion of the neighborhood the lots get bigger, thereby increasing the size of the houses

built on them. This growth corresponds to the building boom post-World War II. Because most of these structures were built with brick, they have been altered very little since they were built; therefore this neighborhood retains a high level of original integrity.

Dubois Block

The Dubois Block Historic District was added to the NRHP in 2014. This district is a representative of the residential architecture designed and built by William Dubois, a famed Wyoming architect, starting around the turn of the century. This small neighborhood, only one block in size, is located in the Park Addition neighborhood just west of the Original City.

William Dubois originally bought most of the property on this block when it was first platted and built his house at the corner of Dey Avenue and 32nd Street. As his children grew, he built homes for them on this block; he also built two homes on this block for close family friends. The property owners today cherish these homes and maintain them meticulously. Most look very similar, if not the same, to when they were first built.

