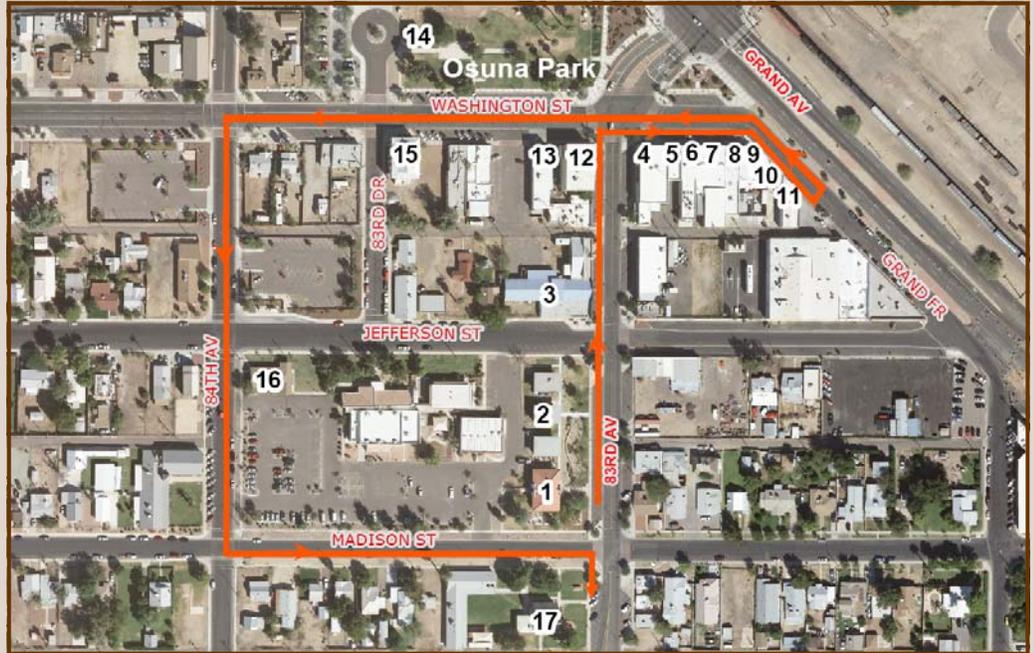




Historic Old Town Peoria Walking Tour

In the summer of 1917, a devastating fire broke out that destroyed virtually the entire commercial district of Peoria. Fortuitously, this event came as locals had begun to call for the construction of more enduring and attractive brick buildings to replace those built of wood and tin. The businesses did rebuild, and the town benefited from the enhanced construction methods which took advantage of the recent availability of electricity brought on by Peoria's contract with the Salt River Valley Water User's Association. As the 1920's arrived, the sturdy buildings and modern amenities of Peoria's commercial district, including a newly built hotel, declared that Peoria wasn't just a tent camp, but a thriving community that was here to stay.



1) Peoria Central School –1906

10320 N. 83rd Ave.

Many locals thought the two-room Central School was one room too big when it opened. It served the community as a school for 70 years and is now home to the Peoria Arizona Historical Society Museum.



2) One-Room School Buildings

10360, 10350, & 10340 N. 83rd Ave.

These small buildings, now used as museums, were once part of the original Peoria school campus. Additional classrooms, a cafeteria building and nurses' station were also part of the campus at one time.



3) Kosier's Hardware

10440 N. 83rd Ave.

This building was the long-time home of the Kosier's family businesses. What started as a blacksmith shop became a welding shop and farm store, and later a hardware store.



4) Saliba's Pay 'n Takit—c. 1918

8295 W. Washington St.

This building housed Peoria's first supermarket, run by the Saliba family, which competed with existing grocery stores such as nearby Tang's Grocery. It was later renamed Saliba's Park and Shop.



5) Arizona Bank —c. 1918

8291 W. Washington St.

This storefront still possesses the original signpost from its time serving as the location of Arizona Bank.



6) Tang's/Sunmaid Grocery —c. 1918

8281 W. Washington St.

This store is the former Tang's Grocery, owned by the prominent Tang family who were involved in Peoria's Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, and City Council.



7) Western Auto/U.S. Post Office –c. 1918

8273 Washington St.

This is the former location of the Western Auto store and the first permanent home for Peoria's U.S. Post Office.



8) Wood's Pharmacy –c.1918

8271 W. Washington St.

This building was home to Wood's Pharmacy, a popular hang-out for local kids. Charles Vickery, one of the proprietors of the pharmacy, also served as Mayor of Peoria.



9) Thurston Insurance –c. 1918

8265 W. Grand Ave.

This store once held Thurston's Insurance and Real Estate Company run by Thomas F. Thurston. Thurston also served as the secretary as secretary of the Peoria Chamber of Commerce.



10) Manuel's Place –c. 1918

8255 W. Grand Ave.

This building was home to the local watering-hole Manuel's (pronounced Man-yuhl's by the locals). The owner, Manuel Leyva, was also a member of Peoria's City Council.



11) Wilhelm's Garage –c.1918

8245 W. Grand Ave.

Built for Jennings's Garage, this shop was bought and renamed in 1928 by Joseph Wilhelm. Maintenance of farm machinery, including cotton picking machines, was historically a prime source of business for the garage.



12) Hood Building –1920

8301 W. Washington St.

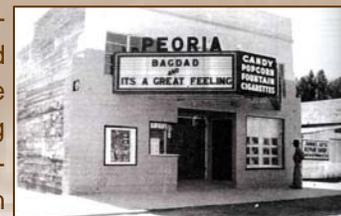
The Hood Building has housed a wide variety of businesses including Western Auto and a furniture and appliance store. The second story accommodated high school classes prior to the construction of the Peoria High School.



13) Peoria Theater/Fire Station #1 –1920

8307 W. Washington St.

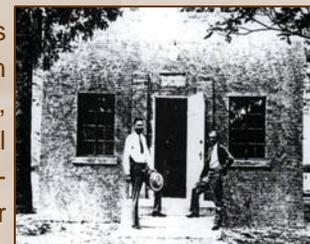
This building served as the Paramount Theater, later renamed the Peoria Theater. In 1947 the building was rebuilt after being damaged by fire. It was converted to a fire station when Peoria incorporated in 1954.



14) Peoria Jail House –1934

Osuna Park

Constructed as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, in addition to serving as the local jail, this building also held City Council meetings. The Chamber of Commerce also used the jail for their offices at one point in time.



15) Edward's Hotel –c. 1918

8325 W. Washington St.

This building served as Peoria's first hotel. In the 1920s, sleeping porches were added with canvas tarps that could be tied up for ventilation or tied down to provide protection from dust storms.



16) Peoria Woman's Club –1919

10381 N. 84th Ave.

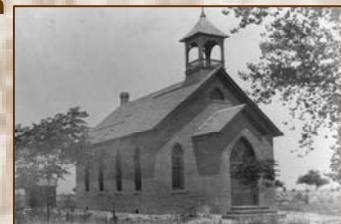
The Peoria Woman's Club building was originally located in Osuna Park, before being moved to its present location in 2009. It provides a meeting hall for the club, and other community organizations, and also provided space for the town's first movie theater and library.



17) First Presbyterian Church of Peoria –1899

10236 N 83rd Ave.

The Gothic Revival-style church is reputed to be the oldest church continuously in service in Arizona. It is the oldest extant building in the original Peoria town site.



For more information on historic preservation in the City of Peoria, please our website at: www.peoriaaz.gov/historicpreservation