

Architecture & Design

The Peoria Woman's Club is an approximately 2,300 square foot building consisting of a primary rectilinear form capped by a "T" shaped wing which was an addition to the original structure soon after its construction and well within the period of the building's significance. The building's has been described architecturally as both a Front-Gabled National Folk style, and as a Bungalow. According to the 2008 Archaeological Investigations report produced for the City by Roadrunner Archaeology & Consulting, the original rectilinear building was altered soon after its construction with an addition to the west end of the building in 1923. The addition created the building's present T-shaped configuration with the cross-gabled roof. The Women's Club is clad in board-and-batten siding and the roof is covered in asphalt shingles.

Background

The Peoria Woman's Club represents early Peorians engagement in civic affairs. The club first organized in 1914 and was known at that time as the Peoria Embroidery Club. By 1916 the Club had broadened its scope and taken the name Peoria Civic Club. Then in 1917 the group was admitted into the larger organization known as the District General Federation of Women's Clubs. Throughout these early years members met in each others homes and membership was necessarily limited due to a lack of a larger meeting place. In 1919, the Peoria Woman's Club building was constructed after a period of fundraising and waiting for the end of World War I so that building permits could be obtained.

The new building allowed the Club to continue as a leading force in Peoria's civil society, especially for the women of the community. The Peoria Woman's Club building accommodated numerous functions throughout the years. As early as 1920 the Woman's Club was *the* place to catch a movie. Prior to the construction of an actual movie theater, the enterprising club members rented their building to a motion picture operator, which helped raise funds for the club while providing wholesome entertainment. From 1920 to 1975 the building also served as Peoria's public library. Dances and socials and at least one funeral were held in this simple, yet practical building. The Woman's Club also provided educational opportunities for Peoria's Mexican-American population. Above all, the Peoria Woman's Club building has been a place where a strong sense of community has been formed and fostered.