

## Historical and Architectural Walking Tours of Richland Center



Fred and Julia Bowen House - SandHill Marketing photo.

**Fred and Julia Bowen House** (NRHP 1996) 220 East Union Street, 1869. Characterized by overhanging eaves ornamented by paired cut-out scroll brackets, the main block of this two story brick Italianate styled house features a wooden bay window with bracketed eaves and stone lintels. The best example of Italianate residential architecture in the city, this house was built for the local merchant Frederick Phelps Bowen and his

wife Julia Busby Bowen, a prominent suffragist and

temperance proponent. The property features one of the few intact carriage houses remaining in the city. The historical development of Richland Center as an agricultural support community and retail trade center is reflected in its fine architectural heritage. Buildings dating from as early as the mid-1850s and 1860s still remain in the city. The greatest wealth and diversity shown in the city's architecture dates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when Richland Center experienced rapid growth and prosperity as a result of the creation of the Pine River and Stevens Point Railroad in 1876. The city is nestled in a valley carved from the surrounding hills and bluffs by the Pine River. Richland County is located in the center of the scenic Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin and was not covered by glaciers during the last ice age. This forced the original commercial district and residential neighborhoods into a distinct, compact area making for an easy walk.

In 1987 the city of Richland Center organized an architectural and historical survey project. As a result of the survey, the Court Street Commercial Historic District consisting of the ten block central business district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. The Court Street Commercial Historic District joined the **Frank Lloyd Wright** designed **A.D. German Warehouse** (NRHP 1974) and the Richland Center **City Hall and Auditorium** (NRHP 1980) on the list. Docent guided walking tours of Richland Center are available for individuals, groups, schools or clubs. The tours start at the **Fred and Julia Bowen House at 220 East Union St.** The cost is \$10 per person. For more information call 608.604.5034 or email [larbegust@gmail.com](mailto:larbegust@gmail.com). (The **A.D. German Warehouse** and **City Auditorium** are included on the walks).