



**ARKANSAS HISTORIC  
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# Hillcrest: The History and Architectural Heritage of Little Rock's Streetcar Suburb

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& Sandra Taylor Smith

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*Butterworth House  
Hillcrest Historic District  
Little Rock,*

Cover illustration by Cynthia Haas.

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## **Hillcrest Significance**

The architectural significance of the Hillcrest Historic District is based mainly on the houses in the district that were built between the early 1890s and 1940. From the Retan House, the district's lone full-fledged example of the Queen Anne style, to the Modernistic Knoop and Back Houses, the Hillcrest Historic District contains excellent examples of virtually all architectural styles that were popular in Little Rock from the turn of the century to World War II. In addition, the historic district contains a wide range of interpretations of most of these styles, from modest builders' versions to elaborate architect-designed examples. The historic district also is significant in the area of community planning because a large portion of the district (the section north of Lee Avenue) originated as a "streetcar suburb" of Little Rock called Pulaski Heights. The process by which Pulaski Heights grew--first as an unincorporated area, then as a small municipality, and finally as part of Little Rock--is typical of early suburban development throughout the United States. Adding to Hillcrest's significance in the area of community planning is the fact that Midland Hills, a 1908-11 addition to Little Rock located in the southeastern corner of the historic district, was the first Little Rock addition to abandon the traditional grid pattern of street layout in favor of curvilinear streets that follow the natural terrain. Finally, Allsopp Park, a city park partially located within the boundaries of the Hillcrest Historic District, is a reminder of an early planning effort in Little Rock: the preparation in 1913 of a report on the development of a city park system.

## **Origins of Pulaski Heights**

Aside from a few farms, the earliest development in the neighborhood now known as Hillcrest took place in the 1890s, when a group of Michigan investors acquired 800 acres of hilly, heavily wooded property about a mile northwest of Little Rock. Organized as the Pulaski Heights Land Company, the investors were led by H. F. Auten and Edgar Moss, two young attorneys who had moved to Little Rock from St. Johns, Michigan, in 1890. With suburban development in mind, the Pulaski Heights Land Company purchased the 800 acres of land early in 1891, and in 1892 the first ten blocks of the Pulaski Heights Addition were platted.

Before the turn of the century, a few Pulaski Heights Land Company investors built homes within the original ten-square-block area of Pulaski Heights, located north of Lee Avenue between Oak and Walnut streets. Just two of those homes now retain their historic integrity. They are the Retan House, built in 1893 by Albert Retan, who--like Auten and Moss--moved to Little Rock from St. Johns, Michigan, and the Leaming House, built about 1900 by Edward H. Leaming, a lumberman who came to Little Rock from Greenville, Michigan. Other than the investors, Pulaski Heights had very few residents until after 1903, when a streetcar line was extended from Little Rock to the fledgling suburb.

Once construction of the Pulaski Heights Streetcar Line was underway, the pace of development quickened. In 1903 and 1904, three new additions--Auten and Moss, East Pulaski Heights, and a large expansion of the original Pulaski Heights Addition--were platted in the section of Pulaski Heights that now forms the northern half of the Hillcrest neighborhood. During the same years, two additions to the City of Little Rock--Ridgeland and Glendale--were laid out immediately south of Pulaski Heights, an area that now comprises the south-central section of Hillcrest. Although houses did not spring up immediately on all the lots in these new additions, enough construction took place to accommodate the estimated 300-400 people who resided in Pulaski Heights at the time it was incorporated as a town on August 1, 1905.

As was common practice in the U. S. during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Town of Pulaski Heights was incorporated primarily so that residents could tax themselves to provide public improvements. Through the creation of improvement districts, Pulaski Heights residents built sidewalks and

paved streets. However, the town never was able to afford the cost of building and equipping a fire station. Hence, Pulaski Heights had no fire protection. Eventually, as often happened during the course of early-twentieth suburban development, the residents of Pulaski Heights decided they would like the superior city services--especially fire protection--offered by Little Rock. On January 4, 1916, residents of Pulaski Heights and Little Rock voted to consolidate the two municipalities. Ten months later, on November 1, the new Pulaski Heights fire station opened at the northeast corner of Kavanaugh Boulevard and Beechwood. (This Craftsman-style station was demolished in the 1940s.)

The houses in the Hillcrest Historic District that were built during this first major phase of development--1903-1916--make it obvious that, from the very beginning, the style of development in Hillcrest was diverse. This thirteen-year period is represented by vernacular "pyramid cottages," Colonial Revival cottages, a few large examples of the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles, numerous Bungalows and Foursquares, and imposing architect-designed examples of the English Revival style. The developers of Pulaski Heights and nearby additions to Little Rock apparently understood that Little Rock could not support large-scale suburban development that catered only to the affluent or to any single segment of society. The diversity of its development was a key ingredient in the long-term success of Pulaski Heights.

(What all Pulaski Heights additions and adjacent areas of Little Rock did have in common--and not merely by chance--was the fact that all their residents were white. Little Rock's nineteenth-century neighborhoods were racially diverse. Within just a few blocks of one another--sometimes within a single block--could be found the homes of black and white families of varying income levels. Such was not the case in the areas of Little Rock developed during the Jim Crow era, which began in Arkansas in 1903. The developers of Pulaski Heights, in particular, made it clear that property would not be sold to blacks. Advertisements for Pulaski Heights bluntly stated that the area was "exclusively for white people" and that there would be "NO NEGROES NOR SHANTIES.")

In general, the most modest scale of development in the Hillcrest Historic District took place in the section of the district south of Lee Avenue and west of Colonial Court, an area which by 1916 included not only the Ridgeland and Glendale additions but also Elmhurst and Lydia Dice's Addition. It is in this section of the historic district that 11 of Hillcrest's 14 pyramid cottages--arguably the district's most modest historic homes--are found. Clustered primarily on Pine, Cedar, Rose, and Walnut streets, these cottages (whose "country cousins" can be found in many rural areas of Arkansas) stand in sharp contrast to the high-style, architect-designed houses that were built at the same time in other sections of Hillcrest.

The rest of the existing pre-1916 houses in the southwestern section of the historic district are Colonial Revival cottages, Bungalows, and one-story Foursquares. While all are relatively modest, several of these houses are noteworthy because of "quirks" in their designs. The Bungalow at 408 North Cedar, for instance, has a cut-away corner trimmed with decorative brackets--a Queen Anne holdover. A Craftsman-influenced Bungalow at 326 North Ash has porch supports that are appropriately square but much too thin. Obviously built by and for people whose knowledge of design was limited, these houses nevertheless add an interesting dimension to Hillcrest's architectural history.

## Hillcrest Addition and Midland Hills

In 1906, the Hillcrest Addition--from which the entire neighborhood now takes its name--was platted as an addition to the Town of Pulaski Heights. In this addition, as well as in the Pulaski Heights, Auten and Moss, and East Pulaski Heights additions, development was varied prior to 1916 but generally could be described as middle-to upper-middle-income. Several Colonial Revival cottages are located in the area encompassed by these additions, as are assorted Foursquares and Bungalows.

Also located in this section of Hillcrest are some of the neighborhood's largest and finest pre-1916 residences, all built for prominent business and professional men and their families. On Hill Road, which spans the Pulaski Heights, Auten and Moss, and East Pulaski Heights Additions, stand two of Hillcrest's most notable historic homes: the McDonnell-Hamilton House and the Wright House, dating from 1910 and 1911 respectively. The Colonial Revival-style McDonnell-Hamilton House, designed by local architect Theo Sanders, was built for James Smith McDonnell, who operated several successful cotton-related businesses in Jefferson County, Arkansas. George R. Mann, best-known as the architect of the Arkansas State Capitol, designed the Wright House in the English Revival style for banker Moorhead Wright. Also on Hill Road is the Craftsman-style Cochran House, built about 1911 for Samuel A. Cochran, president of a lumber company.

At 800 Beechwood, in the vicinity of what once was known as the "first Hillcrest [Addition] entrance," stands the Siegle-Donham House, built about 1914 by Otto Siegle, a "planter," but better-known as the home of Judge William R. Donham, who served on the Arkansas Supreme Court. In the Hillcrest Addition are two pre-1916 houses designed by Little Rock's best-known and most prolific turn-of-the-century architect, Charles L. Thompson. The Colonial Revival-style Myers-Peek House, designed by Thompson in 1912 for Thomas T. Myers, partner in an insurance firm, stands at 4223 South Lookout. At 4301 South Lookout is the Butterworth House, a c. 1912 Craftsman Bungalow picturesquely situated on a deep, wooded lot. Its original owner, Asa Butterworth, was an engineer.

In the southeastern corner of the historic district, Midland Hills, with "its winding driveways follow[ing] the foothills and the hillcrests" (in the words of a 1911 promotional brochure), clearly was aimed at a more affluent group of homebuyers than any other addition in the Hillcrest neighborhood dating from before 1916. In Midland Hills, even the Bungalows and Foursquares are a cut above average. The developers of the addition claimed that forsaking the standard grid pattern of street layout and platting in an "irregular . . . way demanded the sacrifice of many a lot to sell," which probably made Midland Hills lots more expensive than lots in other additions. The result, however, was a very attractive addition.

Midland Hills was opened to development in three phases between October 1908 and May 1911. Most of the oldest homes are located on Berry, Woodrow, Kavanaugh, Charles, Louise, and Fairfax. Among the several notable residences built in Midland Hills before 1916 are the Lipscomb-Smith House, a Craftsman-style home dating from about 1911; the English Revival-style Volkmer-McKinney House, built in 1911; the Loeb House, dating from about 1915 and influenced by the Prairie style; and the Craftsman-style Williamson House, designed by Charles L. Thompson and built in 1911. In the 1400 block of Kavanaugh stands a row of three of Midland Hills' best early houses: the Robinson-Beal House, an excellent Craftsman Bungalow built about 1914; the 1911 Reid House, a Charles L. Thompson design that combines Craftsman and Dutch Colonial features; and the Perrie-Bathurst House, a particularly good example of the English Revival style dating from 1910-11. On Ridgeway is the Poole House, a nice Craftsman-style residence (currently "disguised" as Colonial by white paint and blue shutters) built about 1911 as one of the first two houses on its street.

Except for construction of the new Pulaski Heights fire station, consolidation seems not to have had an immediate

impact on development in the Pulaski Heights area, perhaps because World War I intervened. Between 1916 and the early 1920s, only one addition, Doyle Place, was platted in what now is the Hillcrest neighborhood, and development of that addition was delayed for almost a decade.

Though no new additions were under development, new houses continued to be built in existing additions during the World War I era. It was during this period that the influence of builder Kenneth E. N. Cole (whose name usually appeared in print as "K. E. N. Cole") began to be felt in what now is the Hillcrest neighborhood. Until the early 1920s, Cole apparently earned the major part of his living as a traveling salesman, but by 1916 he also was building "spec" houses in Pulaski Heights. The earliest-known examples of his work are the Cole-Mehaffy and Cole-Rainwater Houses, two nicely detailed Craftsman Bungalows dating from about 1916. Until the early 1920s, Bungalows were Cole's specialty, and the ones he is known to have built were of the type labeled "California Bungalows" by Little Rock newspapers of the period. Such Bungalows were built with more attention to detail than the average builder Bungalow, and their designs usually featured rustic stone porch supports and chimneys. K. E. N. Cole prided himself on building Bungalows that were attractive on the outside and that were "planned for convenience, coolness and general 'livability'" on the inside. Intended for "none but the highest class people," Cole's Bungalows are found in the portion of the Hillcrest Historic District north of Lee Avenue.

### **1920s Development**

K. E. N. Cole's decision, around 1922, to devote himself full time to building houses coincided with the boom in development experienced by Pulaski Heights during the 1920s. Eight of the additions contained within the boundaries of the Hillcrest Historic District were platted between 1922 and 1928. Also, in 1927, the entire Doyle Place Addition (originally platted in 1918) was purchased by a group of four investors for development as "Doyle Point."

The style of development in the 1920s additions generally followed the lead of adjacent existing additions. In the southwestern section of Hillcrest, where modest houses already lined the streets of the Ridgeland, Glendale, and Elmhurst additions, the Pinehurst and Reutlinger additions--both platted in 1923--experienced a similarly modest scale of development. Between 1923 and 1930, for example, the majority of lots in the Pinehurst Addition were developed, and--without exception--the houses constructed either were modest Bungalows or English Revival cottages.

In the same vein, the 1920s additions that bordered Midland Hills took their cue from the older addition's style of development. Platted immediately west of Midland Hills in 1922, Crystal Court and Colonial Court do not have curving streets, but their houses generally were built on the same scale as those in Midland Hills. Fairfax Terrace, platted in 1924 adjacent to the northern boundary of Midland Hills, continues the pattern of curving streets that originated in Midland Hills. Alpine Court, a 1924 replat of the southwestern corner of Midland Hills, also continues the street pattern, although the scale of development--mainly small English Revival cottages--is comparatively modest.

The development of Fairfax Terrace highlights an interesting aspect of Hillcrest's history that generally is unrelated to its growth as a neighborhood. Before being sold to a group of three investors early in 1924, the property that became the Fairfax Terrace Addition belonged to the Arkansaw Water Company, a private firm that supplied Little Rock's water until 1936. A water works facility has been located on Ozark Point (formerly known as "Filter Plant Hill") since 1886, when two basins, one for settling and one for distribution, were constructed. Overseeing this project was Zeb Ward, a colorful character in Little Rock's post-Civil War history who is remembered mainly for his controversial tenure as State Prison lessee. Ward was president of the Home Water Company, which later became the Arkansaw Water Company, and construction of the basins on Ozark Point was



an important step toward improving the quality of Little Rock's water, which previously had been pumped--dirt, debris, and all--straight from the Arkansas River to consumers.

At least indirectly, the Arkansas Water Company was responsible for some of the best development in the Hillcrest neighborhood during the 1920s. Besides providing the land for Fairfax Terrace, the water company sold the property where the Shoemaker, Cunningham, Knoop, and Steinkamp Houses were built at Nos. 12, 10, 6, and 2 Ozark Point, respectively. The Shoemaker and Cunningham Houses are excellent examples of the English Revival style, the Knoop House is a scarce Little Rock example of Modernistic architecture, and the Steinkamp House is an attractive 1940-vintage Colonial Revival residence. The water company also sold the property at 3230 Ozark Avenue where an imposing English Revival-style residence was built about 1925 by A.W. Sloss, who was in the insurance and real estate businesses. Sloss is known to have built speculatively several of the houses in the Fairfax Terrace Addition, including the Noack House, arguably the best of Hillcrest's few Spanish Revival-style houses.

A final example of the water company's positive impact on the Hillcrest neighborhood is the existence of what now is known as Knoop Park, an area along the eastern and northern edges of the water works property that is open to the public. Originally developed during the 1930s as a Works Progress Administration project, the park is notable for its scenic overlooks, which provide dramatic views of the Arkansas River and downtown Little Rock.

Another of Hillcrest's few examples of the Spanish Revival style, the Hewes House at 4217 Lee Avenue, is a 1920s example of K. E. N. Cole's speculative development in Hillcrest. Leaving Bungalows behind, Cole built a variety of period revival houses during the 1920s, including houses at 4312 and 4316 South Lookout "in the French style of architecture" (according to a 1928 newspaper ad for the houses) and English Revival-style houses at 501 North Elm and 4701 Hillcrest Avenue.

The English Revival style clearly was the style of the 1920s in Hillcrest. Modest cottage-sized versions of the style appear frequently in the southwestern section of the historic district (though not as frequently as Bungalows), middle-income models can be found virtually everywhere else in the district, and elaborate large-scale examples are clustered primarily along Hill Road, South Lookout, and in the Midland Hills Addition. Two large English Revival residences, the Kahn House and the Tucker House, were built east of the Wright House on Hill Road during the 1920s. Also on Hill Road are the F. B. T. Hollenberg and Plunkett Houses. The Haley, Boone, Paisley, and Holmes Houses are located on South Lookout. Midland Hills' premiere example of the English Revival style is the Storthz House, designed by H. Ray Burks, an architect whose work has not been studied.

Nearly all of the 1920s-vintage houses in the Oakwood Place Addition, platted in 1926, are middle-income versions of the English Revival style. As typically was the case in middle-income development, the houses in Oakwood Place were "planned" by the developer of the addition rather than being designed by architects. In Oakwood Place's case, the developer was J. D. Walthour, acting in his capacity as manager of the real estate department of W. B. Worthen and Company (forerunner of today's Worthen Bank and Trust Company).

A similar type of development took place during the 1920s along Crystal Avenue in the southwestern corner of the Midland Hills Addition. Although the street had been platted in 1911, it apparently experienced little or no development for over a decade. In the late 1920s, Bracy Real Estate and Building Company erected many of the houses that now stand on Crystal Avenue, including all those located on the east side of the 100 block of the street. Bracy Real Estate's "designer" was Buford Bracy, son of the company's founder and president, Eugene D. Bracy. Without formal architectural training, Buford Bracy became adept at planning sturdy, functional houses that invariably were brick-veneered, rectangular in plan, and devoid of references to any particular style except,

sometimes, in the design of the main entrance. In addition to the houses on Crystal Avenue, Bracy-built residences are found elsewhere in Midland Hills and in other middle- to upper-middle-income areas of Hillcrest (as well as other neighborhoods in Little Rock).

By the time the boom period of the 1920s came to an end, the residential areas of the Hillcrest neighborhood looked largely as they do today. By 1930, all of the land within the boundaries of the Hillcrest Historic District had been platted into additions, and, although vacant lots still existed throughout the neighborhood, the vast majority of the houses standing today had been built.

### **Hillcrest in the 1930s**

During the worst years of the Depression, little construction took place in Hillcrest, but during the late 1930s, some notable--and not-so-notable--houses were added to the neighborhood. The "not-so-notable" houses were small residences in the plain (or minimal) traditional vein, usually vaguely Colonial or English but lacking in detail. A number of these little houses were built in the southwestern section of the historic district, where they generally fit well into the already-existing modest scale of development. They also are scattered through other areas of the district, usually blending fairly unobtrusively with their older neighbors.

Clearly, though, the Hillcrest neighborhood also remained a desirable place to build middle- to upper-middle-income residences--including large architect-designed homes--during the late 1930s. H. Ray Burks designed the Bailey House on South Lookout in 1937, and a year or two later his partner, Bruce Anderson, designed the Adamson House just down the street. The Knoop House, a Modernistic design by the firm of Brueggeman, Swaim, and Allen, was built in 1936, and Howard Eichenbaum designed another Modernistic residence, the Back House, in 1937.

Although World War II now provides a convenient dividing line between Hillcrest's historic and nonhistoric housing stock, houses have continued to be built in Hillcrest throughout the years since the war. Post-war houses are scattered around the neighborhood, typically located where lots had remained vacant rather than on the sites of older houses that were demolished, and they comprise a small portion--about 12 percent--of the total properties in the Hillcrest Historic District. Consequently, their presence does little harm to the district's historic visual character. On the other hand, it is important to note that most of Hillcrest's post-war houses are middle- to upper-middle-income residences, underscoring the fact that the neighborhood not only has remained stable but always has been considered such a good place to live that people never stopped wanting to build nice houses there. As this nomination was being prepared in 1990, in fact, a "post-modern" house was under construction in the neighborhood.

## Other Hillcrest Building Types

While single-family residences define the character of the Hillcrest neighborhood, almost from the beginning, multi-family residences, churches, schools, and commercial buildings also were built in the area. In addition, the neighborhood contains a large city park, the only one in Little Rock that is--and probably always will be--largely undeveloped due to the nature of its terrain. These elements of the Hillcrest Historic District add to its significance in the areas of architecture and community planning.

Although a few duplexes were built in the Hillcrest neighborhood as early as the 'teens, multi-family development blossomed during the 1920s. Confined largely to Kavanaugh and nearby streets, apartment buildings were quite common in Hillcrest by 1930. Several of the nicest apartment buildings were developed by Judge William R. Donham, who lived in the section of the neighborhood where he built the apartments (see Siegle-Donham House, above). The apartments Judge Donham is known to have developed are Castle Heights, Spanish Court, and Crethaven, all built between 1928 and 1930, and the Donham Apartments, built about 1938.

Located as they were in the Pulaski Heights Addition, a stable, middle- to upper-middle-income section of Hillcrest, construction of these apartment buildings certainly did not mean the neighborhood was beginning to decline. Their presence, however, does illustrate the fact that most of Hillcrest developed in the days before zoning went into effect in Little Rock. Consequently, it is not unusual to find single-family and multi-family residences in the same block.

Institutional uses--primarily churches--also are scattered through residential areas of Hillcrest. In fact, since 1905, when St. Mark's Episcopal Church became the first church built in Pulaski Heights, churches have been constructed seemingly at random in the Hillcrest neighborhood. Unfortunately, church expansion--particularly parking lot construction--now poses a threat in some sections of Hillcrest where growing churches are "hemmed in" on all sides by houses. The growth of Hillcrest's churches is illustrated by the fact that, while all of the congregations have been located in the neighborhood since the early twentieth century, none of them now is housed in a historic building. All church congregations in Hillcrest have erected new sanctuaries since World War II, though one church--Pulaski Heights Baptist--still uses a pre-war structure for classroom space.

Hillcrest's only school building, originally Pulaski Heights Grammar School but now used as a junior high school, is located on the site occupied by the first public school that served the neighborhood. The existing school was built from 1920 to 1936, in stages corresponding to the growth in Hillcrest's student population. Probably by chance rather than design, the school property acts as a dividing line between the modest development that characterizes the southwestern section of the Hillcrest Historic District and the more affluent development style of the Colonial Court, Crystal Court, and Midland Hills additions.

Despite the lack of zoning during the neighborhood's formative years of development, commercial buildings in Hillcrest historically have been confined almost exclusively to Kavanaugh Boulevard, originally the route of the Pulaski Heights Streetcar Line. Some commercial encroachment into adjacent residential areas has occurred since World War II, but Kavanaugh remains the neighborhood's commercial backbone.

The oldest commercial building known to exist in Hillcrest stands at the southwest corner of Oak Street and Kavanaugh, where it was built about 1906 as a grocery store. Now converted to residential use, the structure was the first of many commercial buildings constructed along the streetcar route. The majority of these commercial buildings were built in clusters at two streetcar stops, one where Kavanaugh Boulevard branches off of Markham Street (a point known as Stiff's Station) and the other at the intersection of Kavanaugh and Beechwood. The latter intersection is the location of one of the most notable commercial buildings remaining in Hillcrest, the

Morgan Smith Building, which was designed by Charles L. Thompson and built in 1915. A second-story section of this building, destroyed by fire in the 1970s, briefly housed the Pulaski Heights Town Hall.

Two blocks farther west on Kavanaugh stands another particularly noteworthy commercial structure, the Spanish Revival-style Saul Harris Building, which was designed by the architectural firm of Erhart and Eichenbaum. Built in 1930, the building contains eight storefronts arranged in a crescent around an off-street parking area, a design that comes remarkably close to creating what now would be called a shopping center. At the time of its construction, however, the building was termed a "community center," and it included--in addition to the eight stores in the main structure--a free-standing Marathon Service Station, now used as a restaurant. Both as a work of architecture and as a symbol of the arrival of the automobile age, the Saul Harris Building is an important historic resource in Hillcrest. (Saul Harris was prescient in his accommodation of the automobile; streetcars stopped running in Pulaski Heights in 1947.)

Another important historic resource is Allsopp Park, a city park that is both a neighborhood amenity and a reminder of early city planning efforts in Little Rock. Allsopp Park was not officially dedicated until 1931, but the idea for its creation dates back at least to 1913. In that year, the City of Little Rock hired John Nolen, a landscape architect and planner from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to prepare recommendations for the development of a city park system. Nolen's report noted that the "region called Hill Crest possesses much ground so irregular as to be far more suitable for park uses than subdivisions" and recommended that the "steep ravines, the high promontories, the particularly fine outlooks, should all be included in an extensive reservation in this region." Although it was the late 1920s before the city heeded Nolen's recommendation and acquired the two ravines that now comprise Allsopp Park, the ravines' rugged terrain had prevented development from occurring, so the property remained largely in its natural state--as it still does today. Just the south ravine of Allsopp Park is included within the boundaries of the Hillcrest Historic District, but this ravine is of particular historic interest because it contains concrete piers that are the only remaining vestiges of a steel suspension bridge that once provided residents of the Hillcrest Addition with a shortcut to the streetcar line on Kavanaugh Boulevard.

Though time has not stood still in Hillcrest, the neighborhood's visual character overwhelmingly derives from the early twentieth century. Containing some 1,200 houses built between the turn of the century and World War II, Hillcrest documents virtually the full range of early-twentieth century domestic architecture. In addition, the neighborhood is an excellent example of suburban development dating from the era when city expansion depended heavily on the streetcar.

### **The Hillcrest Historic District**

The Hillcrest Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the country's official list of historically significant properties worthy of preservation, November 18, 1990. The district was identified following a comprehensive two-year survey of buildings in the neighborhood sponsored by the City of Little Rock using Certified Local Government grants provided through the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The Hillcrest Historic District is bounded roughly by Woodrow, Jackson, and Markham streets and by North Lookout Road. (An amendment to the district, bounded roughly by Evergreen, Harrison, Lee, and Jackson streets, was listed on the National Register October 8, 1992.)

Of the 1,611 properties in the original district, approximately 1,035, or 64 percent, are historic structures contributing to the district's significance; 356, or 22 percent, are non-contributing historic structures (altered or synthetically sided); and 220, or 14 percent, are non-contributing because they are less than 50 years old. Of the 220 properties that were constructed after 1940, 25 percent were built in the 1940s, 40 percent in the 1950s, and 35 percent were erected after 1960.

## **The Architectural Styles of Hillcrest**

The buildings in the Hillcrest Historic District reflect the varied popular taste in architecture during the period 1890-1940; the district's versatility is characterized in its eclectic strain of period revivals, Prairie and Craftsman styles. Frequently within a particular style, homes in this area are found in an applied grand-scale, medium-scale, and modest-scale version of the same basic plan.

Throughout the district's tree-lined streets, the use of fieldstone retaining walls and site features (in addition to the stone detailing on many of the buildings) adds to the historic streetscape of the area. The extensive use of fieldstone in some form on virtually every street in the district is a visual link between the divergent additions of Hillcrest.

### **Queen Anne**

Five houses in the Hillcrest Historic District represent the Queen Anne style of architecture. Each of these houses strongly displays Colonial Revival detailing, indicative of the transitional movement away from Queen Anne to Colonial Revival styling at the turn of the century. The most impressive and representative of the Queen Anne style in Hillcrest is the Retan House. Constructed in 1893, this large architect-designed house reflects the Queen Anne style in its irregular plan and extensive use of fanciful woodwork. The influence of Colonial Revival styling is largely seen in the use of Palladian windows.

Another large house in the district is located at 520 North Cedar and also displays modest stylistic details of both Queen Anne and Colonial Revival. Built c. 1903, this two-story house features Queen Anne massing and a wrap porch (the original porch supports have been replaced with square brick columns). Decorative fanlights and scalloped shingles are found in gable ends. The two-story house constructed c. 1910 at 1008 Kavanaugh has been significantly altered with porch enclosures and artificial siding, but retains its Queen Anne plan and massing.

The c. 1910 house at 510 Midland is more Colonial Revival in its plan but prominently displays Queen Anne influence in the use of scalloped shingles and a turret-like projection. The house at 4805 North Lookout is characterized by its Queen Anne asymmetrical floorplan and its Colonial Revival influenced wrap porch. This c. 1913 house rests on several lots facing what is now the "north" ravine of Allsopp Park.

Four of these Queen Anne style homes contribute to the district and one is considered non-contributing due to alterations and application of synthetic siding.

## **Colonial Revival**

There are approximately 120 historic houses, or 7 percent, in the Hillcrest District reflective of the Colonial Revival style. Although this style was widely used in home design in the early part of the century, its popularity peaked before the majority of the development of Hillcrest. However, with its many different subtypes, this style was popular in various forms off and on throughout the entire period of development of Pulaski Heights. Thus the Colonial Revival style is seen in its earliest form in Hillcrest at the turn of the century and in later forms continuing to be built up to 1940.

Many of the early houses representing the Colonial Revival style in Hillcrest are 1 1/2 story asymmetrical "cottages." A row of early examples of this Colonial Revival cottage type is found on the east side of the 300 and 400 block of North Cedar. Similarly the houses at 602 North Palm and 617 and 619 North Ash display the transition from Queen Anne to Colonial Revival in their irregular plan with Colonial Revival decorative features such as semi-circular windows in gable ends and classical porch columns. Other examples of these Colonial Revival "cottages" aimed at the moderate income resident are the Huron-Collins House, built in 1905, and the 1908 Probst House.

The oldest remaining Colonial Revival house in the Hillcrest District is the Leaming House at 514 North Cedar, built in 1900. In addition to its historic significance in association with one of the developers of the area, the Leaming House is exemplary of the transitional pattern of stronger Colonial Revival influence moving away from the Queen Anne style. The two-story Leaming House features a Colonial Revival regular floorplan and classical porch roof supports but is embellished with two different patterns of decorative shingles on its upper stories.

Another early Colonial Revival home in Hillcrest is the Clancy-Flickinger House. This two-story hipped roof, frame house features a two-story flat roof front portico supported by fluted Corinthian capped columns and is located on a highly visible corner lot at the junction of Kavanaugh, North Martin, and Ozark streets. An early architect-designed example of Colonial Revival is the McDonnell-Hamilton House. Constructed 1910-11 and designed by local architect Theo Sanders, this two-story brick house displays the transition to Craftsman in its detailing.

The prosperity and building boom in Hillcrest in the 1920s saw a new type of Colonial Revival house come into popularity. These houses were usually two-story with side gables and small classically detailed entrances. The Adler House at 216 Ridgeway and the Stiff House at 220 Ridgeway are brick examples of the side gabled roof versions of Colonial Revival popular in the 1920s. A Colonial Revival subtype popular from about 1935 to 1955 is commonly known as the "Garrison Colonial." This type features a wood-sided second story overhang with brick veneering used only on the front facade of the first story. Hillcrest examples of the Garrison Colonial include the Peters House at 2909 Lee Avenue and the house at 3809 South Lookout, both constructed c. 1940.

## **Pyramid Cottage**

Concentrated largely in the area south of Lee Avenue and west of the Midland Hills Addition are 14 small square frame cottages with pyramidal roofs. This type house is a vernacular form frequently found in rural Arkansas. Although unique in their urban setting, the Hillcrest "Pyramid Roof Cottages" are somewhat different from their rural prototype. Due to the number of these cottages and their distinct similarity, it is felt they merit recognition as a particular building form representative of homes built for the working class resident of Pulaski Heights. The 14 "Pyramid Roof Cottages" in the Hillcrest Historic District were built between 1910 and 1915. Currently seven are covered in synthetic siding and are considered non-contributing to the district. These structures are simple frame cottages usually with 1/2 front recessed porches. Representative examples of this cottage form are found at 215

North Ash, 304 North Pine, 224 Rose and 404 North Cedar.

## **Prairie**

Ten houses in the Hillcrest District are representative of the Prairie style in their design. Two of these are pre-1920: 326 Fairfax Avenue, built c. 1912, and 405 Louise, built c. 1915. The house at 326 Fairfax Avenue is a one story structure with the typical Prairie low-pitched hipped roof and wide overhanging boxed eaves. Although this house has unfortunately been covered in artificial siding, it is an excellent early representation of the broad, horizontal emphasis of the Prairie style. The Milton Loeb House is a two-story hipped roof frame structure with a symmetrical facade featuring a small one-story gabled roof portico and second story bay window projections. Another two-story example of the Prairie influence in design is located at 923 North Monroe. Here the characteristic Prairie casement windows and emphasis on the upper story can be seen.

Perhaps the most distinct of the Prairie style homes in the Hillcrest District is the Neimeyer House at 314 Ridgeway. Constructed c. 1922, this two-story stucco clad house features a variety of ceramic tile hipped roofs, ribbons of casement windows, and the typical Prairie boxed eaves. An original neon "314" address sign hangs from the recessed front portico. The c. 1920 Prairie style house at 124 North Spruce is an asymmetrical one story type with stucco clad walls and a recessed entrance portico supported by a single heavy square stucco column.

Eight of the ten Prairie style buildings in Hillcrest are considered contributing. Two are non-contributing due to the application of synthetic siding.

## **"Foursquare"**

Forty-three houses in Hillcrest represent the house form that has come to be known as the "American Foursquare." Typically, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, or Prairie style decorative details are seen on these houses. The Foursquare is characterized by simple square or rectangular two-story plans, low-pitched hipped roofs, and one-story full-width porches.

Exemplary versions of the American Foursquare in the Hillcrest Historic District are the McCaskill House at 129 North Woodrow, (narrow-width synthetic siding was applied to the house during preparation of this nomination), 1116 Kavanaugh, and 1200 Kavanaugh. These homes feature hipped roofs with front hipped roof dormers and flat roof front porches supported by square masonry columns. The Bloom House at 102 Berry is another similar two-story frame Foursquare and is known to have been designed by Little Rock architect Theodore Sanders c. 1910. The Dice House at 3820 Compton is another Foursquare constructed c. 1910.

In two different sections of the Hillcrest Historic District rows of American Foursquares are found. Three Foursquare houses are located on the north side of the 2600 block of Kavanaugh Boulevard. Each of these houses features low pitched gable-on-hip roofs with wide eaves. The two easternmost houses were originally identical with full-width front porches supported by square brick columns. The corner house at 2618 Kavanaugh is slightly larger and features battered wood columns on square brick piers and a low brick balustrade on its front portico. All three structures have been adapted for commercial use and contain specialty shops.

Another series of American Foursquare houses are found in the 800 block of North Beechwood. Although all three houses are excellent examples of this form, only one retains its original weatherboard sheathing. This series of three Foursquare houses is an interesting study in porch variation on the style: 818 North Beechwood features a wrap porch with a decorative wood balustrade and its flat roof is supported by square brick columns; the hipped roof porch on 822 North Beechwood has stone columns and features a solid stone balustrade; a shed roof porch

with stone columns and a side uncovered terrace with stone balustrade distinguish the Foursquare at 824 North Beechwood.

An interesting interpretation of the American Foursquare is seen in the Hollan House at 308 Fairfax Avenue. This c. 1912 house utilizes stone wall cladding in three types and sizes of rubble stone.

Of the 43 American Foursquare houses in the district, 29 are contributing and 14 are non-contributing.

### **One-story American Foursquare**

There are 25 houses in the Hillcrest Historic District that fall into no known style but resemble the American Foursquare in almost every aspect except they have only one story instead of two. These are being set aside in a separate group referred to as "One-Story American Foursquare."

These houses feature the same square to rectangular floor plan, hipped roof, and horizontal emphasis as the two-story Foursquare. Most of these houses have front hipped roof dormers and flat roof full front porches with square masonry columns. A series of three "One-Story Foursquare" houses is found in the 700 block on North Palm Street. Constructed c. 1909, each of these houses features hipped roofs with a front hipped roof dormer and flat roof full front porches. An oriental flare in the eaves of the house at 806 Midland distinguishes it from the others of this form. The house at 4305 "I" Street is marked by a recessed porch and stucco wall cladding.

Ten of these "One-Story Foursquare" houses contribute to the district. Fifteen are considered non-contributing due to the application of synthetic siding.

### **Craftsman**

The Craftsman influence is by far the most common building style found in the Hillcrest Historic District. The majority of the development of Hillcrest coincided with the peak period of the popularity of the Craftsman style. Although the Bungalow form of the Craftsman style would normally be included in the broad category of Craftsman, due to the large number of Bungalows in Hillcrest, it will be discussed separately.

There are few "high style" examples of Craftsman design in Hillcrest because most architect-designed houses were still being built elsewhere in Little Rock before 1920. However there are approximately 100 buildings considered to be strongly Craftsman in their design influence located in the Hillcrest Historic District.

One particularly noteworthy Craftsman style house in Hillcrest is found in the northern section of the district on Hill Road. This is the two-story brick veneered Bagley House, which combines Craftsman and Colonial Revival features, but with more pronounced Craftsman influence in the generous use of natural stone and horizontal emphasis. Once a large estate, the Bagley House rests on an elevated corner lot at Hill Road and Pine Street and is encircled by a low stone retaining wall.

Stronger Craftsman design is displayed in the Sloss-Isgrig House at 4220 Woodlawn. Constructed c. 1920, this large brick and stone house is distinguished by a stone entry porch with arched entrance, gabled tile roof and rows of casement windows. Another good Craftsman example is the Wycoff-Riegler House at 3225 Ozark Street, which is less "grand" in proportion but features many high-style Craftsman details such as a low slung side gabled tile roof, wide eaves, and exposed rafter ends.

Several Craftsman styled homes are located in the 4500 block of South Lookout. This row of houses features a



variety of Craftsman details such as the combination of narrow weatherboard, brick and stone wall cladding, wide eaves with exposed rafter tails, triangular braced supports, battered foundations, and multi-pane over single-pane sash windows. These Craftsman houses are particularly effective in their wooded setting across from Allsopp Park.

Other notable examples of the larger two-story version of Craftsman styling in the Hillcrest Historic District include the houses at 2516 and 2520 Kavanaugh Boulevard, 216 North Woodrow, 4920 "I" Street, and 102 Ridgeway. Stucco wall surfaces and half-timbering in gable ends distinguish the Craftsman style house at 1023 North Monroe.

Seventy-seven percent of the Craftsman houses in the district are contributing and 23 percent are non-contributing.

### **Craftsman Bungalow**

By far the most prevalent form of house in the Hillcrest Historic District is the Craftsman Bungalow. Thirty-eight percent, or 614, of all structures in the district fall into this category. Bungalows are located in all additions of Hillcrest, with the heaviest concentration in the western sections.

The American Craftsman Bungalow became the "cottage" of the early decades of the twentieth century. It began as a small Craftsman house but acquired a wide diversity of stylistic influences, specific examples showing links with many popular American architectural styles. The American Bungalow adapted itself to widely divergent environmental and climatic conditions, made use of numerous kinds of local building materials, and ranged in size from rambling weekend retreats to small low-income residences. The rapid growth of the working class sections of Hillcrest reflected the need for small affordable housing.

Although there are many different types of Bungalows within the Hillcrest Historic District, a common theme in their design links them. The Bungalow is set low to the ground; it nestles into and becomes part of its environment. The use of rustic materials on the exterior of Bungalows was encouraged. Low pitched roofs with wide eaves also characterize these houses.

Living space was often extended to the outside in the use of the spacious porches on Bungalows. The Bungalow porch was a key factor in the livability of these small homes as they were geared to the outdoors. Today the porch continues to be an important space in the Hillcrest Bungalows.

In assimilating the large number of Bungalows in the Hillcrest Historic District, several distinct groupings became apparent. The earliest form of Bungalow in the district maintains a distinct similarity in steeply pitched front facing gabled roofs. Examples of this type of early Bungalow are found at 515 Valentine, built in 1910, 524 Midland, built c. 1911, 4520 Kenyon, built c. 1911, 326 North Ash, built c. 1912, and 417 North Beechwood, dating from c. 1912.

Another early Bungalow type seen in the Hillcrest area is the front facing gabled roof type with an oriental-influenced trellis in the gable end. Examples of this Oriental influence are seen on the houses at 311 North Woodrow, 500 Holly, 410 North Beechwood, and 501 North Oak.

A yet different characteristic noted in a pre-1915 type of Bungalow in Hillcrest is the gable-on-hip roof version. Examples of this type include the houses at 515 Valentine, built c. 1910, and 604 North Martin, built c. 1912. These gable-on-hip roof Bungalows contain more decorative features in their upper sash window pane

arrangements; their gable-on-hip roofs with flat eaves have a cap-like effect.

An exceptional representation of the early Bungalow in the Hillcrest Historic District is the Cochran House at 805 North Pine Street. This stucco 1 1/2 story house built c. 1913 particularly epitomizes the low, organic characteristics of Bungalow. The living room opens onto a full recessed portico on the rear, or south, elevation. Three round and two massive battered stucco columns support the porch roof. Large shed roof dormers are found on both the north and south elevations. A battered fieldstone chimney on the front, or west, elevation adds textural contrast.

Another outstanding Bungalow in Hillcrest is the Butterworth House at 4301 South Lookout. Constructed c. 1912, this side gabled roof house is set back from the street on a long corner lot surrounded by tall shrubbery. This house effectively blends with its setting and does indeed seem to nestle into the ground. A full front recessed porch is supported by two very large square brick columns with low brick piers flanking the wide porch steps. The most prominent feature of this house is a large shed roof dormer with a balcony on the front, or north, elevation.

Heavy emphasis on rustic qualities is found on many of the Hillcrest Bungalows. These are, for the most part, painted a dark, natural color (in most cases brown) and feature strong rustic materials (usually rough-cut wood and fieldstone). Examples of these rustic Bungalows are found at 315 and 321 North Woodrow, 521 North Spruce, 522 North Ash, and 400 North Cedar.

Another type of Bungalow seen often in Hillcrest is the cross-gabled roof type most often associated with "California Bungalows." These incorporate multiple roof planes, Oriental-like flared roof lines, and prominent triangular braces in addition to the usual Bungalow wide eaves with extended rafter ends. A variation on these Bungalows is the "Airplane Bungalow," with a single second-story room affording a full view of the sky, hence the name "Airplane." Examples include the houses designed and constructed by builder K.E.N. Cole at 708 North Ash, 712 North Ash, and 908 North Palm. Another exceptional "Airplane Bungalow" is found at 1105 North Monroe, which also features bands of casement windows.

Side-gable roof Bungalows with a broad front shed or gable roof dormers in the district usually contain a full front recessed porch. Notable examples of the side-gable roof Bungalow are found at 1402 and 1504 Kavanaugh Boulevard, 510 North Palm, and 484 Ridgeway.

In the additions west of North Pine Street, streets are lined with variations of small Bungalows, often similar to their neighbor, but usually with some particular distinction. The proportion and scale of these Bungalows is similar but the differences are noted most commonly in roof and porch type. Front facing gabled roofs, side-gable roofs, hipped roofs, and gable-on-hip roofs characterize the variations in the smaller and simpler Bungalows. Numerous porch arrangements can be seen with a good cross section of typical Craftsman porch supports such as battered wood columns on stone or brick piers, masonry columns, and paired or multiple supports as seen on the house at 424 North Ash.

The pane arrangement in the windows of these vast number of Bungalow variations is also notable. Upper sashes in many different decorative configurations add interest to these designs. Many of the small Bungalows in the district feature narrow weatherboard in two widths. A good example of this is found at 419 North Beechwood, where wider weatherboard above a band encircling the house at the window line adds textural interest to an otherwise undecorated structure.

Oriental influence is strong in the Bungalow at 410 North Beechwood, which features a pagoda-like porch and

roof eaves with an Oriental flare. Bungalows with English-like curved porches are found at 105 and 109 North Woodrow and at 508 North Pine.

Within the Bungalow category 438 contribute to the historic district. Largely due to the application of synthetic siding, 174 are considered non-contributing.

### **"Period Houses"**

Nationwide in the 1920s an eclectic flavor of design was emerging. Buildings incorporating many of the "romantic" styles of the past in their designs were fluently constructed in this period. English, Spanish, and French influences were some of the historic styles incorporated into these picturesque houses. The Hillcrest neighborhood was no exception to this national trend and a large number of these "period" homes were built in the 1920s.

The largest group of "period" buildings in the Hillcrest Historic District fall into the English Revival category with 192. This category of "period" house ranges from elaborate large versions to small working class adaptations of 1920s English influence in design. Of particular interest is the extensive use of fieldstone on the Hillcrest "period" buildings. In part, this can be attributed to the local availability of the materials as a stone quarry was located nearby.

A series of three impressive versions of the English influenced "period house" in Hillcrest are set back from Hill Road with wide expanses of elaborately landscaped lawn. The Wright House at 3518 Hill Road, the Kahn House at 3504 Hill Road, and the Tucker House at 3420 Hill Road are good examples of the high end of this type house. The Wright House, set on 14 city lots, is probably the most picturesque of these three with multiple front facing steep gabled roofs, half timbering in gable ends and extensive use of fieldstone on the first floor exterior. The early date (1911) of the Wright House is revealed by lingering Craftsman influence as seen in exposed rafter ends and knee braces. The Kahn House features a side gabled roof with fieldstone wall surfaces on the first story and stucco on second story walls. Rows of casement windows, small hipped roof dormers, and arched first floor openings add interest to this house. The Tucker House is the only one of these three Hill Road houses which uses brick wall materials with no stone details. A prominent front facing gabled bay with half-timbering gives this house a strong Tudor effect. The rear, or north, section features a two-story round turret, which contains an interior stairway.

Another elaborate English Revival home in the Hillcrest District is the Storthz house located at 450 Midland. This large home incorporates extensive use of fieldstone, steep front facing gables, and bands of decorative diamond-shaped leaded glass casement windows.

A slight variation from the above mentioned large versions of the English Revival is the Shoemaker House at 12 Ozark Point. This easternmost house in the Hillcrest Historic District is 2 1/2 stories high with a clipped gable roof, first floor brick wall cladding, and second story stucco wall material. Irregularly spaced fieldstones surround the first floor windows. A large recessed porch on the east end of this house affords a spectacular view of the Arkansas River and downtown Little Rock.

Two less "grand" houses on Oakwood Road are particularly interesting in their extensive use of fieldstone wall materials and English style, steeply angled front gables and arches.

Good examples of stucco adaptations of the English Revival style are found at 819 North Ash; 4316, 4312, and 4308 South Lookout, 3914 South Lookout, and 4001 Cedar Hill Road. These examples of stucco-clad homes are

two-story with prominent half timbering and the typical steeply pitched gable projections.

Less ostentatious English Revival "period" houses in the Hillcrest District are abundantly found throughout. The Fairfax Terrace addition, which developed in the 1920s, contains several good examples of the "median" English Revival home. Such houses are found at 3227 and 3229 Ozark Street, 8 and 10 Fairfax Terrace, and 300, 306, and 310 North Elm. These are one-story brick homes with gable roofs and prominent front-facing gable porches. Other typical small versions of the English Revival period house are found along Alpine Court, 1508 Kavanaugh Boulevard, 1422 Kavanaugh, and 217 North Palm.

Of the 192 English Revival "period" houses in Hillcrest, 184 contribute to the historic district.

### **Other "Period" Houses**

There are eight homes in the Hillcrest District constructed with Spanish influence in the 1920s picturesque movement. An outstanding example of this type is the Noack House at 3233 Ozark Street. Here the stucco walls, tile gable roof, terraces, and patios exemplify the period adaptation of the historic Spanish style.

French design influence is also represented by eight houses in the area. These homes are large, impressive versions of French Eclectic design featuring tall, steeply pitched hipped roofs. Two of these French "period" homes in Hillcrest are known to have been designed by architect Max Meyer. The Ogden House at 3620 Hill Road and the Scroggins House at 321 Linwood are outstanding examples of Meyer's work. Both of these homes feature fieldstone wall cladding and massive hipped roofs.

Dutch Colonial design is seen in the tall gambrel roof on the house at 4523 Woodlawn. The houses at 211 Crystal Court, 306 Midland, and 4402 Woodlawn are somewhat Italianate in their period design and feature the typical low pitched hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets and arches above first floor doors and windows.

### **Modernistic Houses**

Two homes in the Hillcrest Historic District fall into the stylistic definition of "Modernistic." Both are contributing to the historic district. The Knoop House is a two-story, flat-roof, smooth-brick walled home with excellent details defining the Modernistic style in its streamlined asymmetrical facade, casement, and glass block windows and steel bar balustrades on a second level deck. The Back House was constructed in 1937 and though less streamlined in appearance than the Knoop House, details the Modernistic style also in its use of steel bar balustrades on an uncovered terrace.

### **"Other"**

Eighty-one structures in the Hillcrest Historic District fall into a category labeled "other." This category includes those houses which have no particular stylistic influence. A large number of houses in this category were designed and constructed by one firm, the Bracy Real Estate and Building Company. Often these houses are two-story brick with gabled roofs. An attempt at "style" is most commonly seen in the many types of porch configurations used on these houses, most often with the use of fieldstone or English Revival-like steeply pitched gables and arches.

A row of these ambiguously styled homes is found in the 100 block of Crystal Avenue. Similarly, homes at 115 Midland and 3916 South Lookout are representative of this basic two-story brick house type with limited English

Revival influence in porch details.

Spanish influence is seen in the details on the houses at 4109 Lee Avenue and 923 North Spruce. Both of these houses feature stucco walls and tile roofs. Another "other" type house is the two-story stucco at 812 North Palm, which is homogenous in its appearance. An additional attempt to insert some stylistic details on an otherwise plain house is seen at 4415 Kenyon, which combines Foursquare, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival detailing. Similarly, 4318 Kenyon is slightly Colonial Revival in detailing.

Seventy of the "other" buildings are contributing to the district with 11 considered non-contributing.

### **Plain Traditional**

Approximately 10 percent of the historic homes in the Hillcrest Historic District fall into the period 1930-1940. These Depression-era homes attempt to reflect the various revival styles but lack decorative detail. Roof pitches are generally low and eaves are close. Built in the 1930s and interrupted by World War II, this is the same type house built in large numbers in tract-housing developments following the war.

Four homes on Fairfax Avenue are examples of this type home. These small frame, gabled roof versions of this eclectic style were constructed in the late 1930s.

Larger versions of this type house tended to feature more detailing, as seen in the Monterey effect of a second floor porch on the Bailey house at 4020 South Lookout and slight Colonial Revival influence on the house at 516 Fairfax Terrace.

Only 57 percent of the Plain Traditional style homes are contributing to the historic district. Most of the 43 percent non-contributing in this category have been artificially sided.

### **Multi-Family**

Forty-five historic multi-family buildings are located within the Hillcrest Historic District. Of these, 43 are contributing structures. The three non-contributing have been covered in synthetic siding.

The oldest of the multi-family structures is a duplex located at 1403/1405 Kavanaugh, built in 1918 and Craftsman in design. Built in 1919, the duplex at 112 Berry also reflects Craftsman influence.

Twenty-four of the multi-family buildings were constructed in the 1920s. The design of those constructed in this decade reflect the "period revival" popular in the 1920s. Many of these apartment buildings feature names reflective of their stylistic intent. One such building is the Spanish Court Apartments at 808 North Palm. Constructed 1930-31, this building was designed by Erhart and Eichenbaum, architects, and features colorful tile insets, a tile roof, and a center courtyard with tiled fountain. Just around the corner at 4715 "I" Street, the L-shaped Cresthaven Apartments feature modest Tudor details in half-timbering and a two-story entrance turret.

The Spanish Court Apartments and Cresthaven were built for W. R. Donham, who lived in the Colonial Revival style house at 800 North Beechwood. He is also known to have built Castle Heights Apartments, and in the late 1930s two English influenced apartment buildings at the corner of North Beechwood and "I" streets.

Other picturesque multi-family buildings constructed in the 1920s include the Hillcrest Apartments, featuring Prairie detailing, the Craftsman-styled Coronet Apartments, and 1800-1822 Kavanaugh.

Perhaps the most picturesque of all the multi-family structures in the Hillcrest Historic District is the Oakwood Place Apartments. Built to look like a "palatial" residence and set on an elevated site affording a view of the Arkansas River to the north, this English Revival apartment building was constructed in 1928. Exterior walls are veneered in fieldstone. Fieldstone site features, including retaining walls, benches, and sidewalks, add to the interest of this building. Geared toward high income tenants, the building originally contained four apartments each with servants quarters.

The decade of the 1920s also saw a number of duplexes constructed in the Hillcrest area. The Fuess Duplex reflects Craftsman design, while the Dillingham Duplexes feature English Revival details.

The 1930s saw the construction of 15 multi-family structures in Hillcrest. The Markwood Apartments at 1000 Kavanaugh feature English Revival detailing in the use of fieldstone on the foundation and entry porches. Other 1930 multi-family dwellings tend to be simple and sparse in detail reflecting the trend away from the picturesque revivals of the 1920s.

Two c. 1940 multi-family buildings considered contributing in the district are the Exeter Apartments and the duplex at 506/508 North Oak. Both are functional two-story brick structures in the same Plain Traditional vein as those built in the 1930s.

## **Commercial**

Although the Hillcrest Historic District is overwhelmingly residential in character, there are 16 historic commercial buildings within its boundaries. Of these, nine are contributing and seven are non-contributing.

Commercial structures in the district are largely confined to Kavanaugh Boulevard. A small commercial area located at the corner of West Markham and Kavanaugh Boulevard, known as "Stiff's Station," contained several small shops. A grocery was originally housed in the building at 3016 West Markham.

The oldest commercial building in Hillcrest was constructed c. 1906. Originally a grocery, the structure for many years has been the residence of a prominent Little Rock interior decorator. The two-story brick "Ice House" is strictly a functional commercial structure in its design. Adjacent to the Ice House is a one-story storefront building featuring slight Spanish influence in its raised parapet with tiled ridge.

The main commercial center of Hillcrest spans a four block area on Kavanaugh between Ash and Spruce streets. At one time service stations were located in each of these blocks; these have been razed or adapted for other purposes.

Designed by prominent Arkansas architect Charles L. Thompson in 1915, the Tudor building on the southeast corner of Kavanaugh and Beechwood once housed the Pulaski Heights city offices. Although a fire has destroyed a second floor section on the west end, this building otherwise remains much as it was originally.

A forerunner to the modern shopping center was built in 1930 at the corner of Kavanaugh and Spruce. This picturesque Spanish Revival building features a large arched window on the north end, a tile roof, and elaborate chimney caps with small tile roofs. The building remains virtually unaltered from its original appearance. In the parking lot in front of the building is a small structure with similar stylistic details, originally a service station, now a restaurant.

The Hillcrest Historic District's only three Art Deco style structures include the 1930 Southwestern Bell Telephone Company building at the corner of Elm and Woodlawn and two of the Little Rock Water Works buildings. All of these structures utilize typical Art Deco zigzags and other geometric designs.

A quaint cut stone corner commercial building constructed in the late 1930s is located on the southwest corner of Kavanaugh and Spruce streets. This one-story flat roof structure is reminiscent of many downtown buildings in small northern Arkansas towns.

Thirteen non-historic commercial buildings are found in the Hillcrest Historic District and range from an attempt to duplicate a historic structure that burned to a large modern grocery store.

### **Institutional**

There are a total of 12 historic and non-historic institutional buildings in the Hillcrest Historic District. Of these, five are historic with four contributing and one non-contributing.

Of the contributing buildings, two are churches. The oldest is St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Constructed in 1905, this simple one-story brick building with gabled roof was the first church in Pulaski Heights. Another early institutional building belongs to the Pulaski Heights Baptist Church. This church was constructed c. 1911, later remodeled and is the only building in the district in the Neo-Classical Revival style. Another early institutional building in Hillcrest is the Old Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church, built c. 1911. Now extensively remodeled for use as an apartment building, the former church does not retain its historic significance.

A Masonic Lodge building was constructed c. 1926 and is a two-story brick structure with a flat roof. Basically unadorned, this building features slight Classical Revival detailing in arched windows on the south elevation.

The Pulaski Heights Grammar School at Pine and Lee streets is composed of an original, c. 1920, building with two later additions. Although windows have been boarded in some sections, it is considered contributing.

### **Non-contributing Historic Buildings**

The majority of the 356 non-contributing historic structures in the Hillcrest Historic District are covered in synthetic siding. Many of these houses are covered in eight- to nine-inch wide aluminum siding. Others have been sheathed in asbestos. However, there are a handful of homes which have been synthetically sided (mostly in recent years) with narrow width siding and careful attention paid to window and door surrounds, corner boards, and cornice lines. Although these are considered non-contributing to the district, these few examples of tastefully applied synthetic siding are seen on the houses at 818 and 824 Beechwood, 500 and 519 Palm, and 821 Spruce. Particularly well done is the application of siding to the house at 500 Holly. Siding on the Colonial Revival two-story house at 4223 South Lookout is narrow width, but apparent.

Despite the fact that the application of synthetic siding has lessened the historic contribution of these houses within the confines of the National Register nomination, these houses still maintain their original historic scale and proportion and continue to contribute to the streetscape and wholeness of the neighborhood.

Structural alterations in the district are mostly found in the enclosure of a porch or less often, the addition of a room. Some attempts to convert large homes to apartments have been severe, but are confined to only a very few houses.

### **Non-contributing Buildings Built After 1940**

There are approximately 220 buildings, or 13 percent, in the Hillcrest Historic District that are non-historic. Of this number 55, or 25 percent, were constructed in the 1940s; 90, or 40 percent, in the period 1950-1960, and 75, or 35 percent, after 1960.

For the large part, these are residential structures, most built on vacant lots never filled or on lots carved from large estates. Those built in the 1940s are difficult to distinguish from their late 1930 counterparts. An abundance of ranch houses account for most of the 1950 and 1960 new construction. Several modern apartments on Kavanaugh were built on sites formerly occupied by large historic homes.

A convenience food store, branch banks, and an office building are representative examples of non-historic commercial buildings in Hillcrest.

Three of Little Rock's large churches are located in Hillcrest. Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church is an English Revival building complex dating from 1950 to 1986. Classical Revival styling denotes two other large c. 1950 churches.

Most of the structures in the Hillcrest Historic District are in excellent condition. A particular pride in this neighborhood has always existed and is apparent in the well maintained homes and carefully landscaped yards. A fashionable area in which to reside in Little Rock, Hillcrest maintains a friendly and secure neighborhood atmosphere unlike that of any other section of town. Streets are lined with walkers, bicyclers, and joggers on any given day as residents enjoy the scenic and historic features of this picturesque area of town.

However stable the Hillcrest neighborhood is, threats do exist on its perimeters. Most affected is the southern edge of the area along West Markham Street. In addition to the many new commercial buildings including fast food restaurants, gas stations, and branch banks, the proximity of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences campus poses a danger for the southernmost areas of the district. Already houses have been razed to create parking for the students, and homes have become rental property. The westernmost area of Hillcrest is also threatened by high traffic and potential commercial encroachment.



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**ARKANSAS HISTORIC  
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# Hillcrest: The History and Architectural Heritage of Little Rock's Streetcar Suburb

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