

CHARACTERISTICS OF PENSACOLA PARK

The proposed Pensacola Park Historic District developed cohesively over a set period of time, with similar type homes – all designed to be appealing and affordable for working and middle class residents. The suburban nature of the district means that every house has a front yard, a driveway, and a comparable setback from the street.

The plats were closely followed as each street was built out – and in many cases, the original plat was improved by the decision (for example, on Rosemont Garden), to combine three lots for one house, with the house being built on the middle lot.¹

The “beautiful location” and “delightful surroundings” extolled by developers in the 1920s has only increased over the decades, as a leafy canopy has matured, and families enjoy walkable, pedestrian friendly streets – often observing these streets from their front porches.



Figure 31 - This one-story brick bungalow at 107 Penmoken Park has a porch with original brick piers with paired square wood columns and a wooden, open rail balustrade; large windows on the front, and flowering trees in the front yard.

The proposed Pensacola Park Historic District is a neighborhood built with an eye toward both public transportation (the electric streetcar) and private transportation (the automobile), and the simplest transportation method – pedestrians walking, running, or biking.

¹ Advertisement, page 5, June 30, 1921, Lexington Herald.

The Pensacola Park neighborhood was developed as a suburb for working class Lexingtonians including professors at the University of Kentucky, members of the clergy, military personnel, engineers, and small business owners. Although almost 100 years have passed since the first plats were filed, Pensacola Park still remains very much a working-class neighborhood, with an array of historic homes that are architecturally intact and representative of the time-period when they were built. There is a distinctive sense of place.

These homes – from small brick bungalows with two bedrooms to more roomy Tudor Revival-style houses with sharply peaked gables and arched front doors – appeal to homeowners today just as they did in the 1920s. The overall character and integrity of the area is intact and significant – some of the pressures felt in other Lexington neighborhoods from the same time period have not impacted Pensacola Park. A walk down the streets of the neighborhood is like looking through a magazine or catalog from between the World Wars, with almost every type of popular house style and type represented.

Although the streetcars left Lexington in 1934, and the automobile isn't a "new" technology, the character of the proposed district is remarkably intact and little changed from its beginnings in the 1920s and 1930s. The streets follow the pattern laid out in the development plats. Trees – both street trees and those in front yards – shade the well-traveled sidewalks.

The proposed district is primarily residential in architectural character, with single family and duplex homes, and a few 3 to 4 unit multi-family dwellings. Infill is limited and there is only one institution, Hunter Presbyterian Church on Rosemont Garden. Some of the dwellings along Nicholasville Road have been adapted to commercial use, but most remain residential and retain their residential architectural character.

Overall, the historic massing and floor plans of the historic buildings in the proposed historic district remain intact. The houses within the district retain stylistic details, including window and door surrounds, cornices, porches, fenestration patterns, roof forms and other accoutrements that convey the historic architectural style and design of each building.

A Street by Street Examination

The proposed Pensacola Park Historic District was laid out in five different sections between 1919 and 1941. These sections are reflective of the development history of the neighborhood, and chart the changing tastes of the American homeowner. Each section will be examined individually, in chronological order, with a brief description of the history of each section and the types of homes built there historically.

Rosemont Addition

Rosemont Addition (as it was originally known) was the first official subdivision plat recorded from what had been Price's Penmoken Farm. It was recorded on August 11, 1919, with 152 lots, most 25 feet wide and 130 feet or less in depth. Rosemont Addition was part of the 15 acres that Mayme Johnston had purchased from the Price heirs at the Penmoken auction.²

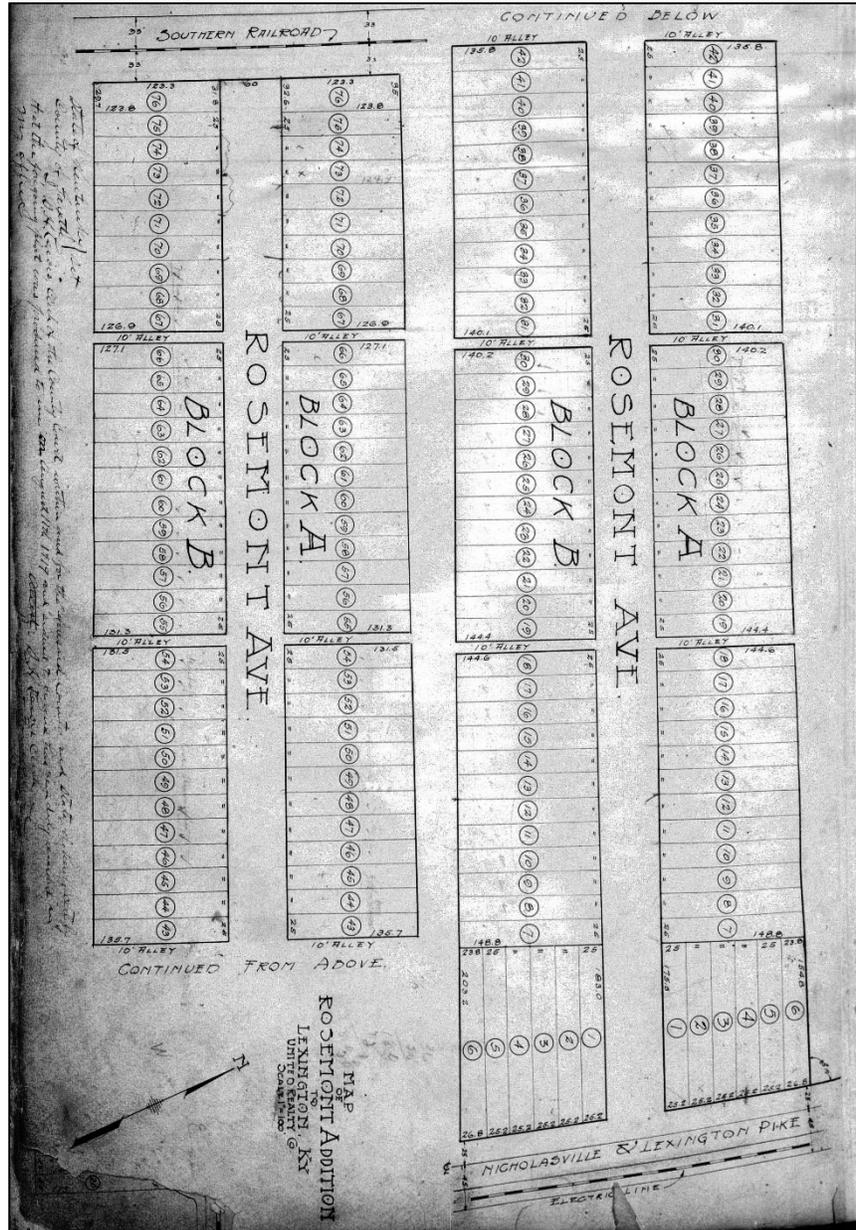


Figure 32 - The plat of Rosemont Addition.

² Fayette County Deed Book 191, page 402.

Johnston was the wife of William McClelland Johnston, a Lexington developer and “real-estate man,” who went by the name of W. McC. Johnston. Calling himself “The Bungalow Man,” Johnston is largely responsible for the development of Rosemont Garden and, across Nicholasville Road, the Southern Heights Subdivision.

Johnston was also a lawyer who was admitted to the Kentucky bar when he was 17, and later practiced with former Kentucky governor William O. Bradley in Lancaster, Kentucky (Johnston’s hometown). Johnston also worked in the coal industry in Pineville, Kentucky, before turning his eye toward real estate development. He proved a natural salesman in the race to sell lots and houses in Lexington’s suburbs.



Figure 33 - Part of an advertisement placed in the May 23, 1920 edition of the *Lexington Leader* by W. McC. Johnson

In a series of advertisements in the Lexington papers between 1920 and 1930, Johnston lyrically described his “California bungalows,” sometimes cajoling readers to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity (at an unbeatable price, of course) he was offering. “Easily the niftiest bungalow ever built in Lexington...it has flower boxes, leaded glass book cases, brick mantles, cozy-corner seats, beamed ceilings in the sitting room, while the dining room has coved ceilings, paneled walls, and leaded glass china-closets. The modern bath includes built-in medicine cabinet with mirror, each bedroom has an attached dressing room, the kitchen has three handsome built-in cabinets, and the concrete basement is dry.”

Johnston’s bungalows ranged from two to five bedrooms. Between 1919 and 1921, there were 73 property transfers recorded at the Fayette county Clerk’s office between Johnston and new homeowners on Rosemont Garden.

Prior to the official recordation of the plat, lots and houses were being sold in Rosemont Addition. An auction was advertised in the August 6, 1919 edition of the *Lexington Herald* of 15 acres of lots, part of “that new subdivision” located on the Nicholasville Car Line, Rosemont. Potential homeowners were encouraged to attend and acquire a large lot in one the best neighborhoods of the city – an “already established neighborhood” with many bungalows constructed.³

³ Advertisement, page 7, *The Lexington Herald*, July 20, 1919.

**LARGE BUILDING LOTS On Nicholasville
Car Line At
AUCTION! THAT NEW ROSEMONT
SUBDIVISION**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 1919 COMMENCING PROMPTLY AT 10:30 A. M.
RAIN OR SHINE

We have bought 15 acres near the City limits on the West side of the Nicholasville Boulevard, and will sell in lots on 75 feet frontage, with privilege of as many more adjoining feet at the same price as desired, at absolute auction, no reserve or by-bid. If you are looking for a large lot in one of the best neighborhoods in the City, City water, lights and gas accessible, in a high-class restricted subdivision, then be sure and attend this sale.

Adequate building restrictions, with building line will be inserted in the deeds.

The property is on the right side of the street, the car line being on the other side, no dangerous crossings.

Your neighborhood is already established, the bungalows already built in this section speak for themselves.

No city taxes, no city disadvantages, yet with all the advantages of the city, car line at your door, and a beautiful approach to the heart of Lexington, near the University, and many other advantages.

**A
Few
Facts**

YOU MAKE THE PRICE, we simply suggest the terms, which will be easy. Souvenirs will be given to those attending the sale.

FREE Automobiles leave Security Trust Building promptly at 10 a. m., or get off at Stop 3 or 3 1-2 on the car line.

LADIES ALWAYS WELCOME, AT THIS SALE SPECIALLY INVITED.

The United Realty Co.

WM. M. NICHOLLS and O. T. WALLACE, Managers.
302 Trust Building
TELEPHONE 1199-X

Figure 34 - Advertisement announcing the auction of lots in Rosemont Addition.

Polk's 1921 City Directory noted that the houses along Rosemont were not numbered. By June 30, 1921, at least 24 bungalows had been constructed along Rosemont Garden.⁴

In 1921, some residents of Rosemont filed suit in Lexington Circuit Court to stop construction of a "residence and apartment buildings, costing only a few hundred dollars and less than \$3,000."⁵ One of the restrictions on lots along Rosemont was that no home constructed should cost less than \$3,000.

Bungalows are indeed the defining feature of Rosemont Garden. The majority of the homes along the road within the district (which extends west to the Railroad and stops there) are bungalows. Of the 47 parcels on Rosemont located within the proposed district, 35 of the homes are bungalows – and a drive down Rosemont Garden reveals an array of bungalows that could have been pulled from the pages of a Sears Roebuck catalog.

Changes to the houses along Rosemont Garden are minimal. Garages have been altered or added, and some materials have been changed, but the feeling of a 1920s development remains intact. Houses maintain their setback and relationship with the sidewalk and street. The historic nature of the houses along the street is readily apparent.

⁴ Lexington Herald, June 30, 1931.

⁵ "Want \$3000 House Built or None." *Lexington Leader*, August 14, 1921.



Figure 35 - The Bungalow at 177 Rosemont Garden is a twin of the one at 181 Rosemont Garden. Each shingle-clad house has flared walls at the bottom, inset porches, and very small dormers.



Figure 36 – The bungalow at 181 Rosemont Garden.



Figure 37 - The bungalow at 132 Rosemont Garden features the low profile of the type. Brackets, exposed rafter tails and the full front porch are also hallmarks of the Craftsman style.

Suburban Court:

The next addition to the neighborhood was Suburban Court, which was also part of the former Penmoken Farm. It was platted October 11, 1922, with 76 lots. The size of the lots ranged from 46 to 50 feet wide and from 118 feet deep to around 150 feet deep. The larger lots were closer to Nicholasville Pike and the smaller lots closer to the railroad.

Suburban Court may no longer be outside the city limits (and thus free from city taxes), but it maintains its character as a 1920s development. In those years before the Great Depression and World War II, Lexington was growing and bustling (despite grumbles about annexation). The remarkably intact houses in the corridor reflect the optimism of a country inventing its own architectural styles for a whole new group of homeowners.

The houses along Suburban Court maintain their character – both in their adherence to the original plat and in the integrity of their appearance and materials. The front porch remains a popular gathering spot, and the sidewalks are busy with children and adults.



Figure 38 - The bungalow was still the most popular house type when Suburban Court was being developed. This row of very intact bungalows, all slightly different, reflect the era in which the historic houses were built.

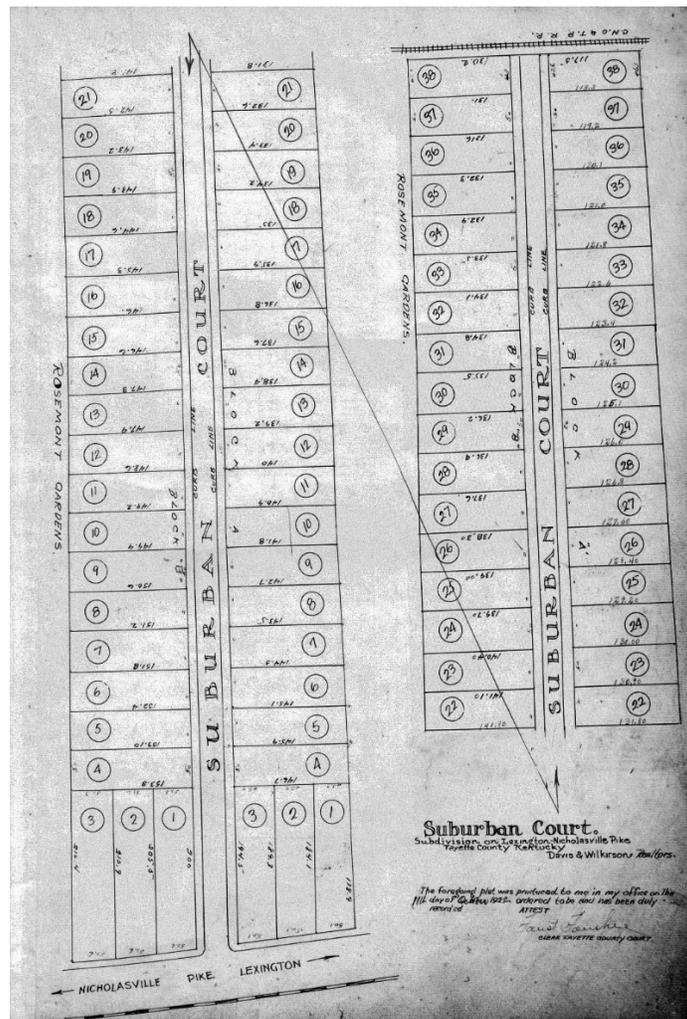


Figure 39 - Plat of Suburban Court.

In the October 8, 1922 advertisement in the *Lexington Leader* touting the auction of lots in Suburban Court, the development was described as “a moderate-priced subdivision of the better type.” The “splendid new development” had a first class macadam street, curbs for sidewalks, city water, gas in front of each lot, and an interurban stop “almost directly in front of this property.” In the 1925 Lexington city directory, there were 17 entries for Suburban Court; by 1928, there were 64 entries.

Davis & Wilkirson

say:—



CLEAN UP—CLOSE OUT SUBURBAN COURT REGARDLESS OF PRICE!

Last Fall We Were Commissioned By Davis and Wilkirson to Sell---At Public Auction---44 Home Sites in Their New Suburban Court Addition on Nicholasville Pike---
WE SOLD THEM---Everyone---And At Bargain Prices---We Are Now Authorized to Sell the Remaining Holdings of the Original Developers at ABSOLUTE CUT-
LOOSE AUCTION---Regardless of Cost or Value.

38 Lots Left 38 Lots Will Be Sold At Absolute Auction Friday, May 25, At 10 A. M. A SUPERB LOCATION ON NICHOLASVILLE PIKE

SUBURBAN COURT is located in the Heart of High Class Residential Developments on Nicholasville Pike.
SUBURBAN COURT is located on the West side of the pike, only seven-tenths of a mile from the City Limits.
SUBURBAN COURT has an Interurban Stop right at it and a strong probability of city car service soon.
SUBURBAN COURT has City Conveniences---Is easily accessible but ESCAPES CITY TAXES.
SUBURBAN COURT is wisely restricted to insure its permanent desirability.
SUBURBAN COURT lots will be sold positively to the Highest Bidders without reserve.

CITY WATER --- GAS --- MACADAM STREET --- SIDEWALKS --- CURBING

EASIEST OF EASY TERMS:

Only 1-5 Cash (Payable On Ground Day of Sale)---Remainder in 30 Equal Payments Without Interest. 2 1-2 Years to Pay and---Think of It---No Interest!
FREE AUTOS WILL MEET ALL SOUTH LIME CARS FRIDAY MORNING

U. S. REALTY AUCTION CO.

KNOXVILLE, TENN. — MARION, VA. — ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.

Members: Knoxville Real Estate Board—St. Petersburg Realtors' Association.
IN CO-OPERATION WITH
DAVIS and WILKIRSON---REALTORS---159 W. SHORT ST.
Information and Maps Can Be Obtained at Davis and Wilkirson's Office

Figure 40 - May 20, 1923 ad for lots in Suburban Court.



Figure 41 - A Suburban Court streetscape. The houses maintain their setback, front yards and relationship with one another, in addition to looking like the 1920s and 1930s houses they are.



Figure 42 - Two bungalows on Suburban Court. The one on the left is an excellent example of a one-story, front gable bungalow, while the one on the right is an equally exceptional example of a brick veneer front gable with a hipped porch roof.

Of the parcels making up the original Suburban Court plat today, there is one non-historic infill dwelling, one vacant lot, 66 historic bungalows and some scattered examples of other housing types popular during the period of development (Cape Cods, Dutch Colonial Revival, and a Craftsman style house). The six parcels that front along Nicholasville Road, as in all of the sections that make up the proposed historic district, are larger, and deed restrictions stipulated that the houses themselves cost more to construct. The historic houses along Nicholasville Road form the gateway to the subdivision – both historically and today.

Penmoken Park

In 1923, Penmoken Park was platted. Two years later, reflecting a slight adjustment in how the lots were configured, an amended plat was filed. Both Rosemont Addition and Suburban Court had sold quickly and houses were going up just as quickly. Lexington’s growth was prompting downtown residents to seek greener pasture in the suburbs.



Figure 43 - Bungalows were the preferred house of choice for Penmoken Park’s first residents. Here, a group of one-story brick bungalows wrap around the cul-de-sac at the end of the street. Each house maintains its original character and charm.

As a result, Penmoken Park was platted with the expectation for speedy sales and development. The official plat shows the most proposed lots per block, in comparison to the two earlier streets.

There are 104 lots recorded on the official plat. The lots are all roughly 25 feet wide, and range from 148 feet deep on the north side of Penmoken Park, to 162 feet deep on the opposite side of the street. The recorded plat also shows what must be the remains of L.C. Price's farm, with a large residence and barns situated on 23 acres (Tract 6).

Penmoken Park, in addition to its density, was also the first cul-de-sac in the proposed district. This design allowed for a circular green space at the end of the street, with houses arranged around the circle (Figure 41). The original 104 lots did not translate into 104 building lots however as there came to be only 73 houses on Penmoken Park, so several owners purchased more than one lot for the construction of their home. This is much the same pattern as seen on Rosemont Garden, where three lots were often combined for one building site, with the house placed on the middle lot.

J.F. Skidmore appears to have been responsible for much of the development on Penmoken Park. A native of Harlan County (and former Harlan County Clerk), Skidmore sold some "large holdings of coal lands" and moved to Fayette County in 1910, where he set about farming and purchasing many tracts of land. Skidmore bought 65 acres at the Penmoken Farm sale in 1919. In 1923, he began selling numbered lots on Penmoken Park.

I WILL SELL

PENMOKEN PARK

A Brand New Subdivision In
**Building Lots and
Small Tracts
At Auction
Monday, June 4th
At 2 P. M. on the Grounds**

Mr. J. F. Skidmore has authorized me to sell absolutely to the highest bidder without reserve or by-bid, his property located on the Nicholasville Road adjoining Rosemont Gardens, and being part of the L. C. Price property.

Penmoken Park has been subdivided into 100 choice building lots, and in front of each lot there will be a first-class MACADAM STREET, CURB AND GUTTER, CONCRETE SIDEWALK, CITY WATER AND NATURAL GAS.

The tracts, ranging from one acre to twenty, all front on the Nicholasville Road.

On the 20-acre tract is located a good two-story residence, containing ten rooms, bath, natural gas and electric lights; an eight-acre tobacco barn, stock barn, and a number of other buildings; fruit trees, grape arbor, and plenty of fine shade trees.

The location of PENMOKEN PARK is ideal, being only a short distance from State University, the new City High School, and Picadome Graded School, and on the Lexington and Nicholasville Interurban car line—cars run every hour. I have been informed that city cars will run every ten minutes to Penmoken Park within the next thirty days. The car line is on the opposite side of the Park, thereby eliminating dangerous railroad crossings.

Simply as an advertisement and to secure a large attendance at this sale, I will give away FREE a brand new FIVE-PASSENGER FORD TOURING CAR, whether you attend as a buyer or merely as a spectator.

Ride out to Penmoken Park and get Mr. Skidmore to show you through, and you will then become convinced that there is no better location for a home.

I welcome your attendance at this sale, whether interested in buying or not. The terms will be easy and announced at sale.

Oliver J. Wallace

Figure 44 - An ad announcing the auction of lots on Penmoken Park, from the June 1, 1923 edition of the *Lexington Leader*.

In the fall of 1923, Mrs. Nancy Hampton Reed, who owned six lots on Penmoken Park, filed suit in Lexington circuit court against another property owner for violation of deed restrictions. According to Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Eunice G. Ruth, owner of lots 70 and 71, had just “completed a frame garage on her lots and...was about to occupy it as a dwelling.”⁶ Despite the lawsuit, Mrs. Ruth remained in Penmoken Park for years afterwards and her eventual frame bungalow (142 Penmoken Park, Figure 44)) still stands.



Figure 46 - Eunice Ruth’s house at 142 Penmoken Park is a good example of side gable, one-and-one-half story frame bungalow. The bay window on the side elevation is a stylistic variation seen on some bungalows, providing a niche within what was likely the dining room.

The majority of the dwellings – 63 – on Penmoken Park are bungalows – representing almost every shape, configuration, and other detailing that makes each dwelling individual and unique. By 1925, the Lexington city directory listed 17 entries on Penmoken Park, a number that has almost doubled two years later to 33 houses. The street was almost completely built out by the time the 1933-34 city directory was issued, with 62 entries along the street.

The original residents of Penmoken Park included bookkeepers, bank tellers, salesman, storekeepers, farmers, plumbers, barbers and machinists – among the many occupations and walks of life represented in this suburban neighborhood evolving in the early-twentieth century south of town and near the University of Kentucky. Growth slowed during the worst years of the Great Depression, with many houses on the street remaining vacant or “under construction.”

⁶ “Owner Kept Out of Garage Home.” *Lexington Leader*, September 12, 1923, page 7.

Lexington recovered slowly but surely from the Great Depression, and so did Penmoken Park. Just as few vestige remains of the hardships inflicted by that period of American history, the houses themselves remain remarkably unchanged today. These small houses – and some are only 800 square feet in size – represented the realization of the American dream for the first residents. Today, the architectural character and compact footprints of these historic houses, as well as the neighborhood’s proximity to services, workplaces, sense of place and the Lexington community have great appeal to today’s homeowners.



Figure 47 - A view of the cul-de-sac at the west end of Penmoken Park where one-story bungalows cluster around the circle, enjoying a view that must have seemed open and expansive to former city residents as well as referencing the substantial amount of significant tree coverage characteristic of many of the properties throughout the proposed historic district area.



Figure 48 - Two bungalows on Penmoken Park demonstrate the variety of cladding materials and forms of the popular house type. Each bungalow, though markedly different, represents elements essential to the type.



Figure 49 - Two wire-brushed patterned brick bungalows on Penmoken Park. Almost 100 years have passed since the construction of these houses and they still look much as they did the day they were completed.

Goodrich Avenue

Goodrich Avenue, the southernmost street in the proposed historic district, reflects the changing tastes of the 1930s homebuilder and home owner. The sharp angles of the Tudor Revival house and the classically-inspired Cape Cod are predominate in this section of the Pensacola Park neighborhood. The variety of sizes and shapes seen elsewhere in the proposed district is present in this section as well, but the 1920s bungalow mania that defined Rosemont Garden, Suburban Court, and Penmoken Park, was on the way out at the time houses on Goodrich were being built.



Figure 50 - Goodrich Avenue features houses built in the 1930s and 1940s, like the intact Tudor Revival style house on the left and a similarly intact Cape Cod on the right.

The first plat for Goodrich Avenue was recorded in 1927, with revisions following in 1928 and 1930. Originally slated to follow the design of Penmoken Park as a cul-de-sac, Goodrich was eventually opened up with a connector that would become Crescent Street (now Pensacola Drive).

There were three main owners/developers of the land (also originally part of Penmoken Farm) that would become Goodrich Avenue: J. G. Galloway, Vera J. Brown, and Lottie Watkins. Little is known about these owners – they were not promoters or developers in the same ilk as W. McC. Johnston, the “Bungalow Man.” Rather, they appear to have each owned a section of what would become Goodrich Avenue, and sold the lots to third parties to build houses.

There would be 71 lots developed along Goodrich Avenue of which 68 houses remain along Goodrich Avenue today (not including 1909 and 1907 Nicholasville Road, which are part of the original plat). Unfortunately, seven houses had to be demolished over several years by the LFUCG

(166, 168 and 170 Goodrich Avenue, and 1877, 1875, 1873 and 1871 Pensacola Drive) in order to mitigate substantial ongoing flooding issues in that area and facilitate flood management.

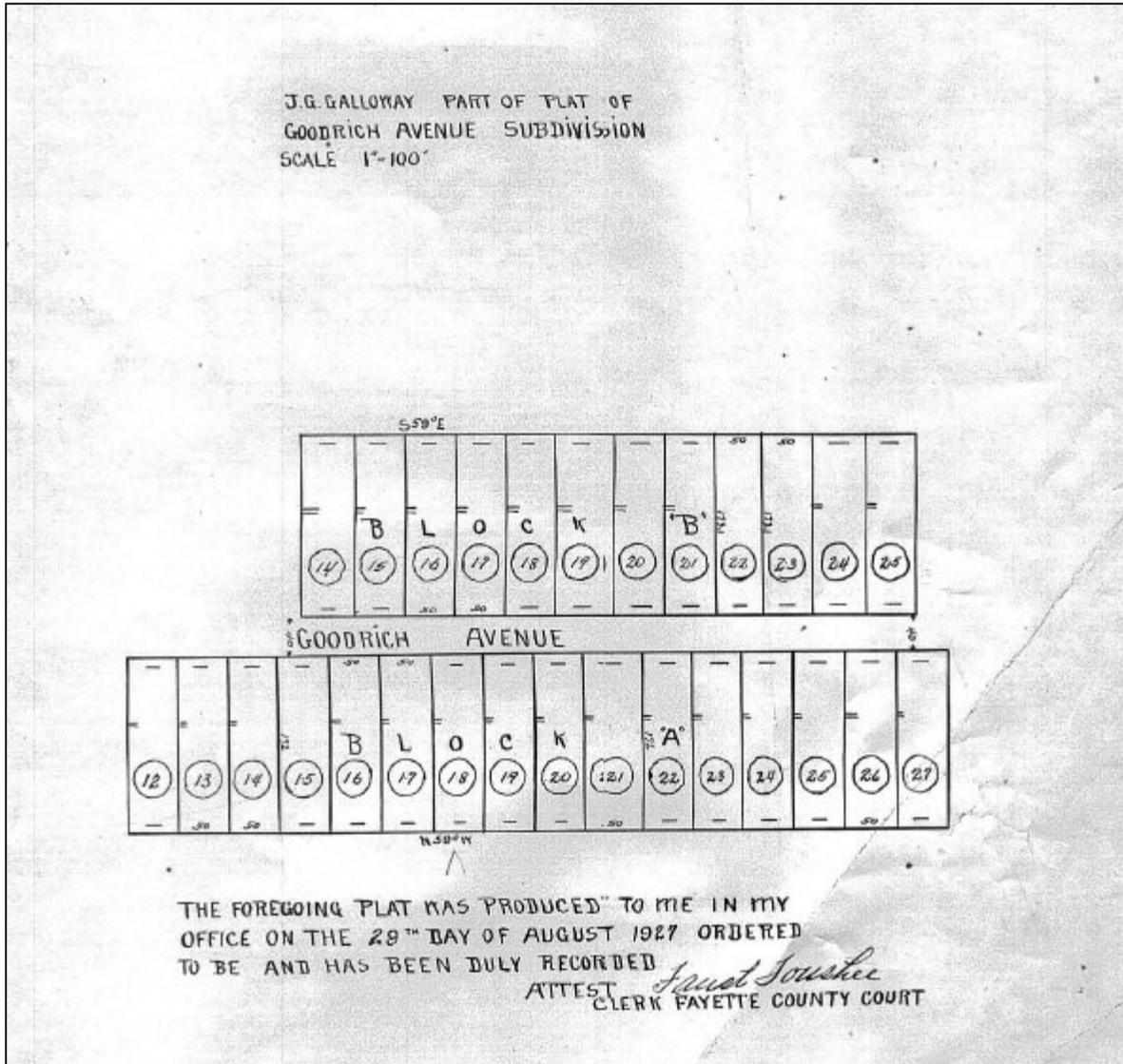


Figure 51 - The first section of Goodrich Avenue was recorded in 1927. The orderly arrangement of lots is still evident today.

Due to its later development during the Great Depression, construction on Goodrich Avenue was much slower than along the three earlier streets in the neighborhood. “All classes of residential building” construction underwent a decline across Lexington in 1929. The 1931 Lexington city directory noted 20 entries on Goodrich Avenue and that number increased only slightly to 28 by the publication of the 1931 city directory.

The historic houses that line Goodrich Avenue reflect the Revival styles including Tudor Revival and the Cape Cod, both of which are dominate on the street. Toward the end of the period of development, the American Small House popularity is evidenced, with 12 examples on Goodrich. There are 12 Cape Cod houses, 15 Minimal Traditional homes, and 13 Tudor Revival dwellings. Only 8 bungalows were built on Goodrich as it developed, revealing the change in architectural focus from that of the earlier numerous bungalows built on several of the other streets in the neighborhood such as Rosemont Garden, Suburban Court and Penmoken Park.

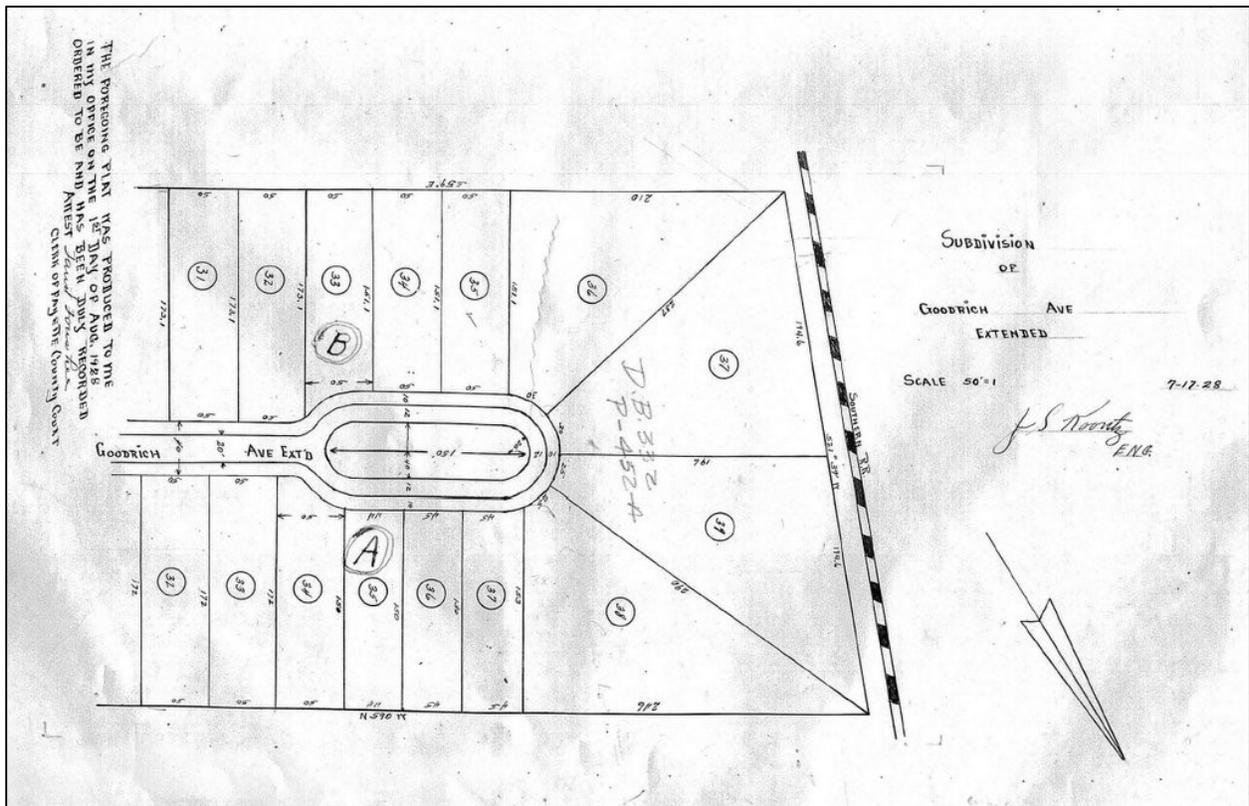


Figure 52 - The 1928 extension of Goodrich Avenue, showing the planned cul-de-sac that was never fully realized.

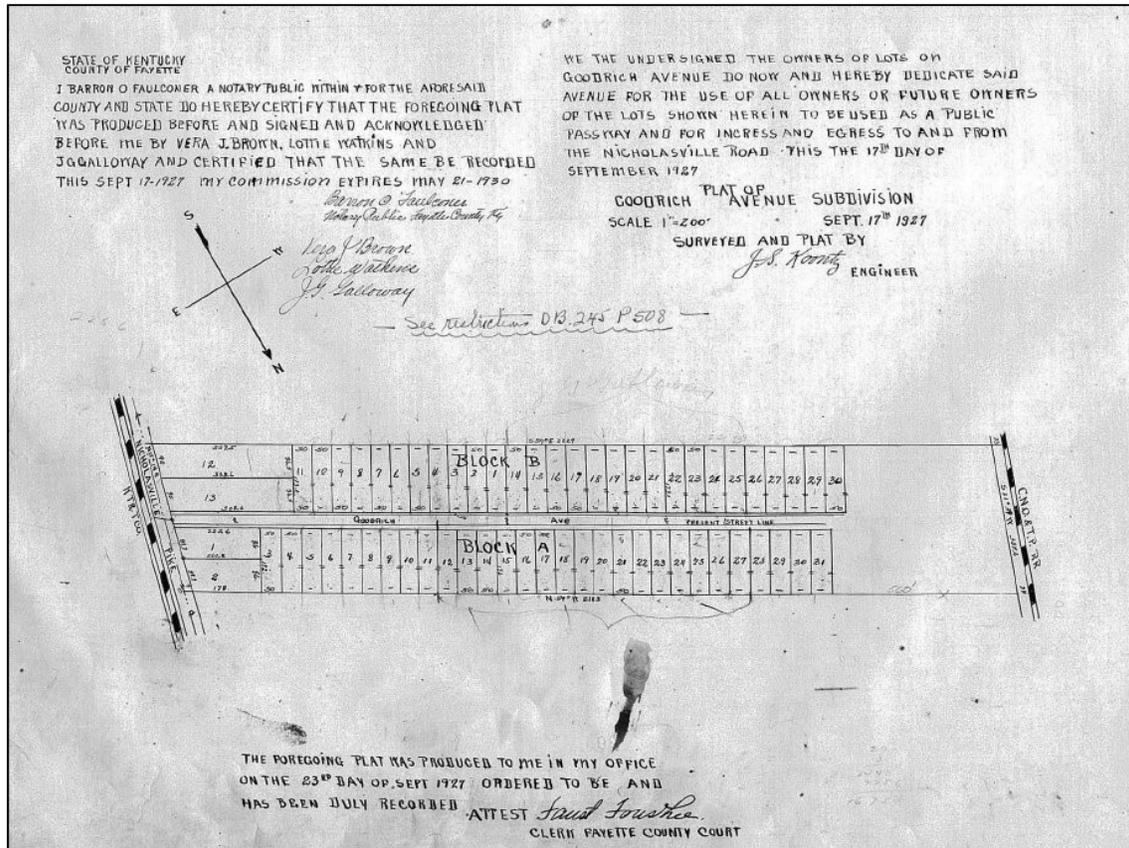


Figure 53 - The 1930 revision to the Goodrich Avenue plat.



Figure 54 - A Minimal Traditional house on the left with a small-scale Tudor Revival on the right.

Pensacola Park

The section of the neighborhood that gives this proposed historic district its name was the last to be developed, including the streets of Wabash, Lackawanna, and Pensacola Drive. Accordingly, the types and styles of the dwellings on these streets skew more toward the house styles and types that were popular during the 1930s and 1940s. Many of the houses fall into the American Small House or Cape Cod categories.



Figure 55 - The Cape Cod type dwelling, like this example at 101 Wabash Drive, was popular in the Pensacola Park section of the proposed district.

The streets are lined with frame, brick and stone veneer houses that still look as they did in the 1930s and 1940s, sharing the same sort of setback from the sidewalk and cohesive landscaping as their neighbors. These affordable, well-built homes in these enticing suburbs appealed to many Lexingtonians, especially dozens of World War II veterans who came to make their home here. It was a time of great change in America, Kentucky and the Lexington area, not the least being the changes in technology and building materials that made it easier and cheaper to build quality homes. Instead of solid masonry dwellings, veneer could be used. The savings on the framing of the house might mean a family could buy a three-bedroom house instead of a two-bedroom house, and perhaps accent the exterior of your home with architectural details.



Figure 56 - This house at 121 Lakawanna Road is a nice example of the Minimal Traditional type of house popular during the late 1930s and 1940s. Oscar and Bessie Dolberg were the first residents of this house in 1942.



Figure 57 - This compact Cape Cod at 117 Wabash Drive is an excellent and very intact example of the type of house the first residents of Pensacola Park desired. Solid, well built, with Classical details – it was the perfect first home for Lynn and Myrtle Grogan in 1937. Mr. Grogan was at that time the assistant manager of Purcell’s Department Store in Lexington.

The first section of Wabash and Lackawanna was platted on March 23, 1928. The plat comprised eight sections of the subdivision, with 139 parcels total. The plan was somewhat curvilinear, with Wabash and Lackawanna wrapping into one another in quiet rectilinear section at the western terminus of the two streets.

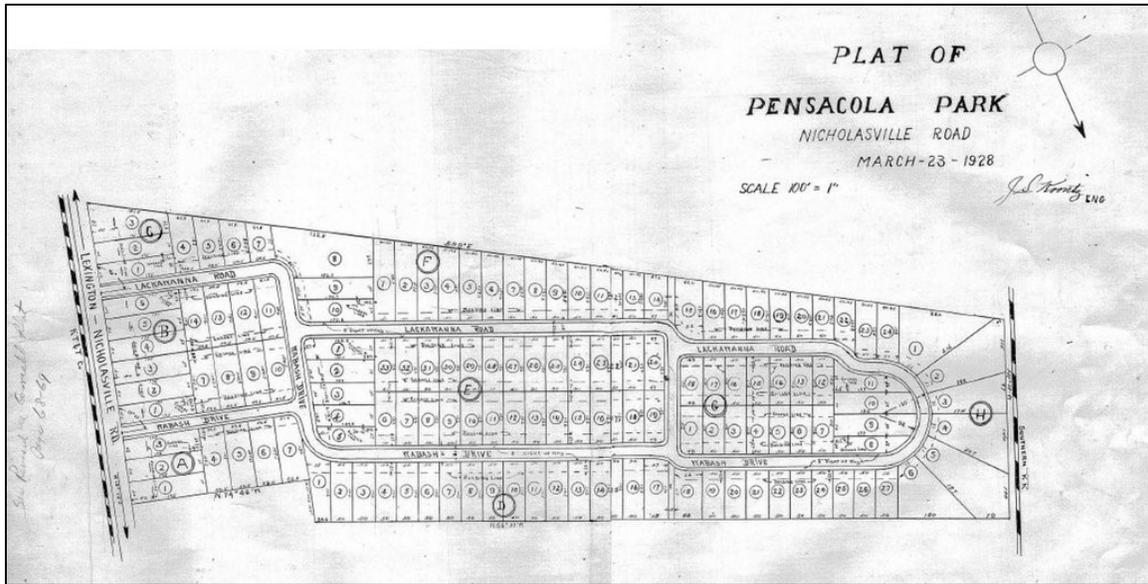


Figure 58 - The 1928 plat of Pensacola Park.

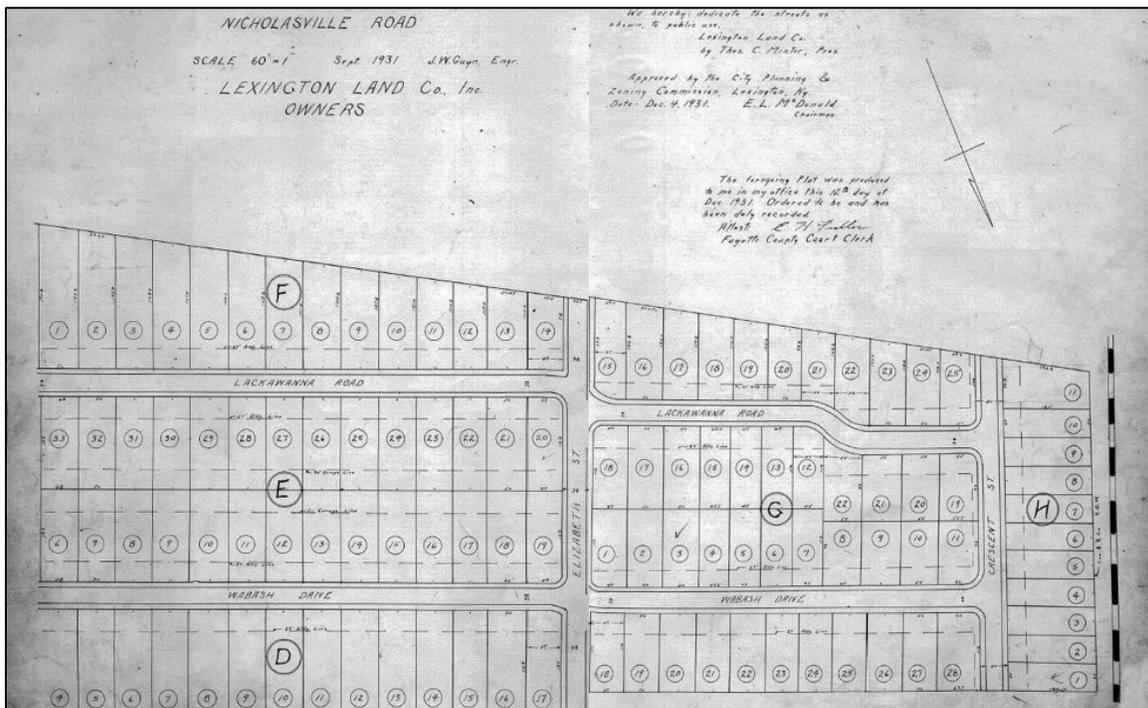


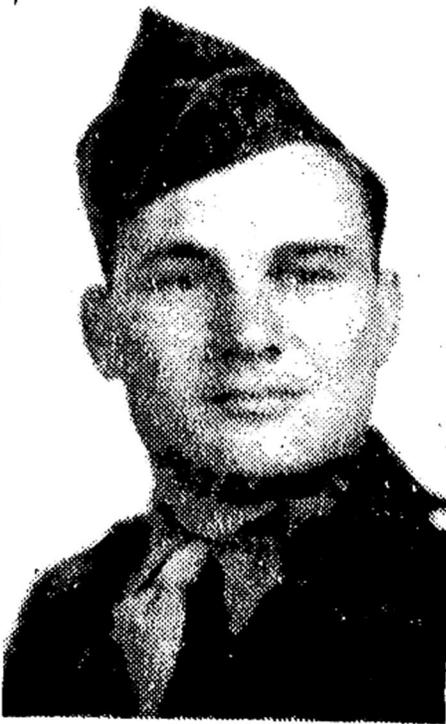
Figure 59 - Revised 1930 plat of Pensacola Park.

The 1930 revised plat did away with the previously platted street plan however, and instead shows Crescent Street with a straight gridline of 11 parcels. The 1940 revision to Crescent Street eliminates one parcel for a total of 10. Crescent Street was later renamed Pensacola Drive and continued south to connect with Goodrich Avenue.

The later development of these streets means that more of the historic dwellings fall into the Cape Cod or Minimal Traditional category. All of the houses on Pensacola Drive can be categorized as Minimal Traditional or American Small House type.



Figure 60 - Looking along Pensacola Drive. All of the houses are one to one-and-one-half story brick veneer or frame, with minimal exterior detail. Despite the plainness of this house type, the examples found in the neighborhood are very intact and convey the time period in which they were built.



Introducing
Robert "Bob"
MOOK

After serving overseas with the army, Bob Mook is now associated with us doing frame straightening and wheel aligning and balancing on cars and trucks. He formerly operated Bob's Frame and Wheel Service. His many friends are invited to visit him at his new place of employment.

Wheel and Axle Service, Inc.

Established 1928

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---|
| 218 Walnut St. Henry Hettel | Frazier D. LoBus | Phones 1952--1953 Clarence LoBus Jr. |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---|

Figure 61 - Robert Mook was the first owner of 1863 Pensacola Drive. The small house was the perfect entry into homeownership for the World War II veteran and his young family.⁷

Assistance for First Time Homeowners

The proposed district properties sold well when the area opened up, facilitated not only by what was happening locally, but by national trends, including the availability of Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgages for new housing in suburban areas (made possible by the National Housing Act of 1934). Prior to the late 1930s, a home purchase typically required a substantial down payment, then several smaller payments over a brief period of time. The FHA allowed for smaller payments over an extended time frame and a minimal down payment.

⁷ Advertisement from the April 25, 1946 edition of the *Lexington Leader*, page 3.

The FHA also promoted house types for suburban development. The FHA released five basic house types in 1936, all including two bedrooms, kitchen, living room and one full bathroom. *Planning Small Houses* included elevations and floor plans, and “each type was devoid of nonessential spaces, picturesque features, and unnecessary items that would add to their costs. The smallest house, Type A, was only 534 square feet, and the building industry coined it the “FHA minimum house.” The house types did not allow much room for variation or flexibility, as builders were limited to changes in building material, stylistic ornamentation or placement on the lot to achieve some diversity.⁸

In its 1940 edition of *Planning Small Houses*, the FHA chose a more flexible system that allowed for “expandability, standardization and variability.”⁹ More architectural details were permitted, resulting in different roof types, gables, porches, windows and cladding materials. Basements were allowed, as were chimneys and fireplaces. Larger, more expansive house designs were highlighted, some with central-passage or side-passage plans, with three or four bedrooms, and attached garages.

Many of the houses in the later sections of the proposed district, along Lackawanna, Wabash, and Pensacola, could be lifted directly from the pages of *Planning Small Houses*.

⁸ Ames and McClelland, 61.

⁹ Ibid, 62.

Nicholasville Road: The Spine of the Neighborhood

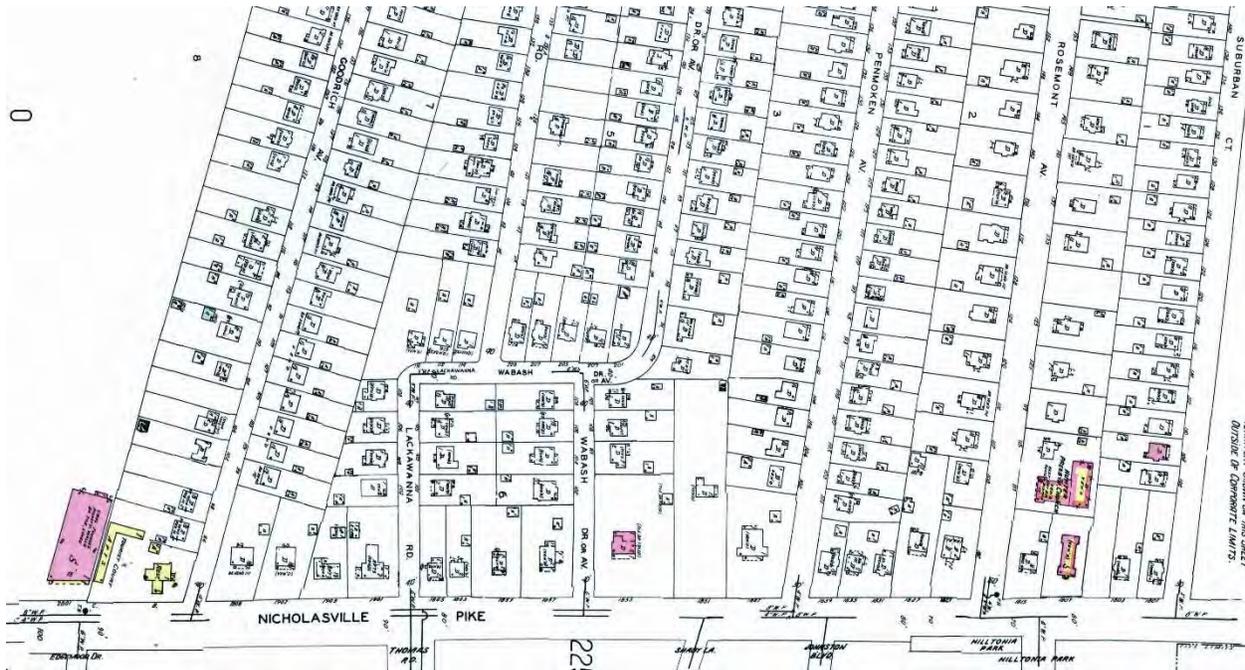


Figure 62 – This portion of a 1958 Sanborn Insurance Map for Lexington shows that by then Nicholasville Road had developed to much as it appears today.

Nicholasville Road facing lots in this area developed as part of the several plats referenced previously in this study and as seen in the included plat records. This land on the west side of the pike, generally between what become Suburban Court and Southland Drive, tended to be developed into deeper lots off the Nicholasville Road frontage with houses somewhat larger in square footage than the smaller lot parcels fronting on the newly created streets running perpendicular to Nicholasville. In essence, these lots and houses facing Nicholasville Road are the front face of the Pensacola Park neighborhood as a whole, reflecting its architectural and historic character and framing its primary edge.

The houses facing Nicholasville Road reflect the same mix of architectural styles found throughout the proposed Pensacola Park Historic District, sometimes more elaborately detailed reflecting the scale of the buildings and financial means dedicated to the original construction, but an integral part of the whole neighborhood. The concept of the properties facing the primary street of newly opened up developments being larger, built on what were platted as the largest lots in the developments, is quite characteristic of many of Lexington’s historic neighborhoods’ development patterns and still occurs in neighborhoods developed today.

The Nicholasville Road addressed properties are all significant, contributing both individually and collectively to the Nicholasville Road streetscape and the proposed Pensacola Park Historic District.



Figure 63 – 1801 Nicholasville Road (left) and 1857 Nicholasville Road (right).

1801 Nicholasville Road (Figure 63, left): This one-story brick Bungalow sits on one of the smaller corner lots along this section of the block. Its projecting half width front porch features tapered columns resting on brick piers. This porch is topped with a hipped roof that matches the main body of the house. The small projecting bay topped with a gable roof on the side elevation probably indicates the location of the dining room on the interior. A small dormer centered on the ridge of the roof provides light into the attic space. In 1925, the house was occupied by Roger D. Whitson, a printer for the Lexington Leader, and his wife Allene.

1857 Nicholasville Road (Figure 63, right): This two-story brick house, on a sizable corner lot, is a fine example of the American Foursquare. The one-story full width front porch provides access to the main entrance, which is offset to the south and not centered. The rhythm of the windows and doors provide a sense of symmetry. A pyramidal roof with wide overhangs tops the structure with a single front facing dormer features paired windows and a hipped roof. The 1923 City Directory indicates that the house was occupied by James C. Heydrick with a street address of WS3, which stood for West Side #3.



Figure 64 – 1909 Nicholasville Road.

1909 Nicholasville Road (Figure 64): This one-and-one-half story brick house is an interesting interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. Its deep front porch, which features paired square columns, is centered on the front door. This simple door is flanked by narrow, rectangular windows. Groupings of three windows complete the symmetry of the front façade. It also features two gabled dormers that are placed close together over the front porch and are connected by a hyphon containing a pair of windows. These, in addition to gable end windows provide light and ventilation to the upper living space. The Becker family lived here for many years beginning in 1935.

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Findings
And
Recommendation

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FINDINGS

The designation report includes the result of a study of the proposed Pensacola Park Historic District area defined in detail by the map and list of property addresses found on page 7. The examination of every streetscape and the exterior of all the included properties as could be viewed from the public right-of ways was conducted. The documentation included research of public records, including plats, historic city maps, city directories, newspapers, archival materials and published works. This study reflects the area's development history and its relationship to Lexington and its cultural, architectural, economic, and transportation history, as well as an evaluation of the architectural history, integrity and character reflected in the area.

Based on this study, the following findings are presented for the consideration of the LFUCG Board of Architectural Review:

Finding 1 The study area is a cohesive, dense concentration of significant domestic architecture mainly dating from 1919 until 1944. This was a time of expansion and growth in Lexington's history. During this roughly 20 years (mostly between the world wars), the proposed historic district development offered well-designed, affordable, well-built homes to many first time homeowners and others.

Finding 2 The area includes over 400 period examples of the residential architecture popular during the development of Lexington between the wars. The historic buildings within the proposed district cover a range primarily of small and medium scale houses of one and one-and-one-half story. The area also includes a limited number of two-story, larger houses.

Finding 3 The structures within the study area are representative of several nationally popular architectural styles quite representative of the development period, including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Bungalow, Tudor Revival, American Foursquare, and Small American House.

Finding 4 The level of architectural integrity is very high throughout the study area. The historic houses maintain their character-defining styles and forms. The streetscapes and layout remain unchanged. There are very few incidents of adverse character altering changes to structures or sites within the boundaries of the proposed district.

Finding 5 The study area meets five of the nine criteria necessary for Local Historic (H-1) Overlay Zoning as established in Article 13, Section 13-3(g) of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Zoning Ordinance. The Criteria met are:

Criteria 13-3(g) (1) It has value as part of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the county, state, or nation.

The proposed Pensacola Park Historic District is an excellent example of suburban growth on the south side of Lexington during the World Wars. Lexington was expanding and growing, and many downtown or near-downtown residents were eager to become homeowners in the newly developing suburbs on the south side of town. The landscape of historic buildings, the orderly street grid, and the planned landscaping within the district display a cohesive character that was all part of the development of this area.

Criteria 13-3 (g) (3) It is identified with a person or person or famous entity who significantly contributed to the development of the country, state, or nation.

The proposed Pensacola Park Historic District would not exist without the work of two Lexington residents, who separately accomplished much to turn the south side of Lexington into a booming suburban oasis: L. C. Price, original owner of Penmoken Farm, and William McClelland Johnston, the “Bungalow Man,” who developed Rosemont Garden. Price’s work to secure interurban lines along Nicholasville Pike laid the groundwork for that sleepy country road to become a main artery of suburban development, and indeed, a pivotal and main artery within the city of Lexington today. Not only did Price help secure the transportation improvements that would help expand the footprint (and population) of Lexington, the successful businessman planned to develop some of his land on Nicholasville Pike because of the interurban line. His untimely death led others to complete his task, mainly, noted lawyer and local developer W. McC. Johnston, who went by the moniker “The Bungalow Man.” Johnson invested his own money in the community and the development of Rosemont Garden before, during, and after the ravages of the Great Depression. His later development of Southern Heights, across Nicholasville Road from the proposed Pensacola Park Historic District, further cemented the south side of Lexington as desirable residential development. Johnston was a home builder and developer, constructing houses on a small number of lots at a time in order to increase marketability for the entire subdivision. The houses simply made the land more valuable and selling the land remained the first priority. It took years for a subdivision of this type to come to fruition, but the presence of homes increased buyer confidence.

Criteria 13-3(g) (6) It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.

All of the historic structures within the proposed Pensacola Park Historic District are variations on nationally popular styles that were promoted by developers across the country and eagerly sought by Americans ready to become homeowners. The optimism of the country's rebound after World War I translated into an economy ready to grow, and a population ready to seek out new territory: in this case, the suburbs south of Lexington. The houses designs and character reflect the tastes of the day: bungalows, Tudor Revival dwellings, Dutch Colonial Revival dwellings, Cape Cods, Minimal Traditional dwellings, and the American Small House.

Criteria 13-3(g) (7) It has character as a geographically definable area possessing significant concentration of buildings or structures united by past events or by its plan or physical development.

There is no question that the proposed Pensacola Park Historic District is a suburban development built between World War I and World War II. The plan, layout, types of buildings and construction methods, materials, and architectural styles, all point to the neighborhood being built during a specific time period, and united by the market forces active at that time. In addition, it was very methodically developed, as documented in this report, and evidenced by the plats, historic maps and physical character.

Criteria 13-3(g) (8) It has character as an established and geographically definable residential neighborhood, agricultural area, or business district, united by culture, architectural style or physical plan and development.

The proposed Pensacola Historic District developed at a pivotal time in the growth of American cities, Lexington included. Residential suburbanization, spurred at first by the interurban line and other public transportation, and then by the increase in automobiles, allowed Lexington residents to leave the downtown core and seek property they could purchase that had grassed lots, wide streets, and fresh air south of the city. The proposed district is united by the suburban mindset of the 1920-1950 time period, architectural styles and housing types, and development plats that ordered lot and parcel size, and dictated how the streets would be laid out, all of which are significant examples of the period.

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RECOMMENDATION

Under the provisions of Article 13-3(g) of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Zoning Ordinance and in accordance with the background information and findings enumerated in this report, including the support documentation contained in the attached appendices, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Division of Historic Preservation recommends that the proposed local historic district reflected in the map and addresses contained within this report, requested by the Pensacola Park Neighborhood Association and as initiated by the Urban County Planning Commission, be approved as submitted and forwarded with a recommendation of approval in its entirety to the Urban County Planning Commission for public hearing, discussion and action.

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