

Location



Illsley Place-West Rudisill Historic District

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For more information about historic preservation
in Fort Wayne, call [260] 427-1140.

www.cityoffortwayne.org

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Illsley Place-West Rudisill Historic District



Fort Wayne, Indiana

Introduction

Significant as an example of Fort Wayne suburban development reflecting the design principles of the City Beautiful movement, and for its outstanding collection of residential architecture, the Illsley Place-West Rudisill Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

The National Register is the nation's official list of properties considered worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register gives a degree of protection from any potentially adverse effects of state and federally funded projects, and may also provide financial incentives for appropriate rehabilitation.

For more information about Historic Districts please call the Division of Community Development at [260] 427-1140 or visit www.cityoffortwayne.org

History

The period between 1900 and 1930 was a time of unprecedented growth and progress for Fort Wayne. By 1915, the US Census Bureau estimated the population at 74,352, making Fort Wayne the second largest city in Indiana. By 1929, there were 300 factories and roughly 1,500 wholesale and retail establishments. The city was a leader in Indiana in city planning, setting standards in utilities, park development, street paving, and railroad overpasses.

This industrial and commercial success resulted in an increased number of wealthy and middle class residents who expressed their prosperity through the development of homes and private property. Simultaneously, progressive planners encouraged movement to the edges of town as a healthy alternative to the industrialized city. In 1909 the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette declared "out beyond the bounds of the city limits...acres and acres lie fallow awaiting the coming of the city dweller." In 1912, David and Samuel Foster donated the land for Foster Park just southwest of the district. Mass transportation, in the form of electric trolleys

extending outward from the city center, facilitated the growth of suburban neighborhoods some distance from the city center. A trolley car line that ran north along Broadway served the district. However, the affordability of mass-produced automobiles, especially to the financially comfortable Illsley Place and West Rudisill residents, is evident in that most have garages.

Illsley was the name given to the large suburban estate of Frank Illsley Brown and Anna Bond Brown. Surrounded by extensive gardens, this stately Italianate home faced west toward the river and was accessed by a long drive from Broadway. In 1923 the property was sold to local land developer W.E. Doud. The Browns retained ownership of the house and had it lifted, turned to face North, and set on two lots at the center of the new development known as Illsley Place. Sandwiched between the Oakdale addition to the north and the Rudisill Boulevard development on the south, Illsley Place is a linear layout with a tree-lined drive from Broadway to Beaver, a small roundabout at its center, brick entry markers at each end, and sidewalks.

Local newspaper promotions declared the new development "Fort Wayne's Most Exclusive District," and described it as located "on the highest elevation in Fort Wayne's most attractive residential district, Illsley Place offers to the man who is now planning his future home, every advantage he may desire. Nature has provided every element necessary to make it the chosen spot as an abiding place of man." Nature, "assisted by the hand of man," included "Graceful maples, sturdy oaks, and beautiful shrubbery," and its location provided "peaceful quietude." The development quickly filled, with all but three houses constructed prior to World War II.

Rudisill Boulevard is a product of a beautification plan initiated by the Fort Wayne Civic Improvement Association's hiring of city planning pioneer Charles Mulford Robinson in 1909, and refined by landscape architect George Kessler in 1912. Rudisill was an existing road, but in Kessler's plan became the primary east-west corridor south of the city. The boulevard was

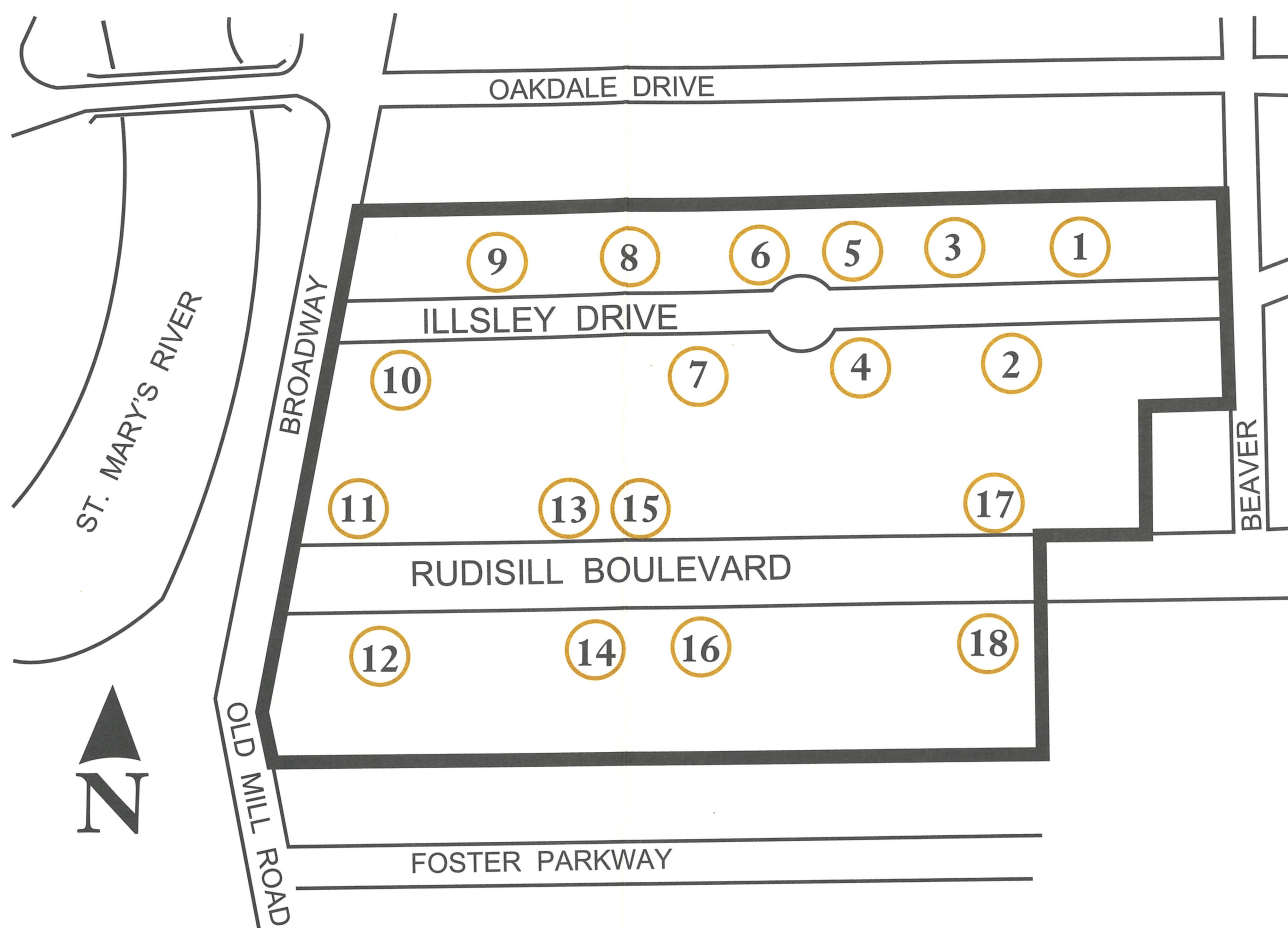
designed to efficiently move traffic in a scenic, pleasurable, and healthy environment. The right-of-way was 100 feet wide with a 40-foot wide road, flanked by parallel tree lawns and sidewalks. Improvements started in 1912. Oriental Sycamore trees were planted on both the street and owners' sides of the walk beginning in 1915, and the boulevard received macadam paving in 1916.

Lined with large lots and offering easy access to Foster Park and the river, West Rudisill was a prominent location for the city's elite. Twenty-six houses were constructed beginning in 1913, and unlike Illsley Place, as many as one-third of the houses were constructed after World War II.

The City Beautiful Movement inspired urban beautification in architecture, landscaping and city planning in the United States from the 1890s through the 1920s. American city planners designed civic centers, grand boulevards and parks in a quest for urban beauty. This period of civic awakening began to emphasize such concepts as zoning, matching up streets in new developments with the existing patterns, retaining existing trees, and providing park space. It was felt that sensitivity to height/setback ratio, lot size, landscaping, neighborhood delineation, and protection of open views would result in comfortable, enduring neighborhoods. These traits are reflected in both the Illsley Place and West Rudisill Boulevard developments.

The Illsley Place-West Rudisill Historic District is primarily significant for the quality of its residential architecture. The homes represent outstanding examples of the Colonial Revival, Tudor, Dutch Colonial Revival, and Craftsman styles. Rare examples of the Spanish Eclectic, French Eclectic, and Art Moderne styles also exist in the district. At least 16 homes are known to have been designed by such prominent architects as A.M. Strauss, Pohlmeier and Pohlmeier, and Joel Ninde.

Illsley Place-West Rudisill Historic District



Please respect the occupants' privacy by viewing all listed homes from the street.

1

Henry & Opal Egly House

1126 Illsley Drive

Dutch Colonial Revival, c.1926

Defined by its gambrel, or barn-like roof, this Dutch Colonial style home also features multi-pane windows and French doors. Built-in benches on the entry porch flank the doorway which is in turn, flanked by full-length sidelights and topped by a fanlight. Mr. Egly was vice-president of the McMillen Company, feed manufacturers.



6

Roland Apfelbaum-A.M. Strauss House

(A.M. Strauss, Architect)

1220 Illsley Drive

Spanish Eclectic, 1925

Apfelbaum, a salesman for the Kraus & Apfelbaum seed company, had this house built for \$10,039. The variegated tile roof, textured stucco walls, arched openings, and wrought iron all contribute to this home's Spanish Eclectic style. A.M. and Madelyn Strauss, purchased the house as their own residence in 1936.



11

**Roger & Virginia Fisher House
(Herbert Willard Foltz, Architect)**

1334 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Tudor Revival, 1913

The Fisher house features Flemish bond brick on the first floor, half-timbering on the second floor, and a tile roof. French doors flank the large chimney facing Rudisill Blvd. A circular drive leads to the front entry which is sheltered by the porte-cochere. A matching carriage house is located behind the home. Roger Fisher was vice-president of Fisher Brothers Paper Company.



12

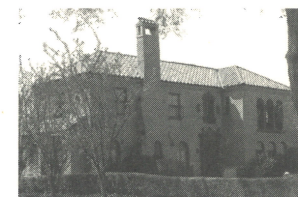
Eugene M. & Adelaide Frank House

(A.M. Strauss, Architect)

1333 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Spanish Eclectic, c.1927

This high-style Spanish Eclectic house features a cross-hipped tile roof, large chimney with scrolled shoulders and an arched niche, and an elaborate door surround. A recessed balcony with an arcade and iron railings and a porte cochere complete the design. Frank was secretary-treasurer of the Frank Dry Goods Company.



13

Frank Taft-Adolph Foellinger House

(Joel Ninde, Architect)

1250 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Colonial Revival, c.1914

This home was designed by the highly influential female architect Joel Ninde, who was a principal in the Wildwood Builders Company. The beautifully patterned central windows, arched transom and sidelights and arched portico are notable features. Taft was a manager for the S.M. Foster Company, makers of women's wear.



14

Kenneth & Irma McDonald House

1245 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Colonial Revival, c.1937

An unusual asymmetrical example of the style this home features a stone clad central section. The large chimney, arched wall dormers, and elaborate door surround are notable elements of the design. McDonald was the owner of the Fairfield Supply Company, a building supply store.



2

Alfred & Minnie Welch House
1137 Illsley Drive

Craftsman Bungalow, c.1925

This bungalow has numerous broad gables with deep eaves, exposed rafters and large brackets. A solarium is located on the east side and a large chimney is on the west. The arched door and front flower boxes enhance the cottage-like image. Alfred Welch was an electrical engineer.



3

Theodore & Margaret Zollner House

(O.C. Brunswick, Architect)

1140 Illsley Drive

Tudor Revival, 1937

Theodore Zollner moved his piston manufacturing company to Fort Wayne in 1931 to be near International Harvester. His home features classic Tudor elements such as stucco and half-timbering, a massive chimney, casement windows, and a Tudor-arched entry with limestone details.



4

Noah & Anna Smith House
1201 Illsley Drive

Colonial Revival/Craftsman, c.1924

The front-gabled roof with returns and symmetrical facade of this house are Colonial features, while the porch with its arched roof, square supports and brackets is more Craftsman in style. A solarium with ribbon windows is on the east side. Mr. Smith operated a restaurant at 310 W. Main Street.



5

Michael & Katherine Gilmartin House

1202 Illsley Drive

Tudor Revival, c.1926

It is appropriate that the president of the Gilmartin Lumber Company would choose to have his Tudor style house finished in wood shingles rather than the more typical brick and stucco. Note the steep gables, multi-pane windows, second floor balcony and the arched hood supported by large scrolls over the entry.



7

Webb-Brown-Bond House

1225 Illsley Drive

Italianate, c.1887/1923

The broad eaves with decorative brackets and tall, narrow windows topped by shelf lintels are characteristic of the Italianate style. The screened porch on the west overlooks the gardens which are enclosed by a rubble stone wall. This home was originally part of the "Illsley" estate.



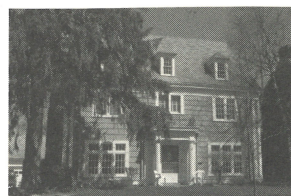
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Howard & Helen Van Arnam House

1240 Illsley Drive

(Pohlmeyer & Pohlmeyer, Architects), Colonial Revival, c.1926

The roof form, symmetry, and entry portico of this house are characteristic of the Colonial style. However, the wood shingle siding, paired corner pilasters, and triple casement windows with transom panels are distinctive features. Mr. Van Arnam was secretary of Van Arnam Manufacturing, makers of plumbing supplies.



9

James Newkirk House

(Pohlmeyer & Pohlmeyer, Architects)

1302 Illsley Drive

Colonial Revival, c.1935

Symmetrically balanced, this classic Colonial features a slate roof and a central portico. The brickwork is wonderfully detailed, with decorative brick-lined arches with brick keystones and infill over the first floor windows, and a soldier course between the stories. Newkirk was a lawyer with Morris, Newkirk, and Halsey.



10

Herbert & Helen Miller House

1321 Illsley Drive

Tudor Revival, c.1929

Herbert Miller was the city editor for the News-Sentinel. The rusticated slate roof, change in roof height, small shed dormers, whimsical iron balcony, and timber lintels over the first-floor windows help give his Tudor style house a cottage-like feeling. The entry is enhanced by the rustic stone arch.



15

Jacob & Nora Calhoun House

1244 W. Rudisill Boulevard

French Eclectic, c.1915

While the French Eclectic style shows great variety in form and detailing, the tall, steeply-pitched hipped roof, which extends to cover the side porch, is a character defining feature. The deeply recessed front entry is set within a Tudor arch. Calhoun was president and manager of Bruder-Calhoun Jewelry Company.



16

Jack & Shirley Komito House

(A.M. Strauss, Architect)

1229 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Art Moderne, c.1937

Jack Komito was a co-owner of the Boston Furniture Company. The house he hired A.M. Strauss to design is a unique example of the Art Moderne style. Streamlined in form, the house features horizontal bands of metal casement windows, recessed brick detailing, and a smoothly curved front wing with glass block.



17

Gertrude A. Muller House

1126 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Colonial Revival, c.1939

Gertrude Muller was one of Fort Wayne's most successful business women. As president of Juvenile Wood Products from 1924-54, she spent her life developing and marketing products for the safety and comfort of young children. Her home features paneled corner pilasters and a recessed entry flanked by bay windows.



18

Edward & Helen Morris House

(A.M. Strauss, Architect)

1133 W. Rudisill Boulevard

Tudor Revival, c.1927

The Tudor style of this large home is defined by its tall narrow casement windows, bay window, and steep roof gables. The architect placed the main entry on the side of the house beneath a spectacular bank of windows and a large window box. The original owner, Edward Morris, was president of Sherman White & Company, suppliers of wholesale produce.

