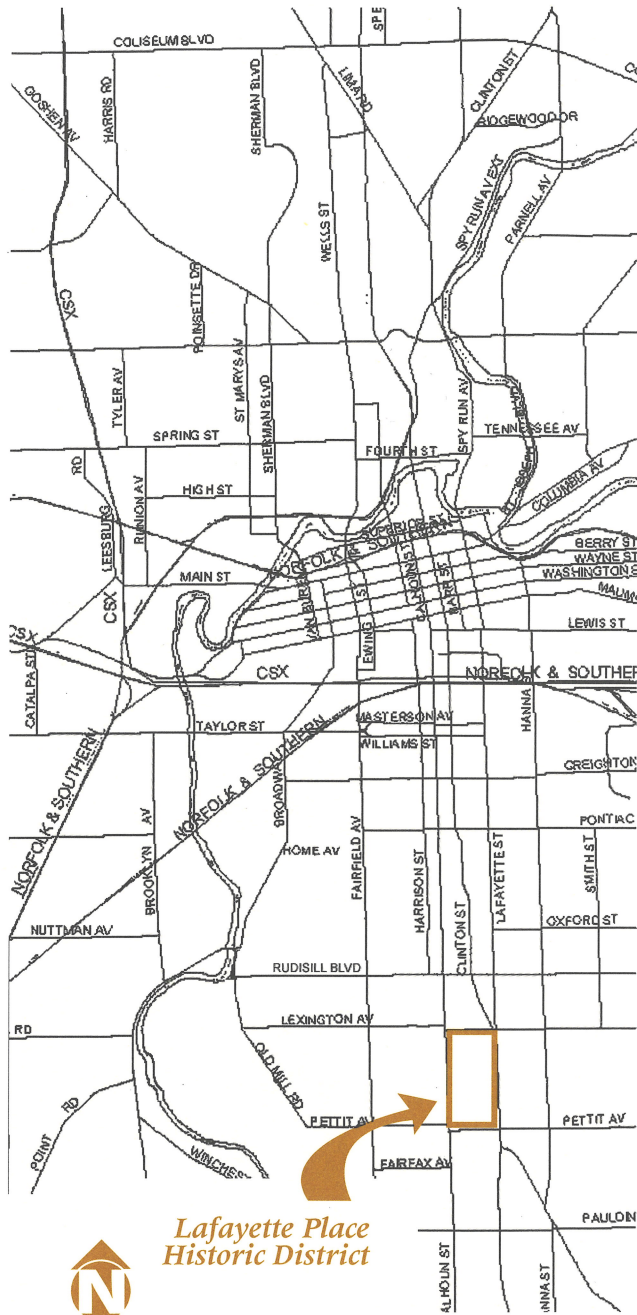


## Location



**Lafayette Place  
Historic District**

## Acknowledgements

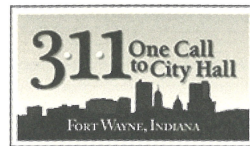
City of Fort Wayne  
Tom Henry, Mayor

Community Development  
Planning Department  
Pam Holocher, Director

Donald Orban, Preservation Planner  
Creager Smith, Preservation Planner

ARCH, Inc., Consultant

For more information about historic preservation  
in Fort Wayne, call [260] 427-1127 or visit  
[www.fwcommunitydevelopment.org](http://www.fwcommunitydevelopment.org)



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## Lafayette Place Historic District



Fort Wayne, Indiana

## Introduction

The Lafayette Place Historic District is significant as an outstanding example of a suburban development that reflects principles of design important in the history of community planning and development. It is also significant for its design, completed by nationally significant landscape architect Arthur A. Shurcliff, and for an outstanding collection of homes with a variety of early to mid-twentieth century architectural styles. For these reasons the Lafayette Place Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.

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) 427-1127 or visit [www.cityoffortwayne.org/preservation](http://www.cityoffortwayne.org/preservation).

## History

Lafayette Place is an innovative development conceived by the Wildwood Builders Company and nationally known landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff in 1915.

The Wildwood Builders Company was incorporated in 1910 with Lee Ninde as president and Lee's wife Joel Roberts Ninde and architect Grace Crosby as the design team. Joel and Grace were among the earliest women in Indiana to work as architects and developers. By 1914, the *Indianapolis News* reported that over 300 homes had been built to their designs. The *Wildwood Magazine*, published by the company between 1913 and 1917, became a nationally known publication on the subjects of architecture, city planning, and interior design.

In addition to being a builder, promoter, realtor, magazine editor and developer, Lee Ninde was also a nationally and regionally significant proponent of city planning, serving as a founding Fellow of the American Institute of City Planning, a member of the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges, president of the Indiana Real Estate Association, and first president of the Fort Wayne Plan Commission. In 1926, local historian Bert Griswold noted: "That Mr. Ninde believes in the beautiful as well as in the practical in the creation of residential subdivisions is shown in the platting of Wildwood Park, Brook View, and Lafayette Place, all planned by the eminent Boston landscape architect, Arthur Shurcliff, and Shawnee Place, his

original realty development. All are striking examples of the best in modern residential developments."

Born in Boston in 1870, Arthur Asahel Shurcliff studied landscape architecture at Harvard University where he later teamed with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to found the country's first four-year landscape program in 1899. After establishing his own practice in 1905, Shurcliff focused on town planning, highway studies for the Boston Metropolitan Improvement Commission, and the development of industrial and residential communities. He designed three Fort Wayne subdivisions for Wildwood Builders: Wildwood Park in the curvilinear style in 1914, Lafayette Place with an esplanade, modified grid and formal pattern in 1915, and Brookview, which was designed around Spy Run Creek in 1917. He was also hired by the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department to complete a master plan for Swinney Park in 1916 and a master plan for Franke Park in 1924. In the 1930s, he served as the chief landscape architect for the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg.

Lafayette Place is unique among Shurcliff's designs in Fort Wayne in its use of formal French landscape architecture concepts in the plat. Shurcliff has been lauded for his mastery of the "informal" naturalistic style of landscape architecture as seen in the curvilinear designs of both Wildwood and Brookview. But his design for Lafayette Place proves not only his ability to master formal French traditions, but his ability to successfully combine formal and naturalistic designs.

Although his career spanned over 50 years, the only known residential suburban developments designed by Shurcliff are the three Fort Wayne subdivisions planned for Wildwood Builders, during the period 1914-1917; and his work in Massachusetts on the Oak Hill Village development from 1924-1931. Lafayette Place is the only one of these designed with a formal rectilinear design, perhaps to make the greatest advantage of the generally flat terrain of the land.

The Lafayette Place plan was announced to the public in the Spring 1915 issue of *Wildwood Magazine*, which describes the new addition: "The distinctive feature of the plat will be what is known as an Esplanade. This is an unusual feature in Fort Wayne platting, but as this tract is oblong, extending one-half mile north and south, and a quarter of a mile wide, the shape of the ground lends itself perfectly to a street two hundred and ten feet wide, placed directly in the middle of the Addition, extending one-third of a mile nearly to the end. This is the Esplanade. Branching off from each corner of this

new thoroughfare is a diagonal street leading out to each of the four corners of the piece." Later articles comment on the neighborhood's easy access from the city; the lack of alleys providing "for a cleaner and healthier community; and the curves and diagonals of the streets resulting in blocks of varying shapes. "The range of lot dimensions has produced advantages for special architectural treatment and landscaping which gives a distinctive character to the home site, as well as to Lafayette Place, as a whole." Lots were platted to allow for a small yard for gardening and a garage at the rear.

The original recorded plat showed 444 lots, streets, and five tracts of land set aside for a playground area, three park areas, and a community center which was to include a club house with an adjoining tennis court and elaborate playground equipment. Today, the home at 4431 Marquette Drive occupies the one-and-a-half acre site originally designated for the community center.

Local architects and builders were enthusiastic to be a part of this new development and prepared plans for homes to be built and displayed to the public during the first annual Better Homes Week and Builder's Expo held June 19-26, 1926 in Lafayette Place. This was Fort Wayne's first home show. By August of 1926, several Fort Wayne builders had moved their own families into Lafayette Place homes.

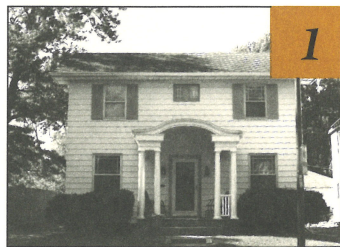
You will notice that Calumet is the only street in Lafayette Place that runs diagonally through the neighborhood. That's because it used to be the route of the Fort Wayne and Decatur interurban which ran on tracks down Calhoun Street, along Calumet, across the esplanade and out Calumet, across Pettit to Decatur, Indiana. The Fort Wayne and Decatur Traction Company released this right-of-way to the City of Fort Wayne in October of 1928.

Two streets have had name changes since the original plat for Lafayette Place. Sherwood Terrace was originally named Cottage Grove Avenue and Montrose Avenue was originally named Montclair Avenue.

Homes in the district are primarily Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Craftsman and Minimal Traditional. Other styles include American Foursquare, Cape Cod, and Ranch. There are also examples of Art Deco, Art Moderne, and Spanish Eclectic. The prominent central esplanade acts as a village green with the gazebo serving as the center for various community gatherings such as picnics and concerts.



**Paul & Esther Bieberich House**  
*(Lloyd Larimore, architect)*  
 232 McKinnie Circle  
 Colonial Revival, c. 1930  
 Characteristic of the style, this home has a side-gabled roof with eave returns in the gable ends, a rectangular form, and a symmetrical façade. However, the entry portico has an unusual, gracefully arched roof resting on



1

## Lafayette Place Historic District

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

**Leo & Marie Kahoe House**  
 4445 South Calhoun Street  
 Dutch Colonial Revival,  
 c. 1926

The Dutch Colonial style is easily identified by the gambrel or barn-like roof. This home features a full-width porch with Doric columns, large brackets under the eaves, and an arched roof over the front steps that extends to the main entry. Other notable details include windows with decorative muntins, and a large chimney on the south side.



5

**Wheeler & Bertha Ling House**  
 4508 Kenilworth St  
 American Foursquare,  
 c. 1925

This style is easily identified by its box-like shape, hipped roof, deep porch, and square plan which allowed use of all available interior space. The raked brick of this excellent example adds texture and pattern to the walls. Mr. Ling was captain of Engine Co. #9 which was located on Winter Street.



6

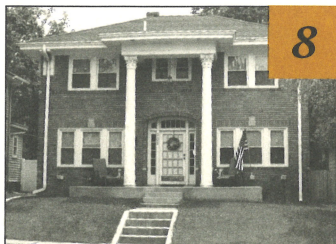
**Krick-Hatfield House**  
 4524 Kenilworth  
 Craftsman Bungalow, c. 1925

The overall plan and design of this petite bungalow may be very simple but the house draws a lot of character from the deep, overlapping gables on the front facade, the wide eaves, and the square porch columns and balustrade. The arched front door with its round, multi-pane glazing is an unusual feature that adds to the overall charm. Barber Harold Hatfield and his wife Kathryn lived here from the 1930s to the 1970s.



7

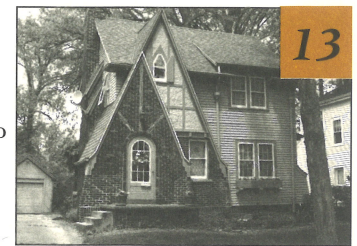
**Wayne & Opal Ferguson House**  
 202 E. Sherwood Terrace  
 Neoclassical, c. 1925  
 Neoclassical homes are identified by the full-height porch with classical columns. The front facades are typically symmetrical with a center door. Note the elaborate column capitals; large, paired brackets under the eaves; decorative brick banding, and arched entry. Original owner Wayne



8

**Clarence & Garnet Jacobs House**  
 265 E. Maple Grove Ave.  
 Tudor Revival, c. 1932

The steep, pointed gables; stucco and half-timbered decoration; large chimney; and arched door are classic Tudor characteristics. Wonderful details include the diamond-pane leaded glass windows; short wing-wall at the southeast corner; and rays of decorative brick at the entry. Mr. Jacobs worked as a salesman for Fort Wayne Printing.



13

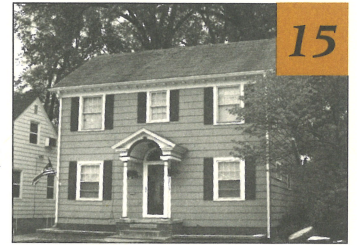
**Volney & Theresa Tuttle House**  
 4701 Lafayette Esplanade  
 Colonial Revival, c. 1942

This yellow brick Colonial has quoins at each corner and blind arches over the first floor windows which are also flanked by raised horizontal bands imitating shutters. The main entry is set within a recess that is framed by quoins and topped by a corbelled arch. Both the sunroom and the garage have flat roofs and scalloped trim. Tuttle was chief engineer at the local General Electric Works.



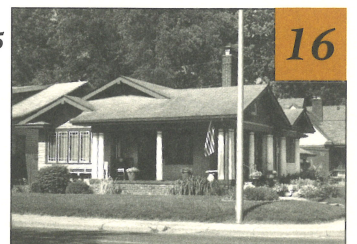
14

**268 E. Fleming Ave.**  
*(Simpson Parkinson, architect)*  
 Colonial Revival, c. 1926  
 Featured in the 1926 Better Homes Show held in Lafayette Place, this home was constructed to illustrate the "101 Points of Excellence" promoted by developers Hilgeman & Schaaf. The "points" included everything from the number of electrical outlets inside to the architectural detail on the front porch. Simpson Parkinson worked with Hilgeman & Schaaf from 1925 to 1928.



15

**Frank & Louise Vevia House**  
 328 E. Fleming Ave.  
 Craftsman Bungalow, c. 1925  
 Building contractor Frank Vevia likely constructed this rambling bungalow. The porches are tucked under the main roof and feature groups of classical columns. The shingle siding is laid in alternating wide and narrow rows, and the windows have Craftsman style muntins.



16

a classical entablature supported by clustered Tuscan columns. Paul Bieberich was the president-treasurer of Fort Wayne Wire Die, Inc.

**Frank & Elizabeth  
Schmid House**  
(Irvin Arnold, architect)  
4302 Champlain Dr.  
Spanish Eclectic, 1926

This unusual home has a flat roof with parapet walls and a central entry flanked by three-part picture windows with multi-pane transoms. The front porch has curved steps and a semicircular roof with an iron balustrade. Pent roofs supported by exposed beam ends extend across the front façade and down the sides of the house. A basement garage is located on the north side. The *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* featured this home on March 28, 1926.



2

**George & Jennie  
Gunder House**  
4418 Champlain Drive  
Craftsman, c. 1929

This classic side-gabled bungalow has clipped gables on the main roof, a low dormer on the front slope, and several lower cross gables. The deep eaves have exposed rafters and knee braces. A broad cross gable shelters the front porch which has short square supports clustered on wide, battered pedestals. The pedestals, balustrade walls and all exterior wall surfaces are covered with wood shingles.



3

**Walter & Lucille  
Moellering House**  
(Lloyd Larimore, architect)  
4321 S. Calhoun St.  
Tudor Revival, c. 1926

Local architect Lloyd Larimore designed this home and five others that were featured in the 1926 Home Show held in Lafayette Place. The prominent chimney, steep gables, stucco and half-timbered dormers, and stone detailing around the front entry are classic elements of the Tudor style. Moellering was president-treasurer of the Moellering Supply Company, builders supplies.



4

Ferguson was a building contractor.

**A. Ralph & Sadie  
Todd House**  
4636 Calumet Ave.  
Tudor Revival, c. 1930

The recessed dormer repeats the sharp gables of the main roofline. Finely cut shutters and a recessed panel accent the double window while diamond-pane leaded glass is found in the gable windows and also the garage door. Incorporating the garage as part of the overall house plan illustrates the growing importance of the automobile in suburban development.



9

**Clata & Pearl Lantz House**  
4807 Montrose Avenue  
Minimal Traditional/Ranch,  
c. 1942

This unique home combines the simplified detailing of the Minimal Traditional with the horizontal form of the Ranch style. There are recessed panels on the streamlined chimney, raised bands on the block walls and corbelled eaves. An open terrace is at the northeast end of the house and the original garage at the opposite end has been converted to living space. Mr. Lantz was a railway signalman.



10

**Wendell A. & Doris  
Summers House**  
245 E. Pettit Ave.  
Ranch, c. 1950

With its one-story rambling profile, low-pitched roof, and attached garage, this home is an excellent example of the Ranch house which was the dominant style of residential architecture in the 1950s and 1960s. Mr. Summers worked for the International Harvester Company.



11

**Guy & Alice  
Colerick House**  
4802 Calumet Avenue  
Tudor Revival, c. 1937

The rusticated slate roof, half-timbered wall decoration, diamond pane windows, highly decorative chimney, small triangular dormer, and arched roofline over the entry all combine to give this house a storybook appearance. Carole Lombard and Clark Gable supposedly stayed at the house shortly after their wedding in 1939.



12

**Stanley & Zee  
Sondles House**  
306 Glencoe Ave.  
Tudor Revival, c. 1930

The stucco and half-timbering in the front gables are a classic Tudor feature. A narrow pent roof over the west window and the wall-dormer above, which pops through the eaves of the roof, add additional interest to the design of this home. Random stones inserted into the brick walls illustrate the skill of the original masons. Mr. Sondles was a sales manager at Magnavox.



17

**Paul & Mary  
DeWood House**  
4527 Lafayette Esplanade  
Minimal Traditional/Colonial  
Revival, c. 1948

This one and a half story brick home has a side gabled roof with minimal eaves and eave returns. The main entry is located in a gabled vestibule with decorative raised brickwork around the front door and an open, concrete stoop with iron railings. The windows have soldier brick lintels and brick sills. A matching garage is at the back of the property.



18

**Theodore & Nellie  
Butz House**  
4502 Wilmette St.  
Craftsman, c. 1925

The complicated roof of this unusual bungalow has numerous clipped gables and deep eaves that are supported by knee braces. Other features include plentiful windows with vertical muntins, a prominent chimney, brackets for large window boxes, and a matching garage. Mr. Butz was a painter by trade.



19

**Harry & Aline  
Connell House**  
4438 Lafayette Esplanade  
Colonial Revival, c. 1938

This house has the classic side-gabled roof and symmetrical façade of the Colonial Revival style. The recessed entry is flanked by fluted pilasters supporting an unusual arched pediment with dentil molding. Decorative panels and shutters add visual height to the adjacent windows that are topped by large crown moldings with dentils.



20