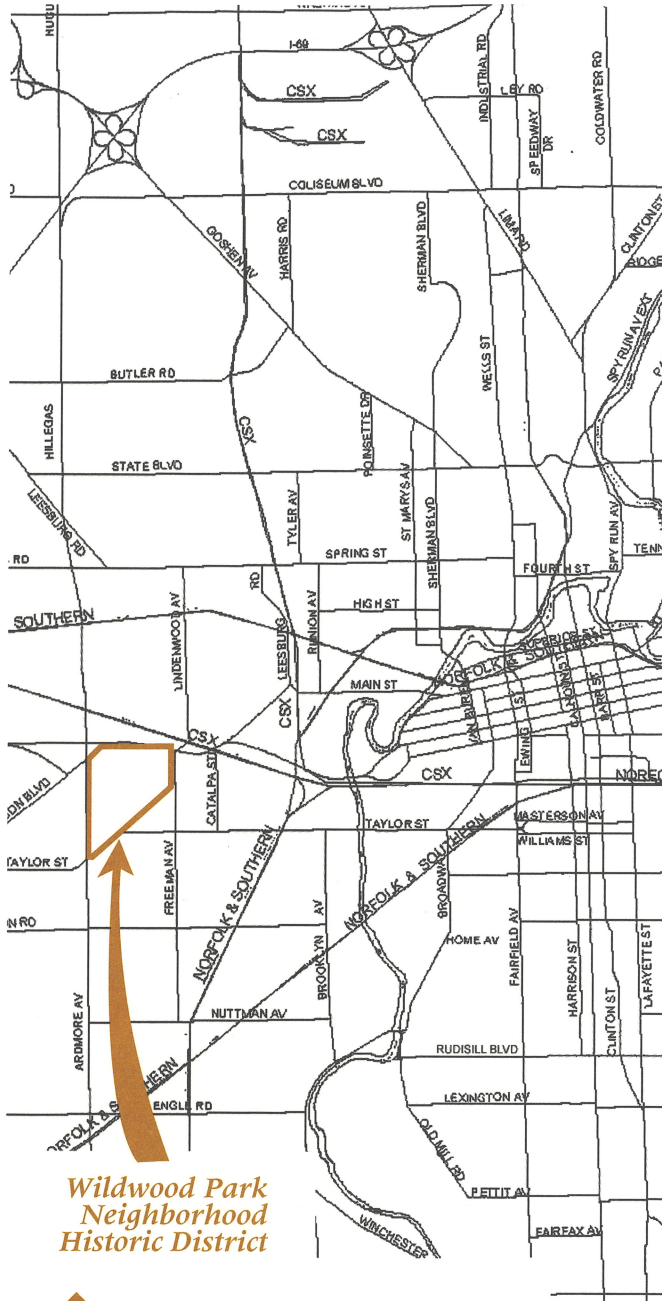


Location



*Wildwood Park
Neighborhood
Historic District*



Acknowledgements

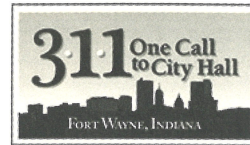
City of Fort Wayne
Tom Henry, Mayor

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



This project has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. The project received federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the State of Indiana. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.

Wildwood Park Historic District



Fort Wayne, Indiana

Introduction

The Wildwood Park Historic District is significant as an outstanding example of innovative suburban development designed by nationally significant landscape architect Arthur A. Shurcliff and developed by Lee J. Ninde, a nationally and regionally significant master proponent of city planning. It is also significant for its landscape design, and for an outstanding collection of early to mid-twentieth century architectural styles. For these reasons the Wildwood Park 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.

History

Lee and Joel Ninde formed the Wildwood Builders Company in 1910 with Lee 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. Joel died in 1916, at age 42; Lee remarried in 1917 to Helena Emmett, who had worked in the Wildwood Builders office.

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. It was through these broader planning interests that he became connected with Boston landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff, who also participated in the development of city planning as a profession.

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.

Ninde and Shurcliff collaborated on the plan for Wildwood Park from the summer of 1914 to the spring of 1916, when the plat was finally recorded. The two also worked on the subsequent Lafayette Place and Brook View subdivisions in Fort Wayne as well. At Ninde's impetus, Shurcliff also developed a preliminary proposal to create a parkway connecting Swinney Park to the Wildwood Park subdivision and also to create a roadway from the western end of Wildwood Park to the country club. Today, the parkway is West Jefferson Boulevard and is included in the Fort Wayne Park and Boulevard System Historic District.

Wildwood Park was laid out with curvilinear streets instead of the straight-line grid most familiar to the community. Soon after organizing the Wildwood Park Company, an article appeared in the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, written by the Wildwood editorial staff. It described the new development:

Seeing the natural beauties of this farm, the Wildwood Builders decided that here would be Fort Wayne's most desirable suburb. They acquired the property and immediately went about planning the improvements to be made upon it. Wildwood Park is to be laid out in what is called the "informal" style. That is, there are to be no set lines to be followed in planning the drives, rather are they to follow the natural curves of the hills. Where a tree lies in the path of road or walk, the path is to be curved around instead of removing the tree. The houses will be restricted as to style and location. Only the finest type will be erected, but they will be of all sizes, from the largest mansions to the humbler cottages. There will be restrictions to quality but not as to size.

In Wildwood Park, Shurcliff demonstrated his mastery of naturalistic, curvilinear subdivision design by fully utilizing the wooded, rolling hills, ravines, and creek, to determine circulation patterns and where homes are situated into the landscape. His

design preserved such features as Willowdale Creek and its banks by the creation of an unusually wide right of way that allowed for a lane of traffic on both sides of the creek, with large common green space from roadway to riverbank. This distinctive approach created a country-like landscape while allowing for automobile traffic. He also used landscape features, such as the park at the North and South Washington Road split, to both provide and terminate vistas. Wildwood Park provided the first example of curvilinear landscape design used for an automobile-oriented subdivision in northeastern Indiana, thus providing the model for future developments.

In addition to the naturalistic, curvilinear plat of the Wildwood Park subdivision, the distinctive character was also formed by the use of legal restrictions regarding the architecture, placement, and materials of the residential structures. The Wildwood Park subdivision was the first planned community in northeastern Indiana to include deed restrictions that gave the Wildwood Park Company the exclusive right to approve the architectural worthiness of the proposed residences, controlled lot grading, placement of structures, and overall harmony with other homes in the suburb. After the Wildwood Park Company was dissolved in the 1940s, the Wildwood Park Neighborhood Association took over many of its functions, including the continuation of an architectural review committee.

Homes in Wildwood Park were constructed between 1916 and 1960. Many of the residences are among the finest local examples of their style, and are the works of locally and regionally significant master architects such as Joel Roberts Ninde and Grace E. Crosby, A.M. Strauss, Guy Mahurin, Pohlmeier and Pohlmeier, John Worthman, and Edwin Gibson. The houses in Wildwood Park are beautifully detailed, single-family detached homes on large lots, with a variety of massing types. Principal architectural styles include Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Craftsman, and Ranch along with unusual examples of French Eclectic, Art Moderne, and Usonian.



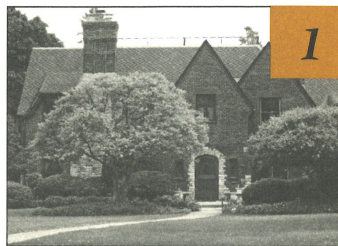
Wildwood Park Historic District

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

Dinnen-Mercer House 3235 North Washington Rd. Tudor Revival, c. 1938

The steep gables, massive chimneys, diamond-pane casement windows, and arched entry are all hallmarks of the Tudor style which was very popular in the 1920s and 1930s.

Note the stone detailing on the main chimney and front entry. The way the roof edge appears to drape over the second floor windows is an unusual feature. S. Robertson Mercer was a physician.

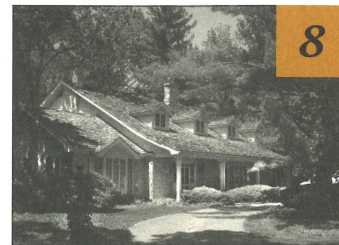


1

Alden & Marjorie Irmscher House (Martingale & Dablgren, architects)

3604 South Washington Rd.
Cape Cod/Colonial, c. 1956

Flagstone is used on the first-floor walls and chimneys of this large Colonial Revival home. The wood shingle roof has four dormers and extends over the full-width porch. Two large bow windows are located to the right of the main entry. Alden was vice president and general manager at Irmscher & Sons, contractors, builders and engineers.



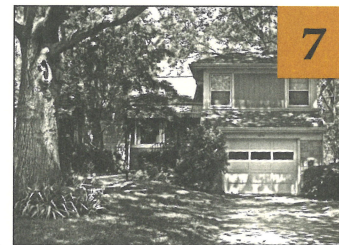
8

G. Doyal and Lillian M. White House

(John Worthman, builder –
O. E. Bly, architect)

1815 Hawthorn Rd.
Split-Level, c. 1954

This Split-Level home is built into the hillside with the garage at street level and the main entry located at mid-level in the one-story portion. The massive, stone chimney flanked by large picture windows is a prime feature of the façade. Mr. White was a purchasing agent at General Electric.



7

Lawrence L. Levy House (Edwin A. Gibson, A.M. Strauss & Associates, architect)

3541 South Washington Rd.
Usonian/Modern, c. 1949

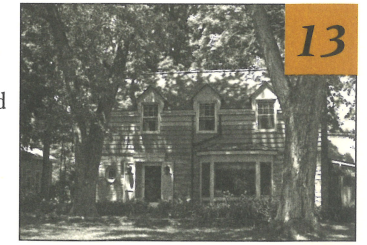
The L-shape plan of this low-profile home opens to a central garden living space. The cut stone, deep eaves, and decorative wood screens flanking the main entry all enhance the horizontal form. Mr. Levy was president of Levy Real Estate and Marjorie was vice president of Ball Drug Service Company. Gibson was a partner in the Strauss firm and the first African American architect registered in Indiana by exam.



6

Carl & Ida Light House 3522 Willowdale Rd. Colonial Revival, c. 1940

Carl Light was a realtor involved in the later development phases of Wildwood Park. His home illustrates the streamlined detailing, asymmetry, and varying materials often seen in later examples of the Colonial Revival style. Three wall dormers cut through the deep frieze board and shallow eaves. Uncoursed stone is used on the first floor and the large chimneys in each gable end.



13

Haberly-McAndless House (Charles Weatherbogg, architect)

1407 Hawthorn Rd.
French Eclectic, c. 1938

The stone tower with a conical roof is one of the distinctive features of this French Eclectic house. Second floor windows are topped with arched hoods that extend through the flared eaves of the roof. There are also oval dormers, a cupola, a stone chimney with stepped chimney pots, faux balconies, casement windows, and French doors. Haberly was president of First Federal Savings & Loan and McAndless was president of Lincoln National Life Insurance.



14

Sherman C. and Gladys Kattell House

(Guy Maburin, Architect)

1505 Hawthorn Rd.
Tudor Revival, c. 1931

Constructed for the secretary-actuary of Lincoln National Life Insurance, this home has unusual brickwork which gives the walls a distinctive texture. In classic Tudor fashion, there are steep gables, casement windows, stucco and half-timbered decoration, and a prominent chimney. Stone detailing surrounds the double-arched front entry which has a small balcony above.



15

Johnson-Ornas House 1518 Hawthorn Rd. Cape Cod, c. 1940

The stepped eaves and front wall of this home give the appearance of a small house with additions, a characteristic commonly found in true Cape Cod homes. Classic pilasters frame the corners of the house and enhance the front entry. Second owner Ted Ornas was chief designer at International Harvester, and sketched the initial design for the International Scout at the kitchen table.



16

Robert & Paula Watt House



17

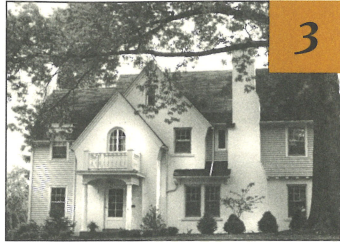
Smith-Kettler House
3404 South Washington Rd.
Ranch, c. 1958

Long and rambling with low-pitched roofs and an attached garage, the one-story Ranch was extremely popular from the 1950s through the 1970s. This home features board-and-batten siding in the gables, an entry porch tucked under the front gable and a large bow window. Long-time owner Alf Kettler, Jr., served as president of the Indiana Construction Company.



George & Catherine Beers House
3403 South Washington Rd.
Colonial/Tudor Revival,
c. 1921

Architects often combine elements from two or more styles to develop a unique design. The side gabled roof, entry porch, and primary window form show Colonial Revival influence while the steep, overlapping gables, huge chimney, and diamond-pane casement windows are distinctly Tudor in character. Both the front entry and the arched window above are framed by decorative brickwork. Mr. Beers handled investments and securities at Peoples Trust Bank.



Leroy & Rebecca Merillat House
3423 South Washington Rd.
Colonial Revival, c. 1939

The symmetrical façade of this home is enhanced by the matching bay windows. The centered entry is recessed and flanked by fluted pilasters with rosettes, and topped by an arched pediment with dentils. Wooden quoins accent the corners and matching chimneys flank the house. Mr. Merillat was president of Wade Motor Service.



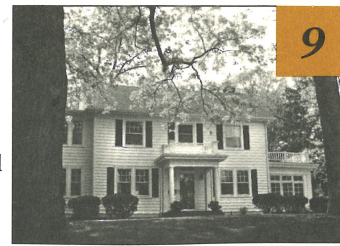
Robert & Erna Lindburg House
3433 S. Washington Rd.
Garrison Colonial Revival,
c. 1939

Popular from the 1930s through the 1950s, Garrison Colonials are defined by the second floor slightly overhanging the first. The asymmetric façade of this home is uncommon. The entry portico, fanlight over the door, arched gable window, and varied wall materials add additional interest. Lindburg was employed by the Ralston Purina Company.



Lee J. and Helena Ninde House
1702 Hawthorn Rd.
Colonial Revival, c. 1925

The entry porch of this classic Colonial Revival home has fluted columns, square pilasters, and a roof balustrade. The north solarium has a matching roof balustrade. Paired multi-pane windows on either side of the porch are balanced by the larger windows above. Lee Ninde was the developer of the neighborhood.



Harold & Hannah Doswell House
3615 North Washington Rd.
Colonial Revival, c. 1932

This brick Colonial Revival home has a side gabled roof with a line of dentils under the eaves. The first-floor windows are topped with keystones and the solarium is topped by a decorative roof balustrade. The main entry has engaged Corinthian columns supporting an open base pediment with a faux fanlight detail. Doswell was president of Doswell & Kover, burial vaults.



Joseph Frank House
1414 Hickory St.
Neoclassical, c. 1940

This style is defined by the full-height porch with its tall, slender columns. The detailing on this house: symmetrical façade and central entry with a Classical surround; is drawn from the Colonial Revival style. Note the large chimneys in the gable ends. Mr. Frank was a vice president at Lincoln National Life Insurance.



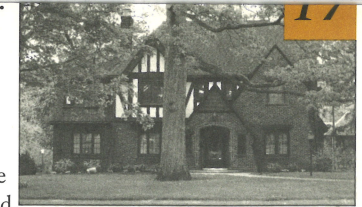
Walter & Ann Neuman House
(A.M. Strauss, Architect)
3606 Mulberry Rd.
Regency Colonial, c. 1939

A high-style, streamlined version of the Colonial Revival style, the Regency variation was popular in the 1930s. The roof pitch is shallow, the right side of the otherwise symmetrical façade projects forward, and all corners are accented by brick quoins. The main entry is set into an angled recess with stylized decoration. Octagonal glazing in the front door echoes the window above. Mr. Neuman was a photographer.



5526 North Washington Rd.

Tudor Revival, c. 1930
This classic Tudor Revival home has a steep roof with a variety of gables, stucco and half-timbering on the second floor, and wonderful details. The arched front entry is recessed and the gable above has wavy cut clapboards. Windows in the brick walls have timber lintels with a decoratively cut edge. A bit of decorative brickwork is tucked into the peak of the east gable. Mr. Watt was secretary-treasurer at Pioneer Ice Cream.



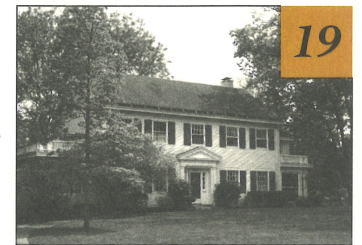
Edmund & Eleanor Miller House
(Attributed to Joel Roberts Ninde & Grace E. Crosby)
3408 North Washington Rd.
Craftsman, c. 1917

The gabled roof of this home has deep eaves with wide vergeboards and decoratively cut beam ends. The offset entry porch with its trios of square supports is balanced by the one-story solarium on the east with its ribbon windows. There is half-timbering in the gable of the entry porch and at the top of the main gable. Edmund and Eleanor were president and vice president of Board & Paper Products, Inc.



Daniel & Margaret Ninde House
(Attributed to Joel Roberts Ninde & Grace E. Crosby)
3401 North Washington Rd.
Colonial Revival, c. 1917

This large Colonial Revival home has the overall form and symmetry characteristic of the style. Single story wings with roof balustrades extend from both ends of the house. The main entry is set into a paneled recess, flanked by sidelights, and capped by a beautifully detailed Classical pediment supported by fluted pilasters. Ninde was a vice president at Lincoln National Life Insurance and brother of developer Lee Ninde.



Guy & Mary Means House
3340 North Washington Rd.
Craftsman, c. 1928

There is an overall decorative pattern to the brick walls of this home. The round arch of the front door and its hood is repeated in the gable window. Slender French doors open to a front terrace while a screened porch offers more private space on the west. The driveway was once the "Hillside Path" that led to the original Wildwood Park sales office. Mr. and Mrs. Means owned an auto dealership.

