United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form  

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property
   historic name  OAKWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT  
   other names/site number N/A  

2. Location
   street & number  100-300 blocks Oakwood Street  N/A not for publication  
   city, town  High Point  N/A vicinity  
   state  North Carolina  code  NC  county  Guilford  code  081  zip code  27260  

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property  
   [x] private  
   [ ] public-local  
   [ ] public-State  
   [ ] public-Federal  
   Category of Property  
   [x] district  
   [ ] site  
   [ ] structure  
   [ ] object  
   Number of Resources within Property  
   Contributing  28  
   Noncontributing  8  
   Buildings  
   Sites  
   Structures  
   Objects  
   Total  28  
   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  0  
   Name of related multiple property listing:  N/A  

4. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
   
   [Signature of certifying official]  
   Date  12-12-90  
   State or Federal agency and bureau  

   In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [x] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
   
   [Signature of commenting or other official]  
   Date  
   State or Federal agency and bureau  

5. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
   [ ] entered in the National Register.  
   [ ] See continuation sheet.  
   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register.  
   [ ] See continuation sheet.  
   [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.  
   [ ] removed from the National Register.  
   [ ] other, (explain:)  
   [ ] See continuation sheet.  

   [Signature of the Keeper]  
   Date of Action  

[Continuation sheet]
6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Domestic/single dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic/multiple dwelling</td>
<td>Domestic/multiple dwelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic/secondary structure</td>
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7. Description

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)</th>
<th>Materials (enter categories from instructions)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Queen Anne</td>
<td>foundation brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Revival</td>
<td>walls brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalow/craftsman</td>
<td>roof asphalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other wood</td>
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</table>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

*Please see attached sheets.*
The Oakwood Historic District is a small, compact, three-block residential corridor whose southern edge borders Kivett Drive and the North Carolina Railroad tracks just three blocks west of the central business district in High Point, North Carolina. The northern end of the district is approximately one half mile from the central downtown area and points the way to some of the city's finest suburbs which date from the mid-1920s. Encompassing approximately twelve acres, the Oakwood Historic District is relatively homogeneous in scale and design with even setbacks, mature plantings, and a well preserved representative collection of early, pre-suburban, twentieth-century residential structures—all within easy walking distance of the downtown area. The present exterior physical appearance of the district remains virtually unchanged from the historic exterior physical appearance. Little significant commercial encroachment or excessive infill construction is evident. What little infill construction exists is unobtrusive and architecturally complementary.

The Oakwood Historic District contains rare examples of High Point's surviving urban residential buildings built between 1902 and 1915 (the 300 block, including the city's only surviving collection of Queen Anne style houses), as well as the last group of residential structures to be built in the downtown area (the 100 block), constructed mainly between 1921 and 1927. This 100 block, also known as Oakwood Court, displays an exceptionally handsome broad, grassy median ninety feet wide including the street at its center point. This gracious median offers a cozy repose and tranquil character within the inner city. Principal architectural styles in the Oakwood Historic District are Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow/Craftsman. Exterior wall materials range from common southern pine weatherboard to exotic North Carolina quartzite stone.

Today, a substantial number of buildings within the Oakwood Historic District need rehabilitation and almost all of the immediately surrounding area is now commercial. The earliest commercial development dates from c. 1917, but the vast majority of commercial development now surrounding the district grew up in the last three decades. Especially threatening is the acceleration of commercial development in the area since 1982.¹
Within the district are a total of thirty-six resources of which twenty-eight are contributing. Of these contributing resources, twenty-five are primary buildings. All of the primary buildings are residential: twenty-one are single family houses and four are multi-family units (two-story brick apartment buildings built late in the district's period of significance, 1936-1939). All of the multi-family units, both contributing and noncontributing because of post-1940 construction, blend well with the district in size, scale, and building materials.

Today, approximately 75% of the primary buildings offer multi-family accommodations and 25% are solely single family structures; the interiors of four of the large Queen Anne style houses are in apartments and the owners of six more of the district's larger homes have boarders. These interior changes and uses, however, do not affect architecturally the exterior physical appearance of the buildings. The houses and apartment buildings of the Oakwood Historic District still portray their prosperous middle and upper-middle class beginnings, although the majority of residents today are low to moderate income people and the overall appearance of the neighborhood is somewhat shabby.

The three secondary contributing buildings are a modest frame duplex (1939) built in the large backyard of 301 Oakwood (1902, entry #23), and two garages, one converted from a carriage shed/barn. The proximity to town of the Oakwood Historic District has always kept secondary buildings to a minimum.

Noncontributing buildings in the district include five primary and three secondary buildings. All of the primary noncontributing buildings except one (entry #24, an altered 1922 bungalow) have that status due to age: two residential buildings—a brick duplex and a brick triplex—and two small brick one-story commerical buildings. The commerical buildings are clustered on English Street, which is lined with light industry and the only street to intersect the Oakwood Historic District.
Although there are no other National Register districts in High Point or individual National Register listings in Oakwood, directly across the railroad tracks from the Oakwood Historic District, less than 400 feet away, in full view, stand three highly significant National Register listings: the O. Arthur Kirkman House and Outbuildings, 1913 (NR, 1988), a large two-acre urban estate incorporating Blair School, (built in 1879 and expanded in 1898, NR, 1989), High Point’s first public school and the first home of O. Arthur Kirkman at the edge of his estate; and the Tomlinson Chair Factory, 1904-1927 (NR, 1984). Four other National Register properties bring High Point’s current total to seven.

The district of Oakwood Street is special for its historic architecture. Especially within the 300 block, the oldest block in the district, one feels as if time has stood still, giving the best example in High Point of what residential life was like in our town at the turn of the century. The 300 block also contains the only collection of Queen Anne style houses left in the city. Five of these two-story houses are virtually identical (entries #6, #7, #8, #9, and #23), reflecting their origins as speculative ventures by developer Benjamin A. Best. (The 300 and 200 blocks of Oakwood Street were, in fact, first named Best Street.) All have a projecting three-sided bay at one end of the main facade, featuring decorative shingles in the gable and spoolwork spandrels, as well as full-facade or wraparound porches with Tuscan columns which indicate the growing popularity of the classical modes. Another strong architectural influence on the 300 block is the Charles Welborn House (1905, entry #25), a 4,000 square foot early Colonial Revival house with Queen Anne influence whose original lot incorporated the two flanking properties and swept back all the way to Meadow Place. The Welborn House is the best built house on the block with an array of elaborate fireplaces, although it now needs rehabilitation.

All except two of the houses in the 300 block of Oakwood are frame. All exhibit even setbacks and have mature plantings. The lots are today relatively uniform, roughly measuring on the average about 65' x 175'. Although the Queen Anne style houses originally had wooden shingle roofs, today all of the houses on the block exhibit contemporary roofing materials such as asphalt and fiberglass shingles. Foundations are brick. Decorative elements are typical for the styles:
wide front porches with classical columns, porch rails and spindles, tall gables, spandrels, turned work, and bay windows. The Colonial Revival Welborn House has a second story balcony centered above its wide wrap front porch. Other than the Welborn House, outstanding architectural examples on the block include the Mary Fisher Frazier House (1905, entry #9), one of the finest examples of the extant Queen Anne style homes.

Although more angular, the four brick and frame houses in the short 200 block of Oakwood are equally gracious with their front porches, one of which is two-tiered (entry, #21). All except one of these houses are two stories. The triple-A style of 207 and 209 Oakwood (#20 and #21) is extremely common to Guilford County; these examples of the style in brick with large rear wings, stucco accents, and two-tiered porches are elaborate urban examples of the style and today rare survivals in the city.

Along the 100 block of the Oakwood Historic District come the large Colonial Revival- and Craftsman-influenced house of Thomas Gold (1910, #2) and the foursquare of Gilbert W. Clark (1913, #16) displaying a stucco and rock exterior. Also on this block are two of the finest examples in High Point of the Bungalow/Craftsman style: the David O. Cecil House (1924, #15), with its exterior of North Carolina quartzite, and the second home of Charles S. Welborn (1923, #13), with Spanish Mission influence and an especially handsome porte cochere. Additionally in this 100 block are the Oakwood Court Garden Apartments (#17, #18, and #19), the largest apartment complex in the district. With approximately thirty-three units in total, the apartments consist of three brick buildings joined over grassy divides by brick arches inlaid with blond brick. Even these 1930s apartments have front porches as do the majority of contributing buildings in this block. The building materials of brick, stone, and stucco predominate; roofing materials are contemporary. Decorative elements are those common to the Colonial Revival and Bungalow/Craftsman styles. Setbacks are for the most part even, although oval shaped to follow the line of the block's central median.

Although Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow/Craftsman styles are the most pervasive in the district, with a complementary assemblage of apartment buildings, other architectural styles do occur. It seems likely that the designs for most of the houses in the district
were derived from stock plans, magazines, or from the popular architectural pattern books of the day. The Queen Anne houses of the 300 block, for example, are fairly uniform. On the whole, workmanship is above average, solid and substantial.

As noted earlier, commercial development in the district occurs primarily at the intersection of English Street. Elsewhere only one other commercial building is found, just outside the southern end of the district: the High Point Coal and Ice Company building (1928), a long rectangular brick building with long front loading ramp facing W. Kivett Drive.

Today, the Oakwood Historic District remains intact in character, feeling, and association despite the need for rehabilitation and despite the loss of five houses over the last thirty years, three within the 200 block. Today, however, Oakwood is more threatened than ever before, not only from commercial encroachment which is continuously present, but also from an aggressive code enforcement policy recently adopted by the Inspections Department of the City of High Point.
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

OAKWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT, Guilford County, NC

Section number 7  Page 6

## Inventory List

C = contributing  
N = noncontributing  
OB = other building

Note: Unless otherwise stated, the person for whom a house was named was its original owner/occupant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List #</th>
<th>Street #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Description/original owner/occupant (if known)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oakwood Street, East Side</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mrs. D.N. Welborn House; brick veneered foursquare with hip roof, hip-roofed attic dormers, and restrained neo-classical detailing; front porch with large square brick columns; second story balcony above front door. Approximately 3,430 square feet. Welborn was the widow of D.N. Welborn, brother of Charles Welborn. The two brothers owned a highly successful furniture retail store and mail order business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 2.</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thomas J. Gold House; prominent frame house influenced by the Colonial Revival style in its massing and symmetrical fenestration and by the Craftsman mode in the supports of its impressive wrap front porch; tall side gable originally with wooden shingle accents on second story and weatherboards at first; now covered in vinyl. Approximately 3,670 square feet. Gold was a judge, state legislator, and successful attorney.</td>
</tr>
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**OAKWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT, Guilford County, NC**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Section number</th>
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<th>Square Feet</th>
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<td>C 3.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gold Apartments; plain rectangular, brick veneered building with hip roof; full-facade masonry deck, round-arched hood at front entrance. Approximately 3,500 square feet. Built by Thomas J. Gold in side yard of 108 Oakwood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C 4.</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T. Walter Albertson House; bungalow/craftsman style house with brick veneer and stucco accents, gable roof, and front porch with brick piers. Approximately 2,465 square feet. Albertson was an attorney and city solicitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 0B-1</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Highly altered single car garage made into small apartment; brick veneered. Approximately 353 square feet.</td>
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<td>C 5.</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs. Cloeana Cecil House; simple frame house with hip roof; small front porch; modest porte cochere. Approximately 1,250 square feet. Cecil was Vice President of Cecil Drug Store and widow of the grocer Cecil whose store stood next door at the corner of Oakwood and English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 6.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frank and Mildred A. Clinard House; frame Queen Anne with projecting three-sided end bay on main facade capped by attic pediment bearing decorative shingles; bay windows; front porch with Tuscan columns extending to handsome porte cochere. Approximately 3,300 square feet. Mildred A. Clinard is present owner and second longest resident on the block having lived on Oakwood since her marriage in 1925.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two-car garage with storage room approximately 375 square feet.

Gurnie L. Frazier House; frame Queen Anne with wooden shingle accents in gables and as bands on three-sided bay at north side of house; projecting three-sided end bay on main facade capped by attic pediment; wide front porch extends to porte cochere. Approximately 3,000 square feet. Frazier managed Frazier Piano Company in High Point.

Queen Anne style house; L-shaped frame with wooden shingle accent in gables; three-sided end bay on main facade capped with attic pediment; full-facade front porch. Approximately 2,700 square feet.

Mary Fisher Frazier House; frame Queen Anne with projecting three sided end bay on main facade capped by attic pediment bearing decorative wooden shingles; wrap front porch. Interior exhibits center hall plan, wainscotting in dining room, turned work on staircase, and bullseye casings. Restored in 1989. Approximately 2,700 square feet. Until her death in 1988 at 94, Mary Fisher Frazier lived in this house for more than 60 years and also owned and maintained 304 Oakwood. Frazier was a successful stock market investor and office manager/controller for Tomlinson Chair Company.
Three-car garage converted from original carriage shed/barn; tin roof.

Alton R. Stuart House; bungalow/craftsman style house with wood shingles on second story and wooden weatherboard at first story; center dormer; porte cochere recently converted into extended front porch. Approximately 2,200 square feet. Stuart was a manager with the Piedmont Hosiery Mill, a supplier of yarn to the manufacturers of hosiery.

Clifton A. Ring House; wood shingled bungalow/craftsman with wrap front porch; gable roof; wooden shutter. Approximately 1,635 square feet. Recently restored. Ring was a pharmacist at Ring Drug Store and in the mid-1920s started a drug supply company.

Duplex; brick veneered with wood trim; simple rectangular building with gable roof; inset at two front corners for entrance/porches.

Charles S. Welborn House II; extremely fine bungalow/craftsman style house; gable front porch with side gables and porte cochere; massive tapered brick piers on brick pedestals with stone accents; both stories of main facade have tripartite windows with single-sash multipaned outer units; low slung roof on second floor with...
exposed eaves. Approximately 2,300 square feet. Welborn (originally of 305 Oakwood) owned a successful retail furniture store and mail order business.

Cassis Pearl Dunn House; modest bungalow/craftsman house; brick veneered with stucco accents; gable roof; front porch. Approximately 1,535 square feet. Dunn managed a dress shop in downtown High Point.

David O. Cecil House; large bungalow/craftsman house that is very distinctive due to its quartzite stone exterior; gable roof with wide front dormer that is gable front at each end with a shed in between; front porch with massive tapered stone piers extending to porte cochere. Approximately 3,670 square feet. The Cecil House is among the finest examples of the bungalow/craftsman style house found in High Point. Cecil was a furniture manufacturer with his plant not far from this home on English. In the 1920s, Cecil started a chain of car service stations and an oil supply company to supply them. The house is currently in need of repairs.

Gilbert W. Clark House; handsome foursquare distinctive for its exterior of stucco and rock; deep wrap front porch with massive
Clark House is empty and in need of rehabilitation. Oakwood Court Garden Apartments; each of the three buildings has approximately 11 units and is brick veneered with vertical pane engaging the windows on the main facades; central entrance porch with fluted columns supporting entablatures and gables with round-arched ceilings; porch at south unit retains original tile roof; handsome spacious interiors with hardwood floors; two-tiered back porches. Two brick arched "hyphens" connect the units in a row. North unit built c. 1939 is slightly deeper.

Hart-O'Neil House; brick veneered triple-A; large rear wing; front porch has replacement iron support. Approximately 3,500 square feet. J. Luther Hart was an engineer. Jonathan H. O'Neil, who bought the house in the late twenties, was President of the High Point Merchants Association.
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C 21. 209 1924 2

Norman L. Garner House; handsome brick veneered triple-A with gable roof; stucco accents; two-tiered front veranda. Approximately 3,460 square feet. Garner was assistant manager of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

C 22. 211 1927 2

Norman L. Garner Duplex; frame, two-story foursquare; small shed roofed dormer; shed roof front porch; craftsman detailing in exposed rafter ends, tapered box posts on brick piers at porch. Approximately 2,768 square feet. Garner, who lived next door, was the builder.

C 23. 301 1902 2

Hayworth-Johnson House; notable Queen Anne style house on large corner lot; projecting three-sided end bay on main facade capped with attic pendent bearing decorative wooden shingles; bracketed cornices with turned pendent drops. Approximately 3,000 square feet. Oral tradition claims this to be the house of J.B. Best (uncle of B.A. and J.T. Best), landowner and furniture manufacturer who died c. 1904. So far, however, this original owner has not been verified by written record. For sure, the house has been owned and maintained for more than 60 years by the families of W.W. Hayworth and Roy B. Johnson. Hayworth, a retired farmer, moved to 301 Oakwood in the early 1920s. His daughter married Roy B. Johnson, who also in the 1920s lived next door at 305 Oakwood. Johnson, who owns and manages real estate, bought the house from his wife's family and today is still the current owner.
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C 0B-5 502-Newton Place 1939 1
Roy B. Johnson, builder; simple frame duplex in backyard of 301 Oakwood; faces Newton Place but still part of Oakwood lot in tax records; gable roof; simple front porch. Approximately 1,100 square feet.

N 24. 303 1922 1½
J. Quincy Moffitt House; stucco bungalow/craftsman with exposed exterior king posts, collar beams, and knee braces; shed dormer. Originally frame with wrap front porch, highly altered in the mid-1950s when porch was enclosed and again in the 1960s after a fire. Approximately 2,736 square feet. Moffitt was an automobile repairman.

N 0B-6 303 1922 1
Detached single car garage matching style and building materials of house.

C 25. 305 1905 2
Charles S. Welborn House; imposin Colonial Revival style house with Queen Anne influences; frame with later asbestos shingles; spacious wrap front porch with second story hip-roofed balcony; glass panel front door with oversize side lights; bay windows; steep hip roof with gable. Approximately 4,000 square feet. Welborn owned a highly successful furniture retail store with his brother D.N. Welbor.

N 26. 307 1952 2
Rosa Apartments; brick veneered triplex with gable roof, uniform windows with shutters, and small stoop at front and back doors. Original builder, owner, Unity Was
C 27. 311 1938 1½

J. Radford and Essie Callie Newton House; frame with gable roof and three gable-front dormers; engaged full-facade shed porch. Approximately 1,600 square feet. Recently remodelled with vinyl siding and metal porch supports, but all other features remain intact. Newton was a salesman in Wright's (Men's) Clothing Store; his house was built on his father's lot next to his father's house, now gone.

English Street, North Side

N 28. 706 1945 1

Warehouse construction; brick veneered commercial building; commercial site since 1926; present location of Piedmont Mill Supply Company.

N 29. 618 1988 1

Rectangular brick veneered office building; four units; formerly the site of Cecil & Kennedy Grocers until 1922, then Lewis & Kennedy Grocers.

W. Kivett Drive, North Side

C 30. 604 1927 1

William F. Palmer House; brick veneered bungalow/craftsman style house with gable roof; stucco accents; gable-roofed front porch with tapered wooden columns or brick piers. Approximately 1,667 square feet. This lot, although facing W. Kivett Drive, was included as part of the original plat of Oakwood Court drawn up in 1914. Palmer was a salesman.
The Oakwood Historic District is significant in the history of High Point, North Carolina as the only survival of that city's downtown middle class residential development between 1902 and 1927. Of the multi-faceted expansion of middle and upper middle class housing in High Point which grew out of the city's tremendous population growth and ever increasing prosperity during the first three decades of the twentieth century, Oakwood is the only residential neighborhood of substantial scope, constructed within the original one-half mile radius of the central city, to survive relatively intact. The Oakwood Historic District presents a noteworthy assemblage of turn-of-the-century pre-suburban residential architecture which includes the only surviving collection of Queen Anne style houses left in High Point. It also displays some of the best surviving examples of early downtown Colonial Revival structures, as well as two of the finest Bungalow/Craftsman style houses found anywhere in the city. With historic construction spanning the period 1902 to 1940, the Oakwood Historic District is the last phase of downtown residential construction and, as such, reflects High Point's community development spurred by the local furniture industry's early twentieth-century successes.
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Community Development and Architecture Contexts

Residential expansion within the city of High Point, North Carolina, was extensive in the early twentieth century in response to a growing and diversifying local economy. Prosperity in High Point grew foremost from the development of the furniture and hosiery industries. Although woodworking factories were present in High Point as early as 1881 (population: 1,500), the city's first real economic boom didn't occur until the turn of the century. (Before that time High Point's largest product was dried fruit.) Beginning in the 1890s and accelerating during the first three decades of the twentieth century, population exploded as an ever increasing number of successful furniture factories and hosiery mills developed. In 1900, High Point boasted a population of 4,163 and twelve furniture plants; by 1930 population had soared to 36,745 and High Point had over 100 manufacturing establishments.²

The abundance of lumber, access to the railroad, pent-up demand, an able labor force, adequate local capital, and the spirit of enterprise combined in High Point at the turn of the century to make the city a bustling center of furniture factories. Most importantly, High Point is at the center of North Carolina's hardwood forests offering an abundant supply of raw materials. David Nolan Thomas, historian of the early furniture industry in North Carolina, writes that as the "American market for household furniture grew with unusual speed after 1900 because of accelerated urbanization and a general rise in the standard of living," High Point emerged within a mere thirty years as one of the country's leading producers of wooden household furniture.³ Along with the furniture industry developed auxiliary wholesale industries: lumber, millwork, hardware, glue, cots, pillows, mattresses, bedsprings, varnishes, stains, paints, dyes, plate glass and mirrors. With the advent of the wholesale furniture market in High Point as early as 1910 and solidifying with the opening of the Southern Furniture Market Exposition Building in 1921, High Point began to grasp its present day title of "Furniture Capital of the World." Today, sixty percent of all solid wood furniture made within the United States is made within a 200 mile radius of High Point, and twice yearly in April and October, the city hosts the largest wholesale furniture market in the world.⁴
The early decades of the twentieth century was also the period during which the hosiery and textile industries took root in High Point. Several hosiery firms were established at this time that would play a substantial role in the future development of the hosiery industry in the state and in the nation. Whereas Hanes was established in Winston-Salem in 1900, High Point’s first hosiery mill—the nucleus of Adams-Millis—opened in 1905. Today, High Point’s eighteen hosiery mills manufacture more than 87,000 pairs of hose and socks a day; High Point’s Adams-Millis has the largest share of the sock market in the United States, making an astounding twenty-three percent of all socks made in America.5

The history of this early economic growth was recorded admirably in the city’s urban architectural development. High Point’s factories and mills were located mostly to the south along with the smaller homes of the factory and mill workers and the larger homes of the factory and mill owners. Before 1925 in High Point, it remained the tendency of factory owners to build their homes near their factories. Middle and upper middle class residential expansion occurred mostly to the north. The North Carolina Railroad tracks running through the center of town divides these two segments. The Southern Railway Depot (1905), where the tracks cross Main Street, is still considered the central point of the city. Incorporated in 1859, High Point first grew up at this point where the North Carolina Railroad tracks were laid across the Old Plank Road (Main Street) in 1855. Good rail connections were paramount to the success of a small industrial town like High Point and the central location of the train depot in the early twentieth century symbolized the importance of rail transportation to the life of the city.

High Point grew in concentric rings radiating from this one central point. First came full-scale development within a one-half mile radius of the depot. Living within this one-half mile radius, one could walk anywhere in the downtown area in three to five minutes. This symbolized the village life in High Point which persisted within this one-half mile radius as shown in the development of Oakwood even into the 1920s. Living within the one-half to one-and-a-half mile radius of the city, development that overlapped with that of Oakwood, but started somewhat later, necessitated some form of transportation like the streetcar, which operated in High Point from 1910 to 1925. Still later, with the widespread use of the automobile, came the more extensive spread of suburbs in the late 1920s and 1930s.6
Today, except for a handful of isolated structures, the only residential neighborhoods to survive from the original area of full-scale development are the small, but highly significant W. High Street residential area mentioned earlier, whose five houses, dating from 1879 to 1913, represent the tendency of factory owners to build their homes near their factories, and the more intact and extensive middle class neighborhood of Oakwood which dates roughly from 1902-1927. Once there were many residential areas within the original radius of downtown that were comparable to Oakwood and even grander. They occurred for the most part along W. Broad and E. Washington (now Kivett Drive), Hamilton, Chestnut, Steel, Elm, English, the first two blocks of Lindsay Street, and Main Street (Main Street being the most favored location until the mid-1920s). These were fine middle and upper middle income streets lined with a magnificent array of early twentieth century residential architecture. Some of these structures, especially along Main Street, were exceptionally grand, reflecting the enormous profits made during the first boom era of the furniture and hosiery industries in High Point. This historic High Point, of which Oakwood was but one part, was captured in photographs beginning in 1896, published in the J.J. Farriss promotional books on High Point until 1916. Broad tree-lined streets, mature plantings, even setbacks, complementary heights, and a host of decorative extras like wrought iron fences and vine-laden trellises graced a large variety of turn-of-the-century downtown residential architecture and conveyed well a small prosperous southern town.

On the whole, residential architecture in Guilford County tended to be modest throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Guilford County was settled mostly by yeoman farmers of English, German, and Scotch-Irish descent with an unusually large concentration of Quakers. Domestic building was composed first mostly of simple log and brick houses, often in a Quaker plan; later came the ubiquitous vernacular farmhouses in a central hall, L-shaped, or triple-A plan. These housetypes were common to both the countryside and the small town until the turn of the century when the urban centers of Greensboro and High Point experienced unprecedented growth. In High Point, splendid, sprawling houses in Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Neo-Classical Revival styles, often in combination, with Bungalow/Craftsman influences arriving in the early 1910s, were built throughout the city. Many were quite elaborate.
An abundance of natural resources, skilled labor (spawned by the advent and growth of the furniture industry) and easy access to the railroad facilitated construction. In High Point, the Oakwood Historic District is the only middle and upper middle income residential area to survive from this early downtown development, and it contains a fine representative collection of High Point's historic urban domestic architecture. More elaborate representations of the styles found in Oakwood, as well as other styles like the Neo-Classical Revival, did occur in the central city, but they are now gone. The majority of these historic structures were destroyed during High Point's second major economic boom in the 1950s and 1960s.

It should be noted also that since 1982 High Point is again experiencing an economic boom that is destroying and increasingly threatening to destroy what little remains of the historic architecture not only within the one-half mile radius of downtown but throughout the entire city. Preservation forces are mounting in High Point, but to date there are few examples of successful preservation in the community from the private sector to offer as models for a wider understanding and appreciation of preservation. Besides the High Point Museum, which displays on its grounds the 1786 John Haley House (NR), the most prominent examples of successful preservation in High Point to date are the 300 to 500 blocks of W. High Street (including three National Register listings) and the locally designated Johnson Street Historic District (R. Homer Wheeler developer), High Point's first streetcar suburb located within the mile to mile-and-a-half radius of downtown. It is hoped that this nomination will encourage the successful rehabilitation of Oakwood and thereby demonstrate the benefits of preserving our historic housing stock.

Historical Background

The development of Oakwood has always been tied to the development of the municipality of High Point. At the far western edge of the city at the turn of the century, the oldest block of Oakwood began the same year as the city first supplied public water, in 1902. In that year, High Point opened its water works system which not only guaranteed city residents plenty of water for the first time, but also a degree of fire protection.
The Oakwood district was originally part of undeveloped rural farmland bordering the cow pastures of J.M. Hedgecock and Everett Corbett to the west and the lightly populated rural outskirts of the city along Lindsay Street to the east. The 200 and 300 blocks of Oakwood Street were sold by metes and bounds. A plat for the 100 block of Oakwood Street was drawn up in 1914, but two houses were already present (#2, 1910 and #16, 1913). The major developers of Oakwood were Benjamin A. Best, along with his uncle, J.B. Best, and brother, J.T. Best, and Robert A. Wheeler. All of these men were large land owners and tied closely to the early prosperity of the city from the 1890s through the early decades of the twentieth century. Both Benjamin A. Best and Robert A. Wheeler, as High Point directories show, lived but one block away on Lindsay Street.11

Robert A. Wheeler came from a wealthy Guilford County family whose members represented some of High Point's earliest downtown residents. From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, Wheeler was considered one of High Point's most prominent citizens, associated with a number of successful businesses and real estate ventures. Whereas Robert A. Wheeler dealt mainly in downtown real estate, his son, R. Homer Wheeler, was responsible for some of High Point's early suburbs: the blocks of Lindsay Street beyond the half-mile radius of downtown, Johnson Street, the city's first streetcar suburb, and the blocks of Main Street adjacent to suburban Johnson Street, both within the mile to mile-and-a-half radius of the central city.12

Benjamin A. Best made his fortune manufacturing chairs. Starting off first in his uncle's chair business in the 1890s, Best bought into the company and along with his brother J.T. Best, in 1906, started the Best Chair Company, which specialized in manufacturing large oak rockers. Perhaps this is why Best was so partial to the Queen Anne style house of which he built so many in the 200 and 300 blocks of Oakwood--because the style had wide front porches that might encourage the use and sale of his large porch rockers.13 Today, Best's Queen Anne style houses that line Oakwood are the only surviving collection of the style in High Point, a city which once displayed many in the downtown area.
Prominent residents in the Oakwood district included Charles S. Welborn (#25, 1905 and #13, 1923), who, with his brother, D.N. Welborn, owned the largest retail furniture store in the South. Thomas J. Gold and his wife, Nina Wheeler Gold (daughter of the developer of Oakwood Court, Robert A. Wheeler) built the first house in the 100 block in 1910, a Colonial Revival-influenced dwelling (entry #2). Tom Gold, as a young man, became a successful attorney as Judge of the High Point Court, a North Carolina State Legislator, and eventually a prominent lawyer to High Point's larger insurance companies, banks, and captains of industry. Also in the 100 block lived Gilbert W. Clark, who built the second house in 1913 (entry #16), a huge rock and stucco foursquare at 111 Oakwood. Clark owned a successful wholesale grainery two blocks from his home and in the 1920s branched out into real estate development and insurance. Other prominent residents included David O. Cecil (109 Oakwood, 1924, #15), who began his career manufacturing baskets, then furniture, and in the 1920s started a chain of automobile service stations and Dixie Oil Company to supply them; Clifton A. Ring (101 Oakwood, 1921, #11), a pharmacist, who in the 1920s owned and operated a wholesale drug supply company; and T. Walter Albertson (114 Oakwood, 1923, #4), a successful local attorney in the 1920s who became the city's public defender. Thus, although the automobile came into general use in the 1920s and fashionable neighborhoods developed on the outskirts of town, members of the prosperous middle and upper middle class continued to buy lots and build houses on Oakwood, apparently due at least in part to its prominent location within the downtown area. Although Robert A. Wheeler officially filed his plat for the 100 block of Oakwood which he named Oakwood Court in 1914, the majority of construction on the block occurred between 1921 and 1927, making it the last downtown residential development until the present with the construction of Market Square Tower, now scheduled for completion in the fall of 1990.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, rooms for rent began to be offered in houses and four apartment buildings were constructed in the district. This trend, coupled with the increasing popularity of the suburbs, started the neighborhood's slow decline to the present. To date, only five houses in the entire district have been lost. Since 1970, however, the city has proposed a variety of plans to destroy the neighborhood. None has been aggressively pursued until now. The attack now is through rezoning to commercial, higher taxes, and aggressive building code inspections and enforcement.
Oakwood has been saved to date partially because it is located just beyond the dense commercial center of the city to the east and just beyond the current development surrounding the new High Point Regional Hospital to the north. Also, a number of long-term residents, with their special interests in Oakwood, have protected their properties from commercial intrusion. Roy B. Johnson, 88, has lived in the 300 block of Oakwood for more than 65 years and has owned a number of buildings in the 200 and 300 blocks. Today, he still owns 301 Oakwood, the homeplace of his wife’s family, W.W. Hayworth, and lives in the backyard at 504 Newton Place (although with a separate address, it remains part of the original lot fronting Oakwood for tax purposes). Mildred A. Clinard, 83, of 300 Oakwood, has lived on this block of the street since her marriage in 1925. Mary Fisher Frazier held her two Queen Anne style houses, 308 and 304 Oakwood, for more than 60 years until her death at 94 in 1988.

It is hoped now that the strengthening of the neighborhood through the recognition of its historic character will encourage rehabilitation and thereby demonstrate the many benefits and wise economy of historic preservation.
FOOTNOTES

1 Adjacent to Oakwood to the west, one-block Newton Place with its seven small turn-of-the-century houses (1,000 to 1,200 square feet) survives intact. Since Newton Place is not threatened today as is Oakwood, Newton Place will be researched later as an amendment to the Oakwood Historic District.

2 For statistics on population, see the High Point City Directory, 1937, p. 19, which quotes the 1930 United States Census; for furniture statistics, see Ibid., p. 12, and David Nolan Thomas, "Early History of the North Carolina Furniture Industry, 1880-1921," (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1982), pp. 45-46. The phenomenal growth of population and industry in High Point during the first decades of the 20th century is reviewed well also in the Introduction to Thomas N. Hanchett's Johnson Street Historic District, High Point, N.C., Its History and Architecture (High Point: City of High Point, 1987).

3 Thomas, Ibid., pp. 395, 402.

4 Today, High Point offers more than six million square feet of showroom space making it the largest wholesale furniture market per square feet of showroom space in the world. It is recognized worldwide as such. Approximately 50,000 buyers from throughout the United States and more than fifty foreign countries come to High Point twice a year for its furniture market. The Southern Furniture Market Exposition Building in 1989 changed its name to the more appropriate International Home Furnishings Center.


6 Stephen C. Clark, "Residential Development Has Provided a Romantic Chapter of Local History," High Point Enterprise, January 20, 1936. For a short history of the development of the streetcar in High Point, see Hanchett, Johnson Street, pp. 4-5.
A small number of early twentieth century residential structures remain scattered throughout the downtown area; nine occur in the 100 and 200 blocks of Lindsay Street, including Lindsay Place, mostly on the east side. The west side of the street in these blocks is now almost entirely commercial, disrupting the historic integrity of the neighborhood. Three more lone survivors are scattered and isolated along industrial-lined English and W. Green streets.


The editor of the local newspaper, J.J. Farriss, proudly pointed out in 1909 that High Point had established a reputation not only for building fine houses, but also good houses of "moderate grade." He discussed at length how many operatives in factories owned their own homes and were encouraged to do so by the many local building and loan associations which made monthly payments on a home hardly higher than rents. Farriss claimed that home ownership was encouraged also by the factory owners themselves who, needing capital, encouraged their employees to invest making many an employee eventually quite prosperous. (The furniture industry seems to have been more encouraging in this practice than the hosiery and textile industries). Because of easy, available credit and employee ownership in the furniture industry, Farriss said that more people in 1909 owned their own homes in High Point than anywhere else in the South. J.J. Farriss, High Point, N.C., 1909, n.p.

Ibid., 1903, 1906, 1912, 1916. See also, Sanborn Insurance Map of High Point, N.C., 1926, cover page, Guilford County Tax Department, High Point, N.C. Sanborn, of course, was interested in High Point's water works system for fire protection.

For a summary of the Bests' extensive dealings in real estate between 1890 and 1915, see, for example, the "General Index to Real Estate Conveyances, Guilford County, N.C., Grantors Prior to 1921," Register of Deeds Office, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, N.C.
A copy of Robert A. Wheeler's 1914 plat of Oakwood Court (Book 3, p. 157) can be found in the Tax Department of the Guilford County Courthouse, High Point, N.C. J.J. Farriss talked about these men in all of his promotional books on the city from 1900 forward. Holt McPherson, in High Pointers of High Point, stressed the wealth of the Wheeler family in its real estate holdings (High Point: Hall Printing Company, 1976), pp. 58, 74, 111.


13 See Farriss books on High Point, 1903-1916. Deed records show that B.A. and his brother J.T. Best were executors of their uncle J.B. Best's estate by 1903 (Book 166, p. 230) and that Benjamin A. Best appears to have handled the building of his houses through the People's Building and Loan Association of which he was a stockholder as his uncle, J.B. Best, had been before him. (See Book 121, p. 345, Register of Deeds Office, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, N.C.).
9. Major Bibliographical References


Clark, Stephen C. "Residential Development Has Provided a Romantic Chapter of Local History." High Point Enterprise, January 20, 1936.


Previous documentation on file (NPS):
☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 12 acres

UTM References

A 1 7 3 1 8 9 6 0
Zone Easting Northing
B 1 7 5 8 9 1 9 0
C 1 7 5 8 9 1 6 0
D 1 7 5 8 9 1 3 0

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Oakwood Historic District are indicated by the bold line on the accompanying map which is a portion of Guilford County Tax Map # 214 drawn at a scale of 1" to 150' †.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of that portion of the Oakwood neighborhood developed between 1902 and 1940 that retains integrity. Altered early buildings, post-1940 buildings and non-residential structures at the edges of Oakwood have been omitted.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Dorothy Gay Darr
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


Welcome to High Point, North Carolina. High Point: Chamber of Commerce, no date. High Point Tourist and Information Center, High Point, N.C.


The following information pertains to all photographs:

1) Oakwood Historic District
2) High Point, North Carolina
3) Dorothy Gay Darr
4) July 1990
5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC

A. View of 100 block of Oakwood St., east side; to the northwest
B. Clifton A. Ring House, 101 Oakwood St.; to the east
C. 108 (left) and 106 Oakwood St., to the southeast
D. View of 100 block of Oakwood St. (109 to right); to the southwest
E. Oakwood Court Garden Apartments, 113 & 115 Oakwood St.; to the southwest
F. 706 English St.; to the northwest
G. Cloeana Cecil House, 206 Oakwood St.; to the east
H. Norman L. Garner Duplex (211 Oakwood St., on right) and Norman L. Garner House (209 Oakwood St.); to the southwest
I. Frank and Mildred A. Clinard House (300 Oakwood St., on right) and Gurnie L. Frazier House (302 Oakwood St.); to the northeast
J. 304 Oakwood St.; to the east
K. Charles L. Welborn House, 305 Oakwood St.; to the west
L. Rosa Apartments, 307 Oakwood St.; to the southwest