

HISTORIC 'RESOURCES WITHIN MUNICIPAL LIMITS

#9

OF FAIRHOPE, AL.  
(Multiple Resource)

Owner: Ben Maumenee  
P. O. Box 966  
Fairhope, Al. 36533

Historic name: Zurhorst House  
Common name: Maumenee House

Location: 200 Fels Avenue

Verbal boundary description:

Begin at a point on the southeast corner of Fels Avenue and Summit Street, run east 66 feet to a point, thence south 132 feet to a point, thence west 66 feet to a point, thence north 132 feet to the point of beginning.

Acreage: Less than one acre

UTM: A-16/413/030/3736/440

Date of Construction: 1906

Architect/Builder: Charles E. Littlefield

Statement of Significance

Period of Significance: 1906

Criterion C-Architecture:

The Zurhorst-Maumenee House is significant as the finest example of concrete block construction in Baldwin County and an uncharacteristically exuberant Fairhope architectural expression. Concrete block construction, a common building material in Fairhope from c. 1905 to c. 1930 was popular for its climate advantages, being cool in summer and warm in winter. The Zurhorst-Maumenee House is by far the most elaborate local example with concrete latticework in the foundation, water table, quoins, elaborate window and door surrounds, decorative band and Greek key and denticulation along the cornice.

Integrity:

Exterior. The Zurhorst House retains its integrity of location, plan and materials. The house originally had a flat, balustraded roof. The Hurricane of 1906 heavily damaged this however and a high hip roof was put up in its place. The finial balls on the front porch were knocked off by vandals during the 1970s. Recent exterior additions (1980s) include storm windows and a fan and pressed tin ceiling under the porch. The shed roof back porch is covered with wood paneling added during the last twenty years.

Interior integrity is good. Original doors, woodwork and floors are present throughout the main house. The back porch has had a new tile floor added and the bull's-eye window surrounds, though not original, match those in the rest of the house. All walls are sheetrock over original plaster and wallpapered. Closet doors are sliding mirrored glass and the stained glass transom over the front door is a recent addition. The hardware throughout the house has been replaced with sympathetic copies.

### Description:

The Zurhorst-Maumenee House sits on the corner of Fels Avenue and Summit Street. The lot is elevated several feet above the sidewalk on a small hillock, giving it an imposing appearance. The yard is informally landscaped with live oak, water oak, cedar and pine. The house itself is of concrete block construction, three by two bays with an inset, balustraded porch. The present high hip roof with slight overhang and brackets was added after the Hurricane of 1906. The wood and glass front door has a 1/1 window to each side and a stained glass transom above. All other windows are 1/1 with molded surrounds. The house features such details as a water table, concrete lattice-work in the foundation, concrete quoins, a decorative band all around at lintel level, and a denticulated cornice with Greek key band below. A fan and pressed tin ceiling in the porch are recent additions (1980s). There is a shed roof, infilled porch across the rear. This is wood paneled with mixed 6/6 and Craftsman windows. The brick patio with white lattice fence behind the porch was added by the present owners. A frame two car garage is behind this.

The basic plan of the Zurhorst-Maumenee House consists of a central entrance hall with two rooms on either side, the front ones projecting either side of the recessed entrance. A full length, filled porch runs the rear width of the house.

There are two bedrooms (the front bays), a music room and bathroom (the back two rooms) and a kitchen/dining room (back porch). All doors and windows have bull's-eye moulding and all walls are papered over sheetrock. Original baseboards are present throughout.

### Historical Summary:

Fairhope's struggle to make Henry George's theory of the Single-Tax work on the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay was closely followed by Single-Taxers all over the world. Many subscribed to the Fairhope Courier in an effort to keep informed and some even donated money to the Utopian community. Others felt compelled to move there and give heart and soul to the endeavor. One such was John Zurhorst, a German immigrant living in St. Louis and an ardent Single-Taxer. Zurhorst subscribed to the Courier and even made a personal visit to investigate the practicality of moving to Fairhope. This he decided to do. The Courier noted on 17 November 1905, "Mr. Zurhorst has an application in for eight lots, in the Morphy Tract, four fronting on Fels Avenue...and will build thereon." The Morphy Tract had been added to the Single-Tax domain in November of 1903. Zurhorst's house was constructed by Charles E. Littlefield, an artist and architect from Pennsylvania. Littlefield specialized in concrete block construction, which was touted as cool in summer and warm in winter. By April of 1906 the house was completed and the Courier did a front page story. In terms of overall construction, 1906 saw the completion of 21 new homes in Fairhope. Yet destruction was not far behind. In September of that year a terrific hurricane struck Fairhope and the Courier lamented, "our smiling village laid waste." (Courier, 9/28/06). In an analysis of the damage it was noted that "the Zurhorst house was unroofed and furniture fairly ruined by water." (Ibid.) After the storm Zurhorst had a hipped roof put on his new house. The balusters from the roof were thrown into an artesian well on the property. In subsequent years Zurhorst raised chickens and lived quietly with his wife and daughter. In 1911 he sold the house to a widow, Mrs. M. C. Dickson, who held the property through the 1920s. The present owner, Ben Maumenee, acquired the property in 1980. Other examples of concrete block construction within this nomination include 24 Cliff Drive (1912), 118 Fairhope Avenue (1911), 131 Fairhope Avenue (1925), and 205 Fairhope Avenue (1912), all in the Bayfront District.

#9 Zurhorst-Maumenee House  
Fairhope, Alabama

21

LK 28

6

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11

12

396

264

66' R / W

6 5 4 3  
7 8 9 10

BLK 30

396

T A T

FELS

6

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396

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264

BLK 27

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264

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11

12

396

GASTON

6

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4

396

3

2

1

BLK 26

264

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12

264

UMMIT

AVE.

396

9

33  
BLK 32

264

STRE

1149

2

1

8

281

BLK 22

264

3

4

5

211

STREET

STREET

LIBERTY

235

3

2

1

BLK 35

23

R

W

264

R

H

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8

6

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3

2

1

BLK 34

26

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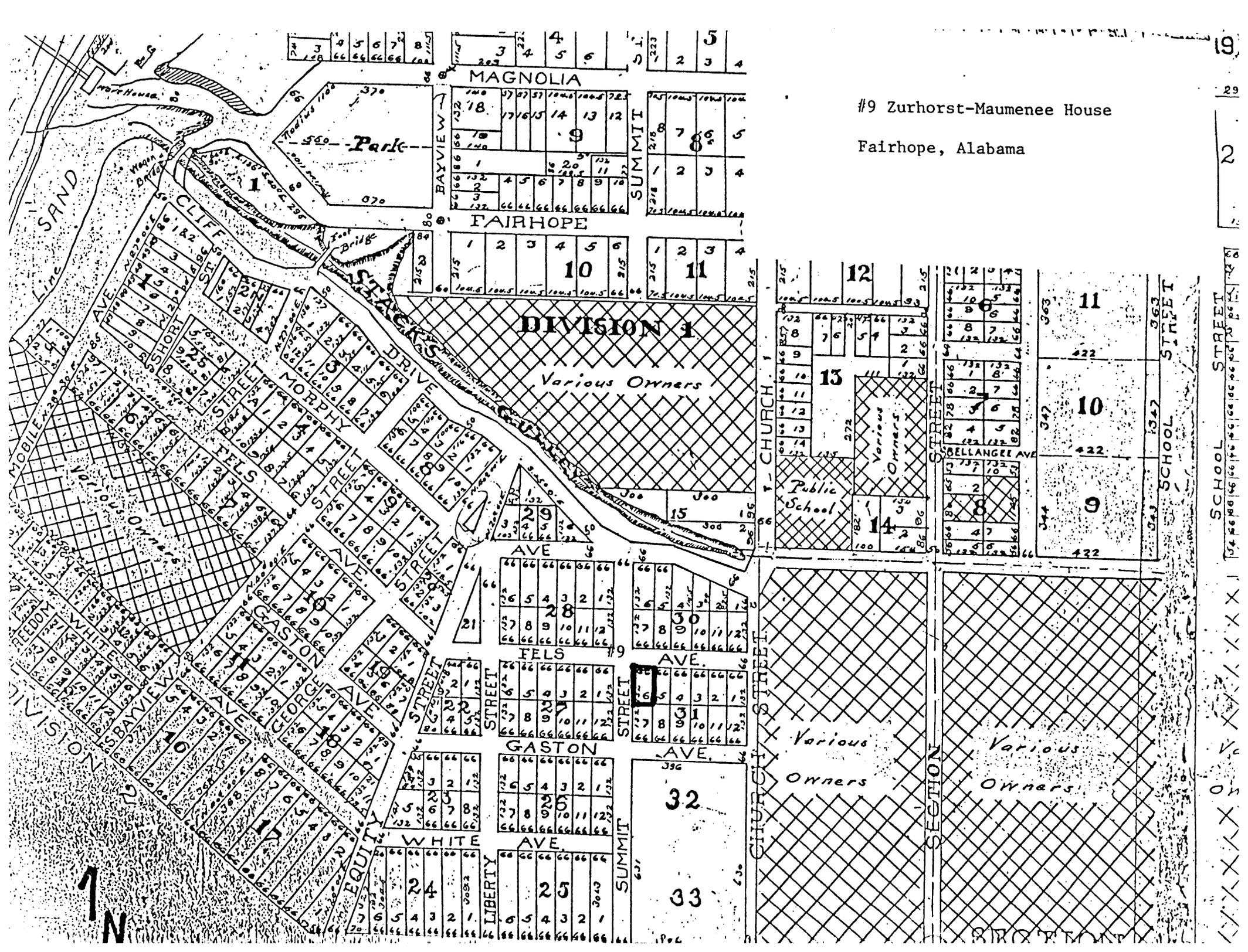
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264

396



#9 Zurhorst-Maumenee House  
 Fairhope, Alabama

19  
 29  
 2

SCHOOL STREET  
 SCHOOL STREET  
 SCHOOL STREET

SECTION  
 SECTION  
 SECTION

MAGNOLIA

|    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 |
| 12 | 11 | 10 | 9  | 8  | 7  |
| 6  | 5  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |

FAIRHOPE

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

SUMMIT

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

10

|     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   |
| 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 |

11

|     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 |

12

|     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 |

11

|     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 |

10

|     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 |

9

|     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
| 215 | 215 | 215 | 215 |

DIVISION 1  
 Various Owners

13  
 Public School

14  
 Various Owners

11  
 10  
 9

28

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

30

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

29

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

31

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

25

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

32

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

24

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

33

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

23

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

34

|    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 4  | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |