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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District

other names/site number N/A, 8PO 3308

2. Location

street & number St. Florida Ave., W. Beacon Rd., W. Belvedere St., Cherokee Trail N/A not for publication

city or town Lakeland N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33803

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne P. Walker/Deputy SHPO 1/29/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the 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:)

Signature of the Keeper *[Signature]* Entered in National Register Date of Action 3/4/93

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
77	25	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
77	25	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style/ Wood Frame Vernacular
Bungalow
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Wood/ Weatherboard
roof Asphalt
other Wood/ Porch

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning

Period of Significance

1923-1940

Significant Dates

1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Various

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District
Name of Property

Polk, Florida
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 40 apprx.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	405440	3110101610
Zone	Easting		Northing
2	17	40581610	3110101610

3	17	40581610	3109194210
Zone	Easting		Northing
4	17	4054410	3109194210

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date 1-19-93

street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Description

Summary Description

The Beacon Hill-Alta Vista Residential District comprises approximately 40 acres and all or part of 10 city blocks in three residential subdivisions located along the west side of South Florida Avenue, south of downtown Lakeland. The area contains single family dwellings one to two stories in height, modest in scale and, exhibiting a wide variety of architectural styles and construction materials. Although the subdivisions were platted separately, they now form a continuous physical and visual area whose historic structures reflect the period of development from ca. 1923 to 1940. The area retains the majority of the buildings erected during the historic period of significance. Of the 104 structures in the district 77 contribute to the district's historic character, while 25 are considered noncontributing. All but 19 of the contributing structures date from the 1920s or earlier. Seventeen dwellings were built in the 1930s, and two date from 1940. Of the noncontributing structures in the district, only one heavily altered house was constructed prior to 1940; the remainder were built between 1949 and 1977.

Narrative Description

Lakeland, a community of approximately 60,000 people, is located in Polk County about thirty miles east of Tampa. Many lakes dot the landscape, the largest of which in the vicinity of the historic is Lake Hollingsworth, located immediately east of South Florida Avenue. The historic district lies approximately 1.5 miles south of downtown Lakeland, and is one of four districts surveyed in the community.

The area is roughly bounded on the east by South Florida Avenue, on the south by West Beacon Road, on the west by the house lots on the west side of Cherokee Trail, and on the north by the house lots on the north side of Belvedere Avenue. These boundaries encompass ten residential streets and one commercial street. The three subdivisions composing the historic district are Alta Vista (platted in 1923), located at the northern end of the district, Beacon Hill (1924) on the south, and Mershon's Subdivision (1924) which comprises five lots along South Florida Avenue between Hiawatha Trail and Maxwell Street. The Beacon Hill Subdivision area of the historic district is distinguished from the remainder of the area by its curved and winding streets, all of which have Indian names. Hiawatha Trail originally served as the main entrance to the subdivision from South Florida

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Avenue. According to local residents, the entrance was once marked by an arch or pillars that have long vanished; however no evidence of such a feature has been found. Beacon Road, which defines the south boundary of the district, was originally named West Hollingsworth Drive. The area west of the district was not platted until 1952, and property immediately north and south of the district remained largely undeveloped until the 1960s.

The majority of the houses in the district were constructed in the 1920s, and a few residences were moved into the neighborhood at various times. The house at 117 Beacon Road is an 1880s farmhouse relocated in the neighborhood in 1938. Two other residences moved to the area are the ones located at 407 Belvedere Street (moved around 1940) and 1801 Cherokee Trail (moved 1979). Both houses were constructed before 1930. Construction tapered off during the 1930s, with only 17 houses being built during that decade. Of the houses erected in the 1940s, only two were constructed before 1945. Both of these were constructed in 1940.

Contributing Resources

The historic residences in the district exhibit a wide variety of architectural styles. The majority of the houses are bungalows (30) and wood frame vernacular (24) structures. There are also a number of Colonial Revival (11), Tudor Revival (9), and Mediterranean Revival (7) style houses, plus a scattering of other types of residential architecture in the district. The neighborhood is well-kept. There are numerous shade trees, many of which were planted when the area was first developed, and a wide variety of mature ornamental plantings. The residences are modest in scale and one to two stories in height. A few have usable attics defined by dormers. Although the majority of houses are constructed of wood, there are a number of masonry buildings, and exterior siding and finishes include brick, stone, stucco, and concrete block. A notable number of residences have porte-cocheres, regardless of style. The streets have been paved with asphalt since the subdivisions were founded. The area was originally lighted by small concrete lampposts, but the city has replaced these with larger modern fixtures. One of the original light standards was purchased from the city and installed in front of 117 Hiawatha Trail.

The house types found in the district were common in the better residential neighborhoods in Florida during the period ca. 1920-1940. The bungalows in the historic district exhibit

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Description

characteristics typical of those found elsewhere in Florida. Features include shallow-pitched gable roofs with wide eaves and exposed rafter ends. Integrated porches are often full width and are distinguished by heavy columns or piers supported by tapered column bases. Both wood frame and masonry vernacular style houses are characterized by the absence of distinguishable stylistic features. They are plain, utilitarian structures whose owners could not afford or did not want applied stylistic details.

The Colonial Revival style houses in the neighborhood emulated the appearance, if not the actual building traditions, of residences constructed in America during the colonial era and the early years of the republic. The primary influences were the Georgian and Adam styles, an eclectic combination of classical details and traditional house types that produced a variety of substyles of residential architecture in England and America. Colonial Revival architecture made its appearance at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 and has flourished in cycles of architectural taste, both residential and commercial, since then. Dominant features of the style include side gable roofs, symmetrical facades, accentuated main entrances (often featuring pediments, transoms or fanlights, sidelights, and small porticos).

The Tudor (English Romantic) Revival houses in the district hark back to a medieval English building tradition and became popular in America during the 1930s. Typical features include steeply pitched gable roofs, tall narrow windows, and massive chimneys. Many such houses in the U.S. are constructed of brick or combinations of brick and half-timbering (exposed wooden framing members with stuccoed infill). The half timbering is often only a veneer. The Mediterranean Revival style houses in the district were all constructed during the 1920s when the style (or more aptly variety of styles) enjoyed a widespread popularity. This style depended heavily on the visual traditions of Spanish and Italian architecture, particularly building and decorative forms between the 16th and 18th centuries. The Mediterranean Revival style was used for both large estates and small residences. The seven examples found in the historic district are modest structures with irregular floor plans, red tile roofs, arches, and stuccoed walls. The Monterey style is related to the Mediterranean Revival, since its antecedents derive from Spanish Colonial architecture. Although not widespread in Florida, some examples were produced in the 1920s and 1930s. Such residences are invariably two stories in height,

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Description

usually are L-shaped in plan, have a side gable roof, and feature a gallery on the second story that is sheltered by main roof. Decorative details are often limited to the surrounds of the main entrance, which is usually located in the corner of the ell.

Noncontributing Buildings

All but a handful of the noncontributing buildings in the district were constructed on vacant lots during the 1950s and '60s. The majority of these are concrete block structures that are similar in scale to the historic structures in the district. A few noncontributing buildings are historic period houses that have been severely altered. All of the contributing structures in the district were constructed as single family dwellings, and only the building at 1701 South Florida Avenue now serves as a commercial structure.

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Photographs

List Of Photographs (Contributing Structures)

1. 117 W. Beacon Road, Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District
2. Lakeland (Polk County), Florida
3. Karen Collins
4. August 1991
5. City of Lakeland, Community Development Department
6. South elevation, Looking Northwest
7. No.1 of 33

The information for items 2, 4, and 5 is the same for the following photographs:

1. 315 W. Beacon Road
 3. Karen Collins
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
 7. No.2 of 33
-
1. 1802 Cherokee Trail
 3. Karen Collins
 6. North Elevation, Looking Southeast
 7. No.3 of 33
-
1. 1925 Cherokee Trail
 3. Karen Collins
 6. Northeast (Main) Facade, Looking Southwest
 7. No.4 of 33
-
1. 1714 Comanche Trail
 3. Karen Collins
 6. West (Main) Facade, Looking Northeast
 7. No.5 of 33
-
1. 1815 Comanche Trail
 3. Karen Collins
 6. East (Main) Facade, Looking West
 7. No.6 of 33
-
1. 112 Hiawatha Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. North (Main) Facade, Looking South
 7. No.7 of 33

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Photographs

1. 201 Hiawatha Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
 7. No.8 of 33
-
1. 210 Hiawatha Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. North (Main) Facade, Looking Southwest
 7. No.9 of 33
-
1. 215 Hiawatha Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking South
 7. No.10 of 33
-
1. 1807 Pawnee Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. East (Main), Facade & North Elevation, Looking Southwest
 7. No.11 of 33
-
1. 1811 Pawnee Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. East (Main) Facade, Looking West
 7. No.12 of 33
-
1. 1819 Pawnee Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. East Elevation and North (Main) Facade, Looking West
 7. No.13 of 33
-
1. 307 Pueblo Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
 7. No.14 of 33
-
1. 314 Pueblo Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. North (Main) Facade, Looking South
 7. No.15 of 33
-
1. 319 Pueblo Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
 7. No.16 of 33

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Photographs

1. 415 Pueblo Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
 7. No.17 of 33
-
1. 1829 Seminole Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. East (Main) Facade & North Elevation, Looking West
 7. No.18 of 33
-
1. 1918 Seminole Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. West (Main) Facade, Looking East
 7. No.19 of 33
-
1. 2001 Seminole Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. East (Main) Facade & South Elevation, Looking Northwest
 7. No.20 of 33
-
1. 2016 Seminole Trail
 3. Charles Vilushis
 6. West (Main) Facade, Looking East
 7. No.21 of 33
-
1. 1912 Shawnee Trail
 3. Karen Collins
 6. West (Main) Facade, Looking East
 7. No.22 of 33
-
1. 108 W. Belvedere Street
 3. Karen Collins
 6. North (Main) Facade, Looking South
 7. No.23 of 33
-
1. 116 W. Belvedere Street
 3. Karen Collins
 6. North (Main) Facade, Looking South
 7. No.24 of 33
-
1. 111 W. Maxwell Street
 3. Karen Collins
 6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
 7. No.25 of 33

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Photographs

1. 312 W. Maxwell Street
3. Karen Collins
6. North (Main) Facade, Looking South
7. No.26 of 33

1. 407 W. Maxwell Street
3. Karen Collins
6. South (Main) Facade & West Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. No.27 of 33

1. 1701 S. Florida Avenue
3. Karen Collins
6. East (Main) Facade, Looking West
7. No.28 of 33

1. 1715 S. Florida Avenue
3. Karen Collins
6. East (Main) Facade, Looking Southwest
7. No.29 of 33

List Of Photographs (Noncontributing Structures)

1. 1830 Pawnee Trail
3. Charles Vilushis
4. August 1991
6. West (Main) Facade & North Elevation, Looking Southeast
7. No.30 of 33

1. 311 Pueblo Trail
3. Charles Vilushis
6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
7. No.31 of 33

1. 423 W. Maxwell Street
3. Karen Collins
6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
7. No.32 of 33

1. 429 W. Maxwell Street
3. Karen Collins
6. South (Main) Facade, Looking North
7. No.33 of 33

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Building List

List of Contributing PropertiesStreetDateW. Beacon Road

117	ca. 1880	(Moved 1938)
305	ca. 1930	
315	ca. 1930	

Belvedere Street

108	ca. 1924	
116	ca. 1923	
117	ca. 1925	
120	ca. 1926	
208	ca. 1926	
407	ca. 1925	(Moved 1940)
410	ca. 1925	
413	ca. 1939	
417	ca. 1926	
421	ca. 1925	

Cherokee Trail

316	ca. 1925	
1703	ca. 1938	
1715	ca. 1931	
1801	ca. 1922	(Moved 1979)
1802	ca. 1931	
1805	ca. 1928	
1815	ca. 1923	
1820	ca. 1926	
1824	ca. 1926	
1830	ca. 1924	
1837	ca. 1925	
1902	ca. 1940	
1905	ca. 1924	
1908	ca. 1926	
1921	ca. 1937	
1923	ca. 1926	
1925	ca. 1925	
1926	ca. 1936	

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Building List

Comanche Trail

1714	ca. 1925
1805	ca. 1926
1815	ca. 1938

South Florida Avenue

1701	ca. 1925
1715	ca. 1926

Hiawatha Trail

112	ca. 1925
117	ca. 1933
201	ca. 1937
210	ca. 1926
215	ca. 1935

Maxwell Street

111	ca. 1923
118	ca. 1923
201	ca. 1925
202	ca. 1923
207	ca. 1925
312	ca. 1924
405	ca. 1939
407	ca. 1923

Pawnee Trail

1807	ca. 1923
1811	ca. 1926
1813	ca. 1925
1819	ca. 1926
1905	ca. 1939
1916	ca. 1926
1923	ca. 1923
1927	ca. 1924

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Building List

Pueblo Trail

307	ca. 1923
314	ca. 1924
315	ca. 1926
319	ca. 1926
401	ca. 1924
415	ca. 1931

Seminole Trail

1818	ca. 1935
1829	ca. 1925
1918	ca. 1934
1923	ca. 1924
1927	ca. 1924
2001	ca. 1923
2016	ca. 1926

Shawnee Trail

1912	ca. 1925
1924	ca. 1924
1927	ca. 1928
1928	ca. 1926
1932	ca. 1925
1935	ca. 1925

Noncontributing Properties

Cherokee Trail

315	
1706	
1818	
1819	ca. 1923 (Altered)
1911	
1918	

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Building List

Maxwell Street

119
306
324
404

Pawnee Trail

1830
1836
1914

Pueblo Trail

311
407

Seminole Trail

1806
1815
1825
1905
2006
2012

Shawnee Trail

1906
1917
1918
1921

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Significance

Summary Significance Statement

The Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District in Lakeland, Florida, is significant under criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Community Planning for its variety of residential styles and for the distinctive character of neighborhood plan. The district contains excellent examples of residential architecture dating from the period ca. 1923 to 1940. Many of the houses were designed by architects, and the district was home to many of Lakeland's prominent citizens. The structures in the area have been well-maintained and the area largely retains its original ambiance.

Historical Context

Lakeland, named for the numerous lakes that dot the region's landscape, was founded in 1884 by Abraham Munn, a wealthy manufacturer and investor from Louisville, Kentucky. Munn purchased several thousand acres in Polk County in 1881 and a year later surveyed eighty acres around which the settlement of Lakeland was to emerge. In 1883, when the South Florida Railroad began extending a portion of its line through Polk County, Munn persuaded the company to run its tracks through the new settlement area by giving the railroad a 100 foot right-of-way and seven acres of land on which to construct rail yards and other facilities. Munn also offered to erect a passenger depot. The line ultimately ran from Sanford to Tampa, with Lakeland being one of the principal stops on the way.

Munn organized the Lakeland Improvement Company with Samuel Hartwell and Charles Hillman in order to sell lots to settlers and investors. In 1884, a post office was established in the fledgling settlement, and the following year the town of Lakeland was incorporated. Because of the railroad, the community quickly attracted new residents and tourists, and by 1886 the settlement could boast six hotels, five sawmills, four churches, and several stores. There was even a school and a newspaper. The population of the town reached 550 by 1890. The development of Lakeland was further prompted by the construction of the Florida Southern Railway which connected the town with Gainesville. Lakeland became an important rail yard and shipping site in Polk County. Both of the rail lines were absorbed into the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad system in 1902.

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Significance

The discovery and mining of phosphate in Polk County also stimulated the growth of Lakeland. Phosphate was first discovered in the area in 1883, and mines began operating shortly thereafter. The offices of a number of mining companies were opened in Lakeland. The population of Lakeland had nearly doubled to 1,000 by 1895, placing it among the fifteen largest cities in Florida. Development in that period included the expansion of the downtown commercial district, the construction of a new depot, and the erection of an electric power plant. Numerous residences were sprinkled among the commercial buildings in the downtown area, others began to appear on the shores of the nearby lakes. Many of the community's residents were involved directly and indirectly with the citrus industry, and by 1890 area groves shipped thousands of crates of oranges and grapefruit to northern markets each year. This industry was temporarily damaged and development of Lakeland curtailed by severe freezes which struck Central Florida in the winter of 1894-1895. Fruit which had been ripening on the tree was a total loss, and many groves lost the majority of their trees. A decade later, however, the industry had completely recovered.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, business and civic groups in Lakeland had taken steps to improve the quality of life and economic climate of the community. A board of trade was founded in 1897, and a telephone system was installed in 1901. Street lights and water mains followed in the same decade, and roads were constructed outside the downtown area in order to promote the establishment of residential subdivisions in the vicinity of the nearby lakes. Lake Morton, near the downtown area, became a fashionable residential neighborhood. Other important subdivisions developed between 1905 and 1912 were Orange Park and Dixieland, both of which were constructed on land that had been orange groves. In 1912, building permits in Lakeland totaled \$625,000. Lakeland's population grew fourfold from 1,180 in 1900 to 3,719 in 1910 and then doubled to 7,062 by 1920, surpassing Bartow, the county seat, which for decades had been the largest city in Polk County.

Citrus continued to play an important role in the economy of Lakeland. In 1910, over 330,000 boxes of oranges were shipped from Polk County, second in volume only to Orange County in all of Florida. Production levels grew to over 1,000,000 boxes in 1920, and Polk County's share of Florida's \$20 million citrus crop totaled \$3.5 million. Over 1,000 acres of land in the vicinity of Lakeland were devoted to citrus production, and the city had several packing houses and a juice plant.

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Significance

Rail lines continued to strongly influence the development of Lakeland during the first decades of the twentieth century. The Atlantic Coast Line was the dominant rail company up until 1913 when the Seaboard Air Line constructed a line across Polk County connecting Lake Wales with Tampa. The company insured Lakeland's position as an important rail center by investing \$400,000 in yards and rail facilities in the community. By 1920, the A.C.L.'s monthly employee payroll in Lakeland amounted to nearly \$100,000.

The onset of the First World War saw a decline in building construction in Lakeland, as world phosphate markets closed due to the conflict and the nation's energies were being directed to the allied cause in Europe. The stage was set, however, for a new period of rapid growth in the 1920s that was to become known as the great Florida Land Boom. South Florida, particularly Miami and Palm Beach, felt the greatest impact of this period of feverish economic activity, but few communities in Florida completely escaped failed to experience the effects of the eager speculation in real estate. The wave of investment was promoted by the Florida Legislature and by business interests throughout the state. State-wide road building programs and favorable property tax action encouraged the purchase and development of large tracts of property.

New settlers flocked to central and south Florida. The population of Lakeland grew from just over 7,000 in 1920 to over 18,000 by 1930, making the community the largest inland city in the state after Orlando. Building construction in commercial and residential areas surged. In 1922, Florida Southern College was moved to Lakeland from Clearwater, establishing its campus along the shore of Lake Hollingsworth and spurring residential construction in the new Beacon Hill and Alta Vista subdivisions. The city of Lakeland sponsored an ambitious street paving program, that resulted in an increase of paved streets from 25 miles in 1922 to more than 150 miles by 1928. Numerous new residential subdivisions were platted during this period, and those already in existence saw vacant lots filled with new houses. In December 1924, the city limits were expanded from four to thirty square miles, and a year later residential investment reached \$5 million with the construction of approximately 1,300 homes.

Florida's speculative bubble, however, had swollen to the bursting point by the summer of 1925. The state's financial

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Significance

institutions had invested millions of dollars in real estate loans that were largely secured by bonds sold by developers at inflated rates of interest. The success of most real estate schemes depended upon the sale and resale of building lots of questionable value. In some residential subdivisions, only a few model homes were constructed, and utilities often had not yet been installed. When real estate sales began to lag, many developers were unable to pay even the interest on loans, leaving many banks without the capital to cover their normal obligations. In 1926, over forty Florida banks became insolvent, and the real estate boom began to go bust.

The crisis hit first and hardest where the boom began, in South Florida, and was exacerbated by devastating hurricanes that hit the state in 1926 and 1928. The effects of the bust were not immediately felt in all parts of the state and were moderated somewhat in Lakeland by the town's diversified economy.

The Alta Vista and Beacon Hill subdivisions were platted early in the boom period, both being located at that time just outside the city limits. The southern boundary was Ariana Street, just north of Alta Vista. The plat of the subdivision was filed March 7, 1923 by A.H. DeVane, president of the Polk County Trust Company and chairman of the State Bank of Lakeland. The subdivision consisted of two parallel streets running east-west called Lakeview Drive and Hilltop Drive. Later these names were changed to Belvedere Street and Maxwell Street, as continuation of the streets on the east side of South Florida Avenue. Newspaper advertisements touted the 80 villa sites with lots measuring 65 feet wide by 140 feet deep. The prices of the lots ranged from \$600 to \$2,000. The amenities of the area included asphalt paved streets, concrete (actually granite) curbs, and tropical landscaping. By January 1925, the city's local newspaper reported that only a few lots remained in "Lakeland's Premier Subdivision."

Sandwiched between Maxwell Street and Hiawatha Trail along South Florida Avenue is a five lot parcel called Mershon's Subdivision. Its plat was filed September 16, 1924. The subdivisions was founded by George W. Mershon, a founder of the Mine and Mill Supply Company, who served as Lakeland's Mayor in 1936. He built his own residence on lot #1 of the development and eventually sold the other four lots for the construction of private homes.

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Significance

Beacon Hill Subdivision was platted in December 1924 (filed January 8, 1925) for land owned by M.G. Waring, A.M. Davis, and G.F. Coogle, all of whom were prominent local businessmen. Development of the area and the sale of lots was managed by Real Estate Investment & Loans, managed by Waring. The subdivision contained 171 lots of varying size, most of which were about 50 feet wide and 130 feet deep. Instead of a normal grid configuration, the streets were curved and winding. They were all given Indian names. Hiawatha Trail served as the entrance to the subdivision, and was probably originally marked by gateposts or an arch.

In 1925, full-page ads were taken out in the newspaper to promote the new subdivision. Lot prices ranged from \$2,500 to \$4,500, and Waring had his own residence constructed in the development. The two-story, brick house at 1829 Seminole Trail was erected and advertised as a model home in the Lakeland Star-Telegram. It was open to public viewing and was completely furnished. By the time development got underway in Beacon Hill, the area had included within the Lakeland city limits, but the area was still considered to be "out in the country." Still business was brisk, and many of the lots in the subdivision were quickly occupied by new homes.

In 1925, \$4,785,000 was spent on residential construction in Lakeland, representing the construction of over 1200 homes, as compared with only 167 in 1920. Just before the collapse of the land boom statewide in 1926, the population of Lakeland had grown to approximately 25,000, an increase of about 305 percent since 1900. The collapse of the boom and the onset of the Great Depression severely curtailed residential development in Lakeland. The population of the city dropped to 18,554 by 1939, but Lakeland remained Florida's second largest inland city. Land to the west and south of Alta Vista/Beacon Hill neighborhood remained largely citrus groves until after World War II, by which time the city's population had rebounded and grown to over 31,000. The closing of an area defense installation prompted only a slight drop in the number of city residents after 1945. In the nearly half century that has since passed, all of the land surrounding the district has been built up, the area being largely dedicated to residential development.

From the beginning, the Beacon Hill/Alta Vista neighborhood was an upper middle class residential area. Many of the residents were prominent professionals or businessmen, and seven residents served at one time or another as the mayor of Lakeland.

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Significance

A state representative also lived in the neighborhood, and it has been home to numerous attorneys and circuit judges. Educators, physicians, writers and others have likewise resided there. Architects who designed a few of the houses and some contractors can also be counted among the residents.

Architectural Significance

The quality of the residential architecture of the Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District demonstrates a variety and quality that is unusual for its period of significance in Florida. In the early 1920s new subdivisions were strongly under the sway of the Mediterranean Revival style or were dominated by a single building type such as the bungalow. The variety and quality of the residences are certainly due, in part, to the fact that the small complex of subdivisions was a fashionable area occupied by important local figures. Most of the houses were designed by architects (both local and from out of town) and reveal the personal taste of the owners and designers of the buildings. The area is also notable for its use of a curved and irregular street plan, unlike the majority of the other residential neighborhoods in Lakeland which employ the standard rectangular grid. The use of Indian street names also lends the area a distinctive flavor.

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Boundary Description and Justification

Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District
Boundaries

The official boundaries for the Beacon Hill/Alta Vista Residential District are those shown on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the district include all of the existing contributing properties constructed during the historic period of significance associated with the development of the relevant subdivisions ca. 1923-1940. None of the areas beyond the extreme limits of these boundaries is associated with the development of these subdivisions.