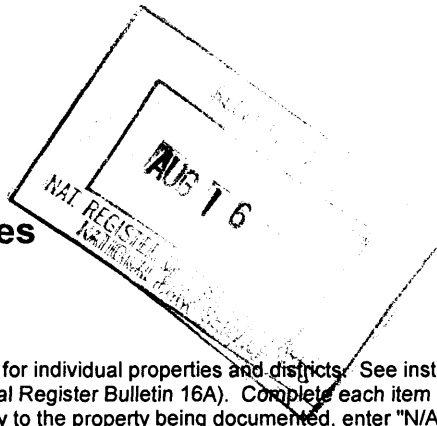


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 Central Court Historic District
other names/site number Jose-Balz Central Avenue Addition 098-296-04000

2. Location

street & number 3529-3575 Central Ave. (east side); 515-551 E. 36th St (south side); and Central Ct. (north and south) N/A not for publication
city or town Indianapolis N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Marion code 097 zip code 46205

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 36CFR 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.)

John R. Goss 8/11/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or 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:)

Edson Beall 9/29/04
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
75	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
75	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. AMER.: Prairie School

19th & 20th c. AMER.: Bungalow/Craftsma

19th & 20th c. AMER.: American

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

OTHER: Four Square

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STUCCO

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

CERAMIC TILE

Narrative Description

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

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
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
75	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
75	0	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
DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. AMER.: Prairie School
19th & 20th c. AMER.: Bungalow/Craftsma
19th & 20th c. AMER.: American
19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Colonial Revival
OTHER: Four Square

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
STUCCO
roof ASPHALT
other WOOD
CERAMIC TILE

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

1916-c.1930

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Jose, Oscar A. (builder)

Balz, Peter (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic 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:

Indiana State Library and HLEFI Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 7.6 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 572760 4408280
Zone Easting Northing

3 16 572990 4408090
Zone Easting Northing

2 16 572990 4408270

4 16 572760 4408100

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 Douglas Fivecoat; Suzanne Stanis
organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana date 05-13-2004
street & number 340 West Michigan Street telephone 317/ 639-4534
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

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 Nancy Conner (local contact)
street & number 555 Central Court South telephone 317/ 923-6279
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46205

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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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Central Court H. D.
Marion County
Indiana**

Section number 2 Page 1

The district lies at East 36th Street and Central Avenue and encompasses homes on the east side of Central Avenue numbered 3529 through 3575, all addresses on Central Court North and South, and homes on the south side of East 36th Street numbered 515 through 551.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Central Court H. D.
Marion County
Indiana

Section number 7 Page 2

The Central Court Historic District is located on the northeast side of Indianapolis in Marion County, Indiana. The district is located approximately 3.5 miles north of downtown Indianapolis in a small area on the eastside of Central Avenue near 36th Street. It encompasses properties lying along the U-shaped Central Court Drive North and South and those fronting the east side of Central Avenue, as well as properties backing on to Central Court lying on the south side of 36th Street (see map). The historic district is surrounded on the north and east by residential areas, including homes in the proposed Watson Road Historic District, as listed in the Marion County Center Township survey, that borders the Central Court neighborhood to the north. Another residential area lies to the west across Central Avenue, a major thoroughfare running north and south in Indianapolis. The area directly to the south of the district was once residential and consisted of 10 more lots that were originally platted with Central Court by the Jose-Balz Company. The homes located there, however, slowly disappeared between 1957 and 1972. Indianapolis Public Schools acquired the University Life Insurance Company (1957-1971) commercial building at 3445 North Central Avenue and the lots on the south side of Central Court South in 1972, combining them and converting them into an elementary school.¹ This school, No.48 - The Louis B. Russell Jr. Elementary School, was dedicated in 1972 and now borders the district to the south.

The Central Court Historic District was originally platted in 1916 by the Jose-Balz Realty Company and officially listed as the "Jose-Balz Central Avenue Addition" in land records. The Central Court Historic District was platted as one addition consisting originally of fifty-eight mostly rectangular lots, measuring 111 feet by 50 feet, with the only exceptions being the six triangular corner lots fronting on the U-shaped court. The district, as defined today, corresponds to the original plat except that it excludes the entire south side of Central Court South since the lots there were combined with the commercial property that became IPS school 48. Having no alleyways, Central Avenue, 36th Street, and Central Court North and South provide the only access to the properties in the district. Central Court homes exhibit some common features, including uniform setbacks, an abundance of small unattached garages to the rear of the property, and driveways that run along the side of the residence. Overall, there is a great deal of consistency amongst the district's homes in general form and layout on the property. The terrain throughout the small district is uniform and level.

¹ Haines Publishing, "Indianapolis Criss-Cross Phone Directory" (Indianapolis: Haines Publishing, 1940-1973 (non-inclusive)).

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Central Court H. D.
Marion County
Indiana

Section number 7 Page 3

The district is comprised of seventy-five contributing buildings: forty-six houses and and twenty-nine garages. There are no non-contributing resources. The district has sidewalks running along all of the streets except for the south side of Central Court South, which, being school property, is fenced off for security.

Many of the homes in the Central Court Historic District share common distinctive traits, such as stucco exteriors, Arts and Crafts design, and full width porches or sunrooms. This fact, when paired with the evidence provided by title records and available building permit information from 1917 through 1926, shows that the Jose-Balz Company was responsible for the design and construction of all but two homes in the district.² The homes in the district were built between 1916 and approximately 1930. The majority of these homes possess Craftsman style elements and many are built in an American foursquare pattern. Several contain decorative elements from early twentieth century architectural styles, including Dutch Colonial Revival, Colonial Revival, Mission, and Prairie (see section 8 for further discussion of the architecture of the district). Other house forms, like the bungalow and some revival styles, appear in Central Court but are much less prominent.

Roofs in the district are, for the most part, gabled, hipped, or jerkin head. They typically utilize asphalt shingling, however some terra cotta tile is used, such as the Italian Renaissance Revival style home at 3529 Central Avenue (photo 3). Houses in the district often feature either a large one-story full-width front porch or a sunroom. Sunrooms, an extension of the house with large windows or glass panes, were a common feature in early twentieth century homes. While some of the sunrooms might have been enclosed with windows at a later date, the majority of them appear original. Sunrooms within the district take many different forms and decorative styles. The majority of the homes in the district have double-hung windows, although some exceptions exist. These windows occasionally utilize multi-pane sash glazing patterns to enhance their decorative scheme. The residences at 530 Central Court North (photo 6), 520 Central Court North (photo 8), 535 Central Court North (photo 9) and 540 Central Court South offer examples of sunrooms, while the homes at 3569 Central Avenue and 535 East 36th Street (photo 2) offer examples of full-width porches.

Most of the properties in the district have unattached garages in the rear with driveways that run beside the house. These garages are typically one-story simple frame structures such as the one seen behind 555 Central Court South (photo 2) and 527 East 36th Street (photo 1).

² City of Indianapolis. "Building Permit Index." 1917-1926 and First American Title Company. "Indianapolis Title Records." 1916-1952. Two homes are left in question by available evidence, lot 28 and lot 34.

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Central Court H. D.
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This arrangement also lends itself to porte cocheres and the homes at 528 Central Court South (photo 4) and 530 Central Court North (photo 6) offer examples of these. A few of the larger corner homes possess two-story attached garages like the one featured at 3529 Central Avenue (photo 3).

Overall, homes in the Central Court Historic District have similar architectural themes and repeated decorative elements; like the foursquare pattern, Craftsman styling, sunrooms, and full-width porches, but each maintains a definite individual flavor. While some distinct decorative styles exist in the district including Prairie, Craftsman, Dutch Colonial Revival, English Cottage and Colonial Revival, they are generally spaced out across the subdivision and vary greatly in both general form and decorative features. This lends each home a rich feeling of uniqueness and individuality, while their similarities help tie the neighborhood together as a whole.

As previously mentioned, the majority of homes in Central Court are built in a basic foursquare footprint. In total, 28 out of the 46 residences exhibit this basic form. Central Court's foursquare homes typically feature stucco exteriors, and large full-width front porches or sunrooms; occasionally they sport a front sunroom and porch combination as well. The hipped roof is a common fixture of Arts and Crafts style homes however Central Court also possesses several front-gable varieties as well.

560 Central Court North offers one of the most traditional foursquare plans in the district (photo 9), featuring the typical full-width, one story concrete porch and asphalt shingled hipped roof. The porch is open and supported by four thick, round wooden columns. This two-story residence also has the district's frequent stucco exterior. It is unusual in that its chimney is located at the front center of the house and actually protrudes from the porch roof on the second story. This front-chimney configuration is a recurring fixture of Central Court with nine examples residing within the district. Finally, the home's driveway runs along its southern side to its one story stucco garage at the rear of the property.

Another traditional Arts and Crafts home is located at 535 36th Street (photo 2). This two-story building shares the same front center style chimney exhibited by the house at 560 Central Court North and the stucco exterior. It also has the traditional full-width one-story low walled porch, crafted out of brick with a stepped wall design. The side entrance gives convenient access to the driveway, which runs along the western side of the house, but the original main entrance lies in the front under the porch. This home possesses a front gable roof with decorative brackets rather than the traditional hipped roof.

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**Central Court H. D.
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The two-story residence at 520 Central Court North (photo 8), while based on a foursquare plan, exhibits many of the typical design and decorative features of the Prairie style. Prominent Prairie elements are the low-pitched, in this case pyramidal, roof featuring flared eaves, one-story attached sunroom with matching pyramidal roof, stucco exterior, and the horizontal decorative trellis and beltcourse on the sunroom. Unusual features of this house include slightly angled buttresses on the main structure and the sunroom, as well as the semi-circular attic dormer in the center of the roof. It has a main entrance in the front and a second entry from the driveway, which runs along the western side of the home. A one-story stucco garage with hipped roof lies at the rear of the property.

The two-story Craftsman styled home at 548 Central Court North (photo 7) offers an interesting variation on the standard Foursquare form by transforming the front, stucco porch into a full sunroom. It is also remarkable for its side gabled roof, with standard asphalt shingles, and its inclusion of a segmental dormer. The stucco exterior features decorative tile elements and painted features that lend it Craftsman flair. This property has a driveway along the northwest side that leads to a one-story garage in the rear. Its main entrance enters into the side of the front sunroom.

530 Central Court North (photo 6) was the home of Fred Denny, President of the Best-Grand Laundry, from the late 1910s to the 1930s. Its basic form is a foursquare, but it has elements of the Prairie style with its hipped asymmetrical footprint. It has many of the expected features of its style, such as a central two-story mass contrasted with very distinct one-story portions, here an extended brick sunroom and brick columned porte cochere, neither of which, however, possesses matching hipped roofs. It has a brick exterior up to the first story windows, which becomes wooden clapboard. The second story, however, is stucco. It has no front entry, typical of many prairie style homes, and features horizontal, geometric half-timbering to enhance the second story. The drive runs along the western side of the property and features a one-story garage beyond the porte cochere. The architect offered an interesting transformation of the foursquare type by using a steep-pitched broad side gable roof. The segmental arched dormer and full-width enclosed porch with through-the-cornice corner piers also provide variation.

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**Central Court H. D.
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555 Central Court South (photo 5) is a two and a half story front-gable Arts and Crafts home with a stucco exterior on the upper façade and wooden clapboard on the lower. It is even more interesting because it is one of only a handful of homes in the district with false half-timbering, all concentrated on the upper story, which is also flared at the bottom where it meets the top of the first story. Like most homes in the district, it features a full-width front porch, consisting of brick piers, low stucco walls, and a stone cap. It also has a flat roof that is supported by three sets of smooth paired columns. There are exposed rafter tails on both the porch roof and the roof of the home itself. While the house itself features an asphalt front-gable roof with cornice returns at attic level, the one story stucco garage to the rear has a more traditional hipped roof. The garage also has its original hinged doors.

524 Central Court North, yet another foursquare type of residence, is unique in the district for its two-story shingle sided exterior.

519, 523, 531, 535, 539, 547, and 551 East 36th Street; 552, 556, and 560 Central Court North; as well as 518 and 538 Central Court South offer further examples of the basic Foursquare pattern of homes in Central Court.

There are four homes in the district that have less than two-stories. These are of various styles, including two bungalow forms that are nearly identical in basic shape. Both use brick cladding and feature jerkin head roofs, however one is terra cotta tile while the other is asphalt shingle.

528 Central Court South (photo 4), a one-story home originally owned by lawyer Ira Holmes, offers a fine example of a Craftsman style bungalow. This home exhibits excellent architectural integrity, maintaining its original appearance as shown in a historic Bass photo from the 1920s (historic photo H1). This brick bungalow possesses many elements of the Craftsman style, including a jerkin head terra cotta tile roof, exposed rafter tails, triangular knee bracing, sloping corner buttresses, and transom windows. This home also features a nearly full width front sunroom and a matching brick porte cochere extending over the driveway on the western side. A brick one-story garage with a matching terra cotta roof lies to the rear of the property. The main entry is located in the western side under the porte cochere.

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Central Court H. D.
Marion County
Indiana

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527 36th Street (photo 1) is another Craftsman style bungalow but not as elaborately decorated. In many ways, this home is a reverse image of the one listed above, however, its entry is located on the right hand side of the house rather than the left and it lacks the porte cochere. It possesses a jerkin head asphalt roof with exposed rafter tails and triangular knee braces. It also has the sloped buttresses, but it lacks the decorative transom windows. Its garage, located at the rear of the driveway along the western side of the property, is stucco with a hipped terra cotta tile roof, which makes it likely that the residence itself originally possessed a terra cotta roof as well.

Another one-story home of note in the district is the English cottage at 524 Central Court South (photo 11). This brick veneer cottage features the traditional steeply pitched side gable roof with a flared catslide gable entryway. It also features the tall narrow windows, heavy wooden door, and pronounced front chimney that are staples of the English cottage style. Other interesting features include some instances of leaded glass, the arched doorway with header-bond brick accenting the opening, the soldier-bond lintels over the windows, and slightly projecting header-bond sills. This property is one of the only ones in the district not to possess a garage. Its driveway runs along the western side of the home.

The district possesses other house types as well, like the Mission Revival home at 516 Central Court South (photo 12). This two and a half story residence, first owned by violinist E. Russell Screes and later by Albert Screes, possesses prominent curvilinear shaped parapets with coping on both the front façade at the roofline and on the covered stoop over the side door. Although it features an asphalt shingle side gable roof instead of a terra cotta tile one, it exhibits many other Mission decorative elements such as a stucco exterior, open roof eaves, and quatrefoil attic windows. The front of the house features a half-width sunroom on the west side and an open porch to the east. This sunroom has French doors that open onto the porch and offer an alternative entryway to the house and also features a balcony on top its flat roof. The sunroom also features decorative elements that replicate viga, or log-like roof beams whose ends project from adobe walls. This residence, like 528 Central Court South, has retained a remarkable degree of integrity as exhibited by the historic photos from the 1920s (historic photo H2). It also features an original attached garage at the rear, one of the few in the district.

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Central Court H. D.
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Similarly, 535 Central Court North (photo 10) is a Mission Revival styled home that closely mirrors the general plan of 516 Central Court South but its features are subtler. It is obvious that the same pattern was used for both homes and that the Jose-Balz Company individualized it by changing certain elements. It has smaller less pronounced Mission parapets on the front façade and the side covered stoop, a small decorative label mold over one front window, and stepped gables on both the sunroom roof and the main roof. The residence possesses small, paired brackets beneath both the main roof and the one-story sunroom roof. Its front features a half width sunroom on the eastside, which becomes an open porch to the west. Oddly, this home, like many of the Prairie and Craftsman styled homes in the district, uses an angled buttress on the eastern edge of its sunroom. This property has a driveway on the western side of the and a one-story attached stucco garage in the rear. It was home to George Van Dyke, Vice-President of Dixie Vein Coal Company and later President of Quick Repair Washers, from 1920 until the 1940s.

The two-story Italian Renaissance Revival home at 3529 Central Avenue (photo 3) features a terra cotta tile hipped roof with a large eave overhang. It has other prominent decorative elements including paired and single cornice brackets, decorative brickwork on the chimney, stylized lintels over the windows with stone accents and keystones, projecting header-bond window sills, and an arched roof over the front stoop. A two-story attached garage projects from the rear, which appears to be original, and a small one-story sun porch extends from the south side.

Taken as a whole, the Central Court Historic District represents an important snapshot in time, both architecturally and historically. Created during the building boom in the early twentieth century, Central Court offers many high integrity examples of popular middle-class housing from 1916 through 1930, including numerous examples of modified foursquares, Colonial Revival homes, and even a few Craftsman bungalows. Especially important is that even though many Central Court homes share a similar basic pattern, each home was made unique by altering aspects of the layout or by utilizing differing decorative elements and styles. So, even when a basic type of home is well represented in the neighborhood, each home is one of a kind.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Central Court H. D.
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Section number 8 Page 9

Statement of Significance

The Central Court Historic District is significant under Criteria A and C for two reasons. First, it represents a noteworthy evolution in community planning and development because it features a very early example of "operative" building in Indianapolis, in which a suburban home developer actually builds and sells the majority of the homes in their subdivision rather than selling the lot for later development by the owner. Second, it offers examples of high-integrity homes and architecture that typify the growth of suburban residential neighborhoods in Indianapolis, as well as the vernacular styles popular with the wealthy middle-class from roughly 1916 to about 1930, especially many unusual variations of the foursquare house type.

The Jose-Balz Realty Company platted the Jose-Balz Central Avenue Addition in 1916. Local developers Oscar A. Jose and his brother-in-law Peter Balz founded this company in 1911. Jose, Balz and another brother-in-law, John Stokesberry, operated the company, which was incorporated to buy and sell real estate, lumber, building materials, and to mortgage, improve, plat, and lease real estate.³ They would "also buy land and improve it by building homes or other structures and then sell or lease them."⁴ They were successful and respected builders in Indianapolis known as pioneers in building "high grade homes in large numbers" and elevating building standards in the city. It appears that building and development were the Jose family's main trade because Oscar Jose's brother, Victor, was the President of Indiana Wall Paper Company and the Jose Building Company.⁵ The Jose-Balz Realty Company survived for over fifty years, finally dissolving in 1966.⁶

Unlike most homebuilders of that period, which typically improved platted land and sold the properties for development by the buyers, the Jose-Balz Company pioneered building high grade homes and selling them on a payment plan basis, similar to less expensive homes, to "substantial citizens".⁷ They, as a company, felt that "men of considerable means" did not "find it convenient or advantageous to immediately invest large sums of money in a suitable home", so they built and sold their large, well crafted homes under a deferred payment plan.⁸

³ Jose-Balz Realty Company, "Articles of Incorporation," filed 19 July 1911, "Annual Corporation Reports," 1912-1966.

⁴ Susan M. Barrett, *Washington Place*. Research Paper. (Indianapolis: Butler University Architecture. 1987.), 3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Brown, Paul Donald, ed., *Indianapolis Men of Affairs 1923*. (Indianapolis: American Biographical Society, 1923), 33.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Central Court H. D.
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Section number 8 Page 10

Evidence, gathered through research of both title records and city building permits issued for house construction in the Jose-Balz Central Avenue Addition, shows that the Jose-Balz Company is the builder of all but a couple of the homes in the Central Court subdivision.⁹ This practice makes them early pioneers of the method known as "operative building", in which developers design and construct the homes in their subdivision themselves, usually in stages, using funds as they become available.¹⁰

The Jose-Balz Company was also responsible for the creation of the Washington Place subdivision in Indianapolis, located on Washington Boulevard between 32nd Street and 33rd Street. This subdivision, commonly called Washington Court, consisted of eight lots on which the Jose-Balz Company built nine of the eleven homes located there between 1911 and 1913.¹¹ All of the Washington Place homes, like the majority of those in Central Court, were foursquare patterns done in a Craftsman style and just like Central Court, Washington Place's foursquares, while similar in plan, each had individual features that set them apart.¹² Other areas developed by the Jose-Balz Company include an addition at 32nd Street and Central Avenue, Fall Creek Boulevard between 30th Street and 32nd Street, twenty eight lots between 31st Street and 32nd Street near California Street, homes on Fall Creek Parkway to 28th Street between Talbott and Central, and still others.¹³ All of these subdivisions and homes were built before 1940 and are high quality homes, designed for wealthier citizens. Since it appears that the Jose-Balz Company was a prominent builder in Indianapolis, especially on the northside, it seems surprising that there is so little information regarding them available today.

⁹ City of Indianapolis. "Building Permit Index." 1917-1926. First American Title Company, "Indianapolis Title Records." 1916-1952. According to these records, Jose-Balz Company built all of the homes in Central Court with the possible exception of two - lots 28 and 34.

¹⁰ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin - Historic Residential Suburbs*, (Washington D. C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 2002), 28.

¹¹ Barrett, "Washington Place" 2.

¹² Ibid., 5.

¹³ Ibid., 4.

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To date, no information concerning the individual architects and designers of Jose-Balz Company homes has been located. It seems possible that many of the homes in Central Court were based off existing patterns but modified as desired by the company. It is certain, however, that Jose-Balz built the vast majority of the homes in the district and that they share many similarities in design and have many repeating elements and styles - like the basic foursquare type, full width front porches, and sunrooms. The company, however, was careful to make each home distinctive and individual in style to better attract buyers. So even though the houses share some similar features and decorative elements, no two are alike in both form and style. The 1923 publication, *Indianapolis Men of Affairs* notes that there was "a lack of duplication of style" among houses at Central Court and other Jose-Balz designed subdivisions.¹⁴ The company was known as a "pioneer of building", constructing high-grade homes in large numbers and elevating the standard of homes in the city.¹⁵

The high quality suburban homes offered by the Jose-Balz Company were in great demand at the time in the city. Indianapolis, originally platted in 1821, was designed to be a compact commercial city but by the early part of the twentieth century it was straining with growth. Built on a one-mile square plan by Alexander Ralston, Indianapolis was ideal for individuals who needed to be within easy walking distance of services and jobs, and for businesses that relied on commercial transportation - such as railroads.¹⁶

As the city grew, however, this one-mile square became densely populated. In 1880, Indianapolis boasted a population of 75,056 but by 1900, it ballooned to more than twice that at 170,000.¹⁷ This tremendous growth exasperated many typical urban problems such as water and air pollution, the risk of disease, and the threat of fire. These concerns, as well as the development of efficient public transportation, helped lead many wealthy middle-class citizens to leave the city for a safer and healthier suburban life style.¹⁸

¹⁴ Brown, *Indianapolis Men of Affairs* 1923. 33.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Cunningham, Amy Lynn. *Hoosier Commuters: The Effects of the Streetcar and Interurban System on the Suburban Growth of Indianapolis*. Thesis (Muncie: Ball State University, 2001.), 8.

¹⁷ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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During the early twentieth century, suburban housing additions, like Central Court, became very popular as the crowding in the city continued. This situation created a housing boom as the wealthy men and women of Indianapolis moved out of the cramped city center. Subdivisions, like Central Court, were created to capitalize on that trend. After 1914, local developers and wealthy homeowners typically favored the northern outskirts of Indianapolis because the southern, western, and eastern innerbelt of the city were more industrialized - holding more stockyards, factories and the great majority of the city's railroad lines.¹⁹ It was during this time of urban flight and high demand for housing that the Jose-Balz Company developed Central Court. Its high quality, uniquely styled homes were an attempt to appeal to upper middle-class families who were gaining wealth due to the growth of urban commercial business and industry. Wealth, however, was becoming less of an issue for homeownership since advances in technology - like balloon framing and rail improvements - were making construction faster and cheaper.

Regardless, the vast majority of Central Court's early residents were successful businessmen and upper middle-class individuals. In fact, Central Court attracted a large population of company presidents, vice-presidents, and secretaries. There were also a fair number of other white-collar professionals, such as doctors and lawyers.²⁰ The homes built in Central Court reflected the middle-class wealth held by these individuals. Most were good-sized vernacular specimens built to simple patterns featuring substantial individual decorative styling that insured their uniqueness in the neighborhood. The residents of Central Court also enjoyed easy access to downtown businesses using the Central Avenue streetcar line, which ran from the city center northward to about 31st Street in 1915.²¹ This convenient method of transportation allowed Central Court residents the option of living in the suburbs while working and shopping in the city.

¹⁹ Cunningham, Amy Lynn. *Hoosier Commuters*. 55.

²⁰ Polk Publishing, "Indianapolis City Directory." Years 1915-1935 (not inclusive).

²¹ Polk Publishing, "Indianapolis City Directory - Street and Railway Lines Map", 1915.

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Central Court's homes reflected the massive changes that American industrial and urban life were undergoing in the early twentieth century. The impact of these changes on American culture forced middle-class housing to become less formal than its nineteenth century counterparts. The busy pace of industry and modern urban life left families with little time for formality. Women were becoming active outside the household, often volunteering or working, and servants and other household workers were quitting to take better paying factory jobs.²² These factors necessitated a simpler, more comfortable style of home and the foursquare and bungalow were created to fill that need. These simpler and less formal homes were ideal for families at the time, who no longer had the time to host formal entertainment or conduct labor-intensive cleaning.

Early examples of the Foursquare home design can be found in Colorado and other areas in the west as early as the 1890s.²³ One offshoot of this design, the Prairie style, was used to great effect in the Chicago area by a creative group of architects, which included Frank Lloyd Wright.²⁴ An indigenous American style of home, Prairie was short-lived but popular and catalogs and pattern books spread it throughout the country beginning about 1900 and declining in the 1920s. Builders, like the Jose-Balz Company, found foursquare homes extremely adaptable, allowing them to add stylistic elements to make them interesting and unique.²⁵

Like the foursquare, the Craftsman bungalow is an American style that was very popular from about 1905 until the 1920s. California architects Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, who practiced together in Pasadena, originally designed the Craftsman Bungalow and were inspired by Japanese architecture in its creation.²⁶ This style was heavily publicized in magazines like *Ladies Home Journal*, *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Country Life in America* and "as a result, a flood of pattern books appeared".²⁷

²² Hanson, Nancy L. *An American Classic: The Foursquare House in the South Bend Landscape*. Thesis. (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1994.), 91.

²³ Berg, Donald J. *Modern American Dwellings-1897*. (Rockville, NY: Antiquity Reprints, 1984.), 86-91.

²⁴ McAlister, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 2002.), 440.

²⁵ Labine, Clem & Patricia Poore, "The Comfortable House" *The Old House Journal* vol.X No.1, Jan 1982, 7.

²⁶ Lancaster, Clay. *The American Bungalow*. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985.), 115-126.

²⁷ McAlister, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 454.

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Both foursquare and bungalow homes represent Americans shift in attitude toward the informal and comfortable. Their exteriors feature simple designs and decorations, including large, less ornate columns, supports, and braces. Their interiors also exhibit this informal air by featuring open floor plans and eschewing doors as dividers between rooms, such as dining areas and living rooms, in favor of cased openings.

Central Court, as a whole, is greatly intact, maintaining a large measure of its historical and architectural integrity. The original subdivision has lost nine homes from the south side of Central Court South and another from the northeast corner of Central Court North. The first nine were combined with other lots to form the large property on which the Louis B. Russell Jr. School (IPS #48) now resides. Only a handful of the forty-eight remaining houses have received vinyl or aluminum siding, and all other modifications to the homes have been minor. The fact that the district contains no non-contributing structures is evidence of the integrity of Central Court. The homes in the Central Court neighborhood reflect the popular architectural forms and decorative styles of the 1910s and 1920s, and they also offer a fine example of the growth of Indianapolis' north side suburbs.

The present residents of Central Court take great pride in the integrity of their homes and have demonstrated a commitment to preserving their neighborhood. They are seeking National Register status as part of this effort.

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Boundary Description:

The Central Court Historic District encompasses the majority of lots in the Jose-Balz Central Avenue Addition. These include all properties east of North Central Avenue, south of East 36th Street, west of a line formed by the eastern property line of lots 58, 40, 39, 38, 37, 22, 21, 20 and the eastern property line of lot 19 (including the entirety of lot 19, but excluding lot 18), and north of the southern curb of Central Court South.

Boundary Justification:

The district conforms to the original plat of the Jose-Balz Central Avenue Addition except for the south side of Central Avenue South (lots 9-18), whose lots were combined with the property from 3445 North Central Avenue and converted into a public school in 1972.

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Photographs:

All photographs are views and streets and properties in the Central Court Historic District, Marion County - Indianapolis, Indiana. (see sketch map for exact locations)

All photographs were taken by Doug Fivecoat for Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

Photo negatives are located at the Indiana State Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology – 402 W. Washington St. W274, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The following are descriptions of the specific view in each photo.

- | <u>No.</u> | <u>Description:</u> |
|------------|--|
| 1 | 527 E. 36 th Street, looking south. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 2 | 535 E. 36 th St., looking south. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 3 | 3529 N. Central Ave., looking northwest. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 4 | 528 Central Court South, looking northeast. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 5 | 555 Central Court South, looking east. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 6 | 530 Central Court North, looking northeast. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 7 | 548 Central Court North, looking northeast. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 8 | 520 Central Court North, looking northeast. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 9 | 560 Central Court North, looking east. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 10 | 535 Central Court North, looking southeast. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 11 | 524 Central Court South, looking north. (Taken 3/29/2004) |
| 12 | 516 Central Court South, looking north. (Taken 4/27/2004) |
| 13 | Streetscape – Central Court South, looking east. (Taken 4/27/2004) |
| 14 | Streetscape – Central Court North, looking south. (Taken 4/27/2004) |
| 15 | Streetscape – E. 36 th Street, looking southwest. (Taken 4/27/2004) |
| 16 | Streetscape – N. Central Avenue, looking north. (Taken 4/27/2004) |

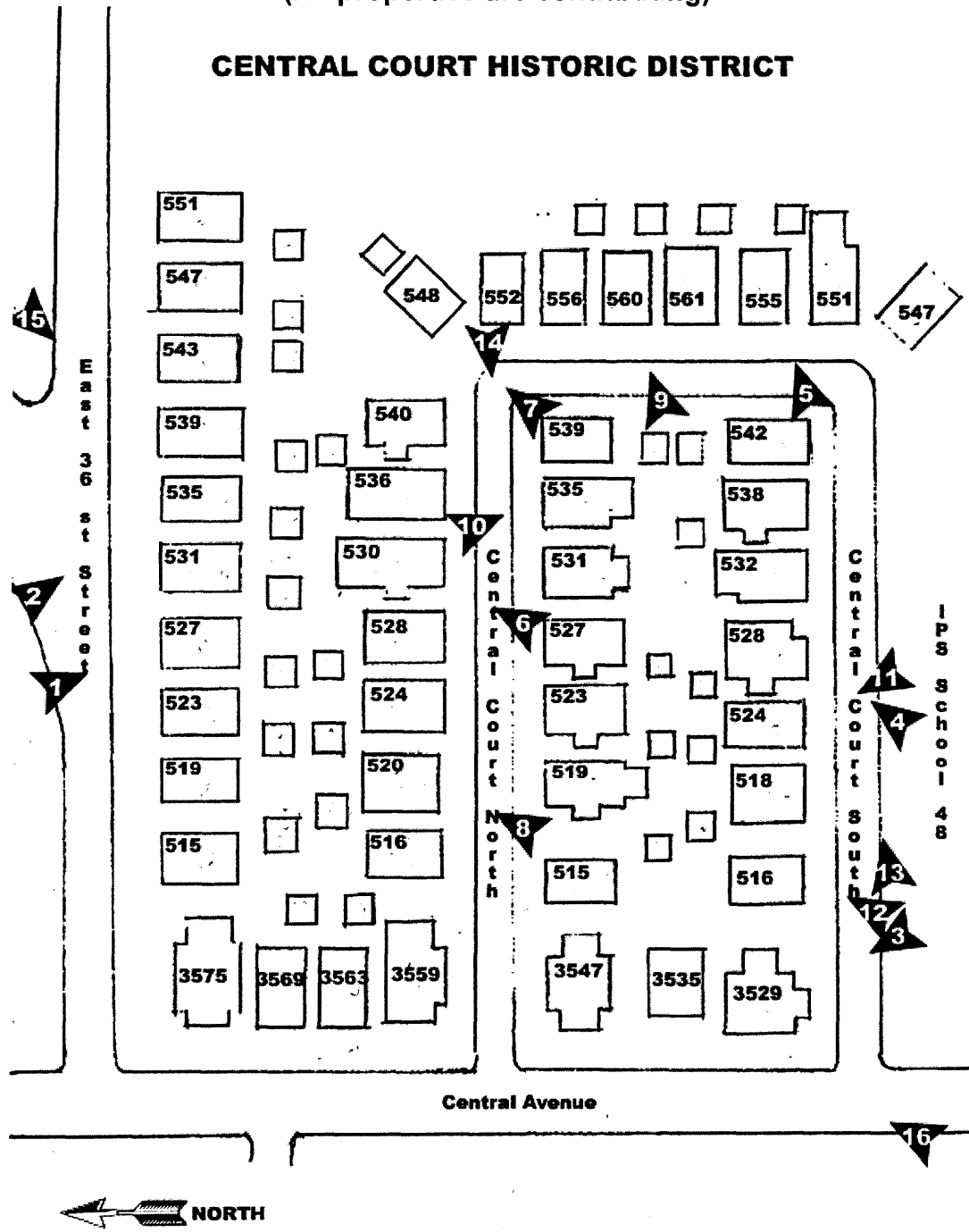
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Sketch Map of Central Court with photo locations
(All properties are contributing)



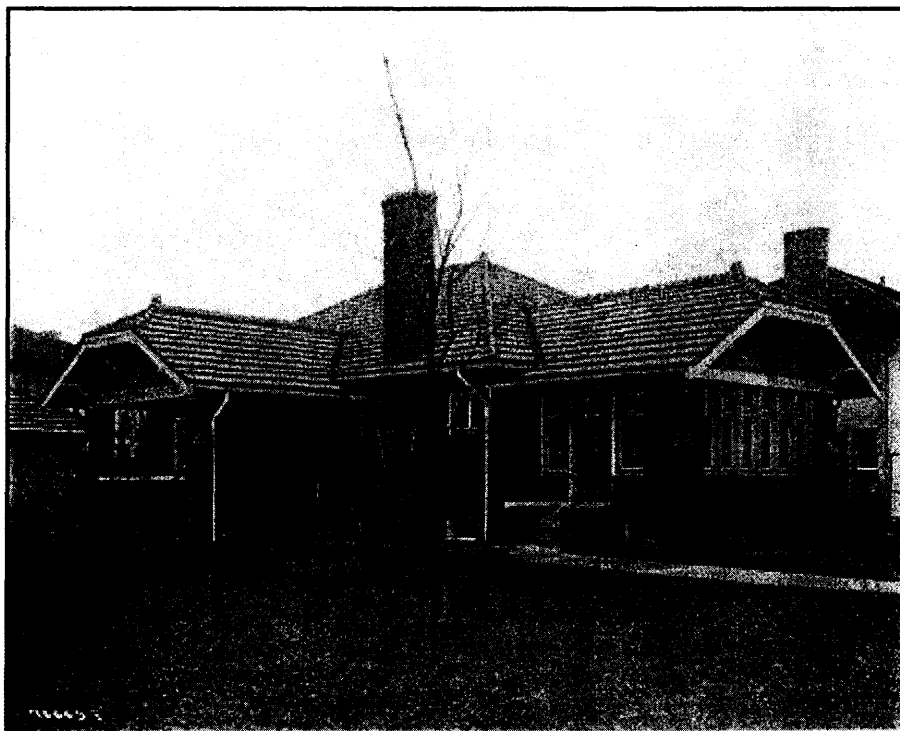
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Historic Photo H1



**528 Central Court South
circa 1920
Bass Photo Collection
Indiana Historical Society**

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Historic Photo H2



**516 Central Court South
circa 1920
Bass Photo Collection
Indiana Historical Society**