

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUL 17 2015 562

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in the National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Bon Air Flats
Other names/site number: The Schaffner/HAM-7318-01
Name of related multiple property listing:
Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers, 1870-1970
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 615 Maple Avenue
City or town: Cincinnati State: OH County: Hamilton
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<u>Barbara Power</u> DSHPO Inventory & Registration <u>July 13, 2015</u>	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Joe Edison H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

9-1-15
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(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT: not in use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Beaux Arts

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, STONE: Limestone, METAL

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Completed circa 1907, the Bon Air Flats at 615 Maple Avenue is a three+-story, five-bay-wide Streetcar Suburb Apartment Building executed as a Central Corridor Walkup Apartment Building subtype as defined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), "Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers, 1870-1970." The building footprint is basically rectangular, with a small projecting front entrance and a larger projection on the rear containing a stairway. (Photos 1 – 7). Built of brick bearing masonry¹ on a high coursed ashlar limestone foundation with wood floor-framing, The Bon Air Flats has three full stories plus a basement and attic. On the first through third floors, the building retains its original floor plan with two 2-bedroom apartments per floor mirrored along a central masonry bearing wall running perpendicular to the street. Two additional apartments were created in the attic circa 1970s. Architecturally the building exhibits elements of the Beaux Arts style; its symmetrical pressed orange brick front facade is accented with smooth limestone trim, a prominent cornice with large consoles, high parapet and flat roof, as well as recessed balconies in the end bays (Photos 1, 2). Located in the Cincinnati neighborhood of South Avondale on a .303-acre lot on a quiet side street just off Reading Road, a busy thoroughfare, it is set back 25 to 30 feet from the street (Figures 1, 2). A surface parking lot is located at the rear of the building. The immediate area is a mixed urban neighborhood, including former single-family dwellings on the north side of the street, a parking lot and The Wagner apartment building to the east; St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church (3401 Reading Road), an imposing stone Gothic-style church and its former school building to the south and a 1960s-era apartment building to the west. The larger setting is mixed residential, commercial, surface parking lots and institutional buildings. Despite replacement of doors and windows and renovation of apartments, the building retains sufficient historic integrity to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

¹ The 1904, updated through 1930, Sanborn Fire Insurance map indicates that the building is brick bearing, with exterior wall thickness varying from twelve inches to 16 inches.

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Narrative Description

Built circa 1907, the Bon Air Flats at 615 Maple Avenue is a three+-story, orange brick masonry apartment building with stone trim reflecting the Beaux Arts style. The building faces north on a side street, is set back from the street 25 to 30 feet, and the property slopes down toward Reading Road, a major thoroughfare, on the east. The building has a regularly coursed ashlar limestone foundation that is exposed 3 to 5 feet above grade reflecting the slope of the site. The front façade is symmetrical and arranged in essentially 5 bays. The center bay is marked by a projecting one-story enclosed entry porch with single windows above (Photos 1 – 3). The other bays each have a pair of windows, including the recessed porches on each floor in the end bays. The three-story height, five-bay symmetrical façade, setback from the street, central entrance and recessed porches are all features of the Streetcar Suburb Apartment Building subtype identified in the MPD.

The front entry porch, which is original, based on a 1909 photo (Figure 9) (when it was known as The Schaffner), was modified, probably in the 1970s, with a gable roof, glass block windows and a metal half-glazed door. The front facade retains all of its masonry window openings, although two prominent center-bay windows and the basement windows have glass block infill. The flat-arch stone window pediments with keystones on the front, a prominent cornice with large paired consoles, and a parapet wall above the flat roof are typical Beaux Arts features. Most of the windows are aluminum replacements with one-over-one sashes except those at the rear stair which are glass block. Like most Central Corridor Walkup Apartments, the Bon Air Flats is architecturally better appointed on the front than on the side elevations. Although the orange pressed brick continues on the side elevations and the cornice wraps around from the front to the sides above the balconies, the remainder of the side elevations is plain with three bays of windows with straight stone lintels and lugsills (Photos 4 – 7). The rear elevation is a cheaper brown brick with a single and paired window on each side of the centered rear stairway projection. That square projection has two bays of small windows on each of its three sides; these windows have been filled with glass block on the rear. The building has three chimneys, which are not visible from grade.

Interior

On the interior, the Bon Air Flats has numerous qualities that are typical of Central Corridor Walkup Apartment Buildings as defined in the Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers, 1870-1970 MPD, including the absence of commercial space at the ground floor, its total of six apartments with linear plans, dependence on stairways for vertical access, and presence of a porch or balcony in each unit. While the building does not (and did not originally) have a central full-length corridor, it has a central front entry that leads directly into a small foyer and stairhall, which is typical of early examples of this subtype (Photos 8 – 9). The foyer retains a marble wainscot, which lines the stair all the way to the third floor. The front stair also has white tile flooring with a contrasting Greek key border on all landings as well as an original wood railing with heavy newels above the first floor (Photo 10). Original marble stair treads and marble wainscot remain between the first and second floors, but above that all treads and risers have been replaced with wood. There is also has a centrally located rear stair which is oriented side-to-side (Photo 11). Its more utilitarian design consists of painted brick walls, wood stairs and a continuous beadboard railing.

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The apartment interiors were renovated in the 1970s but they each retain two bedrooms, bathroom, living room (formerly referred to as a parlor), dining room, kitchen, hall and balcony. Doors, door casings and baseboards were removed but some wood window trim and several original wood fireplace mantels and tile firebox surrounds remain (Photos 12 – 13).

Setting

The Bon Air Flats retains its historic setting on the south side of a side street off Reading Road, which was a major streetcar route and continues to function as a major north-south thoroughfare through the neighborhood. The building faces north set back 25 to 30 feet from the street. It has a grassy lawn in the front bisected by a concrete walkway to the front entrance and a driveway on the west side of the property leading to a parking lot on the side and rear. The adjoining lot on the east is a paved parking lot, and the lot on the west is vacant, following demolition of an early-20th-century dwelling razed circa 2010.

The immediate area is a mixed urban neighborhood, including single-family homes on the north side of the street. Adjoining on the south is the parking lot at the rear of St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church, an imposing stone Gothic-style church, which stands at 3401 Reading Road. A former school building once associated with the church is located southwest of The Bon Air Flats at 588 Blair Avenue.

Integrity

The Bon Air Flats has undergone minor alterations and retains its exterior form and Beaux Arts architectural details. Major original features of its design and function such as its massing, circulation, and window and door openings, as well as exterior materials, such as orange brick, prominent cornice, ashlar limestone basement and smooth limestone trim, remain intact. The enclosed front entrance porch is original but a gable roof was added at an unknown date. Exterior alterations outside of the period of significance are the replacement windows and doors, including the insertion of glass block in the front entrance porch. The six recessed balconies with turned wood railings originally projected slightly from the face of the building. However, the current turned wood railings are very similar if not identical. The original stone coping on the parapet wall has been replaced with aluminum.

The interior retains its marble front stair with original marble wainscot, geometric tile landings and wood railing and newels, as well as its utilitarian wood rear stairway with its beadboard railing. The original symmetrical floor plan is still intact, with two apartments per floor mirrored along a central masonry bearing wall that runs down the center between the two stairways. Although a circa-1970s renovation stripped the original apartments of much historic trim, they each retain two bedrooms, bathroom, living room, dining room, kitchen, hall and balcony. Wood window trim and several original tile fireplaces remain in place.

The Bon Air Flats retains the essential physical features and a sufficient level of integrity to represent its importance as a Streetcar Suburb Apartment Building designed as a Central Corridor Walkup Apartment Building. Those features include its original rectangular footprint, three-story+ height, five-bay width, setback from the street, central entrance, regular fenestration, recessed porches, varied treatment of the front versus the side and rear elevations, small foyer, absence of commercial space, stairway access. The Bon Air Flats retains a significant degree of stylistic integrity, which is also a MPD requirement. Specifically,

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the building continues to exhibit the following characteristics of Central Corridor Walkups as identified in the MPD:

- Purpose-built apartment, no first floor commercial
- More than four apartment units, typically six or more
- Often set back from street
- Linear plan; rooms aligned front to back
- At least three and no more than five stories high
- Mainly three, less frequently five bays
- Façade symmetrically arranged around central doorway
- Occupies nearly entire deep single lot
- Stairwell access, no elevator
- Raised central entrances
- T or rectangular plan
- Early examples have small vestibules or foyers
- Each unit often has separate front porch
- Constructed primarily between 1895 and 1940
- Many have names and ornate entrances

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Period of Significance

Circa 1907-1943

Significant Dates

1907

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Steinkamp, Joseph G.

Steinkamp, Bernard F.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Completed circa 1907, the Bon Air Flats is significant on a local level under Criterion A in the area of community development for its association with the development of suburban streetcar transportation and multi-family living for middle-class residents in Cincinnati's emerging inner-ring suburb of Avondale during the early twentieth century. The Bon Air Flats clearly reflect significance within the historic context of "Streetcar Suburb Apartments in Cincinnati 1890-1930," and it is specifically cited as one of three handsome examples of Central Corridor Walkup Apartments subtype on a side street in South Avondale (Gordon, E-39). It is also significant for its association with the prolific Cincinnati architectural firm of Joseph G. Steinkamp (1868-1948) and his younger brother, Bernard F. Steinkamp (d. 1943), who specialized in apartment buildings (Gordon, E-37). The Bon Air Flats' period of significance is from its construction in circa 1907 to 1943, when the property passed from the original owner's family.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Background and Significance. Avondale evolved as a single suburban village but over the years the movement of different social, economic, and ethnic groups in and out of the community altered and eventually fragmented its identity. Today Avondale is essentially split into two separate neighborhoods, North and South Avondale (often referred to simply as Avondale). Avondale is bounded on the north by the City of St. Bernard and Avon Field Golf Course, on the east by the City of Norwood and the I-71 expressway, on the south by Walnut Hills and Corryville, and on the west by Clifton. Glenwood Avenue delineates the boundary between North Avondale and South Avondale. Avondale is located approximately five miles north of downtown Cincinnati and occupies 800-acres.

Avondale's first wave of construction began in the 1830s when businessmen began building large homes on extensive parcels and commuting to work in the city. As more wealthy Cincinnatians began to construct suburban residences, Avondale landholders further divided their large holdings for sale as residential lots. Examples are Jonathan Dayton, who subdivided his property, known as Clinton, in 1846 and James Corry, who subdivided a tract he called Locust Grove soon after (Gigliero & Overmyer, 380).

Cincinnati merchants and manufacturers continued to move to Avondale and build large dwellings on expansive lots, a trend that was seen in several other nearby communities, including Clifton, Mt. Auburn, and Walnut Hills. Beginning in 1870, the City of Cincinnati sought to annex a number of communities, including Avondale, in hopes of regaining some of its population and the associated tax income that had been migrating to the suburbs; by 1896 Avondale was annexed to the city. Despite initial opposition, annexation afforded some benefits to Avondale residents. With the improved police and fire protection that Cincinnati provided, the suburb became generally a safer, more pleasant place to live (Gigliero & Overmyer, 381).

These improvements encouraged subdivisions of large residential properties in Avondale, among them that of Wayne, Krohn, Wilson, and the Avondale and the Cincinnati & Avondale syndicates, comprising two or three hundred acres. This was followed by the subdivision of over a hundred acres of the original Woodward property. (See Figure 5. 1869 Titus map.) In 1892,

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Robert Mitchell began to develop the Rose Hill subdivision to the north (*Commercial Gazette*, May 24, 1892).

In 1869, the land on which the Bon Air Flats was eventually built was part of a four-acre property at 3415 Reading Road owned by John Dickson (Figure 5). Dickson was a partner of Dickson, Clark and Company, wholesale dealers in hardware located at 51 and 53 Pearl Street on the Cincinnati riverfront (*Williams' Cincinnati City Directory*, 1870). The four-acre property held a large residence set about 500 feet back from Reading Road. This was typical of the pattern of development in Avondale during the 19th century when it was characterized by large homes on large properties owned by wealthy merchants.

However, this pattern was about to change. In 1889, streetcar routes began to be electrified (Stradling, 68). The Thompson Houston Company was hired to electrify the Avondale route in 1890 and built a generating station at the corner of Reading Road and McMillan to furnish power (Wagner & Wright, 111). *C. S. Mendenhall's Standard Guide Map of Cincinnati*, published in 1903, shows that the "Winton Place" route was already running along Reading Road. The combination of transportation improvements, a growing population, and annexations of outlying neighborhoods by the city spurred an exodus to the hilltops.² As stated by History Professor David Stradling, "The electric streetcar not only reflected the growth of all of these more distant places, but also encouraged it. Streets with trolley lines developed more intensely than those without, as business districts and apartment buildings thrived on the easy access provided by the streetcars" (69).

By the early 20th century this fast and inexpensive mode of transportation allowed less affluent residents to settle in newer, less expensive subdivisions in southern Avondale. Upper- and middle-class suburban apartments began to appear along Reading Road, specifically the Cumberland (808 Cleveland Avenue, 1890), a unique dumbbell-plan, six-flat apartment building (now clad in aluminum siding) and the Somerset (802-814 Blair Avenue, 1896/NR# 14000355, listed in 2014), a 24-unit four-story Queen Anne-style building designed by Joseph Steinkamp for the Emery brothers (Gordon, E 37). These new developments resulted in a community development pattern shift away from large single family residences built on spacious lots to the construction of high density suburban apartment buildings. The construction of the massive 56-unit, Haddon Hall (NR# 82003582, listed in 1982), designed by Joseph Steinkamp for the Emery Brothers circa 1909 is another dramatic example of Avondale's second wave of construction.

The Bon Air Flats is cited in the MPD as one of three handsome examples of Central Corridor Walkup Apartments in Avondale (Gordon, E-39). More modest than the grander apartment buildings on Reading Road, a major streetcar artery in Avondale, it is located on a side street. Nevertheless, the Bon Air Flats reflects the evolution of multi-family residential buildings located specifically to meet the needs of the growing middle-class. Its location would have provided access to convenient and affordable transportation, shopping and services within a short walk. The streetcar would have accommodated residents as they commuted from work to home.

² By end of the nineteenth century, electric trolleys radiated out of the city basin to the newly formed suburbs, which also allowed businesses to move from the basin to the suburbs. As history professor David Stradling states in *Cincinnati: from River City to Highway Metropolis*, Cincinnati needed these transportation systems to accommodate its rapidly growing population. By 1911, the Cincinnati Traction Company had unified the many streetcar lines into one system (Figure 5). The city's population climbed from 296,908 in 1890 to 325,902 in 1900; 363,591 in 1910; 401,247 in 1920; and by 1940 there were 455,610 Cincinnatians (30).

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According to the Apartment Buildings MPD, hilltop streets in Cincinnati's urban neighborhoods are dotted with scores of central corridor walkup apartments. Early examples in Walnut Hills include the Florida Flats (2338 Kemper, ca. 1885); the Victoria Flats (918-920 Morris, ca. 1895) and the unusually tall five-story, ten-unit St. Paul (2117-21 19 Sinton, ca. 1895). All have symmetrical three bay facades although the Florida Flats and St. Paul have been altered and no longer retain their center entrances. Among the largest and most striking of the early central corridor walkup apartments is the Eden Flats (2106 Sinton Avenue, 1895, Joseph Steinkamp, architect, for Thos. Emery's Sons), a four-story Richardsonian Romanesque design with an ashlar sandstone facade. In Clifton, the Woodside (3240 Bishop, 1895); the Visalia Flats (3241-3243 Jefferson, 1900); the Marburg (260 Ludlow, 1902); and the Venice (126 Nixon, c. 1914) housed between six and eight units.

Central Corridor Walkup Apartment buildings were smaller and cheaper to build than the more fashionable middle- and upper-middle class court apartment buildings along Reading Road such as the Alameda Flats (1906)(NR# 14000293), Poinciana Flats (1905)(NR# 14000294), and Haddon Hall (1909), at 18, 44 and 56 units respectively. According to the MPD, this subtype was typically three to four and sometimes five stories, and housed six to ten apartments. Symmetrical in plan, a Central Corridor Walkup Apartment had a three- to five-bay façade with central entrance and stacked units accessed by a central corridor. The simple rectangular or square plan was the most efficient, "requiring the least amount of linear feet of wall while still providing one side with outside exposure" (Gordon, E13). This type of building was favored by owner-investors because it fit on a single lot and did not need expensive elevators and fireproofing. It became increasingly common for businessmen to build apartment buildings as investments to provide an alternative source of income. An example of such an owner-investor was John C. Wagner, a retired dentist, who built The Wagner (1905) a 9-unit building at 631 Maple Avenue (demolished), adjacent to the Bon Air Flats on the east. The Bon Air Flats was developed in a similar fashion.

The Bon Air Flats

The Bon Air Flats was built in circa 1907 by Clarence E. Schaffner (1866-1948), a business owner, who purchased a lot from Charles M. Holloway on January 26, 1907 (DB 964, P379).³ Holloway, who was a retired steamboat captain and a Commissioner of the Cincinnati Water Works, occupied the four-acre estate formerly at 3415 Reading Road.⁴ In 1869, this four-acre property was the residence of John M. Dickson, a wholesale hardware dealer, whose home was set back about 500 feet from Reading Road.⁵ (See Figure 5.) Holloway acquired the property from Dickson, possibly in the 1880s, and in the early 1900s began to subdivide and sell pieces of his front yard. In 1905 he sold a lot at 631 Maple Avenue to John C. Wagner in 1905, who built a nine-unit apartment building known as The Wagner.

Clarence E. Schaffner founded and headed the Cincinnati Garter Manufacturing Company. Born on a plantation near Augusta, Georgia, he moved to Cincinnati in 1898 and operated the garter company until his retirement in 1925. He was a charter member of the Hyde Park Country Club,

³ Holloway was listed at 601 Maple, the new address for his home formerly at 3415 Reading.

⁴ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 25, 1916, 16:2.

⁵ *Williams' Cincinnati City Directory*. 1870.

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a former member of the Maketewah Country Club, Cincinnati Club and the Cuvier Press Club. He continued to maintain the Georgia plantation until his death in 1948.⁶

Before buying the lot at 615 Maple Avenue, Schaffner already lived in the neighborhood; he and his widowed mother, Mary D. Schaffner, were listed in the 1907 *Williams City Directory* at a 4-unit apartment building at 3460 Knott Avenue, right around the corner from Maple Avenue. In 1908, however, Schaffner and his mother were listed at 615 Maple Avenue, indicating that the building had been completed and that they took residence there. Although the building was labeled, "The Schaffner," in a 1909 article in the *Ohio Architect & Builder*, it was listed as the "Bon Air Flats" in city directories. (See Figures 6 – 9.)

By 1910 Schaffner had moved to 3441 Stettinius Avenue in the tonier neighborhood of Hyde Park but the Bon Air Flats stayed in the Schaffner family for 36 years, being transferred in 1921 by Clarence to his wife Mary E. Schaffner, who held it until 1943, when she sold it to John Oppliger.⁷ In 1957, the building was purchased from Oppliger by Morris Mandell, and the property stayed in the Mandell family until 1995. Since that date, the property was transferred five times before being purchased by the current owner, Avondale Housing II, in 2013.⁸

The 1910 United States Federal Census, which listed only four households at 615 Maple, reflects the middle-class status of the tenants, except for a mulatto janitor. The three other heads of households included a lawyer, a dry goods merchant, and an agent of U.S. Express. They and their spouses ranged in age from their early 30s to early 70s; none had children living with them but all had one servant. All were American born, including transplants from Maine, New Hampshire and New York. One head of household had parents born in Germany, but all listed English as their mother tongue (United States Federal Census, 1910).

The Bon Air Flats and other suburban apartment buildings made Avondale more accessible to the growing middle- and upper-middle classes. The majority of Avondale's population for most of the nineteenth century was merchant-class, Protestant, and of English or German ancestry. Only a small number of its inhabitants were middle or lower class, and only 8 to 10% were black. Beginning in the 1890s, however, well-to-do German Jewish families began moving into the northern part of Avondale (Gigliano & Overmyer, 380), as they were often not welcomed in the exclusive social circles that dominated other wealthy suburbs.

Community Development Trends after 1920

The Bon Air Flats reflects the broad pattern of suburban development associated with the migration of the Jewish population from Cincinnati's West End to Avondale. The Bon Air Flats and other suburban apartment buildings, provided housing for the growing Jewish middle-class in Avondale, allowing for the community to become more diverse. These new residents, which included many Eastern European Jews, particularly following a general exodus of the Jewish population from the declining West End in the early twentieth century, would profoundly change the character of the community. Between the 1920s and the end of World War II, Avondale was known as the "gilded ghetto," with Jewish inhabitants making up 60% of the suburb's total population. A variety of Jewish institutions and businesses, many of which originated in the old

⁶ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 25, 1948, 16:1.

⁷ *Williams City Directory*, 1910; Hamilton County Recorder

⁸ Hamilton County Auditor website, accessed January 16, 2015.

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Jewish neighborhoods of the West End, also took up residence in Avondale at this time (Giglierano & Overmyer, 381-382).⁹

The Bon Air Flats is a physical reminder of Avondale's transition from an upper-class suburb to a more architecturally and socio-economically diverse neighborhood. The 1920 census indicates that most of the Bon Air's tenants were in sales or business, including a textile salesman, manager of wholesale notions, manager of a print shop, v.p. of a coal company and secretary of an iron foundry. Two of the six heads of household were Jewish. However, by 1927, as listed in the city directory, four of the six heads of household were Jewish and two of the units were vacant, reflecting a time of transition.

The trend of suburban apartment buildings as a desirable housing option continued after World War I. But by 1930, Avondale's second wave of development stopped, with the construction of Rose Hill Apartments, which is thought to be the last middle-class apartment built in Avondale. After the depressed 1930s and World War II, Americans once again rekindled their ambition to own automobiles, a desire that was sparked in the 1920s. The growing preference for automobile travel meant falling fares from decreased streetcar ridership, and political pressure to remove lines that were viewed as obtrusive by auto owners.

The City of Cincinnati encouraged the demise of the streetcar system after World War II. The City's 1948 *Metropolitan Master Plan* envisioned a new type of city, "one reliant on limited-access highways to relieve traffic congestion and spur growth" (Stradling, 127). The highway projects envisioned in the 1940s, the Millcreek Expressway and the Northeastern Expressway, which eventually became sections of Interstates 75 and 71, spurred remarkable growth on Cincinnati's fringe, and determined that the suburbs would be reliant on the automobile. The first line to be discontinued in Avondale was the "Highland/Auburn" route in 1947, followed by the "Zoo-Gilbert" and "Winton Place" routes in 1949, and then the "Vine Burnet" route in 1950. By 1951, Cincinnati's streetcar era was merely a memory.

The Bon Air Flats, built before the proliferation of motor vehicles, is significant within its historic contexts for its role in providing multi-family living to middle-class residents in an emerging inner ring suburb that was in close proximity to public transport and shopping. With the discontinuation of the streetcar system, Avondale ceased being a streetcar suburb. This, in combination with the sale of the building by the Scahffner family in 1943, reinforces the end of the Bon Air's period of significance, as the building's original role as a Streetcar Suburb Apartment Building became obsolete.

After World War II, the community development pattern and the population began to transition as the Jewish community began to move to Amberley Village. Departing residents were often replaced by middle-income black families. Some white homeowners panicked and left Avondale as the black population grew. As property values fell, Avondale became even more accessible to lower-income residents. By 1959, the southern portion of Avondale, which had been predominantly Jewish, had become mostly black, particularly after the Cincinnati Department of

⁹ The following is a sampling of former Avondale Jewish institutions: Synagogue of Sh'erith Ahabeth, 3212 Reading Road; Isaac M. Wise Center, 3202 Reading Road; The Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati, 3200 Burnet Avenue; Keneseth Israel Synagogue, 3504 Washington Avenue; Louis Feinberh Synagogue, 3556 Reading Road; Isaac M. Wise Temple-Center, 3771-3733 Reading Road, North Avondale Synagogue, and 3870 Reading Road (Giglierano & Overmyer, 386-392).

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Relocation settled 220 black families in the neighborhood, often in larger houses that had been illegally subdivided into multi-family dwellings (Giglierano & Overmyer, 382).

As outlined in the "North Avondale Community Master Plan," published in 1970 by the Cincinnati City Planning Commission, the land use pattern and density increased substantially in Avondale from 1930 to 1970 (40). It was common for the large single family dwellings to be subdivided into apartments. In addition to the subdivision of dwellings, the increase of renter-occupied housing resulted from the development of vacant land zoned for high-density apartment development, which changed the community development pattern as green space on residential side streets were replaced with large multi-unit apartment buildings.¹⁰

J. G. Steinkamp & Brother, Architects

To design his apartment building, Clarence Schaffner chose J. G. Steinkamp & Brother, who were considered among the leading architects of Cincinnati and specialized in apartments. Joseph G. Steinkamp (1868-1948) and his younger brother, Bernard F. Steinkamp (d. 1943), got their start in the office of their father, John B. Steinkamp (1827-1890). A native of Germany, John came to Cincinnati in 1835 at the age of eight. Trained as a carpenter, John served for 25 years as superintendent of construction for the Emery family, among others. Beginning circa 1885, John Steinkamp practiced as an architect until his death in 1890. Joseph Steinkamp graduated from St. Xavier College in Cincinnati and then went to work for his father. Following his father's death, he continued the business under his own name for seven years. In 1897, he took on his brother as a partner, and they practiced together until at least 1936, after which Joseph continued alone until ca. 1948, the year of his death. Bernard, like his brother, received his education in parochial schools and St. Xavier.

"Outstanding examples of their practice are school and college buildings, while they have to their credit a large number of other structures built for investment purposes within the Cincinnati area" (Leonard, 594). These included school buildings for various Catholic parishes such as St. Mark's, St. Andrew's and St. William's, as well as St. Xavier College, their alma mater. Among their most prominent commissions are the Mercantile Library Building (1908) at 414 Walnut Street and the Hotel Metropole (1912)(NR# 09000443, listed in 2009), at 609 Walnut. While the firm drew a considerable number of clients, the Steinkamps are most closely associated with Thomas Emery & Sons, who hired them exclusively to design and build innumerable apartment buildings downtown and in the inner suburbs. "Although some of these are handsome structures, the firm was best known for its efficiency and practicality" (Langsam).

Examples of apartment buildings designed by the Steinkamps for the Emerys include the Somerset (1896) at 802-814 Blair Avenue, the first large-scale apartment building in Avondale, and the Parkside Apartments (1898)(NR# 08000116, listed in 2008) at 3315-3317 Jefferson Avenue, the first large-scale apartment building in Clifton. Several early middle-class perimeter-plan apartments built by the Emerys in Clifton followed—the Roslyn (3404-3420 Middleton, 1905); the Romaine (3404-3420 Middleton, 1905); and the Rutland (358 Shiloh, 1905; OAB, July & Nov. 1904, March 1905; Wright, 234). Steinkamp also designed the previously mentioned Haddon Hall apartments (circa 1909) at 3418 Reading Road for the Emerys near the Somerset.

¹⁰ For more information concerning Avondale's land use pattern change from 1930 to 1970 see the "North Avondale Community Master Plan," published in 1970.

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Central Corridor Walkup Apartments by the Steinkamps in addition to the Bon Air Flats include The Kinsey (1905)(NR# 13000937, listed in 2013) at 2415 Maplewood Avenue in the Mt. Auburn neighborhood, and the four-story LaSalle Apartments on a large corner lot at 3501 Montgomery Road in Evanston (1906). The floor plan of the Bon Air Flats is nearly identical to that of The Kinsey.

Conclusion

The Bon Air Flats exemplifies patterns of development in Avondale, an inner ring middle-class Cincinnati suburb during the period from 1895 to 1940, when modestly scaled residential and commercial buildings predominated. As the introduction of the streetcar line in the 1890s spurred population growth in the Cincinnati suburb of Avondale, developers seized the opportunity to construct apartment buildings that appealed to a broad population of the middle- and upper-middle classes. Before the prevalence of the automobile, these Streetcar Suburb Apartments were typically located near key streetcar intersections or along major streetcar arteries such as Reading Road. This trend continued, fueled by population growth after World War I, as suburban apartment buildings continued to be a desirable housing option. The multi-family construction boom changed the development pattern of Avondale from an area of large, splendid single-family dwellings on spacious lots to a more architecturally diverse area with a rich collection of suburban apartment buildings.

The Bon Air Flats meets Criterion A in the area of community development under the broad theme of transportation for its association with high-density suburban apartment development in Avondale during the era of the electric streetcar in the 1890s. The Bon Air Flats clearly reflects significance within the historic context of "Streetcar Suburb Apartments in Cincinnati 1890-1930 and specifically "Central Corridor Walkup Apartments," as presented in the MPD, "Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers, 1870-1970." The Bon Air Flats is cited as one of three handsome Central Corridor Walkup Apartments built around 1900 in Avondale (Gordon, E-39).

The Bon Air Flats sufficiently retains the physical features and level of integrity to serve as an example of the Streetcar Suburb Apartment Building type identified in the MPD, including construction between ca. 1890-1910, a location on a side street on a major streetcar route in a neighborhood at the perimeter of the central city, and a total of six apartments when built. More specifically, the Bon Air Flats is an excellent example of a Central Corridor Walkup Apartment Building. Essential characteristics cited in the MPD (Gordon, F-7 and 8) exhibited by The Bon Air include its three+-story height and generally rectangular plan. The façade is architecturally better appointed and dressed in decorative brick. The side elevations are plain common bond brick with minimal ornamentation and plain lintels and lugsills. For many owners and smaller investors, this sub-type provided the greatest return on investment (Gordon, F-8).

Bon Air Flats
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HAM-07318-01

Bon Air Flats
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.303

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 716591 | Northing: 4335285 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description

The Bon Air Flats is located within the corporate limits of Cincinnati. The boundaries coincide with parcel 107-0008-0080-00 recorded by the Hamilton County Recorder. (See Figure 2. Boundary map.)

Bon Air Flats
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Boundary Justification

Parcel 107-0008-0080-00 contains all the property currently associated with the resource. The east and west boundaries of the property appear to have shifted over time.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Beth Sullebarger, Principal
organization: Sullebarger Associates
street & number: 1080 Morse Avenue
city or town: Glendale state: OH zip code: 45246-3830
e-mail: sullebarger@fuse.net
telephone: (513) 772-1088
date: January 27, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:**

Figure 1. Location map
Figure 2. Boundary map and photo key
Figure 3. First floor plan and photo key
Figure 4. Second floor plan, typical, and photo key
Figure 5. 1869 Titus map
Figure 6. 1904 Sanborn map, V. 4, Pl. 392
Figure 7. 1904 (updated through 1930) Sanborn map, V. 4, Pl. 392
Figure 8. 1922 Sanborn map, V. 2, Pl. 68
Figure 9. 1909 photo, looking southwest

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Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: The Bon Air Flats

City or Vicinity: Cincinnati

County: Hamilton State: Ohio

Photographer: Jeff Raser

Date Photographed: November 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 13. Front (north) and side (west) elevations, looking southeast
- 2 of 13. Front (north) elevation, looking south
- 3 of 13. Front entrance detail
- 4 of 13. Side (west) elevation, looking east
- 5 of 13. Rear (south) elevations, looking northeast
- 6 of 13. Rear (south) elevations, looking northwest
- 7 of 13. Side (east) elevation, looking west
- 8 of 13. Entrance vestibule toward front stairway
- 9 of 13. Entrance vestibule from front stairway
- 10 of 13. Front stair landing, typical
- 11 of 13. Rear stairway
- 12 of 13. Apartment interior with fireplace
- 13 of 13. Apartment interior looking toward rear stairway

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers,
1870-1970

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information

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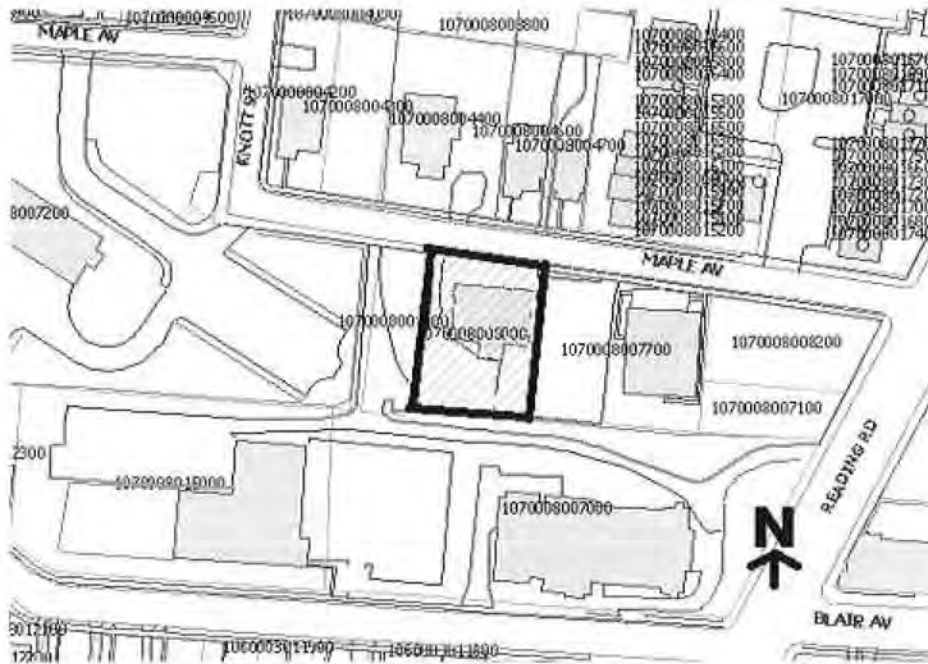


Figure 1: Location map

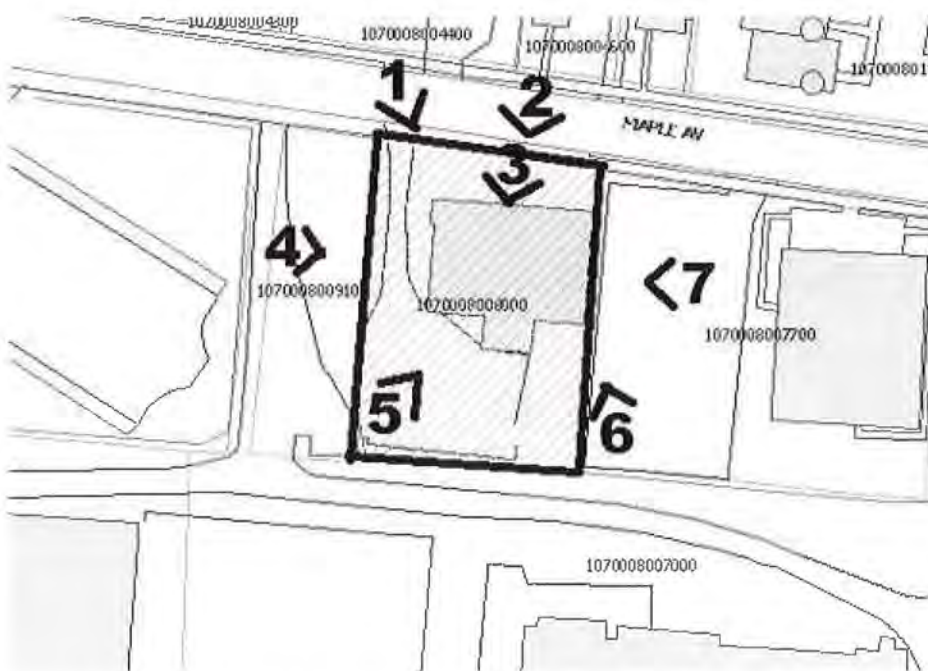


Figure 2. Boundary map and photo key

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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1870-1970

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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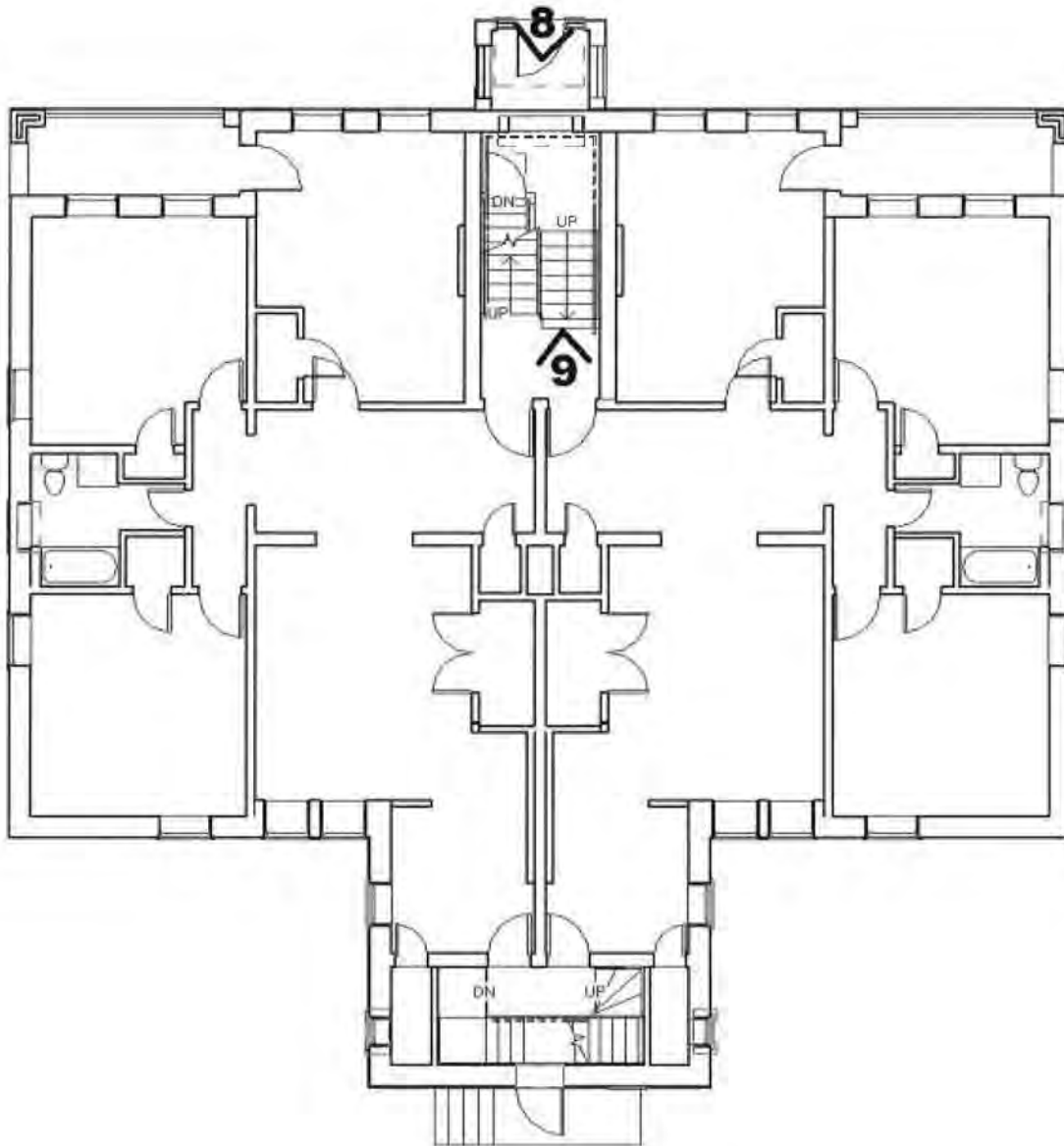


Figure 3. First floor plan and photo key

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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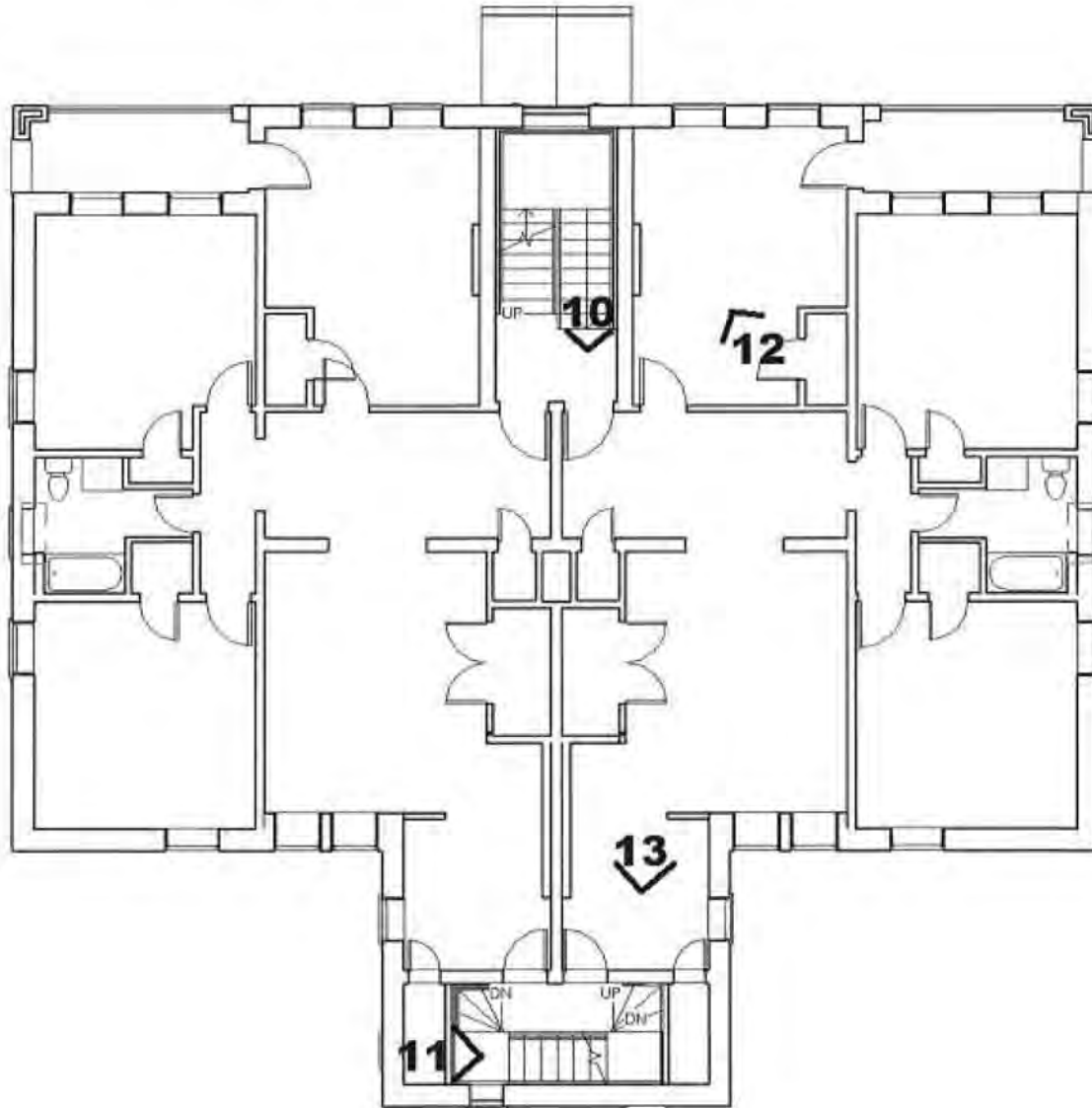


Figure 4. Second floor plan, typical, and photo key

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

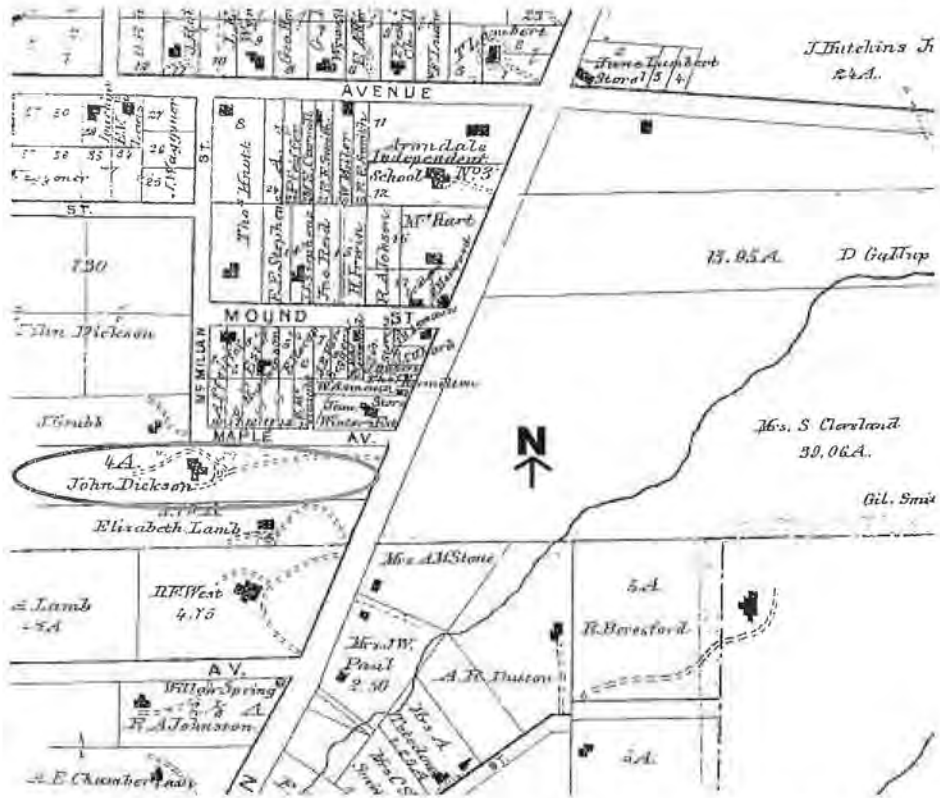


Figure 5: 1869 map in Titus' *Atlas of Cincinnati & Hamilton County*, with property of John Dickson, future site of The Bon Air Flats, indicated

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National Park Service

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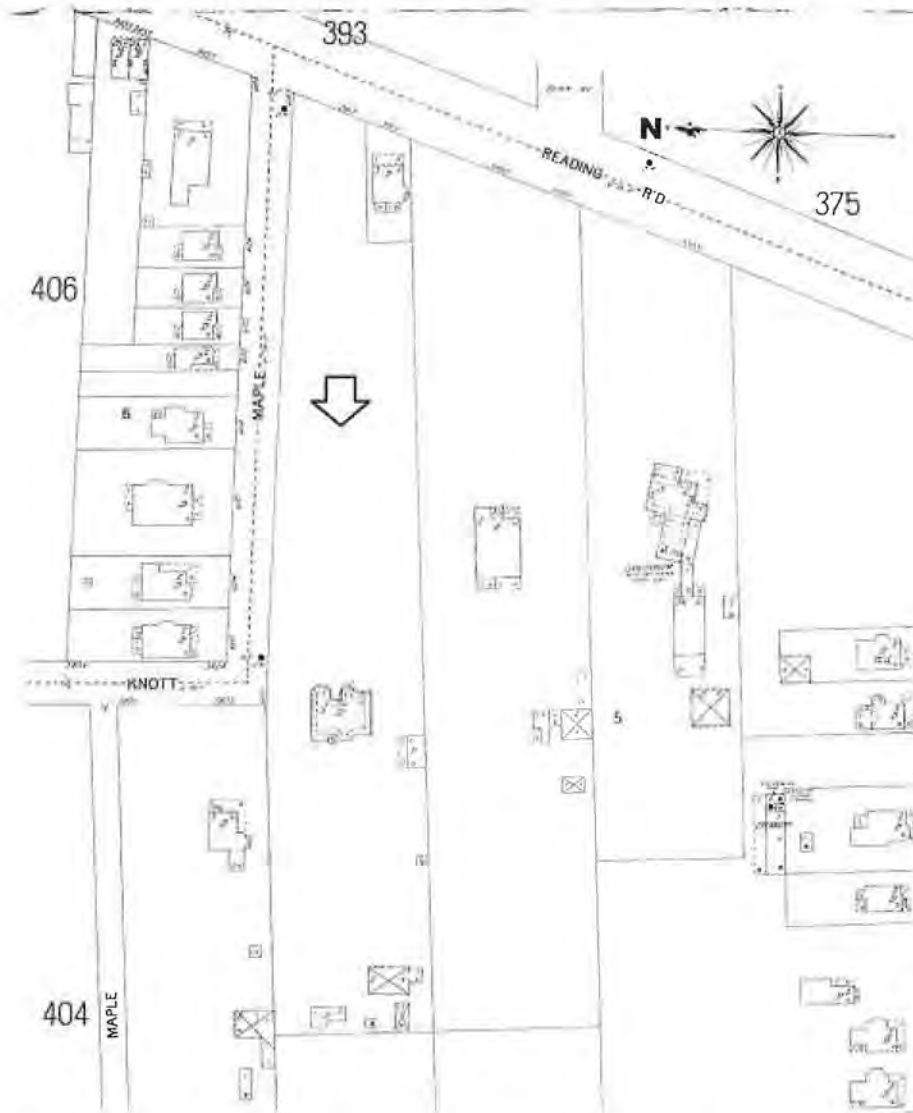


Figure 6: 1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Cincinnati, V. 4, Pl. 392, showing site of The Bon Air Flats near the center

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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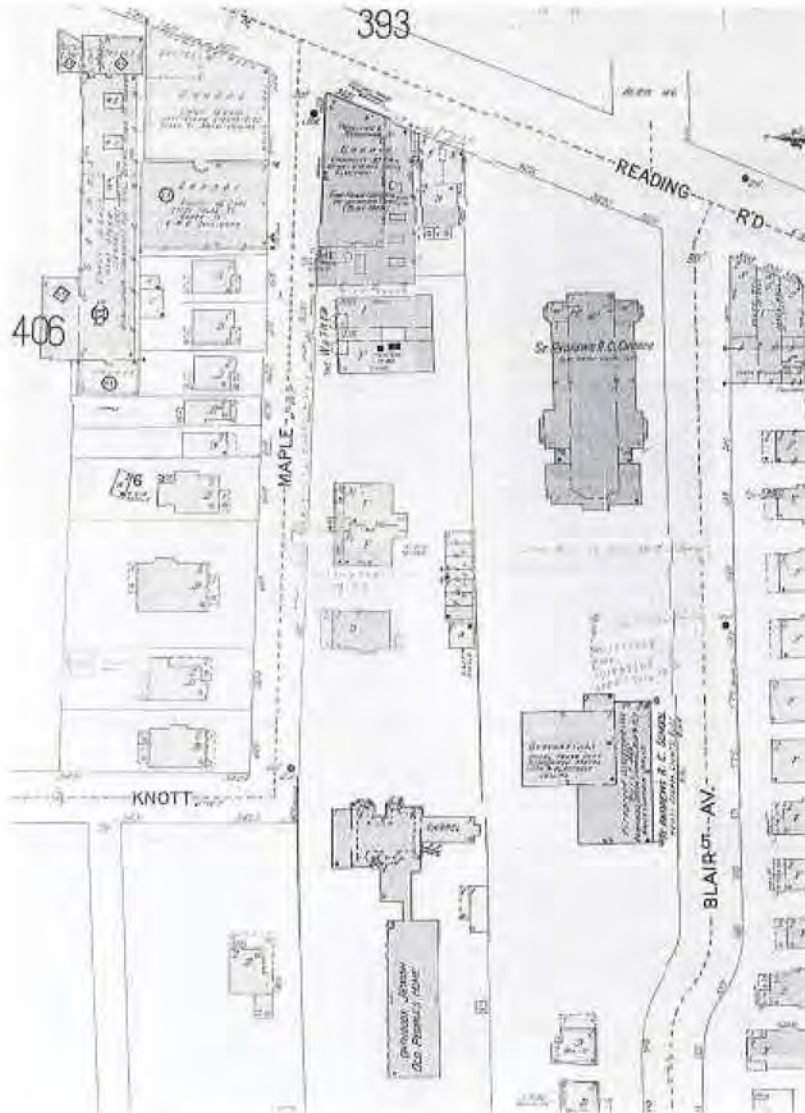


Figure 7: 1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Cincinnati, V. 4, Pl. 392, updated to 1930, showing The Bon Air Flats near the center

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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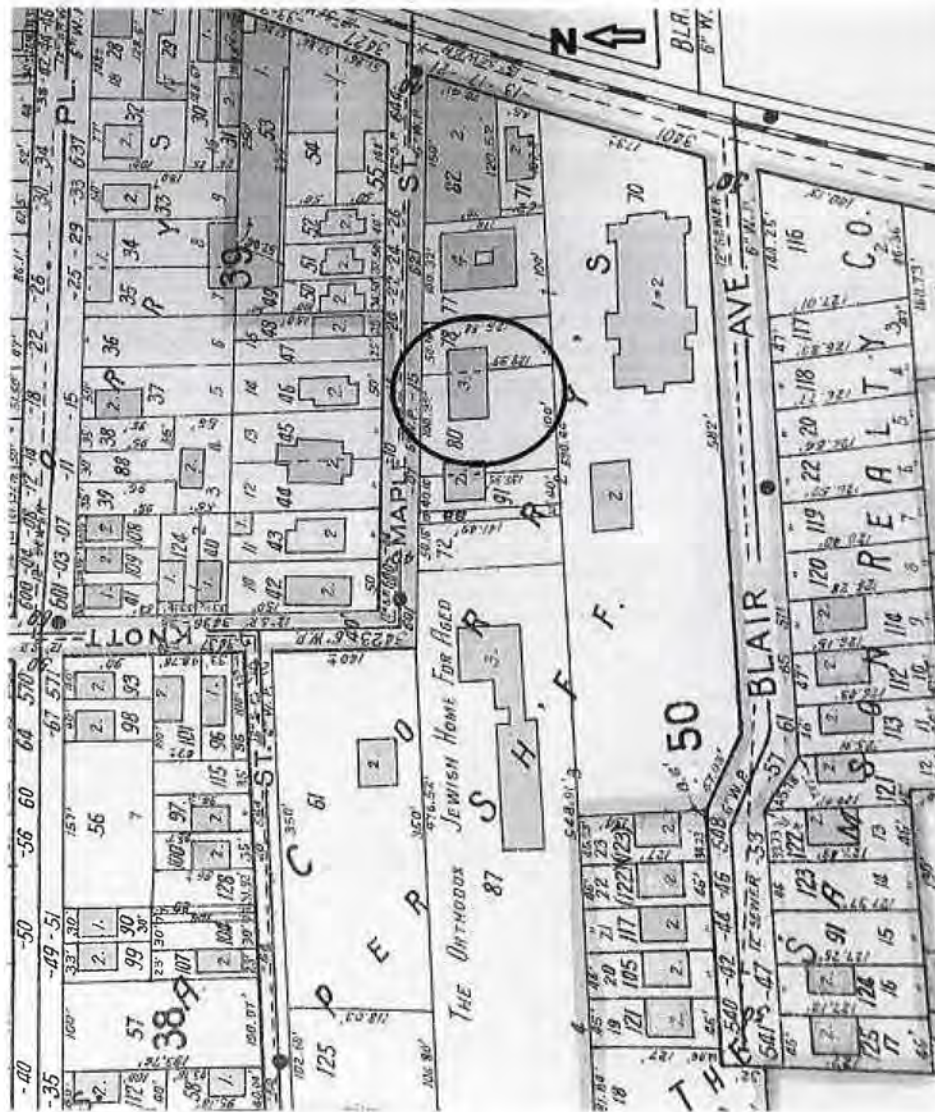


Figure 8. 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Cincinnati, V. 2, Pl. 68, showing The Bon Air Flats

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The Schaffner, Cincinnati, O.

Jos. G. Steinkamp & Bro., Architects, Cincinnati, O.

Figure 9. 1909 photo, looking southwest
Ohio Architect and Builder, V. 13, N. 6 (June 1909)



REDMAN
PROPERTIES
610 MAPLE
276-2446



REDMAN
PROPERTIES
615 MAPLE
276-2446

POSTED
NO TRESPASSING
NO PARKING





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12

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WARNING

NO PARKING

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Bon Air Flats

MULTIPLE NAME: Apartment Buildings in Ohio Urban Centers, 1870-1970 MPS

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Hamilton

DATE RECEIVED: 7/17/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/19/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/03/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/01/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000562

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: Y PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9.1.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on July 15, 2015
For nomination of the Bon Air Flats to the National Register of
Historic Places: Hamilton Co, OH

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
 Paper PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
 Paper PDF
- Photographs
 Prints TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)
 Paper Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
 Paper PDF
- Piece(s) of correspondence
 Paper PDF
- Other _____

COMMENTS:

- Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- Other: _____



RECEIVED 2280

JUL 17 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

July 13, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief, National Register
and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl. (2280)
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find five (5) new National Register nominations for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submissions.

NEW NOMINATION

Woodland-Larchmere Commercial Historic District
Villa San Bernardo Historic District
South High School
Bon Air Flats
Mohawk Place Historic District


COUNTY

Cuyahoga
Cuyahoga
Franklin
Hamilton
Hamilton

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the South High School, Franklin County, OH nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

for 

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer
Ohio History Connection

Enclosures