

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** *Biltmore Village Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)*  
HISTORIC *Biltmore Village Historic Resources (Partial inventory: Historic and architectural properties)*  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION** *I-40*  
STREET & NUMBER *The traditional boundaries of Biltmore Village (the area defined roughly by All Souls Crescent, Lodge Street, and Brook Street) plus contiguous associated properties.*  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
*Asheville* \_\_\_\_\_ *11th*  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_ CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_ CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
*North Carolina* *37* *Buncombe* *021*

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**  
NAME *Multiple ownership: see continuation sheets.*  
STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. *Buncombe County Courthouse*  
STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
*Asheville* *NC 28801*

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**  
TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR              UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Biltmore Village, the half-timbered manorial town built by George W. Vanderbilt on the south bank of the Swannanoa River at the edge of his vast estate, exists in its original condition only in memory. Over the years, the rural unspoiled setting has given way to a flood tide of urban sprawl which breached the village boundaries and carried away many of the early buildings. Nonetheless, the four buildings by Richard Morris Hunt remain, and sixteen of the half-timbered cottages, three of the commercial buildings, and the hospital designed by architect Richard Sharp Smith exist in varying states of intactness. Many of these form a small neighborhood which evokes the village's original ambience. The simple landscaping, the quaintness of the cottages, the logic and symmetry of Frederick Law Olmsted's, or perhaps Hunt's, street pattern, the playful elegance of the railway depot, the bold vernacular of the Estate Office, and the exquisite loveliness of All Souls Church still form a community of importance and distinction.

The symmetrical, fan-shaped street plan is the least disturbed element of the design. At the north edge, Lodge and Brook streets join at an obtuse angle at the railway station and "plaza." All Souls Creseent swings south from these streets to form the boundaries of the village. Within the village a small network of streets amplifies the fan pattern and forms a modified grid.

At the head of the plaza is the railway station with the tracks to the north. Directly south, at the opposite end of the village, is the church. Most of the surviving cottages and the old hospital building stand in the eastern part of the village. The estate office is located on the plaza, a space undoubtedly intended as the business and commercial center of the community. The entrance to Biltmore estate is to the west. It leads from the station along the north edge of the village through a small park to the handsome gate lodge. From there the drive leads about three miles up the hill through woods and fields to Biltmore House itself.

All Souls Church, together with the Parish House, is the tallest and largest structure in the village. Both the church and Parish House feature brick and wood trim, pebbledash wall surfaces (a rough textured stucco), and expansive tile roofs. The Romanesque style church, from the exterior, is enormously complex for a building that is not in fact of great size. Though it is deceptively small, the wide eaves, massive tower, highly expressive folds and turns of wall and roof, the steeply pitched cascades of red tile, and richness of detail give it a certain monumentality.

For all its precocious complexity, the building is a simple cruciform. A tall tower rises in the center and contains the greater part of the interior space. Extending to four sides of this center mass are short, rectilinear transepts and "nave," and, in the south end, a rounded apse. Framing the tower are small brick buttresses. At the top is a pyramidal roof which kicks out slightly at the bottom, characteristic of the other roofs of the building, and rests on a heavy bracketed cornice. The buttresses seem to rise through the roof forming pinnacles at each corner. The transepts have gable ends and wood trim. Piercing the wall are round-arched windows framed in brick with molded stone sills.

The north end is somewhat different. Though it too features a gable end, the dominant compositional element is a wide, inviting tile-roofed porch resting on heavy, unevenly

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spaced brick piers. The porch extends to the front width of the church creating a hipped-roof effect. Here the wood decorative detail is rich but unpretentious. At cornice level sawn brackets support the shallow eaves. Between the piers and over the window openings, however, the wood beams are chamfered and molded. Other satisfying details, such as the elaborate iron lamps, brick herringbone floor, glazed and paneled entry, stone "baseboards," and sills abound.

The interior is relatively simple but no less elegant. The tower opens to the extensions through broad pointed arches outlined by wide brick frames. Through these light is filtered from the transept windows to the center space. Light enters directly from the tower windows above. Brick frames the arched openings and fenestration. The wood floors are herringbone, the walls plastered, and furnishings understated in wood. The tower's ceiling is wood tongue-and-groove on molded joists; in the transepts molded ribs support a similar tongue-and-groove surface. The apse is not elaborate and features a simple altar and plain furnishings. Behind are round-arched windows with brick surrounds framed by severe pointed arches of plaster. The windows are filled with elegant stained glass designs created for the Vanderbilts by Maitland Armstrong and his daughter of New York. They feature a variety of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, many of which were appropriately matched to suit the individuals memorialized.

The Parish House, designed by Hunt as a detached structure, features the same materials as the church but is considerably different. The one-and-one-half story, hipped roof, rectangular structure features a high brick watertable. Above rise pebbledash walls with wood trim supporting a red tile roof and wide eaves. The most notable details of the building are the dramatic, well-detailed wall dormers. Wide gables with trefoil trim extend from the building and rest on brackets. The window openings, subdivided by cross-shaped muntins, contain decorative leaded glass similar in technique to the glass in the stair tower and banquet hall at Biltmore House, also by Maitland Armstrong. At the ends of the building are larger gables, carrying the ridge line of the roof past the slope of the hip. These contain a Tudor-arched frame, stucco and curvilinear half-timbers, brackets, and decorative leaded glass. Between 1925 and 1930 one-story wings were added, creating an asymmetrical courtyard and attaching the Parish House to the church. Numerous alterations have occurred on the interior.

Directly across the village from the church is Hunt's railway station, still in occasional use as a passenger depot. The one-story symmetrical structure with its low hipped roof and central porte cochère features wide overhanging eaves, half-timbering, pebbledash, and a simple brick watertable. Heavy chamfered brackets with molded and gauged detail spring from a point about halfway down the walls to support the eaves. These handsome brackets are arranged in an irregular pattern according to the frequency of bays and openings and give the pattern a lively effect.

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Most of the wall timbering is vertical, but under windows some angled timbers occur. The porte cochère is a dominant feature of the facade. This open gable-end protrusion features pairs of chamfered and molded posts with small brackets and simple molded trim. The arrangement of the interior is typical of small railway stations of the period. Double waiting rooms, the one originally for whites on the right and a smaller one formerly for blacks on the left, are separated by a center ticket office and vestibule. The larger room contains a simple picturesque fireplace with segmental-arched fire opening and tapered breast.

The Biltmore Estate Office, the fourth of the Hunt structures in Biltmore Village, combines a number of vernacular materials and design motifs found in the village. The pebbledash surfaces, half-timbering, brick trim, chamfered and bracketed porch posts, and stylized classical ornament which occur in the building are among the village architectural leitmotifs. The one-and-one-half story building rests on a coursed ashlar foundation. Window surrounds feature brick flat arches and patterns reminiscent of quoins, a suggestion found at the corners of the building. Above the molded cornice rises a hipped roof pierced by oversized, multi-bay, half-timbered, hipped-roof dormers. A short flight of steps leads to a recessed porch stretching the width of the building and a handsomely paneled and molded entrance with three-light transom. In the rear was a porte cochère, later unsympathetically converted into a small firehouse garage. A number of changes have occurred on the interior, but most of the original oak trim, chairrails, doors, and a mantel are original.

Fourteen of R. S. Smith's cottages in the neighborhood in the eastern part of the village are relatively little altered. All are one-and-one-half to two-story pebbledash cottages with recessed porches, multiple gables, steeply pitched roofs, simple molded trim, one or more brick chimneys, and brick foundations. Half-timbering, clipped gable dormers, shed dormers, gambrel roofs, small brackets on porch posts, and twelve-over-twelve sash occur on many of the dwellings.

No two cottages are exactly alike, though in some cases cottages are closely similar or even mirror images. There are four basic types by mass and facade:

1. Cottage with one-bay recessed porch and two-story gable-end projection (e.g. 1 All Souls Crescent, 3 Swan Street, 2 Boston Way).
2. Cottage with two-bay recessed porch, hipped roof dormer, and two-story gable-end projection (e.g. 5 Boston Way, 6 Boston Way).
3. Cottage with gambrel roof, shed dormers, and two-bay recessed porch (e.g. 2 All Souls Crescent).

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4. Cottage with gable-end facade of one type or another (e.g. 7 All Souls Crescent, 1 Swan Street).

There are two additional cottages on the west side, with recent brick veneer wall embellishment but a substantial portion of the original half-timbering and pebbledash remain in addition to the original massing.

One early but much altered commercial complex and two small commercial structures remain on the north side of the village. The one-and-one-half story symmetrical complex contains two gables facing the street, one at each end, with two gable dormers piercing the center hyphen. Half-timbered detail remains in the gable ends. Next door is a one-story symmetrical gable-end structure with the inevitable pebbledash and half-timbering, and a center gable extension toward the street, originally the Biltmore Village Post Office and now an exterminating company. To the west on Lodge Street is a tiny commercial structure, which may have been a bank but is now a shoe shop with a clipped gable-end facade, half-timbering, and pebbledash.

Outside of the street plan itself is the old Clarence Barker Memorial Hospital, since converted into apartments. This notable and highly irregular one-and-one-half story building constructed in pebbledash is a predictable combination of gables, dormers, casement windows, stylized ornament, and some shingle detail.

To the east of Biltmore Village sited on a hill overlooking the community is the Samuel Harrison Reed House, built in 1892 for the man who sold the site of Biltmore Village to George W. Vanderbilt. The frame structure is one of the most substantial Queen Anne dwellings in Asheville, featuring irregular massing and a prominent corner turret with an ogee dome. The wrap-around porch is supported by turned posts with curvilinear brackets and a pediment over the porch steps. The fenestration generally consists of one-over-one sash, and a large brick chimney pierces the center of the roof. The house has seen only minor alterations, and the rich interior fabric, typical of the period, remains throughout.

Since the original village passed from Vanderbilt interests a number of new buildings rose in land that had undoubtedly been intended originally for village cottages. Only a few of them prove to be of any architectural interest. On the plaza next to the Biltmore Estate Office is a notable and well-maintained brick commercial building. Build between 1925 and 1930, this two-story building contains a number of shops and features simple Sullivanesque ornament and various decorative brick patterns. Other commercial buildings of the period on Biltmore Avenue between Lodge Street and the railroad tracks are plain and feature simple period detail.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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Adjacent to the railway station is a two-story Georgian-type bank (formerly the Biltmore-Oteen Bank, now a realty office), built between 1925 and 1930, a thin, wedge-shaped building displaying Flemish bond brick work, concrete detail, Doric type pilasters, and a host of various classical ornamentation. Among the later commercial buildings, the most notable is the contemporary First Union Bank. This structure alludes to the older buildings through materials, shapes, and color, yet it maintains its identity as a modern building.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES \_\_\_\_\_ BUILDER/ARCHITECT Richard Morris Hunt, Richard Sharp Smith, Douglas Ellington, Frederick Law Olmsted, Ronald Green

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When George Washington Vanderbilt (1862-1914) began assembling his vast estate, Biltmore, in the mountains of western North Carolina in the late 1880s, he planned a picturesque manorial village, both as an ornament in the vast tableau of buildings and grounds and as a practical solution to the problem of housing estate workers and servants. The model village, English in flavor, was primarily the work of three men: Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895), the nationally prominent architect who designed Biltmore House itself, the village church, railway station, and estate office; Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), the renowned landscape architect who designed the grounds of the estate and the village plan; and Richard Sharp Smith (1852-1924), an architect employed by Hunt who designed the cottages, school, infirmary, post office, and other village facilities and who later became a prominent Asheville architect. The site of the village of Best, or Asheville Junction, was chosen for the village, planning for which began in 1889. Vanderbilt bought the village, relocated the residents, and constructed an entirely new town. By 1896 the streets were laid out and the church, parish house, rectory, estate office, and railway station were built. Vanderbilt added buildings to the village until about 1910. In the early years the village was the center of community life, the location of schools, church, and social functions, and even a cottage craft industry started by Mrs. Vanderbilt. Shortly after Vanderbilt's death the village was sold, and over the years a number of changes, additions, and alterations were made, not all compatible with the original design. The overall character of the village survives, however, thanks in large part to a recently instituted program of adaptive use.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. The Biltmore Village is an essential part of one of America's great estates; in its design it vividly reflects both the immense wealth created by industrializing America and the picturesque tastes in architecture prevailing during the period.
- B. Biltmore Village has obvious associations with George Washington Vanderbilt, the gentleman, sportsman, and intellectual who created the great Biltmore estate; with two of the nation's leading architects, Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted; and with two regionally significant designers, Richard Sharp Smith and Douglas Ellington.
- C. The Biltmore Village buildings, designed in individualistic, picturesque styles, are the works of major American and major regional architects. Most possess high artistic value; some derive their primary significance from their pivotal role in preserving the visual integrity of the resource area.

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### Survey Scope

This survey was conducted in the summer of 1976 by McKelden Smith, architectural historian with the Survey and Planning Branch, Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History. Research material was partially supplied by Susanne Brendel, research historian, Biltmore House and Gardens. Every building in the resource area was examined; the attached survey sheets include all those buildings in the area meeting the criteria for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This project included no archeological survey.

By 1888 George Washington Vanderbilt (1862-1914), son of William Henry Vanderbilt (1821-1885) and grandson of "Commodore" Vanderbilt (1794-1877), purchased several thousand acres of land near Asheville, North Carolina, where he intended a hunting lodge and retreat. Unlike his father and brothers, Vanderbilt had little interest in the family's shipping and railroad empire and the New York social whirl, preferring instead agrarian pursuits, esoteric literary interests, hunting, and travel, most of which, perhaps, were more easily satisfied in the mountains of western North Carolina than New York's Fifth Avenue or Newport's Bellevue Avenue. Vanderbilt's ambitions for his North Carolina property were great, and by early 1889 both Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) and Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) were hard at work creating a house (finished 1895) and estate on a scale unprecedented in America, an establishment George Vanderbilt named Biltmore.

Richard Morris Hunt, familiar with the tastes and ambitions of the Vanderbilt family, was the logical choice for architect, having designed two houses for George Vanderbilt's brother William K.--Marble House in Newport (1888-1892) and 660 Fifth Avenue (1878-1881)--and the family mausoleum on Staten Island. (Hunt did not begin The Breakers in Newport for Cornelius Vanderbilt, another brother, until 1892). Olmsted, like Hunt, was well known to George Vanderbilt, both as a landscape architect of national reputation and from personal contact, Olmsted having worked at the Vanderbilt farm on Staten Island and at the grounds of the Vanderbilt mausoleum. Biltmore was Olmsted's first of two commissions in North Carolina. He did not begin work on his Pinehurst village (NR) until 1895.

As part of the estate George Vanderbilt planned a model village intended to house many of the estate workers and servants and the services and facilities needed for operating an estate of more than one hundred thousand acres. (At one time, and as late as 1895, a plan existed to rent housing units for students of forestry, agriculture, and horticulture in the village.<sup>1</sup> The Asheville City Directories, however, make no mention of such students living in the village proper.)

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In keeping with the manorial style and standards of the estate, the town was conceived as a picturesque European village, architecturally diverse yet harmonious in scale, texture, and proportion.

The romantic English-style village, located on the Hendersonville Road a little more than two miles south of Asheville's center on the south bank of the Swannanoa River, served symbolically and functionally as the gateway to the estate for those coming by carriage, commercial or private railway, or, in later years, by trolley from Asheville. The village was small but carefully and logically arranged, a community of stage-set unreality reflective of Vanderbilt's and thus Olmsted's and Hunt's extravagant visions for the estate. It served Vanderbilt's requirements both for practical necessity and convenience and for ornamental effect in the estate's grand tableaux of buildings, roads, and landscaped grounds.

The site selected for the new village was a small crossroads known as Asheville Junction or Best (for William J. Best, an owner of the Western North Carolina Railroad). Mary Louise Boyer, in her chronicle of the history of All Souls Church, reported that ". . . the railroad station [later replaced by Hunt], two small inns, a couple of country stores, a grist mill, the Fern Hill Baptist Church . . . and a few dwellings scattered along the Hendersonville Road constituted the settlement in those days."<sup>2</sup> Documentary photographs in the Biltmore House Archives and the Sanborn Insurance Maps of the 1890s support Mrs. Boyer's description. Asheville Junction was a small, plain, undistinguished collection of frame buildings, shacks, and stables that eventually disappeared. Vanderbilt purchased all the property, relocating the residents and structures where the village was to stand, and building the Baptist congregation a new church to the south in the small settlement that came to be known as South Biltmore (incorporated 1895).<sup>3</sup> Included in the Vanderbilt land purchases at Asheville Junction was a tract of 100 acres from Samuel Harrison Reed who built a substantial Queen-Anne style home in 1892 on a site overlooking the village.

By the end of 1889 plans were already being discussed for a village to be sited at the foot of Olmsted's approach road to the house.<sup>4</sup> The collaboration between Hunt and Olmsted on the estate, as Olmsted wrote, was generally harmonious. "There has not been," he wrote, "the slightest breach of harmony between us."<sup>5</sup> Yet Olmsted's biographer reports a "breach of harmony" over the village. In April, 1895, as work was about to get underway, Olmsted ". . . expected discord over the Biltmore Village. The firm's English plan for it and Hunt's French were irreconcilable. Vanderbilt leaned toward Hunt's. He was expected at Biltmore late in April, and Olmsted intended to explain the firm's plan to him in person, being unwilling, he said, to leave him to Hunt, who was 'earnest, tempestuous, and used to having his own way.'" By July, Hunt was dead, and it is unknown to what extent Hunt succeeded in promoting his ideas. A reference in March, 1894, on an architectural drawing in the Biltmore House archives

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making reference to "Mr. Olmsted's drawing No. 165 showing skeleton plan for Biltmore Village" may be the final plan.<sup>7</sup> The vaguely French character of the fanlike plan suggests the design as executed may have derived from Hunt's plan. Further research, beyond the scope of this nomination, will be necessary to define the working relationship between Hunt and Olmsted at Biltmore.

The Sanborn insurance maps of 1896, the year All Souls Church was consecrated, show the streets laid out according to the fanlike plan. The rectangular shaped church with its porch and semi-curcular apse, the rectangular detached Sunday School building (Parish House), a nearby rectory on the corner of Angle Street and All Souls Crescent (destroyed), the Biltmore Estate Office, and new railway station were the only permanent buildings existing. Near the station was a freight depot "to be removed"<sup>8</sup> and a post office. The cheap frame buildings constructed before Vanderbilt began the village stood for a short while longer on both sides of the river grouped around the road which crossed the iron bridge to Asheville and ran south in the opposite direction to Hendersonville. West of the road were the Biltmore Brickworks, created to supply building material to the estate, a substantial operation with its own railway spurs that the Sanborn cartographers reported ran "night and day."<sup>9</sup>

Probably in order to provide temporary housing for workers, "About a dozen small houses," according to Mrs. Boyer, "had been moved to All Souls Crescent from scattered sites in the old settlement. . . . As they were gradually replaced by permanent ones of today they were torn down and rebuilt. . ." elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> These "small houses" may be the identically planned houses on the north side of Brook Street which appear on the 1901 Sanborn map. Twelve of the permanent pebbledash cottages south of Brook Street, however, had been erected by that year.

These small but handsomely executed cottages were designed by Richard Sharp Smith (1852-1924), a capable architect who worked in the office of Richard Morris Hunt and supervised the construction of the Biltmore House itself. Little is known of Smith's architectural training or early life. He emigrated from Yorkshire to America about 1872, was first employed in the office of architect Bradford L. Gilbert in New York, and later joined Hunt's fashionable office.<sup>11</sup> After Hunt's death in 1895, Smith, according to his own advertisement, served for six years as George Vanderbilt's "resident architect" before establishing himself in private practice in the fast growing city of Asheville.<sup>12</sup> Through his own abilities as a designer and undoubtedly through his Vanderbilt association Smith became one of the city's leading architects, and was said to be the first, professionally trained architect residing permanently and practicing in the city.<sup>13</sup>

These first cottages, built by 1901, many of which are still extant, rose along the outer rim of All Souls Crescent near its intersection with Brook Street, and in the block adjacent bound by Brook, Swan, All Souls Crescent, and Plaza (later Oak Street and now Boston Way). They formed a small compact neighborhood. In 1901

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My Sketchbook, a trade pamphlet promoting the work of R. S. Smith and various construction and contracting enterprises, illustrated twelve cottages varying in size, pretention, and detail.<sup>14</sup> The unnamed author, perhaps Smith himself, explains that "the frame and brick, roughcast" cottages ("all with bath") contain "all modern conveniences," with heat provided by "steam and open fireplaces." "They are all rented," the author boasts, "and are all considered model cottages." As further proof of their quality, the author modestly reports that ". . . the style and convenience they contain has made them so popular that as we go to press Mr. Vanderbilt has given orders to build some twelve or fifteen more to meet the demand."<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the cottages, Smith added by 1901 a post office (still extant), a small schoolhouse, and a small hospital or infirmary. Additionally, a shopping block on the Plaza opposite the Estate Office was erected. Now gone, the long one-and-one-half story building contained a grocery, dry good store, meat market, drug store, and miscellaneous shops with four to six-room flats above.<sup>16</sup>

By 1907 a number of new buildings had risen in the village, among them three dwellings across from the church.<sup>17</sup> To the west the Parish School built new quarters. Seven new dwellings (three of which remain) occupied the block between Swan Street and All Souls Crescent, with three more east of the Parish House. The largest new building (possibly an enlargement of the infirmary) was the Clarence Barker Memorial Hospital, now an apartment building. Not the least important was the addition of a polygonal robing room to the south end of All Souls Church. A postcard ca. 1907 shows a town of picture-book perfection. The picturesque curvilinear street, with its macadamized surface, brick sidewalks, and grassy strips, is the setting for this combination village and garden suburb. The houses had louvered blinds, tall shrubs, and porches which looked out over small lawns and shady, tree-lined drives. Elaborate lamps, now gone, lit the streets and featured street signs on scrolled brackets.

The dwellings were owned by the estate and leased to residents. In 1899-1900, the first years for which a directory exists, there were seventeen heads of households listed of which thirteen were employed on the estate or in the village, all but four in working class capacities. They included, for example, Edward Divelbiss, an engineer at the Biltmore Dairy; S. H. Donahoo, an estate carpenter; James A. Halyburton, the estate's road-grading foreman. By 1911 the village was still a "company town" but many of the residents worked in other parts of Asheville or in enterprises not connected with the estate. In later years the town functioned more like a suburb of Asheville than an adjunct to the estate.

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In their own time, the Vanderbilts not only controlled and owned the village real estate, they were active in village affairs generously patronizing activities that interested them. On May 27, 1896, a dozen men met to organize All Souls Parish. George Vanderbilt, one of the number, who financed the construction of the church, was not surprisingly elected Senior Warden, an office he held until his death in 1914.<sup>18</sup> Joseph Blount Cheshire, Bishop of North Carolina, consecrated the church on the following November. George Vanderbilt came down from New York in his private railway car, Swannanoa, accompanied by the rector of New York's fashionable St. Bartholomew's Church to attend the consecration. Vanderbilt's mother's unexpected death, however, required their return to New York before the service.

As one might expect Vanderbilt selected furnishings and windows for the church equal in quality to Hunt's designs for the building itself. The carved furnishings of the church, such as the pulpit, altar, and choir stalls, and other objects such as cushions for the pews were provided by Baumgarten & Co., New York, previously known as Herter Brothers, one of the most prestigious decorating firms in New York. The Vanderbilts had been clients of the firm for a number of years, which designed, built, and decorated, for example, William H. Vanderbilt's house at 640 Fifth Avenue.<sup>19</sup>

The church windows of "opalescent glass" designed and manufactured by Maitland Armstrong and his daughter of New York are of particular interest. The Armstrongs were accustomed to working in association with Hunt on various projects, including Biltmore House. As Miss Armstrong wrote, "Mr. Hunt, the architect, was a life long friend of my father . . . and we made a great many windows for the firm, perhaps the most interesting being those in All Souls Church. . . ." <sup>20</sup> The subject matter for the windows was selected with some care. "Our idea was to present both the Old and New Testament history, and at the same time to select, when possible, for each window a subject suitable to the individual commemorated," continued Miss Armstrong. "Thus charity was chosen for the window in memory of Mr. Vanderbilt's mother, who was, I believe, a very good and lovely woman; Solomon and Hiram building the temple was considered suitable for Mr. Hunt . . ." <sup>21</sup> Additional windows included David playing the harp before Saul for Clarence Barker, a Vanderbilt cousin of some musical talent; and Jesus and the priests and scribes in the temple set in a landscape setting for Frederick Law Olmsted. Connections between the content of the other windows and their subjects is not known.

From the beginning George Vanderbilt, said to have been a deeply religious man, assumed complete leadership and control of church affairs. "At the first meeting," wrote Kingsland Van Winkle, an early member of the Vestry,

. . . Mr. Vanderbilt made the announcement that he desired to pay the entire expenses of the church, including the salary of the Rector, the

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salary of the organist, the salaries necessary to pay for the services in the choir, the assessment and the apportionment which the church might have to pay to the District of Asheville--it was not until after Mr. Vanderbilt's death that the Diocese was organized, and prior to that time it was called the Missionary District of Asheville. The Vestry voted to accept Mr. Vanderbilt's offer, and from then until the day of his death, this arrangement prevailed, but left the church in an anomolous position. The congregation was without any financial responsibility.

. . . Meetings of the Vestry were very pleasant affairs, as the members were not troubled with any budget or money to raise, nor were members expected to present plans of their own.<sup>22</sup>

Evidently the character of the church services reflected the simplicity and unpretentiousness of the interior. As Mr. Van Winkle continued:

. . . On the altar there was a cross, but no candlesticks, and the whole service could be described as very "low church." The name "All Souls Church" would seem to indicate that such was the case.

I am inclined to think that this was done, not so much to Mr. Vanderbilt's own churchmanship, as to his great desire to make this the church of all the people of the village. He wished to attract as many as possible and repel none by reason of anything in the service.<sup>23</sup>

Shortly after the parish was organized, Vanderbilt, accompanied by the young author, historian, and bibliographer Paul Leister Ford (whom a window in the church memorializes) and Charles McNamee, the estate manager, traveled to Wheeling, West Virginia to observe the rector of St. Matthews Church, Dr. Rodney Rush Swope, whom they were able to entice to Biltmore.<sup>24</sup> The church congregation was small but active in the life of the community, operating, for a time, the village school and hospital.

Vanderbilt also gave the land and contributed handsomely to the endowment of the Clarence Barker Memorial Hospital, incorporated on June 13, 1900. The hospital's charter specified, according to Mr. Van Winkle, that the directors consist of the Rector, Vestry, and Wardens of the church, and "one or two physicians," so that the hospital was an adjunct of the church. "This duty," said Mr. Van Winkle, "involved no worry or responsibility to the Vestry, inasmuch as all costs and expenses incurred in building and maintaining it were met by Mr. Vanderbilt. Budgets and money did not trouble the Vestry's minds."<sup>25</sup> In 1919 the hospital received its independence from church jurisdiction and its name became Biltmore Hospital.<sup>26</sup>

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Edith Vanderbilt, George Vanderbilt's wife, interested in native crafts she found practiced in the mountain region of western North Carolina and in their preservation, founded the Biltmore Industries in 1905, a small network of cottage industries specializing in wood carving, needlework, weaving, dyeing, spinning, embroidery, and the like. It grew out of work begun by Miss Eleanor Vance and Miss Charlotte Yale of All Souls Church, engaged as the "Parish visitors" in 1902, who formed classes and clubs for boys and girls on the estate for cultivation of the native arts.<sup>27</sup> Apparently the village was not only intended to look like a manorial village, it was meant to function as one. (In 1917 Mrs. Vanderbilt sold Biltmore Industries to Mr. Fred Seely, an important Asheville businessman who removed the industries to the grounds of his Grove Park Inn (NR), where they continue to operate to this day.)

Between 1907 and 1913, the year before George Vanderbilt's sudden death, few important changes occurred.<sup>28</sup> Between 1913 and 1925, however, the blocks between the Hendersonville Road and All Souls Crescent were developed with cottages (the design and appearance of which are not known) and a block across from the church which had remained vacant, perhaps as a village green of sorts, was divided into lots. At the same time, the land north of Lodge Street began to fill up with service stations and large commercial buildings not in scale with Vanderbilt's original village.<sup>29</sup> By this time, the heirs of George W. Vanderbilt's estate, forced by serious financial reverses, a shrunken inheritance, and the burdens of vast holdings in non-income producing land to consolidate their assets, sold much of the estate in the years after 1914. Most of the village was sold in 1920.<sup>30</sup> Vanderbilt family efforts to include design restrictions and guidelines in the deeds suffered from lack of supervision and enforcement.

After 1930 the village fabric seriously deteriorated. Within the village intruded filling stations, a motel, parking lots, a large bowling alley, and a number of large brick commercial buildings. The most important losses included R. S. Smith's shopping block and school, a number of the largest and most substantial cottages, and all of the small cottages along Brook Street. An important change in the church between these years was the addition of Sunday School rooms between the church and Parish House forming a single complex and closing a block of Swan Street. Fortunately all of Hunt's buildings, by far the most important in the village, a number of the R. S. Smith cottages, and the street plan survived. In the last decade, efforts to revitalize the early buildings, no longer desirable as residential units, and adapt them for use as specialty shops and professional offices, appear to have halted further destruction of village cottages. Most of the adaptations have been sensitive and tasteful. In February, 1977, for example, the architectural firm of Jackson, Padgett, and Freeman received an award from the North Carolina Chapter, American Institute of Architects, for the adaptation of a cottage for the firm's own offices. Biltmore Village looks forward to a more secure future.

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FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>The Asheville News and Hotel Reporter, October 28, 1895.
- <sup>2</sup>Mary Louise Boyer, Early Days All Souls Church and Biltmore Village (Biltmore, N. C., privately printed, 1933), p. 6. Hereinafter cited as Boyer, Early Days.
- <sup>3</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 7.
- <sup>4</sup>Laura Wood Roper, FLO A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 417. Hereinafter cited as Roper, FLO.
- <sup>5</sup>Frederick Law Olmsted to William A. Stiles, March 10, 1895. Cited in Roper, FLO, p. 465.
- <sup>6</sup>Frederick Law Olmsted to Charles Eliot, April 29, 1895. Cited in Roper, FLO, p. 465.
- <sup>7</sup>Baltimore House Archives, Catalogue of Architectural Drawings, collection #540.
- <sup>8</sup>Sanborn Insurance Map, 1896.
- <sup>9</sup>Sanborn Insurance Map, 1896.
- <sup>10</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 6-7.
- <sup>11</sup>Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles, Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc. /facimilie, 1970/, 1956), p. 560-561.
- <sup>12</sup>Asheville City Directory, 1906-1907, p. 108.
- <sup>13</sup>Asheville Citizen, February 17, 1957.
- <sup>14</sup>My Sketchbook (Asheville, privately printed, 1901), passim.
- <sup>15</sup>My Sketchbook (Asheville, privately published, 1901), passim.
- <sup>16</sup>My Sketchbook (Asheville, privately printed, 1901), passim.
- <sup>17</sup>Sanborn Insurance Map, 1907.

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- <sup>18</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 18.
- <sup>19</sup>McKelden Smith, interview with Susanne E. Brendel, research historian, Biltmore House and Gardens, August 21, 1976.
- <sup>20</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 10.
- <sup>21</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 10-11.
- <sup>22</sup>Kingsland Van Winkle, Sixty Years at All Souls Church, Asheville (?), privately printed, 1956 /p. 3/. Hereinafter cited as Van Winkle, Sixty Years.
- <sup>23</sup>Van Winkle, Sixty Years, p. 4-5.
- <sup>24</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 14-15.
- <sup>25</sup>Van Winkle, Sixty Years, p. 5.
- <sup>26</sup>Van Winkle, Sixty Years, p. 6.
- <sup>27</sup>Boyer, Early Days, p. 18.
- <sup>28</sup>Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1913.
- <sup>29</sup>Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1925.
- <sup>30</sup>Buncombe County Deed Books, Buncombe County Courthouse, Asheville, N.C., Deed Book 247, p. 390.



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Verbal Boundary Description for Multiple Resource Area

Begin at a point on the southeast corner of the junction of Lodge Street and All Souls Crescent. Then south and east in a curve following the front property lines along the east side of All Souls Crescent to a point on the northeast corner of the junction of Biltmore Avenue and All Souls Crescent. Then south along the front property lines on the east side of Biltmore Avenue/Hendersonville Road to a point on the northeast corner of the junction of Hendersonville Road and Lula Street. Then northeast and southeast in a curve along the front property lines on the north and east sides of Lula Street to a point on the northeast corner of the junction of Lula Street and Irwin Street. Then east along the north side of Irwin Street to a point approximately 600 feet along an extension of Irwin Street. Then north to Warren Street approximately 700 feet. Then north and west in a curve following the front property lines along the east and north sides of Warren Street to a point on the east side of Reed Street. Then north following the front property lines on the east side of Reed Street to a point at the southeast corner of the junction of Reed Street and Brook Street. Then northwest following the front property lines on the south side of Brook Street to a point at the southeast corner of Brook Street and Swan Street. Then northeast to the Southern Railway tracks. Then west following the railroad tracks to a point on the east side of Biltmore Avenue. Then south following the front property lines on the east side of Biltmore Avenue to a point at the southeast corner of the junction of Biltmore Avenue and Lodge Street. Then west following the front property lines on the south side of Lodge Street to the point of origin. See attached map (Multiple Resource Area outlined in red).

UTM References

A--17/360300/3936900  
B--17/360280/3936820  
C--17/360400/3936720  
D--17/360380/3936620  
E--17/360520/3936640  
F--17/360520/3936420  
G--17/360400/3936380

H--17/360340/3936490  
I--17/360200/3936460  
J--17/360160/3936580  
K--17/360020/3936820  
L--17/360080/3936840  
M--17/360070/3936920