

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUL 27 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Historic Resources of Fort Mitchell, Kentucky

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

Residential Development of Fort Mitchell, c. 1857-1935

Community Development of Fort Mitchell, c. 1857-1935

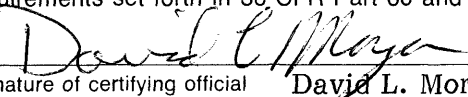
**C. Geographical Data**

Corporate limits of City of Fort Mitchell, Kenton County, Kentucky.

☐ See continuation sheet

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

  
Signature of certifying official

David L. Morgan

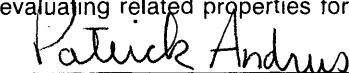
7-19-89

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

  
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

9/8/89

Date

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**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

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Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

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## E. Statement of Historic Contexts

## I. Residential Development of Fort Mitchell, c. 1857-1935

The city of Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, conceived as a residential streetcar suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio in the early twentieth century, possesses a wealth of well-preserved domestic architecture. The Historic Resources of Fort Mitchell, Kentucky multiple properties nomination provides historic contexts for the Old Fort Mitchell, Fort Mitchell Heights, and Beechwood Historic Districts. Despite many similarities in the built environments of these adjacent districts, each evolved from a separate subdivision with its own unique architectural character. Together these districts include 261 resources and encompass approximately one-fourth of the city's land area.

The suburban community of Fort Mitchell (1980 population: 7,297) is located in northern Kenton County approximately two miles south of the city of Covington, which is on the south side of the Ohio River directly opposite Cincinnati (see topographic map). The city of Fort Wright adjoins Fort Mitchell on the north, and Lakeside Park borders it on the south. Fort Mitchell is bisected by the Dixie Highway (U. S. 25 and 42), the area's major north-south thoroughfare, and by Interstate 75, which crosses the city in an approximately southwest to northeast orientation. These two major transportation routes divide the city into quadrants of unequal size.

The city's terrain is for the most part level, and its predominant land use is residential. Commercial development is limited to a mid-twentieth century retail area of the type sometimes referred to as a "taxpayer strip," centered along the Dixie Highway between Requardt Lane and Buttermilk Pike, and post-World War II shopping and office developments adjacent to freeway interchanges. Although much of the city's housing stock was built between c. 1905 and 1929, many houses were built there after World War II, particularly in its southwest quadrant (bounded by Interstate 75 on the north, Dixie Highway on the east, and Buttermilk Pike on the south), and residential development is still proceeding in outlying areas of the city adjacent to Interstate 75. Since Fort Mitchell's early development was concentrated along the Dixie Highway, much of the city's historic architecture can be found on or near the highway. Fort Mitchell's greatest concentration of historic buildings can be found in its northwest quadrant (bordered on the north by the city of Fort Wright, on the east by the Dixie Highway, and on the south by Interstate 75), and along the northern edge of the southwest quadrant.

## II. Community Development of Fort Mitchell, c. 1857-1935

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the nucleus of the present-day city of Fort Mitchell remained a small, isolated, unincorporated rural settlement. The community took its name from a Civil War fortification located atop a hill in what is now the Fort Mitchell Heights neighborhood. This earthworks was one of a series of Northern Kentucky

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hilltop defenses constructed by the Union Army in anticipation of raids by Confederate General Kirby Smith, who cut a swath of destruction across that area of the county during the War Between the States. Although Smith never reached Greater Cincinnati, the hasty and sometimes confused preparations made by Union troops fearing his arrival have become the stuff of local folklore. Tradition maintains that vestiges of Fort Mitchell's earthworks were visible until the early twentieth century. Fort Mitchell was named for General Ormsby MacKnight Mitchell, an astronomer, philosopher, and engineer. Over the course of time the spelling of his name was corrupted to the present form.

Lake's 1883 Kenton County Atlas depicts the Fort Mitchell area as a gently rolling rural landscape, dotted with large farmsteads and the summer homes of wealthy Cincinnatians (see map 3). But the area's gentle terrain and proximity to a major transportation route, the Covington-Lexington Turnpike or "Lexington Pike" (now known as the Dixie Highway), offered possibilities for another kind of development, that of the "streetcar suburb." However, this potential was not realized until the end of the century. In 1893, a syndicate called the Buckeye Molding Sand, Brick, and Quarry Company, comprised of investors from the nearby city of Covington, purchased a tract of land (approximately 93 acres) between the Lexington Pike and the Southern Railroad right-of-way from the Perkins family for \$18,000. But the Buckeye Company did not commission a survey of the property until 1904. The reason for this delay has not yet been determined, but economic factors (particularly the recession of 1893) may have been to blame. Soon after the survey was completed, the original "Town of Fort Mitchell" (now part of the Old Fort Mitchell neighborhood) was platted.

The plat of the new town included a small grid of streets surrounded by a semi-circular drive. Except for minor changes, this basic plan--depicted on the 1910 Sanborn fire insurance map of Fort Mitchell--is still recognizable today in Old Fort Mitchell (see map 4). As befitted a "garden suburb," streets were wide and lot sizes generous, with an average 100 foot frontage and 200-foot depth. Street names--Orchard, Ridge, Maple, Edgewood, Iris--also evoked the idyllic mood. Although Orchard Road was originally labeled "Main Street," John Blakely's "Early History and Development of Fort Mitchell" describes how local protest soon initiated a change. As early resident Frank Van Winkle stated, "We came here for some green, and not for city names."

To reduce through-traffic, all streets with the exception of Ridge Road were originally cul-de-sacs. Subdivision regulations mandated that any house in the new town cost at least \$3,000, a figure that gradually escalated to keep pace with inflation. In keeping with the standard deed restrictions of the day, commercial uses and the sale or manufacture of spirituous liquors were also forbidden.

It seems clear that the city's first subdivisions were founded to create refuges from city life for affluent residents, and as speculative ventures for the various development companies involved. But no evidence has yet been found that would indicate

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that the city's founders were trying to emulate a particular model of suburban development, for example, the communities founded by Frederick Law Olmsted in the mid-nineteenth century. Nor was the city conceived as a planned community with strict development controls. Fort Mitchell, like most of its neighbors, most closely resembles the early twentieth century suburban communities of Cincinnati, many of which have since been incorporated into the city proper. These communities are characterized by architectural diversity but consistency of setback and street patterns, and whose early buildings have since been surrounded by later development.

A further inducement to the development of Fort Mitchell was created in 1904 when the local streetcar company added a Fort Mitchell route, linking the new town to Covington via the Lexington Pike. In that same year, the city gained a social center when residents founded the Fort Mitchell Country Club, located in the former Perkins family pasture at the end of Fort Mitchell Avenue. The original Country Club was destroyed by fire in the 1960's and was replaced by a modern structure.

As an inducement to land sales, the Buckeye Company in 1906 offered favorable terms to the first six people to purchase lots and build homes within a year's time. This offer was accepted by a group of prominent Covington residents, all of whom had formerly resided in that city's prestigious Wallace Woods neighborhood. The first house to be constructed in the town of Fort Mitchell was built on Orchard Road by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Van Winkle in 1906, and it was soon joined by many others.

On July 25th, 1909, the CINCINNATI ENQUIRER reported a "Boom in Fort Mitchell" since 30 lots had recently changed hands. The news article predicted that by the following spring "at least two dozen more Covington residents" would build there. By 1909, the fledgling town of 127 residents had grown large enough to be incorporated under the laws of Kentucky as a city of the sixth class, meaning it had between 300 and 1000 occupants.

Following incorporation, the pace of the city's development quickened. On May 4, 1910, the city's second subdivision--Fort Mitchell Heights--was platted. Four months later, Covington developer John Brames began to subdivide a tract of farmland just outside the Fort Mitchell city limits. John Brames' Foltz Addition (now considered part of the Old Fort Mitchell neighborhood) was centered along Maple Avenue and was advertised as being "adjacent to the city's most exclusive residences."

That same year, an advertisement in the DEUTSCHE SCHUTZEN GESELLSCHAFT, a commemorative brochure published in Covington, touted the rapid growth of Fort Mitchell "from a dairy farm to a city in three years." The ad stated that since 1906, twenty-eight residences had been built in Fort Mitchell costing from \$6,000 to \$15,000 apiece, and that eight more, projected to cost \$12,000 to \$15,000 each, were presently under construction. Furthermore, the advertisement asserted that real estate values in the city were rapidly climbing, and lots that had formerly sold for \$10-15 per front foot

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now cost \$20 to \$25 per foot of frontage.

Old city directories indicate that early Fort Mitchell was home to a number of professionals and entrepreneurs. The vast majority had formerly resided in Covington, and most continued to do business in that city. Professionals included attorneys John Blakely of Beechwood Road, Francis G. Hanlon of 29 Ridge Road, and dentist Fenimore Roudebush of 33 Ridge Road.

The banking, real estate, and insurance industries were represented by Benjamin Bramlage and A. G. Simrall, among many others. Bramlage, of 222 Fort Mitchell Avenue, was cashier and later president of Covington's First National Bank. He was also partner in a syndicate that unsuccessfully tried to secure the natural gas franchise for the city of Newport. Real estate developer Simrall, who resided at 104 Ridge Road, was one of the town's original six "pioneers." He managed the Covington-based realty and insurance firm begun by his family in the mid-nineteenth century. As a member of the Fort Mitchell Land Company, he was also instrumental in the early development of that city.

Other Covington-based entrepreneurs included funeral director Theodore Rose of 2276 Dixie Highway; James H. Brownfield of 119 Iris Road, proprietor of the Brownfield Planing Mill, and Louis Fritz of 20 West Orchard Road, who owned and operated the Gateway Mineral Water and Soft Drink concern.

During the 1920's, Fort Mitchell continued to grow. Early in the decade Fort Mitchell Avenue--which had formerly been a cul-de-sac--was opened to the Dixie Highway, and the lower end of the street was subdivided for building lots. The first to build a house on this end of the street was the Sperti family, who built an elegant residence at 2 Fort Mitchell Avenue. George Sperti (1900- ) would later gain fame as a scientific researcher and educator, and the pharmaceutical company he founded still operates in the nearby city of Erlanger.

During the decade, new houses continued to be built throughout throughout Fort Mitchell. At the same time, numerous real estate syndicates began to develop the unincorporated land on either side of the Dixie Highway south of the city limits, an area that had been sparsely settled since the Victorian era. Gradually a series of subdivisions were developed in the area bounded roughly by Beechwood Road on the north and Buttermilk Pike on the south. Lots facing or close to the Dixie Highway sold first, because of their proximity to the Fort Mitchell streetcar line (which ran along the Highway's northeast side).

By the late 1920's, residents of these new subdivisions began to clamor for better services, and lack of utilities threatened to curtail further growth. They sought relief by annexation to the city of Fort Mitchell, but their repeated attempts proved futile. Incorporation as a separate city proved the only workable solution. On June 5, 1927,

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the City of South Fort Mitchell was born. In its May 12, 1929 edition the KENTUCKY POST described South Fort Mitchell as a place "where every resident is a booster," and said a visit to this "beautiful suburban community" was "a revelation."

The Great Depression slowed the pace of housing construction in Fort Mitchell. In the postwar years, the automobile age brought about the demise of the Fort Mitchell streetcar line, followed in the 1960's by the construction of Interstate 75 along the southern edge of the city. In the late 1960's, economic necessity brought about what prior generations had failed to accomplish, the merger of the cities of Fort Mitchell and South Fort Mitchell.

Residents of Fort Mitchell have traditionally been proud of their city; in the face of change, the city has remained stable. Many old families remain, including descendants of the town's "pioneers." Moreover, Fort Mitchell as a whole continues to attract new residents who appreciate its special ambience. In recent years, a number of young families have begun to restore the city's grand old homes. In addition, the Fort Mitchell Garden Club has taken an active role in promoting the historic areas of the city through house tours and special events.

The Fort Mitchell historic survey and Multiple Properties Nomination have sparked new interest in the city's history and have led to a new appreciation of Fort Mitchell's built environment. Listing in the National Register of the Old Fort Mitchell, Fort Mitchell Heights, and Beechwood Historic Districts will serve as a fitting tribute to the efforts of those who worked to maintain these historic resources and will further assure their continued preservation for the future.

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**F. Associated Property Types**

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I. Name of Property Type \_\_\_\_\_

II. Description

III. Significance

IV. Registration Requirements

☒ See continuation sheet F.1

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☐ See continuation sheet for additional property types



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### G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

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Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

☒ See continuation sheet G.1

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### H. Major Bibliographical References

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☒ See continuation sheet H.1

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☒ State historic preservation office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Specify repository: Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort

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### I. Form Prepared By

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F. Associated Property Types

I. Dwelling

II. Description

Fort Mitchell, like its neighbors Park Hills, Fort Wright, Lakeside Park, and Crestview Hills, contains a large inventory of intact early-to-mid twentieth century domestic architecture. Most of these dwellings date from c. 1906-1935, the era of the city's greatest growth and expansion.

Fort Mitchell's historic areas retain much of their original "streetcar suburb" ambience. Streets are broad and lined with trees. Many streets follow curvilinear patterns instead of the familiar urban "grid." There are no dividing alleys, and services to residences are provided from the curb. All three districts have parklike settings, characterized by dwellings sited on generously-sized lots with spacious lawns, extensive landscaping and mature trees. Landscaped plantings at intersections, and decorative planters along the Dixie Highway, also contribute to this effect, as does a city park along a former streetcar right-of-way in the Old Fort Mitchell district. A few dwellings are sited on very large lots with considerable acreage which serve as important greenspaces. One such example is provided by the Porter-Tranter estate (KEFM 6 and 114), located in the Fort Mitchell Heights Historic District, which includes three dwellings and several accessory structures on a wooded hillside. Beechwood (KEFM 148), the Blakely family homestead, consists of a large early-twentieth century residence surrounded by spacious wooded grounds at the far end of Beechwood Road in the Beechwood Historic District.

Although Fort Mitchell's built environment is diverse, its early development followed the same basic pattern. The first buildings constructed (c. 1905-1915) were houses of comparatively large scale. The 1910 Sanborn fire insurance map of Fort Mitchell, depicting what is now the Old Fort Mitchell neighborhood, and deed records indicate that their lots were also generous in size. Many of these dwellings were quite distinctive architecturally, and some were designed by local architects. But as the original owners moved on and their property was subdivided, these houses eventually became surrounded by "in-fill" development of more modest character. Despite some disparity in scale, these later buildings (c. 1920-1929) harmonize with their older neighbors because of sensitive use of materials, setbacks, landscaping, and careful attention to other aspects in common with earlier development.

In the city's historic districts, the majority of buildings (76%) are faced with brick or stucco. Wood-frame buildings, sheathed in clapboards or wood shingles, amount to 23% of the total inventory. Wood-frame buildings of particular distinction include the Porter-Tranter House (KEFM 114) in the Fort Mitchell Heights Historic District, and the

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Philips House at 28 West Orchard in the Old Fort Mitchell Historic District. The McBurney House (KEFM 108) in the Fort Mitchell Heights Historic District bears the distinction of being the only building identified by the survey whose exterior is faced with stone.

Many of the building modes and types found in Fort Mitchell's residential neighborhoods were also popular in surrounding communities during the early twentieth century. In general, the domestic architecture of Fort Mitchell and suburban Kenton County from c. 1906-1935 reflects the national predominance of historical revival styles during the same era. One of the city's most popular building modes was the Colonial Revival style. Most of Fort Mitchell's Colonial Revival dwellings utilize formal center-passage plans and feature symmetrical three- or five-bay facades. Roofs are side-gabled or hipped and often include finely-detailed roof dormers. Cornices are often graced by mutule blocks or rows of dentils. Other salient details include elaborate entrances with entablatures graced by pilasters and rows of dentils, as well as fanlights and sidelights (often incorporating leaded glass); enclosed sun porches on south elevations; adjoining terraces (often paved with flagstone); and slate roofs. Many feature pedimented entry porticos borne by Ionic or Tuscan columns. Many of Fort Mitchell's Colonial Revival dwellings are faced with brick, although a few examples are clad in wood clapboards or shingles. Typical of the city's center-passage Colonial Revival dwellings is 14 Beechwood Road (KEFM 195), constructed during the 1920's. A very few examples, including the 1920's-vintage 34 Beechwood Road have off-center entrances. The Milburn House at 123 Park Road (KEFM 104) in the Fort Mitchell Heights District, constructed in 1922, is a particularly fine high-style interpretation of the Colonial Revival style. Its five-bay facade with centered doorway is articulated by splayed stone jack arches, brick pilasters, and a denticulated frieze. Unlike most of the city's other Colonial Revival dwellings, it does not have a portico.

The monumental Neo-Classical style, characterized by the use of the colossal full-height entry or full-width portico, also saw limited popularity in Fort Mitchell. Two of the city's finest examples of the Neo-Classical style can be found in the Beechwood district. Beechwood (KEFM 148), constructed in 1911, exhibits a full-width, flat-roofed, tetrastyle portico borne by massive tapered columns. The facade of 33 Beechwood Road (KEFM 149), constructed during the 1910's, displays a pedimented entry portico.

The Dutch Colonial Revival style, distinguished by its gambrel roof, was also prevalent in Fort Mitchell during the 1900's and 1910's. Typical of the city's Dutch Colonial Revival dwellings is the Kreutzkamp House (c. 1905; KEFM 35) at 18 Virginia Avenue in southeast Fort Mitchell. The Kreutzkamp House is a two-story, front-gabled, wood-frame dwelling with full-width front porch and leaded glass transoms and door panels. A particularly stylish example of large scale is presented by the A. G. Simrall House (KEFM 76; c. 1908) on Ridge Road in the Old Fort Mitchell district. Faced with brick, stone and wood shingles, it displays an asymmetrically-composed facade with cross-gabled

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roof and inset porch.

The Tudor Revival style enjoyed great popularity in Fort Mitchell during the 1910's and 1920's. Small-scale examples, constructed by local builders, can be found in all areas of the city. A number of more stylish examples, larger in scale, can be seen in the city's historic districts and along the Dixie Highway. Although the city's Tudor Revival dwellings are considerably varied, they are unified by their rambling, picturesque plans; steeply-pitched, gabled or hipped rooflines, often with projecting gabled pavilions on facades; and use of brick veneer or smooth-faced stucco, the latter generally displaying false half-timbering. Most feature facades of asymmetric composition, although symmetrical facades are not uncommon, especially on smaller examples. Many of the city's Tudor Revival houses employ rough-cut fieldstone for decorative purposes, such as porch supports, chimneys or archways. It is also employed to cover the lower stories of dwellings or the above-grade portions of their foundation walls. Some examples are studded with decorative plaques of concrete (with heraldic devices) or ceramic tile. Gabled roof dormers, eyebrow windows, oriole bays, leaded-glass casement sash, and arched doorways are common features. Chimneys, which often form the focal point of facades, are frequently elaborately treated, displaying multiple flues (sometimes with spiral shapes) and ornate chimney pots. Many large-scale examples display long, sweeping rooflines bearing tiles of polychromed, rough-cut slate. An imposing large-scale example, constructed c. 1910, is the Robert L. Crigler House (KEFM 72) in the Old Fort Mitchell district. Faced with brick and fieldstone, it features a front-gabled facade and banks of tall casement windows with leaded-glass panes. The Camillus Moser House (KEFM 26) at 12 Beechwood Road in the Beechwood district presents a good example of a small-scale Tudor Revival dwelling. Constructed during the 1920's, it displays a symmetrical facade dominated by a one-and-a-half-story gabled entry pavilion. Both the Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles remained popular in Fort Mitchell well into the 1930's.

A few dwellings of the 1920's exemplified more exotic revival modes. Two Spanish Eclectic houses, highly individualistic in design, were identified in the survey. Irregular in plan, they are faced with brick or rough-cast stucco and feature low-pitched roofs of brightly-colored clay tile; round-arched doors and windows; and extensive use of wrought-iron grillework and stained glass. The Harry Welling House at 33 Fort Mitchell Avenue (KEFM 88) in the Old Fort Mitchell district presents a fine, well-preserved example of a Spanish Eclectic dwelling. Constructed c. 1920, it is covered with rough stucco and features tall, arched windows. The Nutini House (KEFM 97; c. 1920) at 5 Fort Mitchell Avenue in the Old Fort Mitchell Historic District is the city's sole representation of the Italian Renaissance style. It exhibits an irregular plan, low-pitched tile roof and varied window treatments. The Nutini House's facade is enhanced by floor-to-ceiling arched windows, iron balconettes, and spiral-bound colonettes. The Sperti House (KEFM 75; c. 1920) at 6 Fort Mitchell Avenue is one of two examples of the French Eclectic style in Fort Mitchell. Cubic in form with a center-

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passage plan, it is faced with stucco and is crowned by a truncated hip roof.

The American Foursquare, bungalow, and, to a lesser extent, the Homestead house type also enjoyed great popularity in Fort Mitchell during the first two decades after the city's incorporation. Fort Mitchell's American Foursquare dwellings, constructed for the most part between 1906 and 1915, generally follow one of two basic plans. Those with front-gabled roofs tend to be somewhat larger in scale, featuring two-bay facades and full-width front porches. On the other hand, examples with hipped or pyramidal roofs tend to be somewhat narrower in form and smaller in scale, with two-bay facades and half-width or entry porches instead of full-width verandas. However, many exceptions to these rules exist: some front-gabled houses have three-bay facades with off-center entrances, and full-width porches can be seen on a number of hip-roofed examples. Both house types utilize prominent roof dormers, gabled or hipped; on front-gabled varieties, these can be found on side and rear elevations. Art glass was used extensively in front entrances, transoms, in small clerestory panels in side elevations, and to light stair halls. Decorative details are considerably varied but generally derive their inspiration from one of these sources: Tudor Revival (stucco wall cladding, false half-timbering), Colonial Revival (classically-inspired porches or porticos, Palladian gable windows), or Craftsman (battered porch posts, broad overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails). Other favored details included scrolled eave trim and brackets, and angled bays on side elevations.

Bungalows were constructed in large numbers in Fort Mitchell from c. 1906 through the late 1920's. As a group the city's bungalows, like its American Foursquare dwellings, are greatly varied. However, they share common elements; low and horizontal form, the emphasis of the porch, Craftsman-inspired ornamentation, and use of "natural" materials such as stained wood shingles and uncut or rock-faced stone. Broad, full-width porches, often set under the front slope of the roof, are common; sometimes these were enclosed to create solariums. Half-width porches, generally with front-gabled roofs, can also be found. Dormers of various configurations, included gabled, hipped, shed, and inset varieties, light the upper stories. Rooflines are often accented by rafter tails and knee braces. Fort Mitchell's bungalows are clad with a variety of materials, with wire-cut brick, wood shingles (often overlapped to form alternating wide and narrow courses), and stucco being the most common. Many employed a combination of materials, such as brick or clapboards on lower stories and wood shingles or stucco (occasionally with decorative half-timbering) on upper stories or gables. Stone, prized for its rustic appearance, was utilized for porch supports, chimneys, and even the above-grade portions of foundation walls. In most cases rock-faced fieldstone, light-gray in color, was utilized for these purposes, although in a very few instances multi-colored spherical rubblestone was used. The Middendorf-Dusing House (KEFM 41), a large-scale Tudor Revival residence at 2355 Dixie Highway, displays extensive use of polychrome rubblestone, set in red mortar.

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The most common manifestation of the bungalow in Fort Mitchell is the one-and-a-half-story semi-bungalow with side-gabled roof, gabled roof dormers, and broad, full-width porches that sometimes were partly enclosed to create sunrooms. An especially good example of the semi-bungalow, large in scale, is the John W. Behle House (KEFM 81) at 37 Maple Avenue in the Old Fort Mitchell district. The John W. Behle House's gently-pitched roof extends over a partly enclosed front porch and is adorned with knee braces and rafter tails. Numerous examples of the so-called box bungalow can also be found in Fort Mitchell. Box bungalows are one story in height, smaller in scale than the semi-bungalows, and more compact and less horizontal in plan. Most have hipped roofs, although cross-gabled roofs can be found on a few. Some of the city's box bungalows, such as 44 Beechwood Road (KEFM 28) feature flared eaves and peaked roof ridges in the Japanese manner.

Although the vast majority of Fort Mitchell's bungalows exemplify popular interpretations of the style and were built according to standard plans, several stylish and distinctive examples can also be found. One of these is the George Allen House (KEFM 120; 1920's) on Greenbriar Avenue in southwest Fort Mitchell. The George Allen House, low and broad in form, is faced with brick, stone and half-timbered stucco and features a cross-gabled slate roof with curve-roofed dormers. The Ben Bramlage House (KEFM 68) at 222 Fort Mitchell Avenue in the Old Fort Mitchell district displays a pronounced Mission Revival influence. Faced with rough stucco, it features a side-gabled tile roof and arcaded full-width porch. The Ben Bramlage House, built in 1910, was designed by architect Lanham Robertson.

Many eclectic houses, combining elements of various stylistic vocabularies, were constructed in Fort Mitchell during the early twentieth century. For example, a number of dwellings of the 1910's combined characteristics of the Colonial Revival and Craftsman modes. Typical of these eclectic houses are 33 West Orchard Road in the Old Fort Mitchell district, a center-passage frame residence featuring open porches with trellis roofs; and the Albert Koenig House (KEFM 110) at 310 Summit Lane in the Fort Mitchell Heights district, a hipped-roof Craftsman-inspired residence with Colonial Revival doorway. Some 1920's-vintage dwellings, such as the James Thiel House (KEFM 123) at 50 Woodlawn Avenue in the Beechwood district, combine elements of the Colonial and Tudor Revival styles.

As previously stated, nearly all of Fort Mitchell's buildings were constructed after 1900, with the majority built in the 1920's. A few dwellings survive from the city's early years, prior to 1900. The majority of these surviving early dwellings, however, have been compromised or altered beyond recognition. An important exception is provided by the Kruempelman Farmhouse (KEFM 150; c. 1890), an intact center-passage brick dwelling of the I-house type. Other surviving early dwellings can be found in each of the city's historic districts. These include 23 Woodlawn Avenue (KEFM 21), a hall-parlor cottage of modest scale, located in the Beechwood Historic District. Although in

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most cases these residences possess diminished integrity, they present an interesting contrast to their newer neighbors. They are also significant as survivors of city's rural past, evidence of which has been all but obliterated by over three-quarters of a century of continuous development.

Because of the exclusive nature of Fort Mitchell's early development, and its present-day restrictive zoning, single-family residences predominate in all three districts. A few duplexes were built, but even these were designed to look like single-family homes, as exemplified by 8 Fort Mitchell Avenue in the Old Fort Mitchell Historic District and 128-30 Park Road (KEFM 124) in the Fort Mitchell Heights Historic District. An important exception to this rule is presented by the Alma Apartments at Dixie Highway and Buttermilk Pike in southeast Fort Mitchell. When it was completed in 1929, this four-story apartment building of eclectic design was the city's first multi-family dwelling.

Typical features of sites include the use of hedges to define property lines since the use of fences was generally prohibited by subdivision or zoning regulations. Fences, however, are sometimes present on properties like the houses of the Porter-Tranter estate, which, when constructed, were part of unincorporated areas. Although freestanding garages are a typical component of suburban areas across the country, they are less frequently seen in Fort Mitchell than elsewhere because a number of the city's dwellings of the 1920's and 1930's have garages incorporated into the basements of dwellings and accessible from the back of the lot. Of the 181 primary buildings in Fort Mitchell's three historic districts, 58, or 32%, have this feature. Attached garages were a feature of seven properties (3% of the total), while 72 (39%) have detached garages. Of these, approximately 20% resemble the dwelling on site in styling and materials, while the remainder are utilitarian in design.

## III. Significance

Fort Mitchell's three historic districts are significant under Criteria A and C as the best representation of domestic architecture during the period of the city's early development (c. 1857-1905) and the era of its greatest growth (c. 1906-1935). The general discussion of the history and architecture of this area is found in the context statement, while specific treatment of these themes can be found on the individual nomination forms. Although historic buildings are scattered throughout Fort Mitchell, the city does not possess any significant concentrations of historic architecture aside from the districts included in the Multiple Properties Nomination.

Moreover, Fort Mitchell's historic districts are unique in Kenton County in terms of architectural quality, scale, integrity and fine state of preservation. They remain the best representation of early twentieth century suburban development in the county because the city's historic fabric is the richest of any Kenton County suburban

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community. This is at least partly due to the fact that the city was incorporated earlier than any of its neighbors, had better access to transportation (via the Fort Mitchell streetcar line) and thus enjoyed rapid growth not shared by surrounding towns. With the exception of Lakeside Park's Dixie Highway Historic District, which includes five large-scale residences of the 1910's and 1920's, no other areas meeting National Register criteria have yet been identified in the suburban areas of the county where a survey has been conducted. Although an important group of 1920's Tudor and Norman Revival residences can be found in Lakeside Park, centered around the series of spring-fed ponds that give the city its name, they are adjoined by a large number of modern buildings whose presence precludes historic designation for the area. To date no formal survey has been conducted in Park Hills, Crestview Hills, Edgewood or Erlanger. However, during 1986 and 1987 preservation consultant Margaret Warminski, the author of this nomination, conducted an informal reconnaissance survey of these communities and did not discover any significant concentrations of historic architecture in any of them.

Nor can any comparable neighborhoods be found in the city of Covington. Covington's Wallace Woods neighborhood, like Fort Mitchell's historic areas, includes an important collection of stylish early twentieth century residences. However, there are important differences. Wallace Woods began to be developed earlier than Fort Mitchell and includes a number of late Victorian buildings. Moreover, its urban setting, characterized for the most part by narrow streets and shallow lots, lends it an ambience different from the more spacious suburban environment of Fort Mitchell. Wallace Woods also includes numerous multi-family dwellings, including two-flat duplexes and large-scale apartment buildings, which are rarely found in Fort Mitchell.

## IV. Registration Requirements

In order for a building to be considered a contributing element of a historic district, it must possess a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. In doing so it will retain to a large extent its original appearance and be recognizable as a product of its own time and place. Unacceptable changes include changes in window configurations on principal facades, such as the insertion of modern "picture" windows or the blocking up or boarding over of window openings, or the installation of replacement windows or doors that do not fit the original openings. The building's original massing must still be evident. Additions must defer to the original structure in terms of scale and should be unobtrusively placed, preferably toward the rear of the building. Since porches are an important element of many streetscapes, the removal of an original porch adjoining the front or side elevation of a house would seriously affect the dwelling's overall integrity. In like fashion, the addition to principal facades of new porches or decks clearly out of scale with the original house or incongruous with its character would compromise the house's integrity. The application of modern siding is a common alteration to historic buildings, especially those of wood-frame construction. The presence of such siding compromises a building's



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integrity of design, materials and workmanship somewhat because it conceals, and may damage, original materials. However, the use of modern siding may not necessarily render a building non-contributing. A re-sided building may still be considered to be a contributing element if it has not endured other major alterations, such as changes to fenestration, massing or roofscape, and its stylistic character is still evident.

Since many building materials are inherently fragile and may eventually require replacement due to wear and tear or lack of maintenance, replacement of certain types of materials may be acceptable in many cases. Such alterations may include the replacement of a slate or tile roof with synthetic material; replacement of art glass panels with ones of plain glass; or replacement of some porch components, such as spindles or posts, with new ones of similar or sympathetic design. The insertion of modern replacement windows or doors may also be acceptable provided that the new doors or windows fit the original openings and do not constitute a jarring, intrusive presence. In all cases, decisions about architectural integrity must be made on a case-by-case basis, governed by each individual building's style and type.

Fort Mitchell's residential areas are intact in terms of setting and location.

**G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

A comprehensive survey of the historic resources of the three adjacent communities of Fort Wright, Fort Mitchell and Lakeside Park was undertaken in 1985 and 1986 by Margaret Warminski under the auspices of the Northern Kentucky Area Development District, funded in part by a grant from the Kentucky Heritage Council. The survey was begun with the expectation that Fort Mitchell would contain the largest inventory of historic architecture since it was the largest and oldest of the three cities involved, a hypothesis that was later proven correct. The survey recorded approximately 140 buildings in Fort Mitchell dating from c. 1857 to 1929. Unaltered buildings over 50 years of age were recorded, as well as altered buildings that typified an unusual type or style or appeared to have been built before the turn of the century and thus ranked among the city's oldest extant buildings. An "unaltered" resource was defined as a building clearly recognizable as a product of its time; one which has undergone only minor and/or reversible alterations that did not affect its integrity such as unobtrusive rear additions, exterior storm windows, replacement prime windows of aluminum or vinyl that fit the original window openings, minor porch alterations such as the replacement of posts or balustrade, removal of art glass windows or transoms, or replacement of slate or tile roofing with asphalt shingles. An "altered" building, on the other hand, was defined as one that had undergone severe or inappropriate changes such as re-siding with modern materials like vinyl or aluminum, replacement of original windows with modern ones of inappropriate size and configuration, or the addition of an obtrusive new room or wing.

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Since there are no written histories of the Fort Mitchell area, survey research utilized as primary documentary sources city directories, newspaper archives, and historic maps. Map sources included D. J. Lake's 1883 ATLAS OF BOONE, KENTON, AND CAMPBELL COUNTIES, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, and a 1931 city plat.

Another surveyed property appeared to be potentially eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C but needed further research to establish its eligibility. The Alma Apartments (KEFM 189) at Dixie Highway and Buttermilk Pike is a multi-story apartment building whose eclectic design incorporates elements of the Colonial and Tudor Revivals. At the time of its construction in 1929 it was the only large-scale multi-family building in the city. It was also the first such complex in northern Kentucky to include only efficiency apartments. The Alma Apartments was designed by local architect Louis Dittoe.

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