

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 Gates Mills, Ohio

B. Associated Historic Contexts

1. Agricultural Commerce: Settlement Era, ca. 1820-ca.1870
2. Agricultural Commerce: Economic Decline, ca. 1870-1899
3. Suburban Commerce: Interurban/Auto Era, 1899-1940

C. Geographical Data

Incorporated limits of the Village of Gates Mills, Ohio

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.

*Barbara Paven*

Signature of certifying official

8-22-91

Date

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.

*Patrick Andrew*

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

10/9/91

Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Introduction

Gates Mills was formerly part of Mayfield Township, located in the Connecticut Western Reserve region of Ohio. The first settlers to the township came in 1805, with the first settlers to what is now Gates Mills settling in the Wilson Mills area the following year. Settlement in this area was slow until about 1820, then increased rapidly until about 1840, when Gates Mills was largely settled as a rural farming community.

Holsey Gates, for whom the community is named, arrived here in 1826 and within a few years had established three mills near the intersection of Old Mill and River roads. Gates Mills had an advantage over many rural farming communities in these early years by its location along a swiftly-moving river in a broad valley, affording the opportunity to develop water-powered mills. Grist mills and saw mills provided for the essential elements of the community: food and shelter, the grist mills efficiently grinding grains and the saw mill creating lumber from the surrounding forests for building purposes. At one time, 11 mills operated within the present village boundaries, most clustered about the two settlements known as Gates Mills and Wilson Mills, but a few operated from feeder ponds on tributary streams.

By about 1850, Gates Mills was the trading and manufacturing <sup>center</sup> for the surrounding farms and was a prosperous community generally characterized by small frame houses, plus several large frame mills, the impressive Greek Revival community church and a few larger houses, including the sizeable home of the town's namesake. This prosperity continued into the post-Civil War years, but the seeds of the community's decline were already sown by 1850. Railroads, which would bypass this small town in a valley too steep for train travel, concentrated settlements in more widely spaced cities. The industrial revolution with its resultant steam and later electrical power, would overtake the primitive and limited technology of the water-powered mills. Agriculture as a bountiful means of support would be replaced by industry and commerce.

During the late nineteenth century, growth in Gates Mills was limited and many of the mills closed and people moved on to seek their fortunes elsewhere. But by the end of the century as prosperous Cleveland boomed with development and people sought a refuge from the harsh urban environment, Gates Mills would see its fortunes restored. The Cleveland Electric Traction Company opened its interurban line from Cleveland to Chardon through Gates Mills in 1899, linking Gates Mills conveniently to downtown Cleveland. In the following few years the Maple Leaf Land Company formed and purchased large tracts of land in the village. It soon began making various improvements to promote the development of this area as a summer retreat. Large impressive estates of Cleveland business and industrial leaders were interspersed with small summer cottages of the upper middle class. Small old farmhouses were renovated into comfortable summer cottages. Generally, the early growth of Gates Mills was in the form of a summer retreat community, but by the 1920's as the roads improved and car transportation become more reliable, Gates Mills increasingly began to be the site of substantial year-round residences.

Gates Mills was formerly incorporated as a village in 1920 and absorbed the Wilson Mills area six years later. Improvements in roads and car and bus transportation resulted in the end of the interurban line through Gates Mills in 1925, but residential development continued, under the guidance of the Gates Mills Improvement Organization, organized in 1909 by some of Cleveland's community leaders who made their homes here. Noted architects such as Charles R. Greco, Walker & Weeks and master builders such as George R. Brown created impressive residences in various historical styles, many of which took advantage of the spectacular views of the Chagrin River valley and

See continuation sheet

**F. Associated Property Types**

- I. Name of Property Type Greek Revival architecture of the Settlement Era, ca. 1820 - ca. 1870  
Italianate and Queen Anne architecture of the Era of Decline: c.1870-99
- II. Description Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival and other styles of the interurban/  
Auto Era: 1899-1940

The Greek Revival style has dominated the character of Gates Mills since Holsey Gates' sawmill opened in 1826, making possible the construction of frame clapboard buildings from the abundant supplies of timber nearby. The majority of these buildings are simple story-and-a-half farmhouses which might be considered vernacular buildings, except that most of them have massive cornices with returns and door surrounds featuring pilasters and entablatures, all hallmarks of the Greek Revival style. Some are simple rectangles, others are fairly common T-shaped houses which have gabled sections intersecting at right angles. Others are a full two stories in height with a central entrance flanked by windows. This last category bears similarity to New England prototypes.

(continued on continuation page)

**III. Significance**

Nominated properties would be significant for their architecture under Criterion C of the National Register. Many are noteworthy examples of major American styles of architecture from distinct periods of history. In addition to qualifying on the basis of architecture, some properties would qualify under Criterion C for landscape architecture. Many of the estates contain planned landscapes that take advantage of the area's dramatic topography. Areas of significance under Criterion A would include community planning and development, and agriculture. Many of the planning decisions that were made during the third context period were community based and many estates operated as farms, some developing scientific advances in farming practices. These residences, associated with individuals whose roles in shaping the historical development of a major metropolitan area are well documented, would additionally qualify for the National Register under Criterion B.

**IV. Registration Requirements**

To qualify for listing under Criterion C for architecture these properties must be readily identified under one of the stylistic classifications detailed in the Description portion of this section. As has been discussed, many of the Greek Revival style houses have undergone major alterations and enlargements over the years which might tend to disqualify them were it not for the fact that these changes were generally of a high quality and usually sensitive to the original character. Styles erected since 1899 should possess a greater degree of integrity since they did not undergo the transformation from simple farmhouse to summer residence or estate house.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types

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

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

This nomination is based on a comprehensive inventory of historic resources in Gates Mills. A preliminary survey undertaken by this consultant three years ago resulted in the establishment of two local historic districts, one around the historic Gates Mills crossroads and the other at Wilson Mills settlement. All buildings within these two local districts were inventoried by means of the Ohio Historic Inventory form. Realizing that the community contained additional historic resources outside the boundaries of these two local districts, a comprehensive inventory of virtually every historic resource fifty years old or older was conducted in all other areas of the village. Some buildings from the 1940's and early 1950's were also included and a few older buildings may have been overlooked in this survey, undertaken in January 1990.

Because of the great amount of growth and development in Gates Mills after World War II, it would not be possible to create a district encompassing the entire community. Therefore Postwar subdivisions were excluded. Several of these occur at the periphery of the village and were relatively easy to exclude. Others are near the center of the community, usually resulting from the subdivision of some large older estate and their exclusion sometimes resulted in the necessary exclusion of small areas with historic significance and/or the creation of somewhat irregular boundaries. Every effort has been made in the course of this survey to exclude non-contributing (cont.)

See continuation sheet

**H. Major Bibliographical References**

Campen, Richard, George Brown of Gates Mills. Gates Mills Historical Society, 1969.  
 Frary, I.T., Early Homes of Ohio. Richmond: Garrett & Massie (reprint: Dover, 1970)  
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 Van Tassel, David & Grabowski, John, eds., Encyclopedia of Cleveland History  
 Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.  
 Wilkerson, Helen, Gates Mills and a History of its Village Church, Gates Mills: St. Christophers-by-the-River, 1955.  
Old-House Journal, Jan/Feb 1983, "The Adirondack Rustic Style" by Harvey H. Kaiser,  
 New York: The Old-House Journal Corporation, 1983.

See continuation sheet

Bostin Museum of Fine Arts, "The Art that is Life" by Wendy Kaplan, 1987.  
 Primary location of additional documentation:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency                 | <input type="checkbox"/> University                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                       |

Specify repository: Gates Mills Town Hall

**I. Form Prepared By**

name/title Steven McQuillin, Preservation Consultant - under contract with  
 organization Gates Mills Architectural Board of Review date May 1990  
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the gulleys formed by its tributary streams. Early 20th century summer cottages were converted, beginning in the 1920's and 1930's, into year-round residences through expansion and remodeling.

A brief lull in construction during World War II gave way to another building boom in Gates Mills as existing houses were enlarged and large new residences were constructed. Some of the large turn of the century estates were subdivided, new streets laid out and modern houses constructed on large semi-wooded lots. Several large older houses were destroyed in this process, but many others remained on reduced lots with contemporary houses nearby. Generally, an effort has been made to preserve the natural surroundings of historic houses in Gates Mills. Older estates, set back from the road, have had newer houses inconspicuously inserted. Greek Revival cottages have been further enlarged, generally in a complimentary spirit, into spacious residences. Skilled historical architects such as Monroe Walker Cöpper, Jr., have played important roles in the Postwar development of Gates Mills.

Today, Gates Mills is a distinctive residential community and is home to some of the Greater Cleveland area's business and professional elite, individuals who have achieved distinction in their professions. It remains one of the region's most desirable residential areas and the community has taken care to safeguard the rural New England charm of the community and its numerous Greek Revival landmarks. This achievement has been aided by the formation of the Gates Mills Historical Society in 1946 and the formation of the Gates Mills Architectural Board of Review soon afterward. An Historical Subcommittee was formed a few years ago to focus on the preservation of the historical portions of the village and this nomination is being prepared in furtherance of the goal of preservation of Gates Mills' distinctive architectural heritage.

1. Agricultural Commerce: Settlement Era, ca. 1820-ca.1870

While the region encompassing Gates Mills was explored by Europeans in the 18th century, it was not until the Western Reserve had been surveyed by the Connecticut Land Company and the shares distributed in 1805 that this land could be permanently inhabited by white settlers. The first settlers in Gates Mills arrived in 1805 and cleared land on River Road near Brigham Road. Abner and Samuel Johnson and David Smith came from Ontario County in New York and formed the nuclear settlement in this part of the Chagrin Valley. Settlement gradually increased until about the year 1820, when improved transportation via the Erie Canal and in power vessels on Lake Erie made migration easier. Holsey Gates arrived in 1826. Peleg Sherman arrived in 1824, Luther Battles and his family arrived in 1834, Gideon and Margaret Keyt came in 1832. The first structures erected were log cabins, but with the opening of Holsey Gates' sawmill in 1826, it became possible to build frame houses. The oldest surviving frame house in town is the Leuty House on Gates Road which dates from 1832. Several houses in the community date from 1834.

The early frame houses of Gates Mills are Greek Revival in style, featuring returns, cornices and clapboard siding. They are generally one and a half stories in height and are small rectangular structures. The presence of the several sawmills during the pre-civil war period probably accounts for the absence of brick or stone buildings

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constructed during this period. The relatively small size of these agricultural dwellings is perhaps indicative that the terrain of the Chagrin Valley did not promote prosperous farming operations. The large size of Holsey Gates' house (destroyed by fire in 1935 and reconstructed on the old foundations as the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club) evidences that the milling operations were the economic lifeblood of the community in the years prior to the Civil War. Gates erected a large and impressive grist mill in 1827 near the village center and another in 1829 across the road. Both were imposing two-story frame Greek Revival style structures which were the largest buildings in town. A smaller and cruder sawmill had been erected in 1826 by Gates on the same watercourse and no doubt was used to produce the lumber for the larger mills and residences which soon sprouted in the settlement.

A dense aggregation of residences, mills, shops and a church were clustered on Old Mill Road between the Chagrin River and the mill course. The most imposing building from the Settlement Era of Gates Mills' history is the Gates Mills Church, now known as St. Christopher's-by-the-River. This impressive and beautifully proportioned example of Greek Revival architecture was erected in 1853 with the major financial backing of Holsey Gates. Its long elegant windows, perfectly proportioned entablature and pediment and its magnificent soaring steeple give this building exceptional charm. More than any other building in the community, it sets the theme of white-painted wood frame New England-inspired Greek Revival architecture which has characterized Gates Mills for many years.

Wilson Mills developed similarly as a small dense rural settlement characterized by the presence of a millcourse, a few mills, some shops and a cluster of small frame houses. It was a smaller settlement and its mills were erected after those of nearby Gates Mills. The lack of an seminal structures such as the church in Gates Mills or the several large houses erected by Holsey Gates has resulted in a less identifiable Greek Revival character to Wilson Mills. The settlement was also to undergo considerable construction of residences and a church in the years after the Civil War.

As has been noted, the period of most intensive migration into the area now comprising Gates Mills occurred from about 1820 to about 1840. After 1840, the area was largely cleared and settled. As with most frontier settlements, the earliest structures were of logs and were soon replaced with more substantial permanent dwellings. Thus, while the population of Gates Mills was fairly stable after 1840, new buildings continued to be constructed until about the time of the Civil War. By the 1850's, the town could boast of a number of fine buildings, including some larger residences, an imposing church and several business and manufacturing buildings.

## 2. Agricultural Commerce: Economic Decline, ca. 1870-1899

A number of factors combined to depress the development of Gates Mills in the years after the Civil War. Once located on a major-east west stage route, Gates Mills saw traffic diverted to the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad in the 1850's, which bypassed the hills of Gates Mills for a relatively flat route from east to west along the Lake Erie shoreline. By the 1870's, with the establishment of the Painesville and Youngstown Railroad, passengers and commerce to Chardon and points due east moved north to Painesville and then west to Cleveland, instead of due east through Gates Mills.

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Some general trends in America around the Civil War years also impacted on Gates Mills. The opening of the Great Plains region to agricultural development lowered prices for grains and other agricultural produce. Mechanization affected farming and the small hilly farms of the Chagrin Valley were not as well adapted as other areas to take advantage of these labor-saving innovations. Also, the good soil which had characterized the valley was also changing by the late nineteenth century. The loss of forest cover and intensive agricultural methods resulted in a loss of the most fertile soil layer through erosion in this hilly terrain, decreasing farm output. These factors of lower grain pricing, reduced yields, the need for capital to invest in new equipment all combined with increasing opportunities for employment in the cities to make Gates Mills less competitive. The mills which were at the cornerstone of the village's prosperity initially were focused on the needs of the nearby agricultural areas: the need for lumber and flour. Later, they diversified as when by 1847, Holsey Gates' old gristmill was transformed into a rake factory. The mills were affected by the agricultural decline in terms of lost business. The perfection of steam power as a more reliable and efficient alternative to water power, the concentration of milling operations into larger and more efficient facilities and the improvement in transportation fostered by railroads but also due to numerous road improvements all had a negative effect on the mill industry in Gates Mills.

Mayfield Township's 1840 census of 852 increased by 1880 only slightly to 879. Many of Gates Mills' post-Civil War generation sought their fortunes not in the businesses of their fathers but in industries of nearby cities or in the great westward migration. Few new buildings were erected in the late nineteenth century in Gates Mills. Some farmhouses were built during this period, generally in a simplified version of the Queen Anne style. These were also frame residences but were generally not constructed from local wood but were the products of the Industrial Revolution with parts coming from various areas of the country and standardized details.

Wilson Mills has more of a late nineteenth century character than does Gates Mills. Several of its houses are Italianate in style and the church is an example of the Victorian gothic style. There is no single factor which was behind the construction of these Wilson Mills buildings during the late nineteenth century, but rather, these buildings reflect the typical growth occurring in small towns throughout Ohio at the time. Gates Mills is the exception to the norm, with its many fine Greek Revival style buildings.

The late nineteenth century was a period of slow decline for Gates Mills. Cleveland, of course, was in an economic boom and experienced major growth. So did numerous other Ohio cities. Small rural settlements such as Gates Mills were the places which generally did not grow.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, Gates Mills retained its predominantly Greek Revival character. While growing communities featured a diversity of styles and on occasion lost important examples of Greek Revival architecture, Gates Mills simply maintained a status quo. The mills remained and several continued to be active, sometimes through conversion to steam power. Houses generally were still occupied.

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### 3. Suburban Commerce: Interurban/Automobile Era, 1899-1940

In the fall of 1899, the first passengers rode to Cleveland on the new Cleveland and Eastern Railway line through Gates Mills. Regular electric-powered service began a few months later. This marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the village as Gates Mills became connected with the growing Greater Cleveland area. The trip from Gates Mills to Public Square in Cleveland took over an hour, making the community less of a commuter suburb than a recreational destination.

This line was one of many interurban trolley lines which were erected around the turn of the century across the country and particularly in the Midwest. The Cleveland and Eastern Railway was one of a number of electric lines operating in the Greater Cleveland area. These lines radiated out in spokes from the downtown, so it was logical that a line would be extended out along Mayfield Road, a major eastern route out of Cleveland. The line was built for a combination of factors which all worked to make it profitable. Closer in toward Cleveland, this was a commuter line. It provided a ready means of access for the county seat town of Chardon and for Burton, which was a fair-sized village. This interurban line was a much more direct way into Cleveland than the existing railroads serving these villages. Finally, the interurban served farms along its route and was a primary means of transporting milk from Geauga County to markets in Cleveland.

As an added attraction, this interurban line promoted summer resort destinations in Geauga County, such as Bass Lake and Punderson Lake. This ready means of communication transformed Gates Mills into a popular vacation destination.

The Maple Leaf Land Company was formed at the turn of the century to promote Gates Mills as a tourist and summer residence destination. The company purchased Holsey Gates' old residence and converted it into the Maple Leaf Inn, which became a popular destination for summer day trips and became noted for its fine food. The Land Company bought up much property in Gates Mills and made improvements to the roads, bridges and countryside. New roads were laid out with fine views of the Chagrin Valley. Boat trips were organized in the river and mill race.

People began acquiring and renovating old houses into comfortable summer cottages. Generally, this involved expansion of the small farmhouses into larger residences by means of adding wings and dormers. This usually was in the same spirit as the original architecture. A few houses were greatly enlarged around the turn of the century. For example, the old Gideon Keyt house was more than doubled in size with a large wing which features an impressive two-story portico, added in 1904 by Dr. T.C. Martin. The old barn of S.W. Knapp on the north side of Old Mill Road at Epping Road, was converted in 1909 into a residence. A large building near the center of town, now the home of Alfred Rankin, Jr., was erected in 1845 by Holsey Gates and for years was a tavern, grocery store and post office until its conversion into a spacious residence soon after the turn of the century. It retains its Greek Revival character.

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The Maple Leaf Land Company's efforts at transforming Gates Mills into an attractive summer resort community were so successful that by 1909 it was necessary to organize a society to provide for the governance of this portion of Mayfield Township.

The Gates Mills Improvement Society was incorporated in October 1905 with the goal of promoting the health, safety and happiness of its members and to improve and protect property in Gates Mills. Prominent Clevelanders such as Frank H. Ginn, S. Prentiss Baldwin and A.G. Frisbee, who all owned property in the community, were among the organizers.

Large estates were developed in Gates Mills during the early years of the twentieth century. These were located on the hillside overlooking the valley or near the old village center, but were careful not to intrude upon the Greek Revival character of the old town. S.P. Baldwin erected his estate, "Hillcrest", about 1900 and chose to reflect the Greek Revival character of the village in his large and imposing summer residence. A.G. Frisbee and Frank Ginn had their residences designed in the more informal Shingle Style which was popular in the late nineteenth century for summer houses of the elite along the East Coast. These houses took advantage of their natural topography via picturesque profiles and appropriate landscaping so that they became a part of the attractive rural character of Gates Mills. These early summer residences were erected by wealthy Cleveland businessmen and professionals who already had substantial, formal residences in the city and so were designed to be less formal and elaborate, "simple" country residences, yet ample and commodious and usually meant to be staffed with servants. Some of these estates had large barns and other outbuildings, sometimes principally to house stables for gentlemanly sports such as hunting and riding, but on occasion these were functioning farms, with crops and dairy cattle.

The Chagrin Valley Hunt Club moved to Gates Mills in 1909, purchasing the Maple Leaf Inn as its headquarters and absorbing two riding groups which had recently been organized in Gates Mills. The Hunt Club served as a social nucleus for prominent Clevelanders who had residences in or near the village and soon developed as one of the most prominent of the Cleveland area's country and social clubs. Polo and fox hunting were popular sports. The club also served as a setting for horse shows and other social and recreational activities. A fire in 1935 destroyed the historical portion of the club building, but it was rebuilt in a similar style on the old foundations and the historic Holsey Gates doorway was salvaged and reinstalled. The Hunt Club continues to serve many of its original functions, although hunting has now been moved out to a more rural location near Middlefield.

In 1920, the Village of Gates Mills was formally incorporated from Mayfield Township and architect Frank R. Walker of the prominent firm of Walker & Weeks became the village's first mayor. About this time, improvements in the development of the automobile and in the roads combined with Gates Mills' growing reputation to make it more desirable for year round residential life. A new generation of houses began to be constructed. Large impressive mansions were designed in a variety of formal styles such as would have been found in Cleveland or Shaker Heights. From 1923-25, Francis Drury erected the largest residence in the village at the corner of SOM Center and Cedar roads. His impressive estate, now part of Gilmour Academy, was designed by Cleveland architect Charles Schneider and is a notable example of Tudor Revival architecture. Industrialist E.J. Kulas had an impressive Tudor Revival estate erected in the early 1930's by Boston architect Charles R. Greco. This large estate, with its numerous outbuildings, is individually listed on the National Register.

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The topography of Gates Mills influenced the design of residences constructed during the period of its use as a summer resort/suburban residential community by encouraging the use of picturesque forms and styles. The earlier residences - those built around the turn of the century - were often constructed of wood in an informal manner designed to take advantage of natural vistas and the wooded character of the somewhat rugged terrain. A number of these earlier buildings are Shingle Style residences. The Shingle Style was popular in resort architecture on the East Coast and elsewhere in the late 19th century. The steep rooflines, the casual character of wood construction, the use of wood shingles, the numerous porches, gables and occasional tower are characteristic of these Shingle Style Gates Mills summer residences.

Another style to be found in Gates Mills is the Adirondack Rustic Style, a style of resort architecture defined by Harvey Kaiser in his book, Great Camps of the Adirondacks. Kaiser identifies this style as originating in resort camps in New York's Adirondack region in the period following the Civil War. This relatively rare style reached a peak of popularity in the years around the turn of the century. Perhaps the most impressive example of this style is the Old Faithful Inn (1903-04, Robert C. Reamer, architect) at Yellowstone Park. Adirondack Rustic Style buildings are characterized by exposed log construction or simulated log construction, with logs often exposed on both the exterior and interior. They had complex, often asymmetrical rooflines and feature stone or other forms of masonry which are laid up in a picturesque fashion, often consisting of irregular rock-faced stones.

Gates Mills has a number of Adirondack Rustic Style residences. Many of them were designed and constructed by George W. Brown, a prominent master builder in Gates Mills during the early twentieth century. The following is a partial list of these houses:

| PRESENT OWNER       | STREET ADDRESS    | DATES    | ARCHITECT/BUILDER | KEY FEATURES                              |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|---|
| Althans House       | Echo Glen Drive   | 1912-18  | George W. Brown   | exposed logs, large scale, asymmetrical   |
| Charles Baker House | Echo Glen Drive   | ca. 1920 | George Brown      | dove-tailed exposed logs                  |
| Irwin C. Katz House | Echo Glen Drive   | 1925     | George W. Brown   | exposed logs, massive stone fireplaces    |
| Sedgwick Estate     | off Berkshire Rd. | ca. 1915 | unknown           | exposed logs, other estate bldgs. present |
| Dr. B.D. Clem House | Echo Glen Drive   | 1912-18  | George W. Brown   | exposed log const.                        |

Most of these houses are located in a highly picturesque ravine setting on a winding trail known as Echo Glen Drive. These houses were all designed and constructed by George S. Brown, whose own stone house stands in this area. These houses all feature exposed log construction which is coated with creosote. Some have wood shingle trim in dormers and on side wings. All have rambling gable roofs with large overhangs, sometimes with exposed log purlins. All of these houses have massive rock-faced stone chimneys and have large fireplaces within.

George Washington Brown (1870-1964) was a remarkable figure in the history of Gates Mills architecture during the period following the turn of the century. He was a resident of Gates Mills.

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Gates Mills for 67 years. He was born in Jeffersonville, Indiana but moved to Cleveland at an early age, at least by the age of twelve. In his youth he trained to be a carpenter and practiced that trade in Cleveland. Brown spent some time at sea in the Bahamas as a young man and this nautical interest was said to have influenced the design of his porthole windows in various houses. Brown soon became involved in the business of developer and contractor. George Brown and his wife began to visit Gates Mills in 1900 at a place known as "Andy's Landing", the home of Andrew Lange at County Line and Ferry roads. He visited for picnics and vacation, but soon began building summer cottages for people. By 1905 he was able to build a large house for himself which still stands on Old Mill Road's east hill. This predominantly Shingle Style residence features a round corner tower with conical roof and distinctive cobblestone facing on the first floor, which is pierced by an unusual porthole window.

Brown's building style soon evolved into a more rustic mode. He built in the second decade of the century a series of Adirondack Rustic Style houses in the woods along a series of picturesque ravines reached from a trail known as Echo Glen. These houses feature exposed log construction and skillfully rustic stone work in the form of massive chimneys and large hearths. During the early decades of the twentieth century Brown took long sojourns from his building work to travel to the East Coast and to Europe. Perhaps as a result his work began to take on a more eclectic quality. In his most noteworthy creations, the gatehouse and bridge at Daisy Hill and the tower and lodge at the Drury Estate in Gates Mills, Brown borrowed heavily from medieval English precedents. However, Brown's masterful stonework was well established by the 1920's as his trademark. First, he used a special deep tan color sandstone obtained from a local quarry. His random ashlar rock-faced sandstone masonry can readily be identified.

Brown's building style had undergone a further evolution from the Adirondack Rustic Style to the English Tudor Revival Style by the 1920's. In 1920-22 he erected his second house near his 1905 Shingle Style house. This Cotswald cottage is heavily English in inspiration, with magnificent stonework, steeply pitched thatched roof and a host of medieval-inspired carvings and details. Brown designed and built several houses without architectural design assistance, including virtually all of his Adirondack Rustic Style houses, but the larger estates he worked on involved prestigious architects with whom the self-taught ~~and unformally trained~~ Brown had legendary disagreements which more than once led to his dismissal. By the time of his retirement from active practice, brought about partially by the Depression, Brown had attained a reputation in Gates Mills that few builders have established in any community. His success in his business and his world travels combined with his distinctive personality to make him one of the community's most talked about figures. A few years after his death in 1964 a book on his life and work was published by the Gates Mills Historical Society. To this day, Brown houses are recognized and treasured by the people of Gates Mills.

Adirondack Rustic Style houses by George Brown and others and Tudor Revival Style houses in Gates Mills were heavily dependant on the picturesque setting of Gates Mills for their effect. The influence of the natural landscape, with its steep ravines and dramatic vistas of the Chagrin Valley, were just as important as the architectural style of these residences in creating the desired country atmosphere. The houses were carefully sited for maximum effect, often with dramatic views of the Chagrin Valley.

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In 1925 the interurban line serving Gates Mills was discontinued. Several years later, the former interurban car barns on the west side of River Road north of Old Mill Road were demolished and became the site of the Gates Mills Town Hall. This Colonial Revival style building is erected in brick with white-painted wood trim. Designed by Walker & Weeks, it relates architecturally to the pre-Civil War Greek Revival farmhouses and cottages of the village by virtue of its story-and-a-half height with small attic windows, its Greek Revival-inspired door enframement and its rectangular massing.

In 1926 the area around the old settlement of Wilson Mills was annexed to the Village of Gates Mills, formed six years previously. This formally united two early mill towns which shared a common history of growth, economic decline and renaissance at the turn of the century as a summer resort, later a prestigious residential area. Larger estates were then constructed in the vicinity of Wilson Mills, such as the old Schmunk estate, dating from about 1930 and executed in stone in the Tudor Revival style. This was the residence of Robert J. Schmunk, mayor of Gates Mills from 1933-1945, who played an active role in the village's development and served on the county metropolitan park board. Also of note near Wilson Mills is the Severance Millikin estate, featuring a grand Tudor Revival mansion dating from about 1930 plus several noteworthy outbuildings, all on a large farm and wooded area with views of a spectacular ravine of a small stream which has cut through sandstone and shale in a highly picturesque manner, forming wooded glens and waterfalls.

Gates Mills enjoys the distinction of being one of Ohio's wealthiest communities, having a population with a high concentration of business and professional elite and featuring a rich architectural legacy of fine early twentieth century estates, including some of the larger and better-preserved examples in the Cleveland area. Gilmour Academy or the former Drury Estate was designed by architect Charles Schneider, who was also architect of Stan Hywet Hall in Akron. Like Stan Hywet, Gilmour Academy's Tudor Hall is an impressive large-scale estate executed in the Tudor Revival style. The size and scale of mansions like these were dependant on a high degree of wealth and a low-wage labor force, two factors which became less common after the Depression.

While several factors may be said to have shaped the development of Gates Mills as a prestigious community, such as the interurban, its development by a private land company linked with some of Cleveland's business leaders, the establishment of the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club which formed a social nucleus for residential development in much the same way as similar clubs promoted Newport and Narrangansett and other East Coast summer communities, and a location which just happened to be along a "line" of eastward migration which began with the decline of Euclid Avenue as Cleveland's prime residential area, topography and its natural setting is perhaps the community's greatest asset.

Gates Mills, Hunting Valley and Waite Hill are located in and near the picturesque Chagrin Valley in close proximity to one another and all have developed a reputation as being the most prestigious residential communities of the greater Cleveland area. In the latter two villages, similar factors propelled their development after the turn of the century, although Gates Mills had its start earlier due to the interurban. But Gates Mills has the added factor of an historic core which provided a theme to the development which would occur. More than these other communities, Gates Mills

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has fostered an image through its architecture of its New England roots. While there is still considerable architectural diversity in the community, its core area is a potent symbol and has influenced the design of new residences for years throughout the community.

The topography which dictated the location of the mills and thus the thriving pre-Civil War village, also made this an attractive summer destination for interurban travelers. Later, as people became more mobile, the decline of Gates Mills as a summer destination in favor of more remote and even more natural resort areas coincided with its increasing ease of access as a Cleveland suburban community.

Geological factors contribute to the picturesque character of the village. In this region a layer of relatively hard sandstone overlays a softer layer of shale. Rivers moving north toward Lake Erie generally move in broad shallow valleys until they undercut the sandstone, reaching the softer shale and eroding rapidly into deeper and steeper valleys. The Chagrin River does this at Chagrin Falls, noted for its scenery at the falls formed by the erosion of the sandstone. Thus, by the time the river reaches Gates Mills, it is in a deep valley. But its tributaries, generally small streams and creeks, must quickly pass through the sandstone layer and softer shale underneath in quick descents through spectacular gorges to meet the Chagrin River below. Some of these were developed in the early years with dams and millponds for water-powered mills, but generally there was not an adequate supply of water to sustain major operations on these streams. Some estates, such as the Severance Millikin Estate, developed these old dams as part of a picturesque series of ponds and spillways. The ravines and gulleys formed by these small streams frustrate high-intensity development, but instead have fostered well-sited, insulated residences often enjoying commanding views overlooking wooded ravines, sometimes spectacularly carved through the rust-colored sandstone. Thus, the unique scenery, a result of the special geological conditions of the Chagrin Valley, has played a pivotal role in the development of Gates Mills.

Growth and development in Gates Mills have not stopped but continue. Unlike traditional suburban communities where growth has occurred rapidly in an area then moves on after a neighborhood or a community is "built up", development continues to occur in Gates Mills, but through infill and subdivision of older estates. By about 1940, Gates Mills consisted of a series of large estates on the hillsides of the Chagrin Valley plus the historic core and isolated concentrations of former summer cottages. Since that time, some of the old estates have been subdivided with new streets and new Postwar houses on large, often wooded, semi-private lots. Sometimes this resulted in the destruction of the old estate main residence or sometimes these large old houses, which required numerous servants to maintain, were simply abandoned to succumb to fire or vandalism. Generally, many of the old estate houses still exist but newer houses have been discreetly sited among them, many times done in such a way as to not be visible from the former main house. The scenic topography and the wooded character of the Chagrin Valley facilitate the inconspicuous introduction of new houses. However, the early Postwar years saw the establishment of sizeable subdivisions where the new houses are prominently displayed and there are instances where the new house owner's desire for prominence has won out over the neighboring historic building owner's desire for maintaining the status quo.

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### II. Description (continued)

These Greek Revival style houses are representative of those found throughout the region. The principal exception from this period is the Gates Mills Community Church which, by virtue of its well-proportioned facade and exquisitely detailed tower, stands out as a prime example of the Greek Revival style in Northeastern Ohio. A sub-category of this building form is the Gothic Revival style cottage, which in Gates Mills appears rarely as a pre-Civil War cottage identical to its Greek Revival counterparts except that its roof is a little steeper and it has (or had) bargeboard trim and label lintels over the windows.

It has been noted in the historical development of Gates Mills that the existing Greek Revival buildings survived a period of economic decline to become the focal point for the revitalization of the community at the turn of the century. Because of their recognized charm, these houses were generally better treated than in other communities. Necessary enlargements and alterations were often carried out in a sympathetic manner. For example, while almost no true Greek Revival houses originally had dormers, most surviving examples in Gates Mills have dormers which were added after the turn of the century. These older dormers are usually harmoniously sited to preserve the original symmetry and have windows and trim details which are compatible with the original design. The great care taken in their design and the fact that such a consistent effort was made at an early point in the history of American preservation, before the restorations at Colonial Williamsburg, etc., to preserve the spirit and form of a pre-Civil War community adds to the significance of these buildings. Thus, the presence of a Greek Revival cottage in Gates Mills which has had enlargements and alterations is important to an understanding of how the community developed and therefore buildings should not be considered to be lesser examples because of these changes, provided they are sympathetic to the original character.

The late nineteenth century was a time when not many buildings were constructed in and around the settlement of Gates Mills. This is because the rural land around here was well settled and the mill industries in Gates Mills did not grow after the Civil War. Whereas in larger communities, the late nineteenth century styles reshaped the visual image of many towns, in Gates Mills, there was little noticeable effect. The few houses and the Wilson Mills church from this period take on added importance simply because of their rarity, due at least in part to the tendency after 1900 to prize the early buildings at the expense of their later and more elaborate followers. As Colonial Williamsburg ripped down examples which did not fit into the pre-1800 time frame, so too was there a general tendency in Gates Mills to "update" and classicize some of these more exuberant late 19th century buildings. Fortunately, in most instances, this has meant simply painting them all white to hide the detail, leaving the trim intact.

After the arrival of the Interurban in 1899, Gates Mills became more attractive to a different category of resident: the summer visitor. Middle-class cottages were clustered in groupings along the scenic Chagrin River and in the woods of the Chagrin Valley. These were originally simple wood structures and many have undergone drastic alterations to transform them into comfortable main residences. Another class of housing was built for the wealthy business and professional clientele attracted to Gates Mills. They built summer houses here which were large and impressive,

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II. Description (continued)

yet by the standards of the day, and certainly when compared with the primary residences in the city of their owners, these were fairly simple informal country houses. This informality was often achieved through wood, usually shingle siding and an irregular massing which evoked a picturesque feeling. The Shingle Style, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival styles were used for this type of building.

As the twentieth century advanced, the types of larger residences constructed in Gates Mills tended increasingly toward one of two types: those that were basically compatible with the Greek Revival cottages by their use of Colonial Revival forms or variations thereof such as Georgian Revival or Classical Revival, and those which tended toward the Tudor Revival style to relate more fully to their natural picturesque surroundings with masonry exteriors, steep roofs and a variety of windows arranged asymmetrically.

The following is a summary chart of the historic styles of architecture in Gates Mills:

| STYLE            | APPROX. DATES | NO. IN DISTRICT* | KEY FEATURES   |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|--|
| Greek Revival    | 1820-1870     | 49               | gable roofs, T-shaped plans, front entrances with pilasters, heavy entablatures with returns, symmetrical window placement   |
| Gothic Revival   | 1840-1870     | 4                | elaborate vergeboards, similar in form to Greek Rev. cottages  |
| Italianate       | 1860-1890     | 9                | broad bracketed eaves, hipped roofs, ornate porches, wood frame construction, window hoods   |
| Queen Anne       | 1880-1910     | 10               | complex rooflines, turrets, large porches, fishscale siding accents, wood frame construction   |
| Shingle Style    | 1900-1920     | 15               | larger scale, massive roofs, shingled exteriors, rubble stone foundations and accents, picturesque landscaping & siting  |
| Colonial Revival | 1900-1940     | 47               | larger scale and more complex detailing, yet sympathetic to earlier Greek Revival, clapboard siding, broad porches, dormers  |
| Bungalow         | 1900-1940     | 22               | small scale, 1½ stories, porches, summer occupancy, wood frame construction  |
| Tudor Revival    | 1910-1940     | 27               | steep roofs, half-timbering with stucco infill, English tile or slate roofs, massive chimneys with elab. chim. pots, casement windows, leaded glass, irregular massing |

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| STYLE                   | APPROX. DATES | NO. IN DISTRICT* | KEY FEATURES   |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|--|
| Adirondack Rustic Style | 1900-1930     | 6                | exposed log construction, broad gable roofs with overhanging eaves, massive stone fireplaces   |
| Georgian Revival        | 1920-1940     | 5                | usually brick or stone exterior, symmetrical facade, elaborate entranceway, fanlight windows, ornate dormer windows                              |
| Classical Revival       | 1910-1940     | 5                | often wood frame construction, but not derivative of the Greek Revival, two-story porticos, dormer windows, more elaborate than Colonial Revival |

\* - numbers taken from Ohio Historic Inventory forms prepared in 1989-1990 of all of the historic resources in Gates Mills

A number of the larger estates include clusters of outbuildings around them. These structures have architectural and historical significance. In at least several instances, the outbuildings are in a different style from the main residence and were designed by someone other than the architect of the main house. For instance, the outbuildings such as the gate house, tower, reading house of Gilmour Academy were designed and built by George W. Brown, although Charles Schneider was the architect of the main residence, Tudor Hall. The numerous outbuildings of "Sunshine Farms", the residence of Harvey Oppman, include several barns and former workers' cottages. These are stylish buildings but are of different styles than the main residence. The E.J. Kulas Estate has about thirty outbuildings of various sizes yet the principal ones such as the superintendent's lodge, are similar in style to the main residence. The more distant gardener's cottage is erected in brick, not stone and the chauffeur's cottage is in half-timbered stucco, but both are still examples of the Tudor Revival style. George Brown erected a number of outbuildings at his second residence on the East Hill several of which are quite substantially built stone buildings.

Also of significance are the agricultural outbuildings and these fall into two categories. Some are typical of their periods, for instance, a late nineteenth century rectangular bank barn with vertical siding. Sheds and other outbuildings are of no particular style, but because of their age and the fact that they have survived in this largely suburban area make them noteworthy. Several small barns, possibly carriage barns, exist in Gates Mills. The second category of outbuildings are those built for estates but which served utilitarian roles. Several sizeable barns exist at Gilmour, although these have been heavily remodeled for other uses. A large barn on the north side of Sherman Road east of County Line Road and part of the Newell estate is most impressive but its design seems purely utilitarian.

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Additional contributing aspects of the estates include the designed landscapes. Often the grounds were laid out in a calculated manner that produced scenic vistas from the interior and gradually unfolding views of the estate sites from the main drives. Structures built on estates include dams and bridges, creating scenic waterfalls, wood fencing found on the horse farms, and wood or stone decorative fences used to delineate boundary lines.

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### III. Significance (continued)

Late nineteenth century buildings of significance include the few rare Queen Anne and Italianate style residences and the one church building from this period, which coincides with a time of economic decline in the village. A much greater number of turn of the century and early twentieth century buildings exist in Gates Mills. These residences often possess large scale and are impressive examples of their style relative to other similar buildings from the period throughout Ohio, reflecting that these houses were built for some of the wealthier citizens of a major American city. These are interspersed with summer cottages, an isolated and somewhat rare building form in Ohio. Summer cottages are claimed to be a somewhat rare building form in Ohio because their specialized use tended to group them in isolated geographic locations. They were prevalent at key natural attractions, such as along Lake Erie, or they were at advantageous spots near larger cities. Gates Mills falls into this latter category since its natural setting, while noteworthy in the context of the Cleveland area, would not be at all unusual in vast areas of Southeastern Ohio, where vacation cottages were an isolated phenomenon in the early 20th century. Today, easy automobile access makes it possible for summer cottages to be more widely scattered rather than having to be a convenient distance from an interurban line.

Gates Mills also derives its significance from the major Cleveland-area architects and architects from the East Coast who designed some of its more prominent residences. The following chart is a partial listing of some of the significant architects:

| ARCHITECT(S)          | SELECTED GATES MILLS HOUSES   | OTHER NOTEWORTHY BUILDINGS  |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Walker & Weeks        | Frank Walker House, Town Hall, many house renovations                 | Cleveland Public Library, Federal Reserve Bank, Ohio Bell Bldg., Severance Hall |
| George Brown, builder | Brown House, Gilmour Academy outbuildings, several log houses in town | Daisy Hill Farm (Van Sweringen Estate in Hunting Valley)                        |
| Charles Schneider     | Gilmour Academy Tudor Hall  | Stan Hywet Hall, Akron: Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Bldg.                  |
| Charles Greco, Boston | E.J. Kulas Estate   | Temple on the Heights, Harvey Firestone Res., Akron                             |
| Munroe W. Copper, Jr. | Copper House, various house renovations, Community House              | designed over 2,000 houses, over 100 in Shaker Heights                          |

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III. Significance (continued)

Landscape architecture is significant to Gates Mills by virtue of the carefully designed landscapes of the large early twentieth century estates, which were established along the valley walls overlooking the historic community. Landscaped estates built during this period were a result of the tremendous amounts of wealth accumulated by industrial barons. Many of these estates feature main residences which are hidden from public view, carefully perched at the rim of the valley for magnificent views and whose vistas unfold to the traveller in an impressive and calculated way. Numerous twentieth century residences in Gates Mills exhibit such landscapes, making the community a study of early twentieth century large estate, picturesque landscape architecture.

Community Planning and Development is a noteworthy area of significance for Gates Mills because of its role as an early planned community. The Gates Mills Improvement Society played a large role in the development of the community. The presence of prominent Clevelanders who helped to oversee development through group efforts directed by the Improvement Society contributed greatly to the effectiveness of this group.

The agricultural significance of many of the estates highlight a distinct period of agriculture known as the gentleman farmer. These individuals maintained large estates with numerous agricultural outbuildings. Sometimes the food production on these estates was strictly for their own personal interest and consumption. Sometimes these individuals applied their talents toward innovations in agricultural production methods, such as horse breeding or dairy production.

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IV. Registration Requirements (continued)

For qualification under landscape architecture, estate grounds should evidence the formal vistas, calculated views of the dramatic topography, and built features such as the dams and outbuildings. The landscape should possess a high degree of integrity of setting, location, design and materials.

Properties nominated under Criterion A for their significance to community planning and development should possess a high degree of integrity of association, setting, location, and feeling. It is important that the planned areas of the community appear similar to the way they looked during the period of significance.

Properties nominated for their agricultural significance under Criterion A should possess a high degree of integrity of setting, association, feeling, and location. A sufficient number of outbuildings must be present to communicate the properties former function as an agricultural facility. Of chief importance are the buildings used for any agricultural experiments or studies.

Properties being considered under Criterion B should possess a high degree of integrity of design association, feeling, setting, location and design. The significant person should hypothetically still be able to recognize the structure. The individual must be significant within the historic context and the property must be shown to better represent the person's historic contributions than other properties association with the individual during their productive life.

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Buildings. However, since some non-contributing buildings lie within groupings of contributing buildings, it was necessary to include some within the proposed district.

The district boundaries were drawn to encompass the historic core of Gates Mills, largely confined to the Chagrin River valley, and to link, via historic open space, the two historic settlements at Gates Mills and Wilson Mills. The boundaries incidentally include some notable natural features such as gorges and woodland, but specifically exclude those features where there exists the potential for future development which might intrude on the overall historical character of the district.

Archival work consisted of a thorough search for written material on the history of the community, which is outlined in the bibliography. In addition, village records were also investigated. Perhaps most important in this process was the task of inventorying historic resources in the community, which was a prelude to this nomination. Knowledgeable individuals in the community whose longtime associations with the community and its historical personages provide an invaluable resource of unpublished data participated in the inventory of historic resources and are duly noted on the individual forms. These forms are also available at the Ohio Historic Preservation Office.

Historic contexts were developed after examination of historical material and were finalized at meetings of the historical subcommittee of the Gates Mills Architectural Board of Review. This consisted of meetings in which members' comments and input were solicited so that a consensus was achieved on the time-periods of the various eras and their duration.

Significant property types were developed from the inventory process. After the preparation of Ohio Historic Inventory forms, the various buildings were mapped and a master list prepared, indicating contributing and non-contributing buildings. This master list also noted the style of each building and its timeframe. Using this data base, it was possible to note the quantity of buildings present for a particular style and period and from this determine which styles and periods were of greater significance to Gates Mills.

Integrity requirements were based on the identifying features developed for the significant property types and take into account the relative rarity of each style, whether most or all of the key features of that style are readily observable in a particular example and the extent of alteration permissible for a style. For example, mention has been made of the presence of substantial 20th century alterations to Greek Revival residences which, due to their own historic significance and sympathetic character, do not detract from the significance of these buildings.