

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Historic Resources of Houston Heights

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Boundaries of Houston Heights-as platted and recorded in Map Records Vol. 1A, pp. 114-116.

N/A not for publication

city, town Houston N/A vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Harris code 201

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership (see continuation sheets)

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Clerk, Harris County Courthouse Annex

street & number

city, town Houston state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Preliminary survey of Houston Heights by Ellen Beasley, Preservation Planning Consultant has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Houston Heights Association, c/o Paul Carr, 720 Heights Blvd.,

y, town Houston state Texas 77007

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date (see Site no. 30)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

One of the first planned suburbs in the state, Houston Heights has retained its architectural and civic identity to an unusual degree. This has been accomplished in spite of its location in one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. The Heights presents a Whitman's Sampler of turn-of-the-century architectural styles. Several notable late-Victorian mansions and substantial early 20th-century public, ecclesiastical, and commercial buildings serve as the anchors of the neighborhood. Nevertheless, the real strength of the Heights rests in its wide array of essentially vernacular, middle-class, and domestic architecture of the period 1893-1932. The one- and two-story houses and cottages are usually of frame construction, and are executed in a variety of styles. Influences from the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, and Bungalow styles clearly dominate, but noteworthy examples of other styles likewise occur. Also to be seen are two schools and a fire station in Jacobethan Revival style; a bank, public library, and telephone exchange done in the Renaissance Revival mode; and several churches in Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles. Furthermore, in spite of tremendous pressure for development, the effects of several periods of decline, and a lack of zoning laws, the relationship of the buildings within Houston Heights has remained remarkably unchanged. A majority of the area being nominated as a multiple resource still consists of tree-lined streets of older residences, punctuated by occasional churches, schools, commercial buildings, and, regrettably, some modern intrusions. In all, one hundred five sites are included in the present nomination.

The large urban neighborhood of Houston Heights covers approximately 1750 acres slightly to the northwest of downtown Houston. Oscar Martin Carter, who was head of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company, chose this site for development in the early 1890s. He did so in part because of the area's proximity to the busy industrial center, and in part because the elevation there is a few feet higher than that of adjacent parts of Houston. The area is now densely populated, as a result of the original subdivision into 10,000 lots. Despite the size of the population and the growth of Houston in and around the Heights, the community retains a strong identity and something of the atmosphere of a small town. Carter planned the town with a basic grid pattern, focusing on a central boulevard divided by an esplanade. This grassy strip is still lined with palms, oaks, oleanders, magnolias, and other vegetation, and remains a visual and social focus for the neighborhood. The vegetation in all the Heights is exceptional, and it contributes greatly to the comfortable sense of community.

Topographically, the Heights is relatively flat, rising in elevation slightly toward the northwest. The major natural feature of the neighborhood is White Oak Bayou, which flows through the southern part of the proposed multiple-resource area. The slight elevation of Houston Heights above the downtown, as mentioned above, was considered a selling point at the time the area was first developed, along with the Heights' sandy soil, good drainage, and superior artesian water.

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The blocks and their constituent lots are layed out so that most buildings face east or west. An exception is the section west of Yale and north of W. 16th streets; in this area the orientation of houses is north-south, and there are many more lots per block than in the rest of the Heights. By varying the sizes of lots from block to block (and thus their prices), the planners established areas both for the monied and for the more impecunious. In this way, social and economic segregation was easily accomplished with the wealthier residents on major streets such as Heights Blvd., Harvard, or Allston, and the poorer families on less conspicuous streets such as Waverly or Oxford.

The first commercial development in the Heights, which was made to help attract new residents, was built by Carter along W. 19th in the vicinity of Ashland. Several one- and two-story buildings were constructed of frame or brick, and included a fine hotel which became a hospital in 1899. Although the original building at 19th and Ashland burned, several hospital buildings have subsequently been built on or near that site. The general area remains as one of the most active commercial strips in the neighborhood. Transportation both by railroad and by street railway, was extremely important to early development. The streetcars no longer run, but the track along Nicholson is still used by local industrie to shuttle goods between 2nd and Center streets below White Oak Bayou, and to reach the main railroad lines on 7th Street.

Carter boosted the Heights as a residential and industrial community, with provisions for a proper separation of these activities. Industries were early attracted, and several manufacturing plants, oil refineries, and mills were constructed in the 1890s. These were generally situated in the northwestern section of the Heights along Railroad (now Nicholson) St., or were connected to it by spurs. Of these often large industrial complexes only the network of structures at 2201 Lawrence (no. 83) remains completely intact. Although this large plant was occupied by several owners in the first few years following construction in 1883-94, it is most widely known as the Oriental Textile Mill. It is an extensive complex of two-story, brick, industrial buildings that currently are used to produce fiberglass. The most prominent feature is a four-story, square tower with a clock on each face.

The southwestern and northwestern sections of the Heights contain the industrial and heavy commercial elements of what was once a complete and independent little community. To supply the factories with workers, several small, frame cottages and shotgun houses were built along the tracks and in the northern and southwestern sections of the Heights. In those areas, blocks had been planned with smaller lots for just such a purpose. Because of their proximity to industry, much of these areas was made available to black families, who were otherwise excluded from owning property in the new, carefully planned suburb. Several of these early structures on the fringes of the Heights remain, although most have deteriorated or have been demolished and replaced by more modern low-cost housing. Two early shotgun houses on the grounds of 612 W. 26th (no. 80) are included in the nominati

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From the outset, the primary emphasis of the town was residential, not industrial. The Omaha and South Texas Land Company, headed by Carter, was not usually involved in the actual construction of homes, but it did commission the Houston Land and Trust Company to build a few elaborate residences along Heights Blvd. as a means of promoting the neighborhood. Thus the construction of fine, highly detailed houses began on the boulevard in 1893, with the Cooley House (demolished in 1968). Several such homes were built in the following decade, the finest extant example being the Milroy House at 1102 Heights Blvd. (no. 34). This frame residence of two-and-a-half stories was built in 1898 and follows the popular Queen Anne style. Its several gables and small, square tower are ornamented with round-butt shingles. This pattern is also followed on the awnings that overhang the upper windows. The porch, which wraps around both sides of the house, has turned posts, balusters, and fretwork. Such details were once quite common in the Heights and may still be seen intact on many of the earlier houses. Other notable examples of the Queen Anne style include the second Webber House at 1011 Heights (no. 38), and the Burnett House at 210 W. 11th (no. 76).

At the same time that the primary investors and other professionals were building prominent structures on the boulevard and on large corner lots on parallel streets, many not-so-wealthy people were building smaller, but equally ornate, cottages. They were primarily white-collar workers or skilled craftsmen who sought a comfortable suburb away from the city for their families. The Lund House, at 301 E. 5th (no. 104), built between 1896 and 1899, is a fine example of an early cottage built by such craftsmen. This frame house is simple in plan, is one-and-a-half stories high, and has a combination roof with a single lateral gable and a projecting gabled bay on the front. There is a decorative bargeboard on the front gable, and cutout brackets and dropped pendants on the three-sided bay. The attached porch is supported by turned posts.

Cottages similar to this one were built throughout the Heights during the 1890s, and a need was soon apparent for schools to serve the area. The first was the Cooley Elementary School, originally a two-room, two-story, brick structure at 17th and Rutland. This was modified several times and was rebuilt in the early 1960s. The second school was built in 1898 at 8th and Harvard as a one-room, frame building. This soon was expanded and eventually was replaced in 1911 by a two-story, brick schoolhouse. Harvard School was a dominant structure in the southeastern portion of the neighborhood, with additions in 1923 and 1979 taking up the entire length of the block. The original portion was demolished in 1980. Neither school is suitable for nomination.

A second major period of residential development in Houston Heights ran from about 1900 to 1910. During that decade, architectural styles began to change. Several families built scattered, large homes, but Victorian-style detail became less prominent and the desired form shifted from a narrow, two-story house to the lower and wider Colonial Revival

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cottage. An Example of the latter is the house at 1437 Waverly (no. 69). This frame house of one-and-a-half stories has a large dormer in the center of its hipped roof, while simple Doric columns support an attached porch extending across the front elevation. The ornamentation of the windows by the use of wooden tracery, and the presence of sidelights and transom around the door are all characteristics of this period.

Other styles of the early 20th century began to appear in the Heights in the years before the annexation of the neighborhood in 1918 into the City of Houston. Wealthy suburbanites continued to build elaborate homes on the tree-lined boulevard, which was finally paved with brick in 1911. An adaptation of the several prominent styles became popular for a while. A simple example of Prairie influence still can be seen today at 1448 Heights Blvd. (no. 23), while the detailed house at 1536 Heights Blvd. (no. 16) is a well-preserved illustration of Bungalow influence. This two-story house is of brick, and has a hipped roof with a small central dormer exhibiting three windows. The attached porch wraps around both sides of the house and is supported by tapered half-columns on brick piers. There is beveled glass in the front door and the sidelights.

Another interesting variation of the Bungaloid theme is the Banta House at 119 E. 20th (no. 2), an unusual brick-over-concrete dwelling with double gallery supported by tapering square portico. The Colonial Revival style is well represented by the Love-Phelps House at 1505 Heights Blvd. (no. 18), with its Roman Ionic columns and Palladian windows, and by the house at 1537 Tulane (no. 67), noted for its portico supported by giant fluted columns without capitals. Some of the most intriguing houses in the neighborhood are eclectic and almost defy stylistic analysis. These include architect Alfred Finn's Woodward House at 1605 Heights Blvd. (no. 12), a symmetrical stuccoed house with Mediterranean motifs; the house at 1443 Allston (no. 71), which reflects the influence of the Dutch Colonial Revival and other styles; and the house at 505 W. 18th (no. 89), with its steep lateral gable. It should be noted that few Heights structures appear to have been custom designed by architects. The majority were likely selected from popular, early 20th century architectural pattern books, or else designed and constructed by builders or developers.

The schools and churches that were organized in the neighborhood about this time contributed to the image of the area as a suitable place in which a family might live and grow. The structures built to house these organizations served a similar purpose with respect to the visual continuity of the community. Many such buildings were built in the mid-20s: Alexander Hamilton Junior High (no. 3, in Jacobethan Revival style), Reagan Senior High (no. 27, also Jacobethan Revival architecture), All Saints Catholic Church (no. 40, in Romanesque style), Immanuel Lutheran Church (no. 26, in Gothic Revival style), and the Heights Christian Church (no. 11, eclectic classical styling). Each of these is of brick and occupies a prominent corner site, or in the case of Hamilton School, an obvious location at the terminus of a street. The two schools have, unfortunately, had their windows replaced by smokey plate glass.

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As the population grew, so did the need for the municipal government to provide services to the people. In 1914, a two-story, red-brick fire station (no. 99) was constructed in Jacobethan Revival style at the northeast corner of 12th St. This also served as the city hall and jail during the years in which Houston Heights as an independent town. The building is used as a fire house today, and has been well preserved by the City of Houston.

The commercial buildings of the Heights proudly bespoke their purpose during that historic period in which American business and industry were all-important. They were often as simple as the small, frame filling station in operation since 1929 at 1400 Oxford (no. 97). It served (and serves) an important supporting function when Houston and the Heights evolved from their early dependence upon mass transportation toward the use of the automobile for individual mobility. There are several other early gasoline stations along Yale and Heights Blvd., but they are greatly altered or deteriorated, and not suitable for nomination.

The large Renaissance Revival structure, built in 1926-27 for the telephone company at 743 Harvard (no. 53), illustrates how large businesses could be sensitive to the communities in which they built. This square, three-story brick building might have appeared intrusive on many other corners in that section of the Heights. But with this particular placement, both the size and material of the structure complemented Harvard School (since largely razed) on the opposite corner. Further, the contrasting stone trim with its Renaissance-inspired details of cherubs, lions, and grapes (used often on commercial buildings of that period), contributes to the building's visual appeal.

The commercial strip at the southernmost section of Houston Heights, in the area once known as Chaneyville, is a principal example of the Heights development during that prosperous era. This strip connected the primarily residential community with downtown Houston. Outstanding among the row of commercial buildings, the fine structure at 3620 Washington Ave. (no. 87) which housed first the Citizens State Bank and then the Heights State Bank, provides an impressive entrance to the neighborhood. This solid, Renaissance Revival structure of two-and-a-half stories is built of brick and gray stone, with stone detailing at the cornice and a carved medallion in the center bearing the initials "C.S.B." Corinthian columns flank the recessed entrance with its tall archway and iron gates. After many successful years as a financial institution, it has recently been adapted for use as a nightclub.

It is unfortunate that Heights' builders during the decades since the 1920s have not always been as attentive to the esthetic values of the community as were their earlier counterparts. As the population became generally more mobile, much of the sense of the human scale was lost on the major arteries of transportation in and around the Heights--on

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N. Shepherd, W. 11th St., White Oak Blvd (6th St.), IH-10, and IH-610. Intrusions to the usual scale and style of the area mostly occur as structures found in strips along these major streets and highways, on the fringes of the neighborhood, or in a few very concentrated sections. Also, as the original restrictions in deeds expired, some smaller homes were built in vacant spaces among large houses, even on Heights Blvd. And in recent years, several of the finest original single-family homes have been demolished and replaced with multi-unit apartment complexes of unesthetic design and poor construction. Some small businesses, usually of concrete block, have likewise been built with little respect for the materials or the proportions of the residential structures around them. Other sections of the Heights, particularly in the northwestern industrial area, experienced modern residential development during the housing boom after World War II. A few long, brick, ranch-style houses of the 1950s and '60s dot the neighborhood.

Despite these problems, there has been a positive change in the appearance of the Heights and in the attitude of its residents during the past decade. Such changes have led to the revitalization of many such inner-city neighborhoods. Individuals, both long-term residents and newcomers, began to improve many of the deteriorating residences. Houses that had been allowed to crumble slowly, as many of the original occupants died, have been returned to their earlier condition, and again display fine turn-of-the-century details. Sensitive development is being encouraged, especially in areas that are already endangered. Southwestern Bell Company recently constructed a building of contemporary design on Heights Blvd., adjacent to the building at 743 Harvard. Although modern, the materials and scale are in keeping with the surrounding structures, and the grounds are landscaped to help keep the building from appearing intrusive. Another example of sensitive design is found in the cluster of modern town-houses at 1012-1018 Heights Blvd. These two-story, frame buildings are also landscaped to blend more easily with the earlier homes. Details and colors compatible with the surrounding turn-of-the-century houses make this camouflage even more effective.

Efforts such as these have been made throughout Houston Heights to maintain the comfortable, residential atmosphere traditionally found in the neighborhood. As regards land use, the area is approximately 89 percent residential, 8 percent commercial, and 3 percent industrial. A few sections have problems, but these are mostly cosmetic and can be remedied. The close proximity of the houses, the large trees that overhang the narrow streets, the well-kept yards, the sidewalks (which were often not included in such early suburbs)--all help preserved a scale that welcomes pedestrians. Except for the esplanade, which is actively used for jogging and walking, there are few open spaces which can serve as parks. The Houston Heights Association, however, has recently begun developing two pocket parks.

The initial windshield survey of the entire area known as Houston Heights was conducted in June and July of 1979, by Ellen Beasley, preservation consultant based in Galveston,

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Texas, and by Kathy London, project assistant. During this survey, each structure in the area was evaluated and marked on large field maps as "significant," "possibly significant," "contributing," or "compatible" to the character of the neighborhood, or as "detracting" from it. After a careful evaluation of these maps through several visits to the area for further inspection, and after a preliminary study of local history, over a hundred structures were determined to be of individual significance to the community. They serve as examples of the kinds of buildings that were constructed in the neighborhood, or are buildings with strong historical associations with that development. Searches of both primary and secondary literary sources were conducted, and more detailed research (i. e., the tracing of deeds, and the consultation of city directories and newspaper files) was done for the significant buildings and the people associated with them. A survey form of the Texas Historical Commission was completed for each significant structure and photographs were taken. No archeological surveying or testing was done. On July 11 and 12, 1982, a second windshield survey was made of the Heights area by Peter Flagg Maxson of the Texas Historical Commission and by Clayton Lee, a lifelong resident of the Heights. Virtually all sites being nominated were revisited, and properties which had been significantly rehabilitated or remodelled, which had become deteriorated or otherwise changed since the initial Beasley/London survey, were rephotographed to insure that nomination photographs accurately portray existing conditions.

Within the Houston Heights there are approximately 8,000 structures, of which 104 are nominated herein to the National Register of Historic Places, in addition to the nomination of Heights Blvd. (item no. 105). Several other structures, or clusters of structures, may someday be nominated when additional reserach and/or sympathetic rehabilitation is done, and the possibility exists that an "historic district" may be defined and nominated within the Heights.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1893-1932

Builder/Architect

Developer: Omaha & South Texas Land Company

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The City of Houston, Texas, is generally regarded as one of the great boom cities of the later 20th century. Indeed, most visitors to the Astrodome, N.A.S.A. Space Center, or the soaring office buildings little suspect the existence of a relatively intact turn-of-the-century residential neighborhood just northwest of the central business district. Houston Heights, however, is unique in the city of Houston for various reasons. To begin with, it has a strong individual identity and its own history, having been a separate, incorporated community from 1896 to 1918. It has had its own churches, philanthropies, commerce, and industry, its own systems of transportation and education. Much more than Houston as a whole, the Heights has had a strong continuity of ownership, and a firm sense of identity and camaraderie. These are reflected today in the strong neighborhood association of old and new residents, dedicated to the preservation and rehabilitation of the Heights. Furthermore, the fabric of the Heights area is different from that of other older areas of town, and is more cohesive. It was arguably the first planned suburb of Houston, and its landscape and architecture still strongly evoke its early 20th-century appearance. In spite of pressures for real-estate development, a gradual half-century decline in the neighborhood, and the fact that Houston is the only major city in the country without zoning laws, buildings have survived which are significant in many fields, including architecture, commerce, communications, community planning, education, industry, politics, religion, and the humanitarian field.

The decade of the 1890s was an exciting period of development for Americans. Towns were becoming cities; cities were expanding. In Texas, this was especially true as many speculators drew people from other states. The Houston area attracted thousands of these adventurers, and it was in this climate that Houston Heights began. The new town was planned and promoted by men from Nebraska, and it supplied the housing needed for the growing population of the crowded city. Similar "streetcar suburbs" across the country were often swallowed as the urban areas expanded and grew around them. Although the Heights was annexed by Houston in 1918, the flavor of the neighborhood was firmly established and is still very much in evidence today. In a major city that has no zoning laws, it is especially significant that this residential community retains relatively intact its collection of late 19th and early 20th-century dwellings, as well as its strong neighborhood identity. During the last decade, the Heights has experienced a resurgence as Houstonians and newcomers re-evaluate the advantages of inner-city living.

The land upon which O. M. Carter and his Omaha and South Texas Land Company developed their new town had long been important to the area of the city of Houston. This section of southeastern Texas was first occupied by Indians of the Coastal Plains. Although a Spaniard had visited the area in the early 16th century, it was not until 1745

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that the French from New Orleans and the Spanish began to vie for control of the region. At that time, the area that included much of Houston Heights was controlled by Chief Canos of the Orcoquisacs. This chief successfully played the two European powers against one another for many years.

In the early 19th century, as Americans began to settle the region, grants of land were given to many of the pioneers by the Mexican government. The tracts of land that were awarded at that time to John Richardson Harris and John P. Austin would eventually become the city of Houston after Texas won independence as a Republic. Harris had established a thriving port on Buffalo Bayou by the time the war began, and a town, Harrisburg, had grown around it. This was burned immediately before the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, but was rebuilt after the war. Shortly after the Revolution, the town of Houston was laid out on the bayou above Harrisburg, and began its period of steady growth. Speculation on this land began when the Allen Brothers, John and Augustus, acquired most of the Austin League and began promotion of this town in the wilderness, named after Sam Houston. The rapidly growing town served as the capital of the Republic until 1839. It was during this period, when provisions were scarce and expensive, and housing was an even greater problem, that the series of yellow fever epidemics began in which the high area north of the White Oak Bayou first became important to the settlement. With each new outbreak of the disease, anxious residents sought to escape the source. Thus a community of tents appeared on the opposite side of the bayou from Houston in the region that would later become Houston Heights.

The importance of Houston as a trading center grew rapidly as the movement of Americans westward increased. The population swelled dramatically after the Civil War with a great influx of black people from the South; and the lack of adequate housing again aggravated a major bout with yellow fever in 1867. The period from 1874 to 1890 brought tremendous commercial expansion to Houston as Buffalo Bayou was made more navigable and the construction of the Houston Ship Channel was begun. The city began to function more and more as a port. Another means of transportation that greatly affected the city during that era was the railroad. By 1890, Houston had grown to be a principal center for the railroads in Texas.

As trade and the transportation business grew, and as technology provided new methods of transportation, the need for housing increased for those who participated in this booming commerce. Creative investors such as Oscar Martin Carter recognized the desire of the growing middle class to move away from the noise and dirt of the crowded city. Thus in the 1880s and 1890s, plans were made for several new suburban developments, of which Houston Heights remains by far the largest and the most intact. Carter came to Houston from Nebraska in 1887. He had been involved in banking and real estate in that state and in Colorado, and his move to Texas followed the organization of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company. The company began purchasing about 1,750 acres of what was to become the Heights in 1891, and made over \$500,000 worth of improvements before offering lots for sale in 1892.

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The blocks were carefully arranged, some principal streets were covered with shell, and a waterworks was established. Scattered open spaces were planned to supplement the 60-ft.-wide esplanade on Heights Blvd. The trees and other natural features that now line the streets and make the scenery so pleasant were planned and planted during that early period of preparation. Carter also built a commercial strip at 19th and Ashland and arranged for stores to be opened there to attract new residents. As was common in most promotional towns, he built a grand hotel (destroyed by fire, 1915) in which prospective buyers could stay as they inspected the area.

During this time, Carter also acquired the Houston City Street Railway Company and converted it into the Houston Heights Street Railway, with its track providing easy access to Houston from all sections of the Heights. This provided transportation for the majority of the area's residents who were not employed by factories in the neighborhood, but worked in Houston. The right-of-way ran northward on the east side of Heights Boulevard, turning west on W. 19th St., then south on Railroad to W. 17th, and back to the west side of the boulevard running south. This track thus encircled the original commercial area of the Heights and placed the focus of the neighborhood on Heights Blvd.

The first lots to be sold in the new town were bought in 1893 by Silas D. Wilkins, one of the carpenters for the Omaha and South Texas Land Company who had helped to ready the area for residents. Shortly thereafter, he built a home at 1541 Ashland (no. 65), and later became the second postmaster of the Heights. The Panic of 1893 delayed the sale of lots somewhat, but by the time of the U.S. Census of 1900, the Heights had a total population of 800. It was not until 1896 that the community became incorporated as a "village," and assumed its own municipal government.

The first residence to be built on Heights Blvd. was appropriately the home of one in the original group of investors, D. D. Cooley. This landmark of the Heights was built in 1893 as an example of the type of house to be built on the grand street, and was demolished in 1968 to the chagrin of all who remember it. Cooley had come to Houston with Carter in 1887 to be the first general manager of the real estate office of the Omaha and South Texas Land Company. From the beginning, he was extremely interested in making education easily available to the residents. He helped establish the first schools, including one for black children, and the first elementary school was named for him. In addition to land, Cooley had financial interests in oil, rice, and insurance. The entire Cooley family was active socially in the neighborhood. Mrs. Cooley donated the land upon which the club-house for the Houston Heights Woman's Club (no. 6) was built. Their descendants remain influential in Houston today in medicine and business.

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John Milroy was the member of the "first five citizens," as the original group of investors was called, who was perhaps the most influential in the actual sale of lots and the movement of residents into the area. After gaining experience in real estate in the Northwestern U.S., Milroy moved to Houston in 1893 to join Carter and his company. He and his family first lived in the fine house at 1602 Harvard (no. 8), but in 1897 they moved into the large, intricately detailed home at 1102 Heights Blvd, (no. 54) which is listed as a Registered Texas Historical Landmark and in the National Register of Historic Places (1980). For 20 years, Milroy was the general agent of the Houston Heights Office of Carter's company, assuming the power of attorney to all lands owned by O. M. Carter in Texas in 1906. Of equal importance were his eight terms as mayor of the municipality of Houston Heights beginning in 1899. His children were also very active in the community, and his older daughter, Helen, was widely associated with philanthropic and charitable groups. It is interesting to note that this man, who had been so instrumental in the initial success of the Houston Heights, lived for only a few months after its annexation by Houston in 1918.

The first mayor of the Heights was William G. Love, who served from the incorporation as a village in 1896 until 1899. His greater service to the Heights, however, was as its legal advisor. He was also appointed District Attorney for Harris and Galveston counties in 1907, and was elected to that position in the next year, serving until 1910. The large, square house at 1505 Heights Blvd. (no. 18), with its classical detailing on the porch and delicately ornamented windows, was the home of Mayor Love until his death in 1926. It has recently been restored as a residence and real estate office.

Although he was mayor of the Heights for six years, David Barker was primarily an investor in real estate. He was president (1924-42) of the Park Place Company that developed a large subdivision east of Houston. During his administration in Houston Heights (1907-13), several major improvements were accomplished. Heights Blvd. and several other streets were paved, schools were constructed, and the first fire station was built. The census figures of 1910 show an increase since 1900 of more than 6,000 people. These improvements were funded through bonds made possible by a charter from the State of Texas, in 1911, that granted the town of Houston Heights the emergency power to tax. After proving his ability to handle public funds, Barker was elected county commissioner in 1914. As such, he ordered construction of the first concrete roads to be built in Harris County. And from 1928 until 1936, he served as the Land and Tax Commissioner of Houston. His well-preserved house at 116 E. 16th (no. 10) is a lasting reminder of the man who contributed much to his immediate community and the entire city.

The home of the Heights' fourth mayor, R. F. Isbell, also survives at 639 Heights Blvd. (no. 56). It is noteworthy in that it features a large second-floor room designed specifically to accommodate public meetings. The last mayor of the Heights was

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James Marmion, who served from 1914 till annexation in 1918. His primary concern was in creating parks for the little town, although probably the most prominent event during his administration was the dedication of the new fire station and city hall at Yale and W. 12th (no. 99). In fact, Marmion is the only mayor of Houston Heights without a home in the present nomination. The survival of the homes of four mayors, a mayor pro-tempore (house no. 32), and the old fire station and waterworks (no. 88) is quite unexpected in an area of the state beset with much change. It was during Marmion's administration that the citizens of Houston Heights acknowledged that they could no longer supply a proper tax revenue to provide for the education for their children. It seems that the principal issue leading to annexation was the inadequacy of the local school system.

The importance of this issue is a good indication of the orientation of the community as a neighborhood for families. From the outset of this project, Carter planned the Heights as a modest suburb. There were a few land-dealers, such as William A. Wilson, who acted as investors and developers in the area but, in general, Carter sought to prevent speculation. His advertisements and his methods of promotion do not appear to have been aimed at the very wealthy, but at the growing class of white-collar workers, young professionals, and the skilled craftsmen of the working class. His philosophy has been maintained in practice by the residents over the years, whether consciously or not. The social and economic make-up of the present Houston Heights probably is quite similar to that of the Heights of 1915. The early occupants of the large, fanciful homes along the Heights Blvd. were often doctors, lawyers, or dealers in real estate. The grand, turn-of-the-century house at 1802 Harvard (no. 5) was owned by a series of successful real estate men in its first years, including Henry P. Mansfield, Allen Kincaide, and Alexander Peddie. Dealing in real estate was a popular and prosperous profession at that time. John E. McDonald, 1801 Ashland (no. 90), and C. L. Sumbardo, 1101 Heights Blvd. (no. 36), are two more examples of early residents of the Heights with profitable careers of dealing in land.

New industries were developing at the turn of the century in the area of Houston and the Gulf Coast with oil, gas, and shipping; and Carter planned a portion of the Heights to attract some of that industry. Cotton mills, textile factories, and oil refineries appeared in the area during the initial years of development. One factory, the Oriental Textile Mill (no. 83), even developed an area of about four blocks near the plant as "Factory Village," a clustering of small houses for the workers. These houses have now been replaced by more industries.

The greater portion of the Heights was residential, however; and as the Heights grew, it was not uncommon for a new resident to use the skills of his trade to build a home for his own family in addition to those he built professionally. An example of

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such craftsmen was Samuel Webber, a brickmason. In 1903, he built a house at 407 Heights Blvd. (no. 60). A few years later, as his craft improved and he became more prosperous, he built a second house, at 1011 Heights Blvd. (no. 38). This is much larger than his first, with such features as a round tower and a porte-cochere in addition to more intricate detailing in the brickwork. Smaller, more modest cottages were also built by resident-carpenters and other members of the building trade. The popular, L-shaped cottage was the most common form in the early years. After about 1910, the trend shifted to 20th-century styles, with several varieties of bungalows. The architecture of Houston Heights clearly indicates the kinds of people who settled the area.

Expansions in the Heights paralleled advances of business and industry in Houston. The new commercial opportunities provided more people the prosperity to own homes. The majority of the early residents of Houston Heights belonged to this new middle class, and most of the homes in the neighborhood are styles of buildings found in the popular publications of that era: bungalows, two-story squares, etc. The first occupants of such houses were often bookkeepers, drillers of oil wells, teachers, or small businessmen. It was extremely important for such people to be part of a community such as the Heights. The green, open spaces in which children could play, the schools, the churches, the social and civic clubs were all necessary elements. One of the most important of such organizations in the Heights was the Houston Heights Woman's Club. It was established in 1911 by the merger of several other, more specialized groups. The club built a small, bungalowoid clubhouse at 1846 Harvard (no. 6) in 1912, which still serves as the headquarters for the group. The purposes of the club include social work and charity, as well as educational instruction and cultural events. In addition to the Woman's Club, there were several more-exclusive groups in the area with which the residents, particularly the women, could affiliate. Notwithstanding the selectivity of the membership of some clubs, all were very active in the community. Groups of mothers provided hot lunches at the elementary schools for many years.

The churches of a community were also of great importance during that period, contributing to the town's image of respectability. Houston Heights voted "dry" in 1912, and much of it remains so in 1980. The religious life of the neighborhood was also an important part of the social activities.

Education was a high priority among the leaders of the Heights from the beginning. Two elementary schools were constructed by 1900, to serve the northern and eastern sections of the Heights, and a high school was built in 1904 (that burned 20 years later). A few additions were made to these schools while Houston Heights existed as a separate municipality; but major new construction did not occur until after annexation of the town by Houston. New schools were built in the 1920s and a library was constructed at 1302 Heights Blvd. (no. 29). The fine curves and ornamentation that grace this building are atypical of the neighborhood and make it a truly significant structure. In 1979, an addition of stucco and glass was constructed, and the library was remodeled. This facility still serves as a cultural center of the community much as it did in the 1920s.

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The city of Houston grew tremendously following World War I, partly because of the deepening of the ship channel and expansion of the petroleum and chemical industries. A major result of this was the extension of several major streets and highways and, in later years, the construction of new interstate highway systems. These routes have been both detrimental and helpful to the Heights. Although providing easier access into the area, encouraging more development, and causing major commercial strips to form along primary arteries, the highways have generally respected and followed the original boundaries of the Heights, and have helped provide a buffer zone for the area. Heights Blvd. runs through the center of the neighborhood and continues to be the focus of movement and activity within the community.

Eventually, as happened in many inner-city neighborhoods, more commercial and industrial interests began to creep into the area after World War II. In a city without zoning laws, it has been doubly difficult and challenging for communities such as the Heights to remain intact. As long-term residents move away or die, the land is often developed by interests that are insensitive to the community into which they are moving. Even areas that remain residential decline as many of the houses become rental property. This phenomenon has been a problem in Houston Heights, but the strong identification of the residents and of the local businessmen with the community has helped limit intrusions to the fringes and to certain concentrated areas.

A major factor in the protection of the atmosphere of the neighborhood, and in the revitalization of the area in recent years, has been a strong, Heights-based financial power. The first of the local banks, Citizens State, built an elaborate building on Washington St. in 1925 (no. 87) as a cluster of other commercial buildings was being constructed in that block. This fine structure, which later became the Heights State Bank, still provides a touch of grandeur as one enters the Heights from the south.

The pattern of promotion, booming growth, uncertainty, and decline that was experienced by Houston Heights is similar to that of many inner-city neighborhoods. Also similar has been the rejuvenation of the area in the 1970s. A major reason for the success of the work done to save this endangered area is the strong sense of community. The efforts began with people who were returning to childhood homes, and with long-term residents who had always identified themselves as citizens of the Heights and suddenly realized that their community needed help. Many Heights residents are elderly and have lived here all their lives. Their dedication to the community has had a strong influence in the area's stability.

While the City of Houston is generally considered one of the most transient in the United States, the Heights boasts unusual longevity of ownership in many structures. Homes of the Mulcahy (no. 41), Doyle (no. 45), Countryman (no. 51), Zagst (no. 86),

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Kleinhaus (no. 101), Allbach (no. 1), Borgstrom (no. 24), Burnett (no. 76), and Knittel (no. 94) families, as well as the Schauer filling station (no. 97), have had the same owners since their time of construction, or until quite recently. Family occupancies of 25 or 50 years are not unusual in other buildings of the Heights. It should also be noted that while the Heights lost a quarter of its population after 1950, the trend was reversed by 1975, and the neighborhood has been growing.

The Houston Heights Association was organized in 1974, and has been an energetic force in restoring pride in the neighborhood, as well as in renovating many of the buildings. Demolition of a few key structures, especially landmarks on Heights Blvd., saddened and stirred up those who remembered the earlier years. The Association has sought to draw attention to some of the early heritage of the area by placing small, wooden gazebos on certain sites along the esplanade, and by sponsoring annual croquet matches and tours of homes. Also, work throughout the area is being done privately by individuals who want to preserve their homes and the community as they were originally intended to be. Interestingly, a strong concern for the history of the Heights led the local association to reprint and expand Sister M. Agatha's History of the Houston Heights (1956). Tremendous public response to the second printing in 1975 has led to a third in 1976 and a fourth in 1981.

The plan of the town has never changed. Although each building includes details that are unique to it, these are but variations on common themes. The similarity in scale, materials, and setback provide a visual unity to the streetscapes. The rich landscaping enhances the comfortable atmosphere of this relatively quiet community within the busy city. The railroad still passes through the area as a visible (and audible) reminder of the period in which the Heights was begun. Also, the views of the skyline of Houston from some crossings are remarkable, if one cares for such things.

The diverse, yet compatible, architecture of Houston Heights illustrates the social mixture of the neighborhood. The combination of industrial, commercial, and residential structures remains today in a balance not far from that originally planned by Carter. The expansion of the medical facilities near W. 19th and Ashland, which originated in 1899 with the Houston Heights Hospital and Texas Christian Sanitarium, helps make the Heights a more self-sufficient community. In many ways, the area can still be identified as the town of Houston Heights, an area whose resources illustrate the latest proposed criteria for nominations to the National Register: It is a neighborhood with "...vernacular popular, (and) traditional building design, landscape architecture, (and) urban design or planning ..." that "had an important influence on the historic ... appearance and development of the State, region, (and) community"

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Records of Harris County Vol. 1A, pages 114-16 on May 5, 1905. Also included is the section of the Heights subdivided and platted as Forest Park by P. M. Granberry in 1901 (Blocks 308-312, 317-323). These boundaries begin on Washington just east of Harvard and proceed westward to the alley west of Yale including both sides of Washington, then northward to the White Oak Bayou. From here, the limits follow the Bayou to a point 279 ft. west of the west line of Railroad St., thus including the west side of Herkimer. The line then runs northward to the north line of W. 16th, which it then follows to a point approximately 560 ft. west of Durham. This is the most western boundary, which extends northward to the northwest corner of the John Austin Two League Tract, what is now the North Loop West (I-610). This most northern boundary then runs eastward to Yale, including both sides of that street as it proceeds southward to the south line of 23rd St.. Along that line, it extends eastward once again to a point 215 feet east of the east line of Oxford. The eastern boundary then runs southward to the White Oak Bayou. It follows the bayou westward to a point just east of the east side of Harvard, and then proceeds southward to the starting point.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property see site forms

Quadrangle name Houston Heights, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	2	6	8	6	2	0	3	3	0	0	2	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	5	2	6	8	9	0	0	3	2	9	5	2	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	5	2	6	6	6	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	5	2	6	6	6	0	0	3	2	9	5	3	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The outer boundaries of the multiple resource area are the boundaries of the original plat and subdivision of Houston Heights as signed by O.M. Carter on October 1, 1892, filed for record on April 18, 1905, and recorded in Map (continued).

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Houston Heights Association (edited by Lee Johnson and Peter Flagg Maxson)

organization Houston Heights Association

date April 1981, February 1983

street & number 720 Heights Blvd.

telephone (713) 864-8960

city or town Houston

state Texas 77007

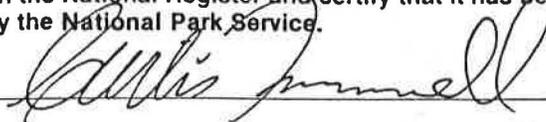
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11 April 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

