

Maple Heights Conservation District

The Maple Heights Conservation District qualifies for local designation under the following highlighted criteria found in Ordinance 95-20 of the Municipal Code (1): a, c (2): e and f.

(1) Historic:

- a. **Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation; or is associated with a person who played a significant role in local, state, or national history; or**
- b. Is the site of an historic event; or
- c. **Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the community.**

(2) Architecturally worthy:

- a. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type; or
- b. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the community; or
- c. Is the work of a designer of such prominence that such work gains its value from the designer's reputation; or
- d. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or
- e. **Contains any architectural style, detail, or other element in danger of being lost; or**
- f. **Owing to its unique location or physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood or the city; or**
- g. Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

Case Background

The Maple Heights Neighborhood Association has met the criteria required to be designated as a conservation district. According to Ordinance 95-20, the proposed district only needs to meet one (1) of the ten (10) criteria listed in the ordinance to qualify for historic designation. A “May 2018” newsletter was sent out to all property owners within the proposed conservation district boundaries. The newsletter contained information about the impact of conservation status on the neighborhood and invited property owners to attend upcoming public meetings. Three public information meetings were held on May 15, 20, and 24 of 2018. A complete application form for historic designation was received by HAND staff on May 16, 2018, and the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC) held a special meeting on June 7, 2018 to hear the Maple Heights Conservation District proposal. At this meeting the BHPC voted 7-0 to approve the boundary map and staff report, and forward the application to City Council. The BHPC also approved a motion to place the proposed district under interim protection until the application and map are approved or denied by City Council.

Historic Surveys and rating historic properties:

The City of Bloomington uses historic surveys that identify properties that may be worthy of historic designation. The survey rates properties as being “Non-Contributing”, “Contributing”, “Notable”, or “Outstanding”. A “Non-Contributing” rating may be given if the structure is less than fifty years old, has been heavily altered, or has been demolished leaving a vacant lot. The “Contributing” rating may be given if the property is at least 40 to 50 years old, is not heavily altered, or does not meet the criteria for an "Outstanding" or "Notable" rating. Such resources may be important to the density or continuity of the area's historic fabric, and the removal or alteration of contributing structures can have a detrimental impact on the area’s historic integrity. Contributing structures can be listed on the National Register only as part of an historic district. A “Notable” property means that the property does not merit the outstanding rating, but it is still above average in its importance. A “Notable” structure may be eligible for the National Register. The ratings of non-contributing, contributing, and notable are given to the properties inside the Maple Heights Conservation District. There are no properties rated as outstanding.

The first historic resource survey was completed for the Maple Heights neighborhood in 2008 by historic preservation consultant Danielle Bachant-Bell. This survey data was added to the City of Bloomington Survey of Historic Sites and Structures and is reflected in the City GIS system under the 2001 Survey Overlay. In 2015 a historic resource survey was completed for the city of Bloomington under the direction of the Indiana Department of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA). Known as the 2015 SHAARD survey, this city-wide survey only partially surveyed the Maple Heights neighborhood. In fact, only fifty-three (53) out of the 119 properties within the boundary of the proposed Maple Heights Conservation District were actually surveyed in the 2015 SHAARD, excluding many historic properties from an important state inventory of historic structures. If the property is not surveyed it must be listed as “Non-Contributing”. In 2018 Bloomington Restoration Inc (BRI) was contracted by the City of Bloomington to resurvey the properties surveyed in the 2015 SHAARD survey due to local disagreement regarding many of the SHAARD survey ratings.

There are several differences between the 2015 SHAAARD and the BRI Resurvey in the Maple Heights neighborhood. The following properties were downgraded by BRI from contributing to non-contributing due to heavy alteration: 1004, 1014 N. Jackson, 509 W. 13th, and 803 N. Maple. 715 and 717 N. Maple were also downgraded from contributing to non- contributing because they have been demolished. 823 N. Maple was upgraded from contributing to notable because of its age and integrity. Both staff and the BHPC agree that the updated ratings assigned by the 2018 BRI Resurvey are the most accurate and current rating of the housing stock in the Maple Heights neighborhood.

The survey ratings listed in this staff report are a combination of the 2008 Maple Heights neighborhood survey and the 2018 BRI Resurvey. The goal was to be as thorough as possible while listing the most recent survey rating available for each property.

Properties located within the proposed Maple Heights Conservation District boundaries (119):

West 11th Street: 701, 702, 702 ½, 708, 709, 712, 719, 720, 801, 800-812;
West 12th Street: 600, 606, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 619, 621, 708, 709, 713, 720, 723, 801;
West 13th Street: 412, 420, 500, 501, 502, 505, 508, 509, 512, 517, 522, 523, 615, 619, 620, 622, 623, 625, 626, 702, 705, 709, 712, 714, 715, 720, 721;
West 15th Street: 409, 410, 512, 514, 516;
North Maple Street: 633, 634, 639, 715, 717, 803, 807, 813, 823, 901, 905, 909, 910, 911, 912, 916, 917, 918, 919;
North Fairview Street: 714, 715, 721, 721 ½, 800, 802, 914, 915, 916, 917, 917 ½, 927, 931;
North Jackson Street: 811, 812-814, 815, 817, 819, 903, 907, 914, 915, 924, 925, 927, 928, 933, 938, 939, 940, 943, 943 ½, 944, 1002, 1004, 1014, 1020, 1022, 1024, 1106, 1108, 1110.

*Red highlight = vacant lots

Properties listed as notable on the historic survey¹ (1)

North Maple Street 823.

Properties listed as contributing on the historic survey (81):

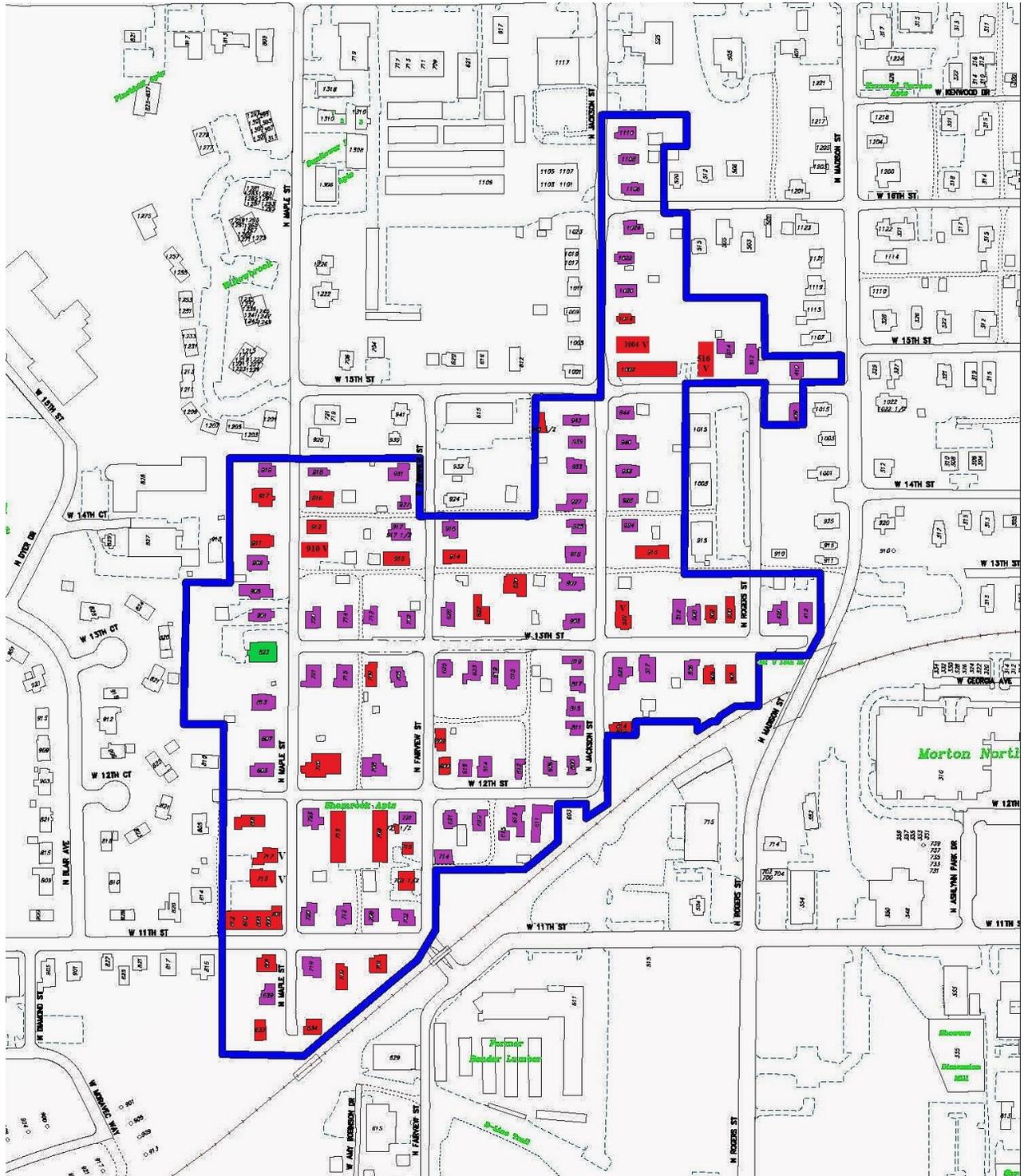
West 11th Street: 702, 708, 712, 719, 720.
West 12th Street: 600, 606, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 619, 621, 708, 723.
West 13th Street: 412, 420, 508, 509, 512, 517, 523, 615, 619, 623, 625, 626, 702, 705, 712, 714, 715, 720, 721;
West 15th Street: 409, 410, 512, 514;
North Maple Street: 639, 803, 807, 813, 901, 905, 909, 918, 919.
North Fairview Street: 714, 721, 914, 916, 917, 917 ½, 927, 931.
North Jackson Street: 811, 815, 817, 819, 903, 907, 915, 924, 925, 927, 928, 933, 938, 939, 940, 943, 944, 1014, 1020, 1022, 1024, 1106, 1108, 1110.

Properties listed as non-contributing on the historic survey (37)

West 11th Street 701, 702 ½, 709, 801, 800-812;
West 12th Street 709, 713, 720, 801;
West 13th Street 500, 501, 502, 505, 522, 620, 622, 709;
West 15th Street 516;
North Maple Street 633, 634, 715, 717, 910, 911, 912, 916, 917;
North Fairview Street 715, 721½, 800, 802, 915;
North Jackson Street 812-814, 914, 943½, 1002, 1004.

¹ The historic survey referred to in this document is a combination of the 2018 BRI Resurvey and the 2008 Maple Heights Neighborhood Survey.

Map of the proposed Maple Heights Conservation District



Maple Heights Proposed Conservation District

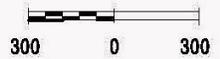
For use as map information only, information is NOT warranted.

- V - Vacant
- - Non Contributing
- - Contributing
- - Notable

May 31, 2018



Scale: 1" = 300'



Sample Styles of Houses Found in the District

- California Bungalow – common between 1910 and 1939.
- Gabled-ell – common between 1890 and 1910.
- Dormer Front Bungalow – common between 1905 and 1930.
- Shotgun – common between the mid-1800's and 1930.
- Pyramid Roof Cottage – common between 1900 and 1930
- I-House – common between the mid to late 19th century

Historic Background: Criteria (1) a, c

Just a half mile north of the Showers Brothers Furniture Factory complex in downtown Bloomington, sits a quaint neighborhood with a collection of architecture that is as unique as the story behind it. Known as Maple Heights, this neighborhood developed out of a need for worker housing that was located near several downtown factories during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the story of the neighborhood goes back much further to the Blair family who originally settled the land, where the neighborhood is located, in 1825. Prominent Covenanter's in the Bloomington community and lifelong farmers, the Blair family cleared and developed the land as Bloomington was becoming a well-known landmark in South-Central Indiana.

James N. Blair, born in 1789 in South Carolina, purchased the plot of land between the rough boundaries of today's North Madison Street, North Monroe Street, 10th and 17th Streets in 1825 and established the Blair Family farm. Scotch-Irish Covenanter Presbyterians who were strongly opposed to slavery, the Blair family moved from South Carolina in 1816 to Tennessee where they remained until 1824 when they finally moved to Indiana after the state had outlawed slavery. Approximately a half mile outside of City limits, the farm encompassed approximately 160 acres, and was used for subsistence farming. James was a prominent figure in the Bloomington Covenanter community and in 1825 was made one of two ruling elders of the Covenanter settlement, which he served as until his death. James also served as a trustee of Indiana University from 1828 to 1841.

Following his father's death in 1849, likely from a stroke, the farm was transferred to James' son, John J. Blair, and shortly after the Blair farmhouse was constructed on the property. Previously, the family had lived in a log cabin that was located on or near the property of what is today 823 N. Maple Street, and the remains of a grain silo still stand not far from the present day house. John and his wife, Hannah, were very active in the Underground Railroad and it is reported that they fed and sheltered any slaves who were seeking aid as they escaped to Canada from the South. John was also an elder of the "New Side" Covenanter Church and the United Presbyterian church, all while continuing to maintain the family farm.

When John died in 1908, his eldest son, James Blair, inherited the farm and sold off portions of the property until his death in 1939. These plots of land would be subdivided into what was to become the Maple Heights neighborhood. James was engaged in road construction and ran a small stone quarry business in the northwest corner of the farm which he ran until approximately 1921, all while he continued to farm that portion of the Blair plat. He was elected as a member of the Bloomington City Council for four years, which was followed by a four year term as Republican County Commissioner. In 1928, James was elected again as a county commissioner and retired as the end of his term in 1932. He was also a member of the city police board in his later years. When John died in 1939, the remaining acreage and the house of the Blair farm was left to his wife, Agnes, and his daughter, Junia. After Junia died unexpectedly in 1942, Agnes chose to sell the house to the Brown family in 1957. In 1965, the Brown Family sold the house in 1965 to Jim Porter who either sold or lost the property in the 1970's to the Monroe County Farm Bureau Corporation Association. Bobby and Lois Duvall purchased the property in 1977 but sold it again in 1979 to ZZ South Central Mental, which eventually became Centerstone, the organization that currently owns the house.

John's third son, William T. Blair, was also an active member of the Bloomington community. While he did not help with day to day operations of the family farm, William owned and operated a shoe store downtown which he purchased from C.R. Perdue before he organized the Bloomington Cut Stone Company. He married Julie Waldron, daughter of John and Ann Waldron, in 1882. John Waldron is one of Bloomington's most prominent businessmen who invested heavily in real estate and his tannery business. John was also the director of the First National Bank in Bloomington. William and Julia moved to a house on West Kirkwood Avenue known as the Blair-Waldron House in the late 19th century. William be active in local politics, serving as a county auditor and a member of the Bloomington city council.

As John sold off portion of the Blair family farm, developers began subdividing the land to create plots for perspective homeowners. The first plats were developed under the names Maple Heights 1st Addition and Maple Heights 2nd Addition, both in 1889. James H. Blair is listed as the first owner of the 1st platted addition, but no specific owner in listed for the 2nd. The next portions of the property to be developed were the Craven and Carmichael 1st and 2nd Subdivisions in 1891. There was a third addition to the north of the Craven and Carmichael sections known as the Dolan Addition that was also platted in 1891. The Kenwood Land Company began purchasing property in this area in 1893 and established the Kenwood Addition, while a small addition was formed immediately to the north under the Citizens Loan & Trust in 1914. The Johnson Subdivision was platted in 1906 and finally, the last addition was platted in 1923 under the name Vernon Subdivision.

Architectural Significance Criteria (2) e, f

Construction dates of houses within the Maple Heights Neighborhood closely follow the creation of the platted additions, with the earliest of the houses being constructed between 1895 and 1915. The dominant styles of houses that were constructed in the neighborhood are gabled-ell cottages and pyramid roof houses, although there are examples of Shotgun Houses, Double-Pen Houses, and California Bungalow's. Example pictures of these various house types are included later in the Staff report. Many of these early twentieth century structures are intact and maintain their historic integrity.

The construction and styles of houses building in Maple Heights are representative of the need for worker housing near the downtown area. As factories and businesses, such as the Showers Brothers Furniture Factory and the Nurre Glass Works, grew and prospered with the expansion of the rail industry, companies began employing more factory workers throughout the city. This led to an increased need for small, affordable houses located near a worker's place of business. Maple Heights became an ideal location for families to live affordably while still remaining close to most of the major factories into at least the 1930's.

Even though larger factories and businesses were the major employers of the residents of Maple Heights, some residents operated grocery stores, barber shops, and other small businesses either in the neighborhood or nearby. One business that still retains its early commercial connections to the neighborhood is the Godsey Cabinet Shop which is located at 611 W. 12th Street and was opened in 1932 by the Godsey/Mouldin family. The business is currently closed but the building is still retained on the site and speaks to an earlier time when small businesses were an integral part of neighborhoods throughout the city. Walter and Pearl Herrin, who owned a grocery store at 701 N. Jackson, lived in the house at 708 W. 12th Street, known in the neighborhood as the Plew House. The Herrin's acquired the house from Arthur L. Plew, who was a barber and ran a shop at 703 W. 11th Street.

The Maple Heights neighborhood has lost many houses over the course of the past century and many others have been altered so they are unrecognizable to their original form, scale, or style. The neighborhood is facing increasing pressure from developers seeking to buy reasonably priced vacant lots and homes to turn into multi-family housing or large commercial enterprises. This single-family neighborhood represents an integral part of the Bloomington story and is a familiar visual feature of the city. A Local Conservation District designation will ensure that these houses are not dramatically altered or lost in the future, and that the neighborhood will maintain its historic setting as a single family residential area thus securing the preservation of this architecture and its story for another century. Staff and the BHPC recommends approving the map and the application for the proposed Maple Heights Conservation District.

Sources

- "Bloomington Fading 823 N Maple Street: The Historic Blair House," *derekandjenrichey*, 2018. <https://bloomingtonthenandnow.wordpress.com/2013/12/28/823-n-maple-street-the-historic-james-blair-house/>.
- "Maple Heights Neighborhood Bloomington, IN: About," 2018. <http://mapleheights.bloomington.in.us/about/>.
- "Find a Grave: James Blair, John Blair, William T. Blair, James N. Blair," 2018. <https://www.findagrave.com/>.
- Previous research conducted by Nancy Hiestand for original designation application ~ 2013.

Sample Photographs of Historic Resources within the Proposed District

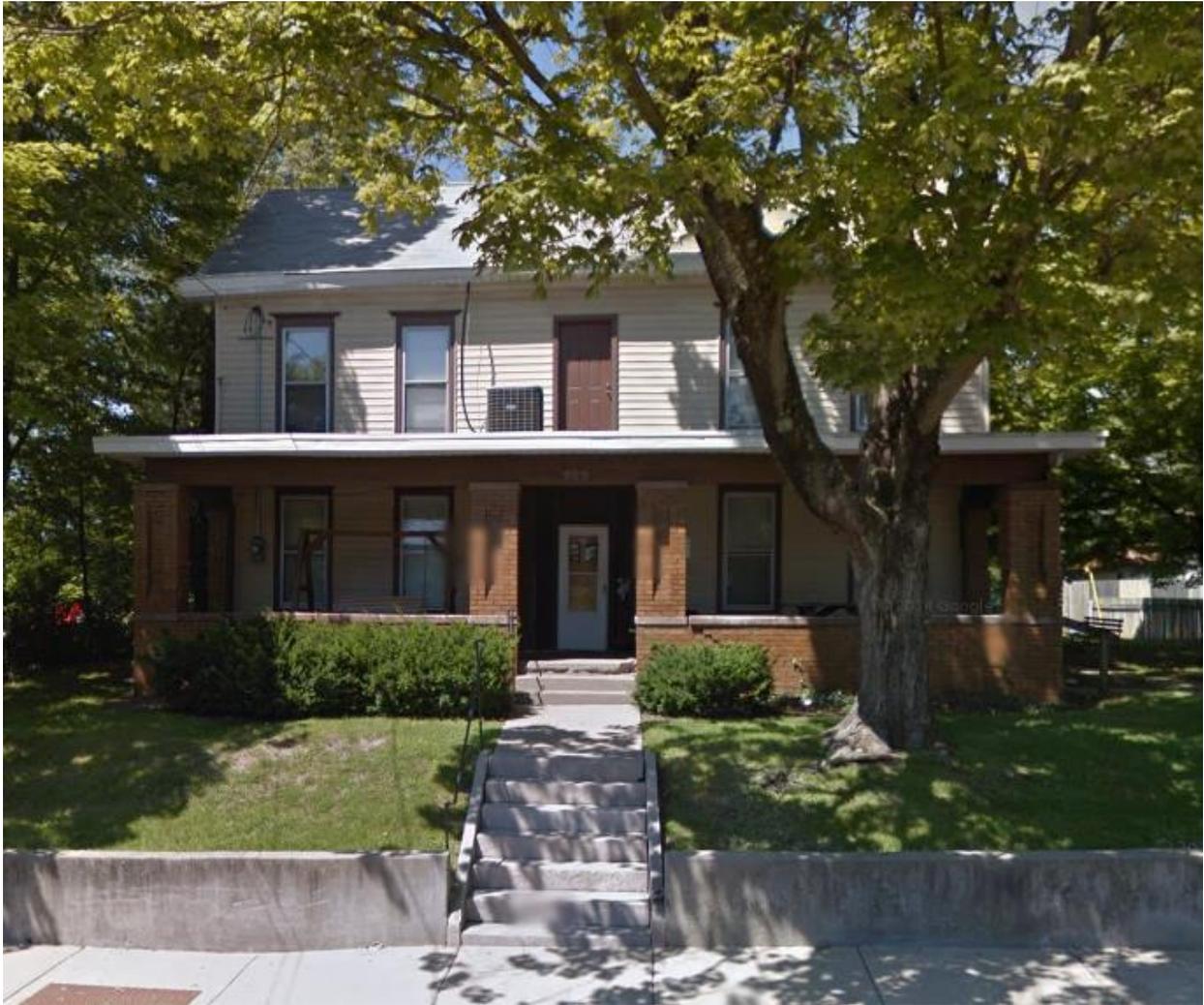


Figure 8. Blair House – 823 N. Maple Street – Contributing.
Architectural style: I-House (c. 1900)



Figure 9. Blair family house constructed by James N. Blair – 813 N. Maple Street – Contributing Architectural Style: California Bungalow (c.1927)



Figure 10. Blair family house constructed by James N. Blair – 715 W. 13th Street – Contributing Architectural Style: Pyramid Roof Cottage (c. 1900)



Figure 11. Blair family house constructed by James N. Blair – 721 W. 13th Street – Contributing Architectural Style: Pyramid Roof Cottage (c. 1900)



Figure 12. 621 W. 12th Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: California Bungalow (c. 1930)



Figure 13. 619 W. 12th Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: Cape Cod (c.1930)



Figure 14. 612 W. 12th Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: Shotgun



Figure 15. 619 W. 13th Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: Shotgun (c. 1900)



Figure 16. 705 W. 13th Street – Contributing Architectural Style: Hall and Parlor (c.1900)



Figure 17. 931 N. Fairview Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: Pyramid Roof Cottage (c. 1950)



Figure 18. 819 N. Jackson Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: Gable Ell (c.1900)



Figure 19. 600 W. 12th Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: Gable Ell (c. 1930)

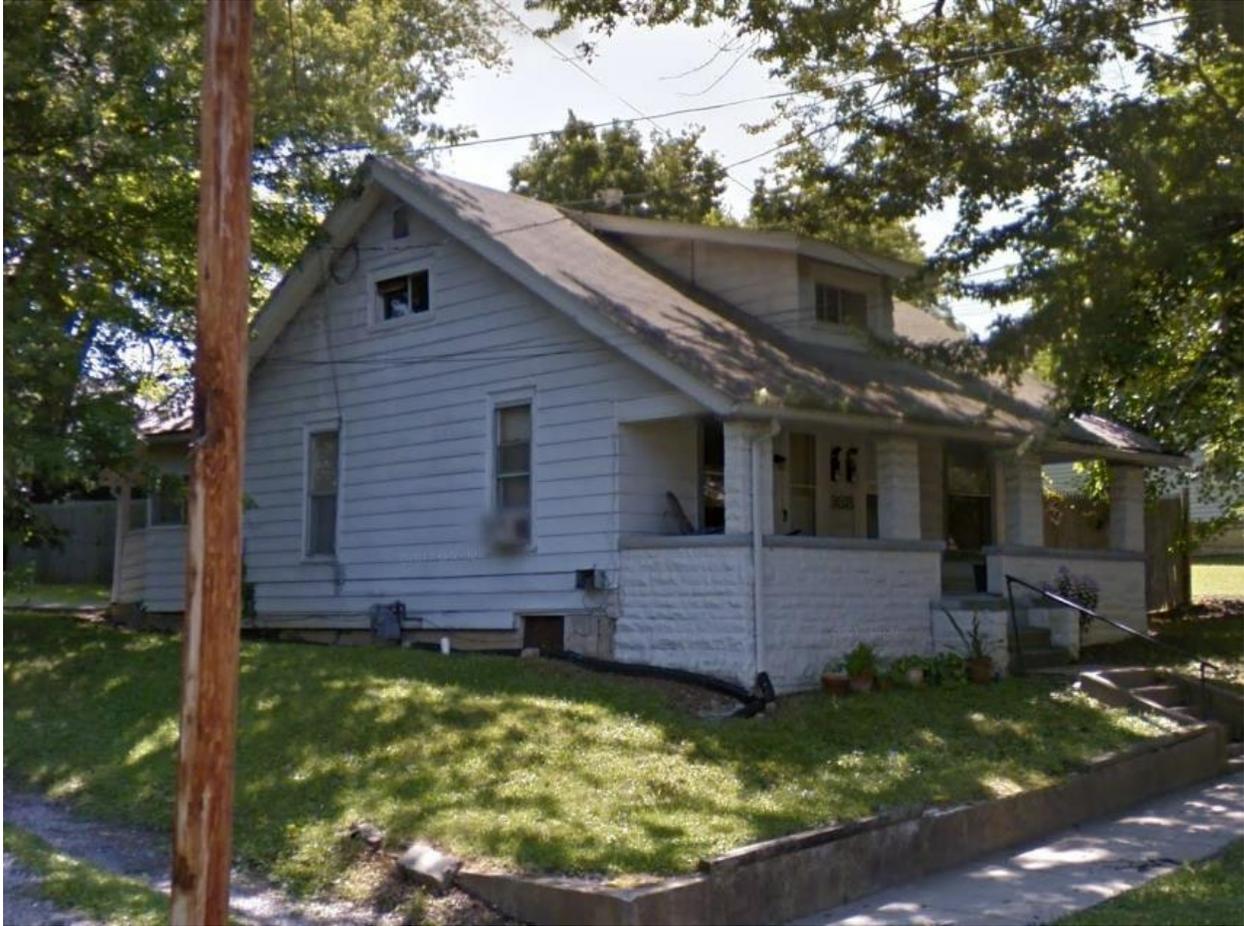


Figure 20. 938 N. Jackson – Contributing
Architectural Style: Dormer Front Bungalow (c. 1930)



Figure 21. 639 N. Maple Street – Contributing
Architectural Style: T-Plan Cottage (c. 1907)