

FINAL

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Town of Crows Nest Historic District

other names/site number 097-296-130000

2. Location

street & number 301, 321, 505, 509, 515, 521, and 555 Kessler Boulevard; 5500-5880 Sunset Lane; N/A ☐ not for publication

1101-1137 Questover Circle

city or town Indianapolis N/A ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Marion code 097 zip code 46228

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/22/00
Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National Register

- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☒ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
29	26	buildings
5	0	sites
4	0	structures
3	0	objects
41	26	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

LANDSCAPE: Garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

LANDSCAPE: Garden

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: French Renaissance

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Tudor Revival

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Tudor Revival

MODERN: Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other STUCCO

STONE: slate

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE _____

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE _____

HEALTH/MEDICINE _____

Period of Significance

1905-1950 _____

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Lilly, Eli _____

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Burns and James _____

Daggett, Robert Frost _____

Jensen, Jens _____

9. Major Bibliographic References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission _____

Town of Crows Nest Historic District _____
Name of Property

Marion _____ IN _____
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____ 65 _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6
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5	7	1	6	3	0
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4	4	1	2	5	8	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

3

1	6
---	---

5	7	0	2	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	4	1	1	3	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone

Easting

Northing

2

1	6
---	---

5	7	1	5	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	4	1	1	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4

1	6
---	---

5	7	0	3	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	4	1	1	6	6	0
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☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kipp Normand and Paul Baumgarten, Principal Consultants _____
organization Normand/Baumgarten _____ date 3/1/99 _____
street & number 4928 Guilford Avenue _____ telephone 317-926-5754 _____
city or town Indianapolis _____ state IN _____ zip code 46205 _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7. Description

Page 1

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

Narrative Description

The Town of Crows Nest Historic District is a secluded residential enclave located northwest of the central business district and residential areas of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana. Established in the 1920s as an exclusive residential neighborhood, the district is characterized by large properties or estates that range in size from 1 to 18 acres, with average size being 4 acres. The area was designed to create a private atmosphere appropriate for the fine country estates located there. The topography of the area lends a distinctive character to the district. Located at the top of a wooded ravine, the entrance to the Town of Crows Nest is found at the north end of Sunset Lane where it meets the broad, tree lined curve of Kessler Boulevard. Sunset Lane is the only access street through the Town of Crows Nest. The lane winds its way through the trees down toward the White River, then curves west and forms a turn around. The large estates of Crows Nest are arranged along Sunset Lane. Many of the properties feature impressive entrance gates and deep curving drives. Landscape design is a defining feature of the district. Many of the estates in Crows Nest were designed to blend the house and outbuildings with the natural setting of woods and river. These estates, often the result of architects working closely with landscape designers, feature formal and naturalistic garden settings which complement and distinguish the buildings in the district.

The forty-one contributing resources in the Town of Crows Nest Historic District are comprised of residences and related structures constructed between 1905 and 1950. Five of those contributing resources are significant landscapes. A variety of period revival styles are exhibited among the residential structures in the district. Examples of the Colonial Revival style date from 1910 through the present day. Tudor Revival, French Chateausque and Mediterranean styles were constructed mainly during the 1920s. Many of the resources in the district have been listed as noncontributing due to their age. Though not considered contributing resources by National Register criteria, the houses built after 1950 reflect the traditional styles favored in the earlier buildings and feature similar massing and high quality materials thereby contributing a consistent visual presence throughout the district. The one stylistic exception is an International style house at 5763 Sunset Lane. (Photo #50.) Designed in 1968 by Courton McComber of the firm of James Associates, the house is fine example of a style rarely used for residential architecture in Indianapolis. Following the traditional Crows Nest relationship of landscape to house, 5763 Sunset Lane is surrounded by a meticulous minimalist landscape that is the perfect setting for the International style house. McComber's design is innovative and will prove to be a valuable addition to the Crows Nest district.

The earliest resources in the district are the remaining outbuildings and caretaker's cottage from a farm called "Vellamada." Among the most progressive and well appointed farms in central Indiana, Vellamada was constructed in 1904-1905 as the country estate of Indianapolis Brewing Company President, Albert Lieber. Lieber was an avid conservationist and valued the natural beauty of the Crows Nest area. He planned his farm to make the most of the scenery and natural amenities available. Vellamada was dominated by a large house at the end of a straight driveway accessed from a formal gate off Lieber road. (Photo #1.) A separate service drive led to a well-planned series of outbuildings that served a variety of purposes including two caretaker homes, a substantial greenhouse, storage, animal shelter, and a powerhouse. Among the Lieber farm buildings which remain, are the large horse/auto barn, the power house and caretaker's cottage. All feature wood frame construction with picturesque rooflines and Stick Style details (Photo #11 through 16.)

By 1910 most of the farmland in the Crows Nest area was divided for building lots intended for substantial estates. The Lieber property in the southwest corner of the district was left mostly intact until the late 1950s. (A portion of the Lieber property was sold to the adjacent Highland Golf Club in 1920.) Initial development in the Crows Nest area was focused on the lots on the east side of Sunset Lane (originally called Sunset Avenue) overlooking the White River. The earliest residence in the area is the former home of Dr. Albert Cole at 5801 Sunset Lane. (Photo #56.) Designed by Robert Frost Daggett, Dr. Cole's home was built in 1910 and is one of the first Indianapolis residences to feature all concrete construction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7. Description (continued)

Page 2

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

The house is a fanciful adaptation of the Colonial Revival style and features a stucco exterior and red tile roof. J.K. Lilly, Sr., purchased this house in 1927. It is currently owned by the Indiana University Foundation.

The home of W. Hathaway Simmons at 5707 Sunset Lane was designed and constructed by the Burns Realty Company in 1914. (Photo #48.) Designed by Lee Burns, who formed the firm of Burns and James in 1926, the Simmons House is an authentic example of the Colonial Revival style. Its scale, materials and detail accurately mimic those of 18th century American architecture. Lee Burns was a noted expert on historic architecture. The Colonial Revival style and other traditional residential styles were the specialty of the Burns Realty Company. Many of the later Colonial Revival style resources in the district are very likely the work of Burns and he partner Edward James. An example of the collaborative work of Burns and James is the residence of Horace Schonle at 5859 Sunset Lane. (Photo #63.) The Schonle House was constructed in 1933. Stylistically, the house is a modern interpretation of Georgian design with simplified classical details.

In 1920 Albert Lieber's farm "Vellamada" was purchased by Frank Stalnaker, President of the Indiana National Bank. Stalnaker engaged the great landscape designer, Jens Jensen to redesign the grounds at Vellamada. Jensen made a number of improvements to the property resulting in the creation of one of the most significant landscapes in the district. Stalnaker renamed the property "Questover." His estate set a new standard for subsequent development in Crows Nest.

Throughout the 1920s other estates were constructed with landscape features similar to those found at Questover. In 1924 Charles Lynn, an executive in the drug manufacturing firm of Eli Lilly & Co., constructed a substantial French Chateausque style house with a formal garden at 5600 Sunset Lane. (Photo #37.) The design of the house is attributed to Frederick Wallick. The house is rectangular in form and features brick construction topped by a massive hipped roof covered with slate shingles. A thickset cylindrical tower with a conical slate roof anchors the north side of the street elevation and creates a strong asymmetrical design. The main entry features double doors and a massive limestone surround.

In 1927 the Frederick M. Ayres estate, called "Walden," was constructed at 5700 Sunset Lane. (Historic Photo #1 through 6.) Designed by Frederick Wallick in a rustic French Chateausque style, the house's most notable feature was the careful stonework which formed its walls. The house was constructed of rough-hewn Minnesota limestone in tones of gray and yellow. The house and outbuildings were surrounded by a carefully designed landscape that was the masterwork of Colonel Lawrence Sheridan. Although the house and outbuildings at Walden were lost to fire in the 1960s, Sheridan's elaborate landscape has been preserved and is a testament to the quality and durability of his work. Among the five most significant landscapes in the district, Walden was the most celebrated work of Indianapolis landscape designer, Colonel Lawrence Sheridan. The rugged topography of the river bluffs on which Walden sat provided a welcome relief from the city's flat terrain. The original estate had a frontage of 500 feet on Sunset Lane, and contained 18 acres, half of which was covered with native Indiana hardwood forest. The basic principal underlying the design of the grounds at Walden was the necessity of retaining and conserving the natural character of the site. The entrance drive from the gate on Sunset Lane followed gentle curves fitting the natural contours of the ground. A low wall of random ashlar stone bordered the Sunset Lane frontage of the grounds and curved to form an unobtrusive Colonial style gateway, flanked by dense shrubbery. The driveway passed through woods to terminate in an oval forecourt at the residence. A swimming pool in the ravine, reached by naturalistic walks fitting the hillsides, could be seen from the garden and house. It was of irregular outline, edged with boulders and fed by a natural spring. Sheridan's award winning work at Walden was featured in the June 1931, issue of American Landscape Architect. Sheridan's ability to merge his designs into existing natural elements and site conditions produced dramatic results.

Of the significant landscapes in Crow's Nest, the most expansive belongs to the Nicholas Noyes estate called "Lane's End" at 5625 Sunset Lane. (Photo #43 through 46.) Lane's End features a Tudor Revival house and a compatible

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7. Description (continued)

Page 3

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

garage/gatehouse at 5623 Sunset Lane (Photo #42) designed by Robert Frost Daggett. Completed in 1928, the house features decorative brickwork, stucco and half-timbering. The house is asymmetrical in plan. Exterior walls are primarily red brick laid in common bond with accent bricks set in random projections. Multi light metal casement sashes are set in wood frames with brick mold surrounds. Projecting half-timbered bays feature limestone and carved wood accents. George MacDougall designed the vast landscape at Lane's End. The house is sited high on the West side of the large property, which slopes eastward to White River. (Historic photo #7 and 8) Many original landscape features remain intact including a formal hedge maze, terracing, an alley with sculpture at its terminus, and a series of pools. A flagstone terrace provides transition from the east elevation of the house to the landscaped grounds. A low brick and limestone wall with balustrade encloses this terrace.

The neighboring house to the north of Lane's End was built in 1928 for Frederick T. Holliday. (Photo #47) The house is a large English Cottage style and exhibits the prominent steeply pitched roofline and exaggerated gables often associated with that style. The house is brick construction topped by a slate roof and features small casement windows with leaded glass sash. The street elevation is dominated by a steeply gabled projection with the main entry at its center. The varnished wood entry door is set within a limestone Tudor arch surmounted by broad brick arch. The rear elevation overlooks the wooded yard that extends to the White River. The rear elevation features larger windows to take advantage of the view and a large secondary entrance that opens onto a terrace surrounded by a brick and limestone balustrade.

Notable among the other residences constructed in the late 1920s is an unusual two family structure built for Jacob "Jack" Goodman and Sarah Wolf Goodman at 301 Kessler Boulevard (Photo #65 through 67.) Designed by Swiss architect, Franz Herding, the Goodman house was built in 1927 for Jack and his brother, L.L. Goodman, President and Vice President of Real Silk Hosiery Mills. Real Silk was a manufacturer of women's hosiery, lingerie and undergarments founded in 1922. At its peak in the late 1920s, the company sold more than 12 million pairs of silk stockings annually. The Goodman House is the only multi family residence in the district. The building features an irregular plan constructed around a central courtyard. Its fanciful, rambling style distinguishes it as one of the most unusual structures in the district. This building exhibits exuberant design combining Art Deco, Bavarian, and medieval elements. Its unusual design and variety of building materials including stucco, terra cotta, decorative tile insets and decorative painting are not commonly found in the Midwest. Many pieces of original furniture, designed for this residence, remain in the house.

Providing a strong stylistic contrast to the fanciful Goodman house is the large Colonial Revival house at 321 Kessler Boulevard. (Photo #64) The house was constructed c.1930 and features the strong proportions and symmetry associated with a strict interpretation of the Colonial Revival Style. This two story brick house is nestled in the side of a hill. The basement living area opens out onto a landscaped terrace that overlooks the ravine behind the Eli Lilly house. Two broad brick chimneys anchor the gable ends and reinforce the strict symmetry of the street elevation. The central entry is surmounted by a fan light window and a carved wood pediment. The other windows are six over six double hung wood sash with functional wood exterior shutters.

The Eli Lilly residence at 5807 Sunset Lane was constructed in 1930. (Photo #60.) It was designed by Robert Frost Daggett and modeled after the Maryland plantation where Lilly's grandfather, Colonel Eli Lilly was born. The house is a rustic Colonial Revival, which features walls constructed of gray granite block and features several verandahs. Immediately east of the house is a Lutheran cemetery founded in 1835. (Photo #62) Although the cemetery was state owned property, it was meticulously maintained by Eli Lilly as an expression of his appreciation of the history of the Crow's Nest area. East of the cemetery, on land that slopes down toward the White River, is a horse stable and riding track. Before the Second World War, Lilly kept horses at his estate and enjoyed riding. Most prominent among the features that distinguish Eli Lilly's home are the series of murals, which decorate the house's third floor ballroom. A dream of Lilly's to create a space for reflection

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7. Description (continued)

Page 4

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

and personal growth, he thought of this attic room as "The House of the Interpreter." Lilly hoped to enlist the services of well-known regionalist painter, Grant Wood, to create the murals and approached him in 1933 to undertake the project. Lilly envisioned the murals as testament to personal courage in all human endeavors. Wood at this time was at the height of his popularity as an artist and theorist and was engaged in administering PWAP mural projects on the University of Iowa campus in Iowa City. In late July of 1934 Wood explained to Lilly that he was too busy to work on what sounded like an interesting project. He suggested fellow artist John D. Pusey. Pusey utilized Wood's teachings in establishing the mural's dynamic lines of composition, dividing each panel into thirds and having major compositional lines connect any two of the division points. The house is currently owned by the Indiana University Foundation.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

Significant Person

Schonle, Horace

Architect/Builder

Herting, Franz

James, Edward

Loonsten, Frits

MacDougall, George

McComber, Courtney

Nolan, Skyler

Sheridan, Lawrence

Wallick, Frederick

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8. Statement of Significance

Page 6

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

Narrative Description

The Town of Crows Nest Historic District meets National Register criteria B and C. As a collection of significant early twentieth century domestic architecture, Crows Nest is exceptional. The district is further distinguished by a series of professionally designed landscapes, the work of both local and nationally respected designers. The landscapes create a context for Crows Nest that differentiates the district from the other upper class residential communities in Indianapolis. The district contains the residence of Eli Lilly, a resource considered individually eligible for listing on the National Register for its architecture and its association with a figure of national historical significance. Crows Nest is a community of beautifully designed and maintained residences hidden among the trees on the hills above the White River north of the city of Indianapolis. The community is associated with individuals known for their social, civic and economic contributions to the development of Indianapolis, its industries, and cultural heritage.

The period of significance established for the district falls between 1905 to 1950 and represents the span of years that comprise the fundamental development of the area as an exclusive residential district. Prior to the period of significance a number of structures were built in the area. The earliest buildings were cabins, a mill, and farm buildings constructed by the first settlers to inhabit the area beginning in the 1830s. Later, more elaborate farm buildings, houses and seasonal recreational buildings were constructed. A small Lutheran cemetery dating from 1838–1883 is the only extant physical evidence of this earlier inhabitation.

The Town of Crows Nest is located in the southwest quadrant of Washington Township, in the north central section of Marion County. Washington Township was established April 16, 1822 by vote of the Marion County Commissioners. The land was made available for purchase at that time. According to Sulgrove's History of Indianapolis and Marion County, when pioneer settlers first viewed the thick forest north of Indianapolis and above the White River, the treetops were laden with crows. "Crows Nest," as the area came to be known, ascends from the White River up the Spring Mill hill, and includes the steep ravine overlooking the White River. The first settler to the area, John Krise, came in 1830. At that time, the general region of Indianapolis was wilderness. Krise acquired land that included most of Crows Nest, he struggled to make a farm there and to build a gristmill powered by the natural springs that still flow in the area. He used his mill to grind grain for himself and the other farmers who eventually settled nearby. Krise's cabin stood just west of where Spring Mill road begins to wind its way up the rise. Sulgrove lists other families who owned property in the area. Most prominent among them were the Harlin, Hessong, Leming, Norwood, and Vansyoc families, who farmed the Crows Nest area until the 1880s.

In the early 1880s, most of the farming families in the area sold their property. Crows Nest gradually became a popular area for picnics, swimming, and fishing. Crows Nest grew in popularity as an excursion site. Judge Solomon Claypool purchased the land on both sides of Spring Mill Road. Claypool bought the property, beautiful rolling hills with a sweeping view of White River, to use as a camping, horseback riding and picnic site for his children. The Claypools called their property "Camp Felicity" and kept guest books for their high society camping parties. A guest list from an outing in 1886 included some of Indianapolis' most prominent 19th century families: Butler, Malott, Sayles, Baldwin, Wood, Landers, McLeod, and author Booth Tarkington. Eventually the Claypool property was divided into lots and sold for development of country houses. At some time during this period, Lucien Barbour, an early Indianapolis attorney, purchased property in the area. His daughter, Sallie Barbour, was cited in a 1939 newspaper article as one of the original residents of Sunset Lane, having lived there since 1890.

The growth of Indianapolis north of the original Mile Square is well documented in National Register Nominations for suburban enclaves such as North Meridian Street, Golden Hill and Forest Hills. The northern development of the city has been credited to the expansion of the population, and increased accessibility via roads and public transportation that

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Page 7

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

occurred in the mid-to-late 19th century. The western and northwestern edges of the city ended in the malarial lowlands around Fall Creek and the White River. More swampland lay south of the city, below South Street. From there, north to Washington Street, factories, warehouses, and rail yards formed an industrial district. Open country lay to the north. Residents eager to escape the emerging congestion of Indianapolis sought relief primarily in this direction.

Aiding the expansion north was a street railway system begun in 1864. Originally designed to serve the businesses along Washington Street, by 1865 it had extended one line up Illinois Street to Crown Hill Cemetery. Streetcars made it easy to live and work in separate parts of the city, an advantage developers quickly exploited. Property values increased steadily north of the city. The population increased steadily as well: Indianapolis counted 48,244 residents in 1870, an increase of 159 percent over 1860. Real estate speculation boomed. Commenting in 1910 on this earlier real estate fever, historian Jacob Piatt Dunn observed that "a man without a few lots on a speculative basis was an exception." These substantial pressures for expansion lead the city council to annex large subdivisions in all directions, pushing the city limits beyond the original Mile Square.

Outdistancing the real estate developers in their race north were a few of the leading industrialists in Indianapolis. In 1904 Albert Lieber, president of the Indianapolis Brewing Company, and a vigorous proponent of conservation, built a farm called "Vellamada" on his property in the Crow's Nest area. Now known as Questover Circle, Vellamada consisted of a large house, elaborate outbuildings, farmland, and main gate. Other large country estates were created in Crows Nest following the example of Vellamada. Dr. Albert Cole built "Cedar Crest" on Sunset Lane in 1910, and W. Hathaway Simmons, Director of the Bemis Bag Co., built his Sunset Lane home in 1914. These are the earliest extant houses on Sunset Lane.

In 1920, Albert Lieber sold Vellamada to Frank Stalnaker, President of Indiana National Bank, who hired the well-known landscape architect, Jens Jensen, to design a new configuration of the Vellamada landscape. Most of the farm acreage was sold to Highland Country Club, and the main house was remodeled. Stalnaker and his wife, Cecelia, renamed the property Questover, and a large circular drive called Questover Circle was installed.

By the late 1920s, the Crows Nest area emerged as a small enclave of private estates noted for the design of both buildings and elaborate grounds. Properties ranged in size from 2 to 20 acres. Crows Nest was home to several of Indianapolis' most influential citizens, including Eli Lilly, Nicholas Noyes, and Frederick Ayres. Concerned over the growth of Indianapolis, and annexation of nearby suburbs, thirty-seven Crows Nest residents petitioned for incorporation as the Town of Crows Nest in 1927. Among those who signed the incorporation papers were Frank Stalnaker, Frederick Ayers, Sally Barbour, N.R. Sinclair, Nicholas Noyes, Albert Cole and Harry Atkins. An Indianapolis Star article "Ask for Town North of City" published July 9, 1927 describes the territory included in the proposed town: "(it) extends west from the new Kessler Boulevard and the White River. The western boundaries are irregular and follow the property lines of the petitioners." In August of 1927, following the example of nearby suburbs of Woodstock and Shooters' Hill, Crows Nest was incorporated as a town by vote of the Marion County Commissioners. The original town boundaries have remained unaltered since the incorporation. The residents of Crows Nest took turns acting as mayor, a very informal assignment. Eli Lilly was mayor three times in succession. Town meetings took place only three or four times a year.

The period between the town's incorporation and the beginning of World War II saw a gradual decline in new construction in Crows Nest. A new period of development came with the prosperity of the 1950s. Houses constructed in the 1950s and early 1960s often lacked the scale of the earlier Crows Nest homes; however, many of them incorporated traditional details which relate to the period revival styles expressed by the older buildings in the district. Crows Nest grew to be one of the most attractive and interesting residential communities in the Indianapolis area. Its development reflects national trends in suburbanization and illustrates the local motivations of Indianapolis' leading citizens who sought to remove themselves from

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Page 8

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

the dirt and crowds of the city they helped to build. It also contains examples of Indianapolis' finest landscape architecture, blended seamlessly with the natural features found in the ravines leading to the White River.

Significant Individuals Associated with Crows Nest

Many of the residents of Crow's Nest were among the social, industrial, and business leaders of Indianapolis. In some cases their residences may not be the most significant resources associated with each figure, however, knowledge of the contributions of these individuals to local and national history enriches contemporary understanding of the social atmosphere of the Crows Nest community.

Eli Lilly (1885-1977) 5807 Sunset Lane.

Pharmaceutical engineer, entrepreneur, civic leader and philanthropist, Eli Lilly was the son of Josiah K. Lilly, Sr., and Lilly Ridgely Lilly. Eli Lilly's marriage to Evelyn Fortune produced two sons who died in infancy and a daughter who died in 1970. His first marriage ended in divorce in 1926. His marriage in 1927 to Ruth Allison Lilly lasted happily until her death in 1973. Lilly graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 1907. He immediately joined the pharmaceutical company founded by his grandfather and remained associated with the business until his death, serving as president from 1932 to 1948 and then as chairman of the board. Lilly played a dominant role in the growth and maturation of the company. He successfully applied the techniques of mass production to drug manufacturing, setting up in the 1920s a straight line production system more complex than Henry Ford's auto assembly line. He led the company into sophisticated research in its own laboratories and into close cooperation with university scientists, beginning with insulin in the 1920s and extending to penicillin and a range of antibiotics. In the 1930s and 40s he also devoted great attention to employee morale and welfare, making Lilly's one of the most attractive places to work in Indianapolis.

Among Lilly's many interests outside the business were the history and archeology of Indiana. He was president of the Indiana Historical Society from 1933 to 1947 and was thereafter a member of its Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. His book Prehistoric Antiquities of Indiana, published in 1937, was a major contribution to the field. Lilly's attraction to the past led also to his strong support for historic preservation, evident in the development of Connor Prairie, support for the restoration of several houses in Indianapolis, and the founding of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. Lilly's wealth and humanity lead him to become a major philanthropic benefactor. He and his family established the Lilly Endowment in 1937. He played an active role in focusing the Endowment's support in the areas closest to his own concerns: religion, education, and community development, with special attention to Indianapolis and Indiana. Eli Lilly's interest in Crow's Nest began in the late 1920s when his father, J.K. Lilly, Sr., purchased an estate called Cedar Crest on Sunset Lane. At that time several of Lilly's top management personnel built their residences in Crow's Nest. Lilly built his home on Sunset Lane in 1930.

Dr. Albert Cole (1870-1928) 5801 Sunset Lane

Albert Cole was a pioneer in the field of radiology, and x-ray technology. He graduated from DePauw University and the Indiana Medical College (now Indiana University School of Medicine) in 1894. Cole continued studies at the University of Pennsylvania and graduated 1896. Cole took up the practice of roentgenology in 1901, and published papers and treatises on the X-ray machine and related topics. Dr Cole served as professor of roentgenology and dermatology at the Indiana School of Medicine. His house, Cedar Crest, was constructed in 1910, and is one of Indianapolis' first examples of all-concrete construction. Cole retained George MacDougall to design the grounds. Dr. Cole delighted in planting many trees around his estate; among the many specimens are a magnificent copper beech and a stand of rare cedars, thus accounting for the name of the estate. After Cole's death in 1927, Josiah K. Lilly Sr. purchased the property.

Albert Lieber (1863-1934) Vellamada (later known as Questover.)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Page 9

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

Albert Lieber was a highly respected Indianapolis businessman and an active conservationist. In the later part of the 19th century, Lieber expanded his family's brewery and merged their operation with two other breweries in Indianapolis to create the Indianapolis Brewing Company. Under his presidency, the Indianapolis Brewing Company grew to be one of the largest and most acclaimed breweries in the Midwest. Of German descent, Lieber was born in Indianapolis in 1863. In addition to his work with the brewing company, Lieber was active in the Merchants National Bank and the Indiana Trust Company. The Lieber family was known for their interest in nature. (Lieber's cousin Richard Lieber established the Indiana State Park System). Albert Lieber's interest in conservation of native forests led to his appointment in 1903 to serve on the State Forestry Board which later developed into the Indiana Department of Conservation. Lieber's love for nature is expressed in his country estate, Vellamada. Lieber purchased the property early in the century and later developed it into one of the most expansive and progressive farms in central Indiana. Lieber enhanced the natural beauty of the land surrounding Vellamada with the addition of various species of trees to those native species found among the forests in Crows Nest. Eventually he developed an informal arboretum where he studied the birds and animals of the forest surrounding his home.

Horace A. Schonle (1892-1947) 5859 Sunset Lane
Horace Schonle received a bachelor and master's degree in chemistry from the University of Illinois in 1917. He joined Eli Lilly and Co. in 1919 to head the organic research department. Schonle worked during World War II as the Lilly Co. representative to the Office of Scientific Research and Development, the federal sponsor of research on penicillin, anti-malarials, and tropical medicines. Schonle discovered Amytal in 1924, a sedative, and later Secanol, another sedative. He was one of the world's foremost authorities on barbiturates. Schonle built his home at the intersection of Kessler Boulevard and Sunset Lane in 1930. He lived there until his death in 1947.

Frank D. Stalnaker (1859-1932) Questover
Frank Stalnaker was president of the Indiana National Bank and director of the State Life Insurance Company. A successful financier and civic leader, finance was both a passion and a hobby to Stalnaker. Stalnaker saw his position in the community as an opportunity to cultivate the development of Indianapolis. He thought of business not merely to enrich himself or the institutions with which he was affiliated, but to assist and direct all types of local business, so that Indianapolis might become known as a city where growth and development was managed. Stalnaker was very influential in the development of Crows Nest as an exclusive residential community. In the late 1920s Stalnaker was the leading advocate for incorporation of Crows Nest as a town in order to protect the area from annexation as part of Indianapolis. He led the movement to safeguard Crows Nest from encroaching commercial and residential development. His extensive estate, Questover, with its professionally designed landscape, set the standard for subsequent development in Crows Nest.

Architects

Most of the Indianapolis architects who were active designing houses on North Meridian Street and the other exclusive suburban enclaves developed in the 1920s such as Woodstock, and Golden Hill were also commissioned by residents of Crows Nest. Architects known to have designed buildings in the district include Robert Frost Daggett, Frederick Wallick, Lee Burns, Edward James, and Franz Herting.

Robert Frost Daggett (1875-1955)

R.F. Daggett is among the most prominent Indianapolis architects of the early 20th century. He earned a degree in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in 1896 and then studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris where he graduated in 1901. He returned to Indianapolis to practice architecture with his father's firm, R.P. Daggett & Company. Daggett was an army officer stationed in France during World War I where he was in charge of building military hospitals. Upon his return to Indianapolis, he renewed his firm's association with Eli Lilly and Company, and executed dozens of commissions for Lilly plants. Among his few residential works are the J.K. Lilly and Eli Lilly homes on Sunset Lane. Two of

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Page 10

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

his buildings, Jordan Hall (1928) at Butler University, and the Washington Hotel (1925) are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Frederick Wallick (1880-1945)

Wallick practiced architecture in Indianapolis from the 1910s until 1939. His specialty was exuberant period revival residential architecture as exemplified by his designs for the Lynn residence and the Ayres residence on Sunset Lane.

Lee Burns (1872-1957)

An architect and author, Lee Burns was born in Bloomfield Indiana and was educated at Butler University. Though not formally trained as an architect, in 1910 he founded Burns Realty Company specializing in the design and construction of fine country and town homes. In 1926 Burns started an architecture firm with Edward D. James. Utilizing traditional designs, Burns and James were responsible for many of Indianapolis' north side homes, including several houses in the North Meridian Street Historic District.

Edward D. James (1880-1969)

Graduated from Cornell University School of Architecture formed a partnership with Lee Burns, a builder, in 1926. The firm of Burns and James specialized in large traditional residences. Their residential designs won the Indiana Society of Architects' gold medal in 1929. By 1949 James was working almost exclusively with Indiana University on buildings for its Bloomington campus. Burns and James dissolved their firm and formed two separate firms: Burns and Burns, with Lee and David Burns, his son, as principals; and Edward D. James, Architect. Later, James expanded his firm to create James Associates.

Franz Herting

Herting was born in Switzerland in the late 19th century. He immigrated to the United States following World War I and eventually settled in Los Angeles where he practiced architecture. Little is known about Herting's life. His one commission in Indianapolis is the 1927 residence of Jack and Sarah Wolf Goodman at 301 Kessler Boulevard. Following her marriage to hosiery magnate, Jack Goodman, President of the Real Silk Hosiery Mill, Sarah Wolf Goodman became an active social leader in Indianapolis known for her sense of style and support of theatre and arts organizations. The Goodmans traveled frequently. On a visit to Los Angeles in the mid 1920's they encountered the work of Franz Herting and commissioned him to design an unusual house inspired by Vienna, Austria, where Sarah Wolf Goodman was born.

Landscape Designers

Elaborate landscape design was the standard for the estates in Crows Nest in the 1920s. A high level of landscape design is a character-defining feature of the district as a whole. The landscapes created for the Stalnaker Estate, Questover; the Nicholas Noyes Estate, Lane's End; and the Fredrick Ayres Estate, Walden; are among the finest surviving examples of the importance ascribed to landscape design in the district. The work of the local and national designers who crafted the landscape of the area remains a significant part of the character of Crows Nest.

Jens Jensen (1860-1951)

Born in Denmark, Jens Jensen immigrated to America in 1884, and settled in Chicago. During a professional career that spanned fifty years, Jensen was regarded as one of America's greatest landscape designers and conservationists. Using native plants and contextual designs, he advocated that American gardens, parks, roads, playgrounds, and cities should be harmonious with nature and ecological processes — a belief that has become a major theme of modern American Landscape

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Page 11

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

design. When Jensen died in 1951 at the age of 90, the New York Times called him the "Dean of American Landscape Architecture."

Jensen worked with the leading architects of his day, Sullivan and Wright among them – many of his projects involved the extravagant estates of wealthy entrepreneurs in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and elsewhere. However, Jensen also worked on schools, parks, playgrounds, hospitals, institutional homes, and government buildings. Long before environmental activists took up the idea, he foresaw the need to preserve the dunes, forests, prairies, and wetlands native to the Middle West. He championed the network of forest preserves around Chicago, protection of the Indiana Dunes, the state park system in Illinois, and numerous parks in Wisconsin.

F. D. Stalnaker contracted the services of Jensen's firm in 1922. Stalnaker's Crows Nest estate "Questover" covered 45 acres of land overlooking the shallows of White River. Work with the site was extensive. An existing spring was used to feed a cascading waterfall that terminated in a calm, reflecting pool before the Stalnaker residence. Near the pool was a "Council Ring," an area intended for outdoor gatherings and evening campfires. The council ring was a familiar element in many Jensen designs and in time became the trademark of his work. His plan at Questover also included a planned orchard and vegetable garden, a stone bridge over a ravine, and a complete site planting plan utilizing native trees and shrubs, and detailed construction drawings.

The extent of Jensen's personal involvement in the design of the new landscape at Questover is well documented. Jensen's project records indicate that his firm worked on the design from 1921–1923 (see Jensen Collection Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois, and Jensen Collection, Art and Architecture Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.) Local landscape designer George MacDougall supervised much of the installation in Jensen's absence. Design features typical of Jensen's work are found throughout the Stalnaker property, including the circular road called Questover Circle, stacked limestone ledge rock forming surrounds for pools and small waterfalls, and the trademark "Council Ring." Jensen was also responsible for the design of another important Indianapolis landscape: the Wheeler Estate, now property of Marion College, located south west of Questover Circle.

Lawrence Vinnedge Sheridan (1887-1972)

Born in Frankfort Indiana, Sheridan earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Purdue University and studied landscape architecture at Harvard in 1917. Sheridan worked on the Kessler Boulevard and Park System in Indianapolis while serving on the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners (1911-1914) and the City Plan Commission (1921-1923). Sheridan worked under George Kessler when the Indianapolis park and boulevard system was being laid out. Sheridan began private practice in 1937, the same year he became a regional counselor of the Natural Resources Planning Board (1937-1941). During World War II he served in the Army Corps of Engineers, and attained the rank of Colonel. After the war, Sheridan focused his attention on city planning in Indianapolis and elsewhere. In his later years, he founded Metropolitan Planners, a planning, landscape, architecture and civil engineering firm. He served for several years as the consulting landscape architect at Crown Hill Cemetery. In the 1930s, Sheridan was the landscape architect for Lockefield Gardens, a significant public housing project in Indianapolis.

Sheridan developed the grounds for Walden, Frederick Ayres' estate on Sunset Lane. The basic principal underlying the design of the grounds at Walden was the desirability and necessity of retaining and conserving the natural character of the site. He described his design approach for the 18 acres in the June, 1931 issue of American Landscape Architect. The planning of every feature was done with the idea of merging its outlines with its surroundings and denying emphasis to any one particular element. Sheridan's ability to merge his designs into existing elements and site conditions, along with his

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Page 12

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

desire to work closely with the architect on the project, produced dramatic results. Although the buildings at Walden were destroyed by fire, the landscape remains as testament to the ability of Sheridan as a designer.

Frits Loonsten (1909-1989)

Born in the Netherlands, Loonsten studied at the Royal School of Horticulture in Boskoop, Holland. He came to the United States in 1928 to visit his brother in Chicago where he then took up residence for several years. He soon met and became partners with Erick Bushholtz, a prominent landscape architect. Together they designed landscapes for many Wisconsin estates; when Bushholtz retired, Loonsten gained control of the firm. In the 1930s Loonsten came to Indianapolis, having heard that the city needed landscape architects and was less hard-hit by the Great Depression than many other urban areas. His first work in the city was the design of the Flowering Walk at Westerly, the Alan Clowes Estate, on Spring Hollow Road. In 1938 he designed a village street to compliment a Colonial Williamsburg-style home at the Indianapolis Home Show. Loonsten's Home Show work so impressed Indiana University president Herman B Wells that he recruited Loonsten as the landscape architect for Indiana University.

After moving to Indianapolis, Loonsten worked on both commercial and estate design, including the redesign of Questover Circle in 1957. His local public work included the plaza outside the original IUPUI Library, Marion College's Japanese Tea Garden, the Eli Lilly Estate, and the period plantings at the Benjamin Harrison Home. Loonsten also worked in tandem with other landscape architects on the design for the Harrison Eitlejorg estate and The St. Vincent's Hospital landscape. When possible, Loonsten worked with architects on building placement and attempted to retain the natural trees of the area. He said, "a good landscape architect must be first a good gardener." In the early 1970s, Loonsten received a national award at the White House for his work on a West Lafayette, Indiana, estate. Loonsten was active in many civic organizations in Indianapolis and served for 30 years on the Indiana University Planning Board.

George MacDougall (1878-1960)

This Scotch-Born landscape architect is well known in Indianapolis for his work with boulevard designer, George Kessler, and for his work commissioned by Industrialist David Parry, who acquired properties to create his personal estate Golden Hill between 1900 and 1907. At Parry's death in 1915 his family subdivided the estate and hired MacDougall to plan an exclusive neighborhood. Today, Golden Hill remains much as originally designed with curving streets and greenspaces creating a park-like setting for the elegant homes which were subsequently constructed there. MacDougall also designed Indianapolis properties for Eli Lilly, Walter Marmon, and Nicholas Noyes. His design for the Noyes Estate, Lane's End, is among the most extensive landscapes in the Town of Crows Nest. MacDougall continued his successful landscaping business until the 1930's when he turned his interests to the more lucrative and practical design of irrigation systems for commercial properties.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9. Major Bibliographical References

Page 13

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10. Geographical Data

Page 14

Town of Crows Nest Historic District
Marion County, Indiana

Verbal Boundary Description

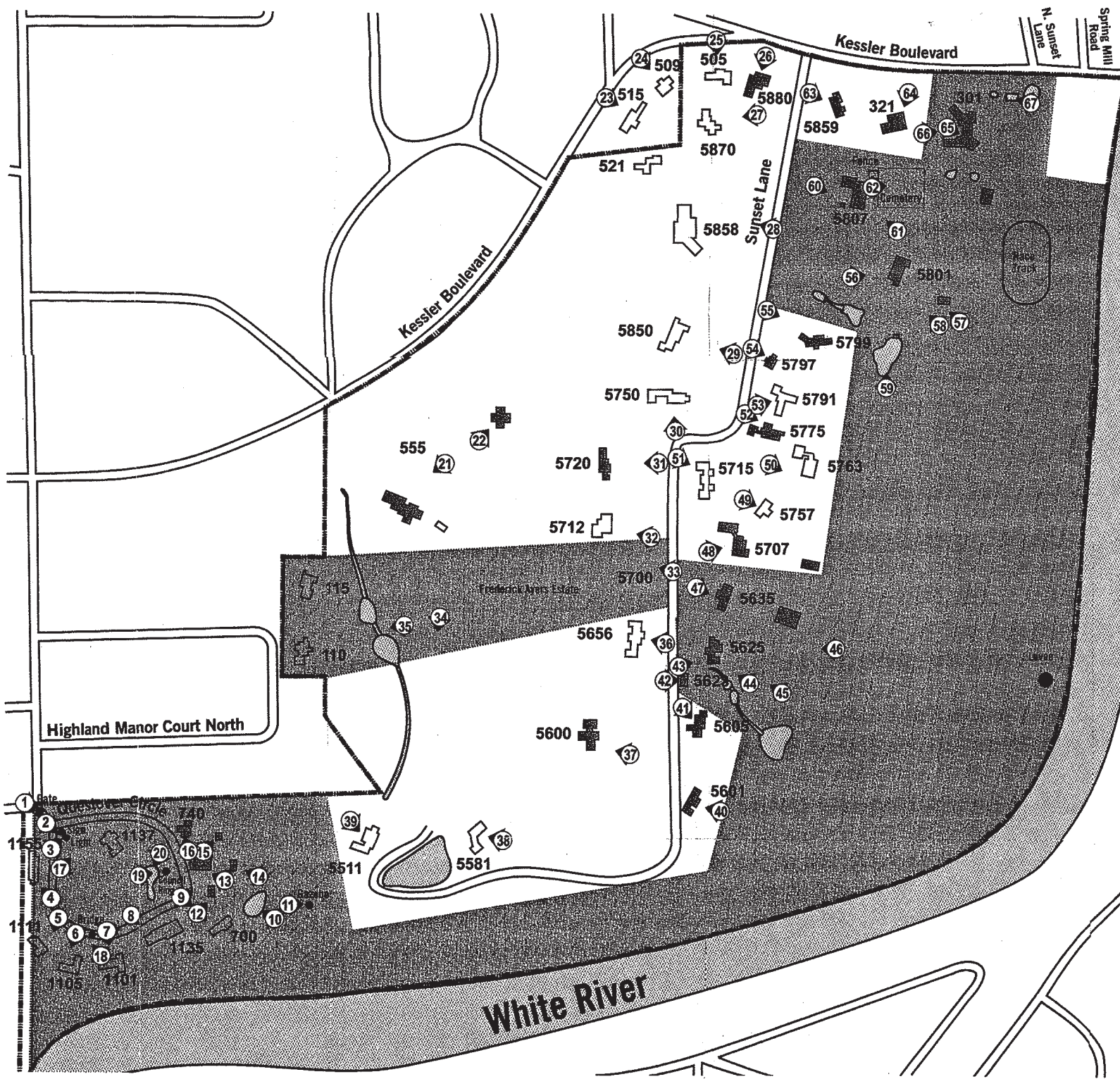
North boundary is Kessler Boulevard, east and south boundary is the White River, and west boundary forms an irregular line from the white river north to Kessler Boulevard following the property lines of homes on Questover Circle, Sunset Lane, and Kessler Boulevard (see attached scale map).

Verbal Boundary Justification

The district boundary follows the original boundary of the incorporated Town of Crows Nest, with the addition of the triangular section of land that extends the district to Kessler Boulevard on the northwest corner, and a narrow strip on the west side of Questover Circle to extend the district to include all of the property for homes along this side of the circle.

UTMs, Continued

- 5) 16 570640 4412150
- 6) 16 571000 4412680



Town of Crows Nest Historic District

- Proposed District Boundary
- Contributing Buildings
- Non-Contributing Buildings
- Contributing Structures
- Contributing Objects
- Contributing Sites

- Original Town Boundary
- Landscape Areas
- Water Features
- 14 Photo Number, Location, and Direction
- 5720** Property Address

Prepared by:
 NORMAND Baumgarten
 4928 Guilford Avenue
 Indianapolis, IN 46205
 (317) 926-5754
 September 1999

200 0 200 400 600
 Approximate Scale: 1" = 200'