

Observations on Potential Historic Districts

in

Forest Acres and Arcadia Lakes

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Introduction

As part of the Upper Richland County Historical and Architectural Survey and Inventory, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History requested that the consultants with Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. identify potential historic districts in the cities of Forest Acres and Arcadia Lakes. These separate, but adjacent communities are located just north and east of downtown Columbia. The Department staff indicated that any potential districts would likely be eligible around 2010. The staff of Archives and History requested that the consultants plot any potential historic districts on survey maps, discuss each prospective district's history, character, setting and integrity.

Forest Acres

The following discussion comes from Carol Cook Dugan's A History of Forest Acres (Forest Acres: the City of Forest Acres, 1997).

Forest Acres traces its history to the nineteenth century when members of the Taylor family established an estate called Quinine Hill at what is now the western edge of the City of Forest Acres. Dr. James Davis, who proved instrumental in the success of the Lunatic Asylum in Columbia, later acquired Quinine Hill. It passed to John Hughes Cooper in the 1920s and eventually to Senator James H. Hammond.

In the early twentieth century, a group purchased Dent's Pond from the Dent family and developed it as a recreational area they called Lakeview. John Hughes Cooper bought Lakeview after World War I and then around 1920, he established Forest Land Company. His first project was to develop the land around Lakeview and establish a swim and dance club there. In the 1920s Cooper sold a portion of his property for the development of Forest Lake Club, a concern focused mainly on golf.

Cooper and Senator Hammond were among several individuals who proved instrumental in the development of Forest Acres. Emmette Groover and Foster Marshall were among others who bought land in the area that became Forest Acres in order to build and then sell houses.

Forest Acres incorporated as a town because of residents' need for water during the Depression. A federal program allowed incorporated communities to obtain a grant or loan to install water lines. The town of Forest Acres was established on 24 September

1935 with John Hughes Cooper as mayor. Eventually the town's original boundaries expanded to the north.

The town's population exploded during the post-World War II era. In 1940, 323 people lived in Forest Acres. By 1950, the population had grown to 3,240. In 1970, the population stood at 6,808. By 1990, over seven thousand people lived in Forest Acres.

Arcadia Lakes

Arcadia Lakes was settled in the early twentieth century and became an incorporated community on 30 October 1959. In 1960, 316 residents lived in the town. By 1990 that number had grown to approximately 900. Arcadia Lakes occupies 2,228 acres.

Recommendations

In late October 2001, the consultants—using City of Columbia maps and a City of Forest Acres map—conducted an extensive windshield survey over a two-day period. They drove every street and road in both cities and photographed several outstanding examples of post-World War II domestic architecture.

As a result of the survey, discussion with a few residents and research into the history of both cities, the consultants determined that potential historic districts could not be identified in either city. Several outstanding early and mid-twentieth century dwellings stand in each city. Forest Acres, especially, possesses some of the most distinct post-war modernist houses in central South Carolina. In addition, each city might potentially hold significance in the area of social history as an example of suburban communities that developed during the post-World War II period. However, the consultants concluded that the resources that might potentially contribute to the significance of a district were distributed in a manner that compromised a potential district's continuity. In other words, potentially contributing resources are interspersed with much later houses thereby compromising a potential district's integrity. From the consultant's observations, it appears that the growth each community experienced from the 1960s to the present has compromised the qualities of feeling and association necessary for the formation of a historic district.