

Spotless Town Residential Survey Normandy, Missouri

Missouri State Historic Preservation Office Survey # SL-AS-052

Final report

Submitted to

City of Normandy Historic Preservation Commission
7700 Natural Bridge Road
Normandy, MO 63121

Submitted by

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Figure 1: City of Normandy in St. Louis County (St. Louis City is faintly traced to the right/east of the county). Gray areas in the county are incorporated; white areas are unincorporated. Source: Wikimedia Commons, base map by Arkyan, modified by Lynn Josse.

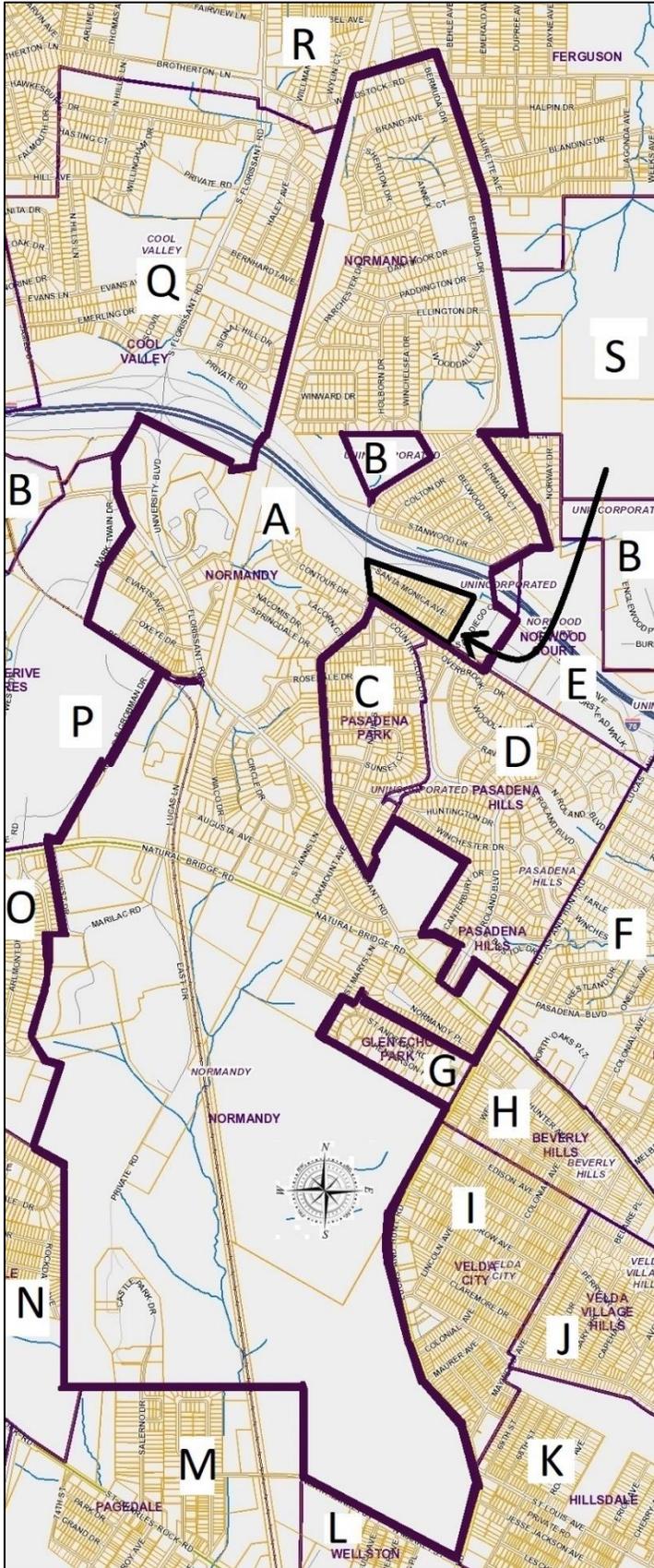


Figure 2: City of Normandy and surrounding municipalities; the arrow points to the Spotless Town survey area. Source: St. Louis County "Jurisdictions" map, modified by Lynn Josse.

- A: Normandy
- B: Unincorporated
- C: Pasadena Park
- D: Pasadena Hills
- E: Norwood Court
- F: Northwoods
- G: Glen Echo Park
- H: Beverly Hills
- I: Velda City
- J: Velda Village Hills
- K: Hillsdale
- L: Wellston
- M: Pagedale
- N: Greendale
- O: Bel-Nor
- P: Bellerive Acres
- Q: Cool Valley
- R: Ferguson
- S: Jennings

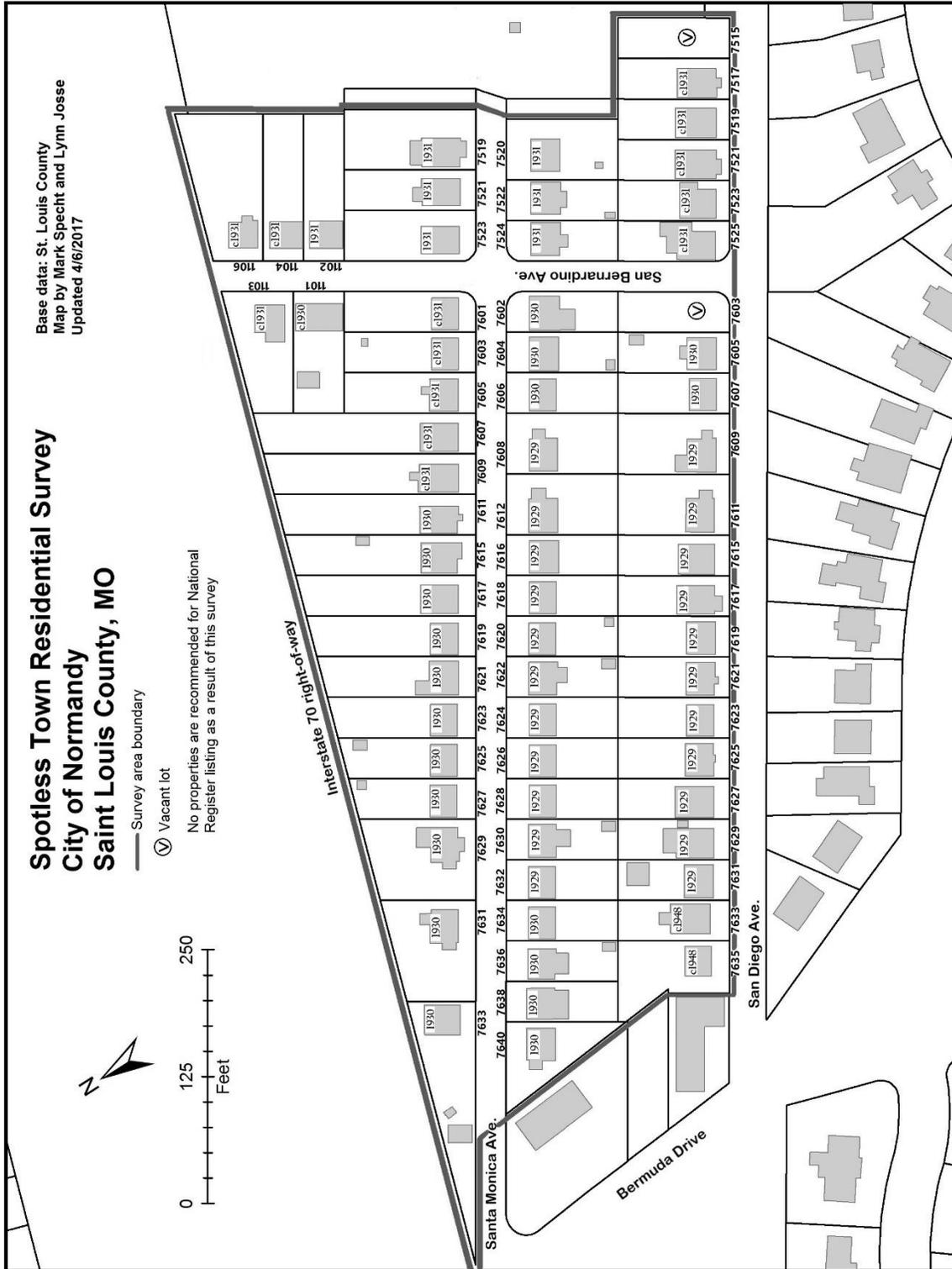


Figure 3: Spotless Town survey map

Project Background

In 2013, the City of Normandy completed the steps to become a “Certified Local Government” (CLG). This designation is awarded by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to local governments that become partners in the preservation process. Normandy is one of ten municipalities in St. Louis County that are so designated.¹

In order to be certified, a community must undertake five steps:

- Enact a local historic preservation ordinance,
- Maintain a historic preservation commission,
- Conduct public outreach and education,
- Conduct an ongoing survey of historic properties, and
- Satisfactorily perform the responsibilities delegated to the local government by the State Historic Preservation Office.²

Communities which participate in the CLG program benefit from technical training provided by the SHPO and are eligible for special grants to further the ongoing survey of historic properties, nominate eligible resources to the National Register of Historic Places, and undertake other preservation projects.

The Spotless Town Residential Survey project was initiated by Normandy’s Historic Preservation Commission as a grant proposal in mid-2015. It was approved for funding from the State Historic Preservation Office in April 2016. In October, after reviewing several proposals, the commission selected Lynn Josse as the professional consultant to oversee the project.

This survey is the first step in the creation of an inventory of Normandy’s historic resources, as well as its first grant-funded project. The Spotless Town subdivision was selected for this pilot project because of its architectural cohesiveness and its manageable size.

There are two generally recognized approaches to survey projects. The first, the reconnaissance survey, will generally cover a larger geographical area and include less in-depth historical background on the individual resources and the survey area as a whole. The second approach, the intensive-level survey, does the reverse. An intensive survey’ geographic scope is typically smaller, but each individual resource is researched thoroughly. The final report in the intensive survey offers more history and context about the area surveyed.

¹ The others are Ferguson, Florissant, Kirkwood, Manchester, Oakland, Pasadena Hills, University City, Webster Groves, and Wildwood. For more information, see Mo SHPO’s Certified Local Government page: <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/certifie.htm>.

² <https://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/certifie.htm> accessed 4/13/2017.

Survey Objectives

The Spotless Town Residential Survey is an intensive-level survey with two major goals:

- to identify buildings that may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and
- to help the community understand the development of the area prior to the city's incorporation in 1945.

Because this is the first such project undertaken by the City of Normandy, an additional goal is to familiarize the City, its Historic Preservation Commission, and its citizens with the processes and procedures used in historic resource identification and registration.

Methodology

The Spotless Town Residential Survey was undertaken using the methods and standards found in the National Register of Historic Places' *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* (Bulletin 24)³ and the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office's "Standards for Professional and Architectural Surveys."⁴

Recordation

Between December 2016 and February 2017, the buildings and vacant lots of Spotless Town were photographed by the consultant and volunteers. Each primary building and site was recorded by consultant Lynn Josse in a Microsoft Access database and outputted onto forms which were then double-checked in the field. The data was then exported into a Microsoft Word editable version of MO SHPO's general architectural survey form.

Research

Archival research was conducted by consultant Lynn Josse and members of Normandy's Historic Preservation Commission. Because this is an intensive-level survey, extensive research was conducted into the histories of individual properties as well as the district as a whole.

The most important sources of information regarding individual owners and renters of Spotless Town properties were St. Louis County Directories and the United States Census. Newspaper articles and advertisements were located via an online search and with assistance from the

³ <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb24/>. Accessed 4/28/2017.

⁴ <http://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/minsurvgl.htm>. Accessed 4/28/2017.

Missouri Historical Society. The St. Louis Public Library offered additional clippings on Normandy's 1945 incorporation. In the absence of historic St. Louis County building permits, the daily "Building News" column in the *St. Louis Daily Record* was scoured for the years 1929-1930 to find permit summaries. Secondary sources included National Register district nominations for the adjacent suburbs of Pasadena Hills and Glen Echo Park. St. Louis County's Real Estate web site provided useful maps and basic information on nearby subdivisions. Additional resources were found at the Missouri Historical Society and the St. Louis Public Library.

In addition to archival research, informal interviews were conducted with residents of Spotless Town during the survey process. An in-depth interview with Tom Urani, who grew up at 7633 San Diego Avenue, was conducted in January 2017.

Evaluation

Potential for listing in the National Register of Historic Places was evaluated according to the guidelines in the National Register Bulletin "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (Bulletin 15).⁵

Properties may be listed in the National Register if they possess both *significance* and *integrity*.

Historic resources (buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts) may be listed in the National Register for their significance in any of four areas. Those that possess significance are those properties:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.⁶

To understand these broad areas in which a property might be significant, the historic and archival information uncovered in the research process is organized to illustrate the historic contexts with which the property might be associated.

In addition to significance, properties listed in the National Register must have integrity. This means that a resource must be intact enough to convey its significance.

⁵ Available online <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>

⁶ National Register Bulletin "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (Bulletin 15), section II https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm. Accessed 4/13/2017.

Geographical Description

The Spotless Town survey area is a 16-acre residential neighborhood located in the City of Normandy in north St. Louis County (see Figure 2). It is roughly bounded by Interstate 70 on the north, Bermuda Drive on the west, the Hillcrest Apartments property on the east, and two single-subdivision municipalities, Pasadena Park and Pasadena Hills, on the south.

The survey area includes parcels facing three streets. San Diego and Santa Monica Avenues are parallel streets which run approximately east-west. They are connected by San Bernardino Avenue toward the east end of the survey area. Entrance to the subdivision is from Bermuda Drive to the west. Traffic flows into the subdivision on Santa Monica Avenue, which is one-way running east, and exits on San Diego, which is one-way running west. Both streets are two-ways on the dead-end spurs east of San Bernardino Avenue. San Diego Avenue extends east into the Hillcrest Apartments complex, but the street is blocked by three large round concrete planters.

The topography of Spotless Town is hilly. Heading east from Bermuda Drive, the two parallel roads gently dip and then climb upward (Figure 4); the eastern half of the subdivision slopes noticeably to the east (Figure 5).

Concrete sidewalks line all of the avenues of Spotless Town. Because there are no tree strips, there are no street trees. Most front yards slope up gently, and all of them are carpeted with grass. A few front yards (as can be seen in Figures 4 and 5) include large trees, but in most cases the plantings are limited. Houses observe a uniform setback of 20 feet. Most lots are 40' wide, which is just enough space for a house and a side driveway, with no side yards.



Figure 4: Santa Monica Avenue, camera facing west to Bermuda Drive. Lynn Josse, December 2016.



Figure 5: Santa Monica Avenue, camera facing east to Spotless Town Addition. Lynn Josse, December 2016.

Although the right-angled plan of Spotless Town would fit neatly into an urban grid, none of the surrounding developments use a grid layout. To the north, Interstate 70's right-of-way borders the properties with a fenced-off line of untended bushes and growth. The property is bounded to the east by a wide grassy parcel, in the middle of which is the fenced-off pool and pool house belonging to the Hillcrest Apartments further east. Much of the southern boundary of San Diego Avenue in the survey area is formed by a retaining wall; the houses on San Diego face the back yards of those to the south in the municipalities of Pasadena Hills and Pasadena Park. Past the west end of the survey area, two Modern-era buildings separate the residences of Spotless Town from Bermuda Drive. The northern of the two buildings is a former Sinclair service station at the southeast corner of Bermuda Drive and Santa Monica Avenue, which has recently been renovated by the City of Normandy into a community building (Figure 6). To the south of that, a single-story L-shaped apartment building was constructed at the northeast corner of Bermuda Drive and San Diego Avenue at the beginning of the 1970s (partially visible at the right in Figure 6).

The survey area is based on the Spotless Town subdivision (1929) and its addition (1930), but undeveloped parcels from the original subdivision are excluded, and two parcels from outside the subdivision boundaries are included (Figure 7). The survey includes all of the lots that were ever developed on San Bernardino, San Diego, and Santa Monica Avenues. The plat of the Spotless Town Addition included more residential lots extending to the east along San Diego and Santa Monica Avenues, and laid out an additional cross-street (parallel to San Bernardino Avenue) to be named Santa Barbara Avenue. These lots were never built on; eventually the parcels were consolidated and sold.

Lots on Bermuda Drive within the Spotless Town subdivision do not include any historic resources and were not included in the survey area. In addition, two lots at the western end of San Diego Avenue are included in the survey area although they were excluded from the original

subdivision plat. The survey boundaries were chosen to include all of the residential resources that were developed in the Spotless Town subdivision and addition, as well as the two adjacent residential lots at 7633 and 7635 San Diego Avenue.



Figure 6: Former Sinclair Station (with characteristic roofline intact) transformed for use by the City of Normandy. Lynn Josse, December 2016. Camera facing southeast.

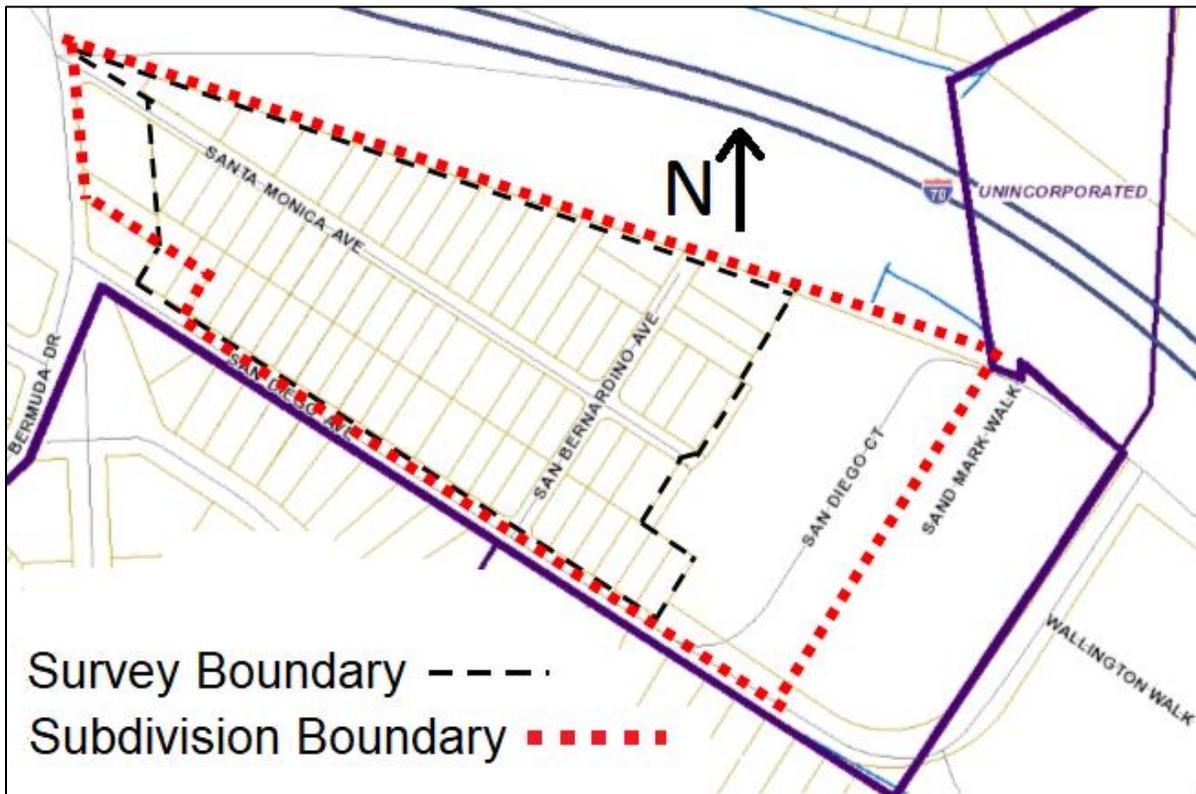


Figure 7: Spotless Town survey area boundary (dashed line) and original subdivision and addition boundary (square dashes). Modified version of St. Louis County parcel map, located at <http://maps.stlouisco.com/propertyview/> accessed May 2, 2017.

Historic Context

The Development of Normandy

On the eve of the Louisiana Purchase, most of St. Louis County was unpopulated land. In addition to the 40-year-old settlement of St. Louis, which had a population of 1,039 in 1800,⁷ there were small settlements at Carondelet (now part of the City of St. Louis), Florissant, and Bridgeton.

Much of the property that became the City of Normandy and surrounding areas was unclaimed at the time of the Louisiana Purchase. Figure 8 is adapted from an 1847 map which recorded the Normandy area's surveys and purchases from the federal government. Many (if not all) of the tracts with survey numbers (marked "Sur.") were Spanish land grants given to early settlers. Survey #1913 at the east side of the map was the property of William Clark. This large tract, purchased from pioneer settler Pierre Chouteau in 1808, was acquired in the year of Clark's marriage, five years before he was appointed territorial governor. He named it Council Grove.⁸

A significant amount of property in the Normandy area was acquired by possessors of "New Madrid Certificates" (cross-hatched on Figure 8). After the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-1812, Congress passed a law that would allow property owners in the earthquake zone to trade for unaffected property elsewhere in the Missouri Territory. Since word of the congressional act reached St. Louis first, speculators from the territorial seat descended upon New Madrid and began buying up the undervalued damaged claims. The certificates issued for the damaged lands were then redeemed for more valuable claims.⁹ Twenty of these were located in the Normandy area.

The largest of the New Madrid claims was that of J. B. C. Lucas. Lucas, one of the giant figures in the region's pre-statehood development, came to St. Louis from Pennsylvania in 1805 as a judge and land commissioner of the new American territory. His rural property would be named "Normandy" after his birthplace in northern France (labeled M.174 on Figure 8).

In 1827, adjacent to three of the New Madrid claims, James Barry purchased the 143-acre tract where Spotless Town would later be platted (labeled E. 1237 on Figure 8).¹⁰

⁷ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley* 3rd ed. (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998). 63. The City of St. Louis was a municipality in St. Louis County until 1876, when the two separated into distinct county-level units.

⁸ William E. Foley, *Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 174. After Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery returned from its famous expedition in 1804-1806, Thomas Jefferson awarded Clark the rank of brigadier general in the Louisiana militia and the position of Indian Agent.

⁹ James L. Penick, *The New Madrid Earthquakes* revised edition (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 47-48.

¹⁰ Bureau of Land Management patent records, <https://glorerecords.blm.gov> accessed March 21, 2017. It has not been ascertained if this is the same James Barry who was mayor of St. Louis in 1849-1850.

TOWNSHIP 46 NORTH, RANGE 6 EAST.

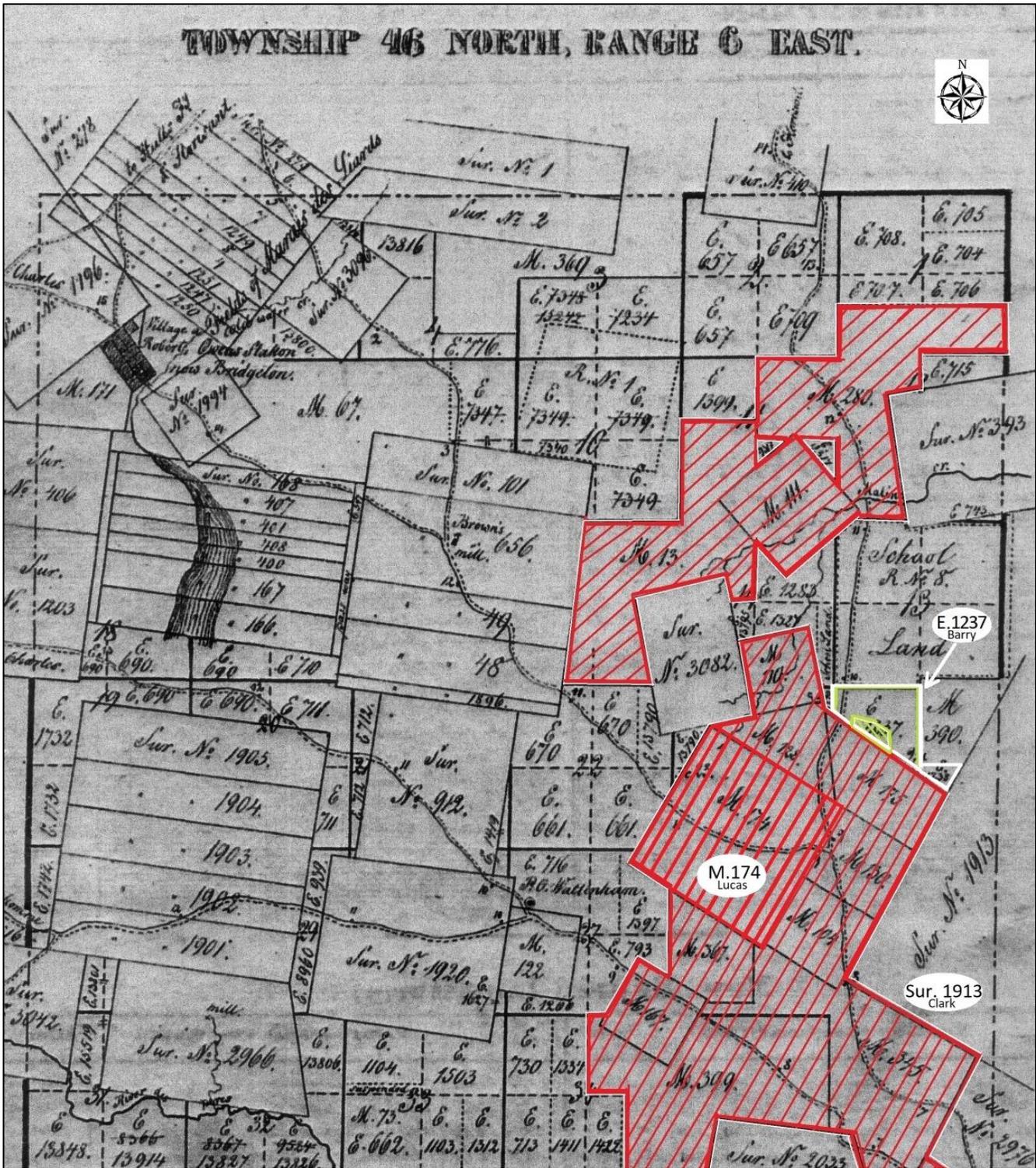


Figure 8: Edward Hutawa map; cross hatching indicates New Madrid claims. The white-outlined area is the Barry tract (with Spotless Town location highlighted).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Natural Bridge and Florissant Road assumed their present courses, and a toll booth was established at their intersection (Figure 9). A small crossroads settlement developed and took its name from the Lucas estate.¹¹ The West End Narrow Gauge Railroad connected the Normandy area with downtown St. Louis in 1875, and ran all the way north to the town of Florissant by 1878.¹² This route was electrified as a streetcar in

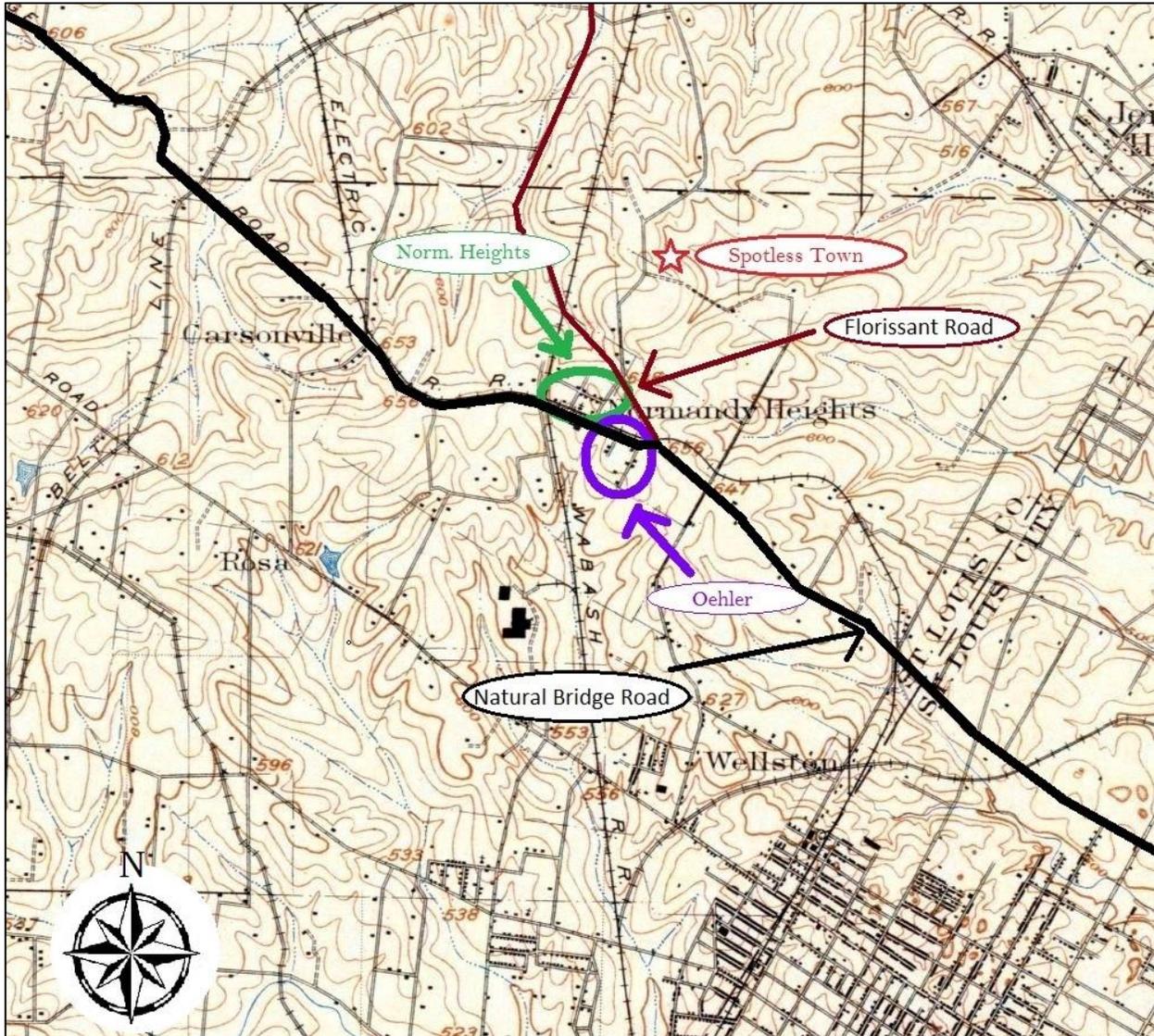


Figure 9: 1904 USGS map shows extent of residential development in that year. The suburb of Wellston is developing adjacent to the St. Louis city limits to the southeast, and Jennings to the northeast. Source: University of Alabama Map collection.

¹¹ Gill, Bob. "Crossroads: Memories of the Normandy Wedge." Normandy Area Historical Association. n. d. <http://www.cityofnormandy.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/582>, accessed 3/21/2017. "Early Transportation St. Louis City and County" in "History of Normandy" document, dated September 1973. Missouri Historical Society Archives. 13

¹² Davison, Rosemary. *Rail, Mail & Dreams*. Historic Florissant, Inc, 2009. 10-11.

1891, was absorbed into the United Railways system after the turn of the century, and operated until 1931.¹³

Despite this rail connection, in the 19th century the Normandy area experienced relatively little development beyond the small community near the toll station. By 1900, land divisions were still fairly large. Most of the sparsely built residences lined major county roads. Figure 9 shows that the exceptions to this pattern were in two subdivisions, Normandy Heights and “Oehler’s Place at Normandy.” Located just west of the wedge formed by Old Florissant and Natural Bridge Roads, Normandy Heights was platted in 1889. Its southern two blocks were developed first; the northern section was eventually replatted and built up after World War II. Just south of the intersection, Oehler’s Place was platted in 1890. (Over the years, the area between and around Natural Bridge and Florissant – now Old Florissant – just west of their intersection became known simply as “The Wedge,” and it is still referred to as such today.)

In the meantime, Barry heirs had retained the northern section of the family’s 1827 purchase, while the southern section (including the future site of Spotless Town) had been sold to “C. Anderson & W. Fred” by 1893.¹⁴ In 1908, Charles and Augusta Deutschmann purchased the southern portion of that property from Mary L. Anderson et al. The 1920 census shows that they lived on site with three of their five children.

The boundaries of the City of St. Louis, just a mile and a half from the Normandy Wedge (at its closest point), had been set in 1876 when the City separated itself from St. Louis County. At that time, there was still plenty of room within the city limits for growth. But in the first few decades of the 20th century, the expanding area of urbanization overspilled the City’s confines at all but its southwest borders. St. Louis County communities which had developed independently as agricultural centers or waystations soon found themselves in the path of suburbanization.

Figure 9 illustrates that by 1904, development had already crossed from the city into near north St. Louis County at Wellston. In this as in most of the other turn-of-the-century suburbs, the extension and electrification of the streetcar system from the City of St. Louis spurred ongoing growth. Easton Avenue in Wellston became one of the city’s busiest commercial districts, becoming both a community hub and a destination for shoppers throughout the city and county.¹⁵

Because it was farther from the urban center, the vicinity of Normandy did not develop as quickly. The 1909 atlas shows that many of the larger parcels were still undivided at that time. In the 1920 census, six of the 16 household enumerated on Old Florissant Road north of Natural Bridge Road (including the Deutschmanns) are listed as farms.

All of this changed in the 1920s, based on factors such as the availability of land, the development of transit, and growing popularity of the automobile. Two subdivisions adjacent to

¹³ Ibid. 33, 34.

¹⁴ *An Atlas of St. Louis County in the State of Missouri, 1893*. Clayton, Missouri: C.R. Black, 1893. <http://digital.shsmo.org/cdm/ref/collection/plat/id/6768> accessed April 28, 2017.

¹⁵ Lindsey Derrington et al, “Wellston Loop Commercial Historic District” National Register nomination, listed 9/9/2010.

the Wedge, the traditional center of the Normandy community, were filed in 1920. These were among the first of approximately 10 new plats filed along Natural Bridge Road and the route of the former West End Narrow Gauge Railroad in the mile or so to the east of Normandy Heights during the course of the 1920s. (Figure 10 maps the subdivision activity of the 1920s. The subdivision labeled ‘E,’ the second phase of Normandy Grove, is essentially the Wedge.)

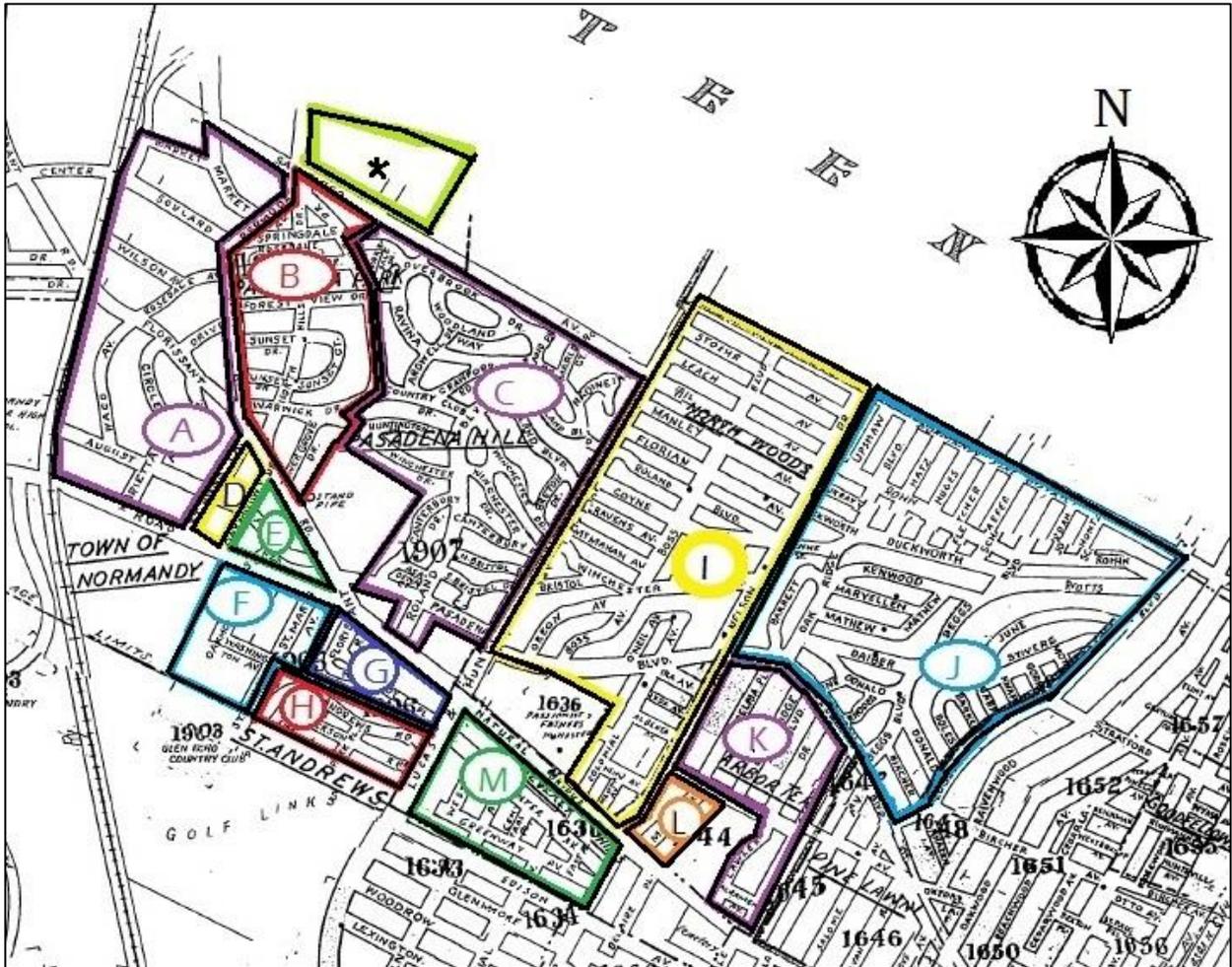


Figure 10: Subdivision Map. Source: Sanborn Map Company, v. 16 index page, based on 1951 updates. The curving street that marks the boundaries between Kenwood Homesites (J) and Arbor Terrace (K) was the route of the streetcar (originally the route of the Suburban Railway) as it wound its way toward Natural Bridge Road.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| *: Spotless Town, 1929-1930 | G: Natural Bridge Place: 1920 |
| A: Normandy Heights, 1889 | H: Glen Echo Park: 1906 |
| B: Pasadena Park, 1924 | I: Electric Homesites: 1928 |
| C: Pasadena Hills, 1928 | J: Kenwood Homesites: 1921 |
| D: Normandy Grove (blocks 1-2): 1920 | K: Arbor Terrace and additions: 1922-1924 |
| E: Normandy Grove (blocks 3-5): 1924 | L: Melba Terrace: 1930 |
| F: Oehler’s Place: 1890 | M: Beverly Hills: 1920 |

By the end of the 1920s, with the ascendancy of the automobile, Americans were less dependent on fixed transit routes. New suburban development no longer needed to locate adjacent to existing streetcar lines. The National Register nomination for Pasadena Hills (platted in 1928 immediately south of the survey area) notes that the subdivision's monumental gate was actually located between the streetcar line and Natural Bridge Road; it served as a gate only for those who came by auto.¹⁶ Spotless Town, platted in 1929 and 1930, was half a mile away from the nearest transit route. In some of its roomier advertisements, the promoters offered instructions on how to reach the new development by bus, but most of the ads only offered driving directions.

During the course of the 1930s, many of the subdivisions in the area filed for incorporation in order to preserve their boundaries and to avoid being annexed into other county municipalities. The first in the area to do so was Beverly Hills in 1933, followed by Pasadena Park (directly south of Spotless Town) in 1935. Glen Echo Park, Pasadena Hills, Bel-Nor, Velda Village, Northwoods, Margona Village (later absorbed into the City of St. John), and Bellerive followed by the end of the decade.¹⁷

In 1945, the tiny city of Beverly Hills proposed expanding to the west, a move that would annex the wedge at Natural Bridge and Florissant. In response, representatives of four Normandy neighborhoods (Spotless Town, Normandy Place, Normandy Heights, and Normandy Grove), met to discuss incorporation.¹⁸ After a successful petition to the county court, the new Town of Normandy was incorporated on March 30, 1945.¹⁹

Building Spotless Town

The original Spotless Town plat was filed in June 1929 by property owners Sol and Hazel Loewenstein.²⁰ It consisted of 41 lots, most of which were located on Santa Monica Avenue and San Diego Avenue. The subdivision was private (streets were owned by the residents) and had restrictions on building type and location, as well as on who could live there.

In July, the couple borrowed money against the first 21 lots, and building permits for the first handful of buildings must have been obtained soon thereafter.²¹ The “opening” of Spotless Town took place on September 8. The properties were owned by the Loewensteins, and marketed and sold by the Albert Wenzlick Real Estate Company. Four lots were purchased before the official “opening” during the period that easements were still being settled with the utility companies.²²

¹⁶ Karen Bode Baxter et al, “Pasadena Hills Historic District” National Register nomination, listed 12/04/2004.

¹⁷ “History of Normandy,” 68.

¹⁸ “Normandy District to File Petition for Incorporation,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 21, 1945, 10B.

¹⁹ “Know Your County: Normandy,” *St. Louis Start-Times*, February 23, 1946.

²⁰ St. Louis County Real Estate Records. Plat Book 28 page 20.

²¹ St. Louis County building permits from this period have been destroyed, but permit summaries were printed in the *St. Louis Daily Record* the following business day. This first set of building permit summaries in Spotless Town was not found, although later permits were identified as noted in the text.

²² Summaries of all deeds (including warranty deeds, deeds of trust, and easements) are located in the St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds office; Deed Indexes for 1929-1931 were consulted for sales in Spotless Town.

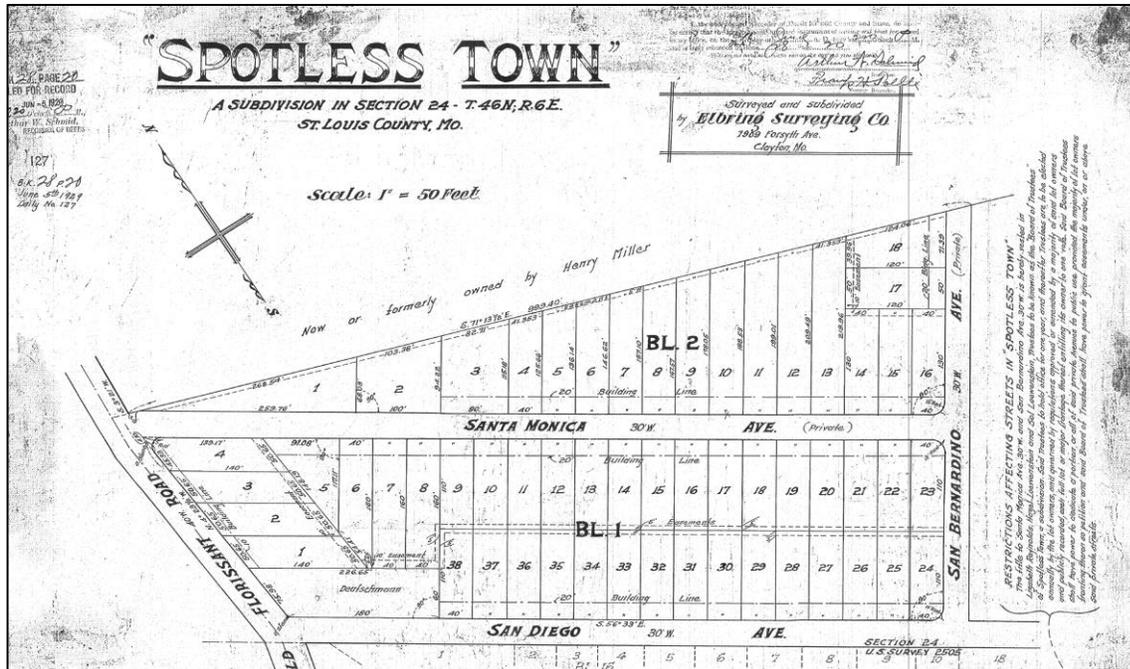


Figure 11: Spotless Town plat, filed June 1929.

While all of the houses appear to have been built to two basic designs, it appears that different builders were hired to complete different phases of the project. For example, J. M. Christian was listed as the builder on six dwellings permitted in June 1930, while Fred Holzum was the builder of 22 dwellings with the same designs permitted that December.²³ The architect of the houses has not been identified.

During the first months, property sold well. The Loewensteins began to build more houses on spec. By April 1930, the U. S. Census recorded 21 households living on San Diego and Santa Monica (out of 37 total lots on San Diego, Santa Monica, and San Bernardino). Most lots in the original subdivision had been sold by the end of 1930.

In December 1930, the Loewensteins filed the Spotless Town Addition. This new plat added 47 lots on San Diego, Santa Monica, San Bernardino, and a new street to be called Santa Barbara. No sales in the new subdivision were filed until June 1931. Most of the new addition, to the east of the survey area, was never developed and still remains as open land.²⁴ The only lots sold as home sites were those within the present survey area.

²³ “Building News” Section, *St. Louis Daily Record*, June 5, 1930 and December 12, 1930.

²⁴ In the 1950s, the remaining lots in Spotless Town made the news when a widow alleged that instead of investing her money in “high class deeds of trust and construction loans,” real estate agent Thomas Gilpin used it to secure loans on property he already owned in Spotless Town, which was described as an “undeveloped, weed-overgrown subdivision in Normandy.” “Gilpin Accused of Transfers of Firm Property,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 26, 1956, 1; “Asserts Funds Apparently Went to Gilpin’s Personal Use,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 5, 1956, 1.

All of the houses in Spotless Town and its addition were built to one of two basic designs. The houses with side gabled roofs had 750 square feet of floor space, and the front gabled model, 900 square feet. They were marketed as “Honeymoon Bungalows” - perfect homes for two people starting out in life. Since the subdivision was geared towards motorists, each house was advertised as being built with a garage.²⁵ There are no records of how many garages were actually built, but the 1937 aerial map does appear to show a detached garage behind nearly every house on Santa Monica Avenue. There appear to be fewer on San Diego Avenue.²⁶

Sol and Hazel Loewenstein

The Loewensteins are elusive figures who seem to have left little trace in the historical record. Sol was born c. 1895 in either Seattle (per his death certificate), Pennsylvania (according to the 1930 census), or Oregon (according to the 1940 census). Hazel was born c. 1900, possibly in Pennsylvania (1930 census) or Iowa (1940 census). Sol Loewenstein was not found in the 1920 census, and the couple’s c. 1921 marriage was not recorded in Missouri.

Loewenstein’s real estate career is first documented in 1928, when, as the “exclusive agent” for the Radio Bungalow Company, he placed 24 bungalows on the market in the Glenechort subdivision.²⁷ (The Missouri Secretary of State has no records of a “Radio Bungalow” company,²⁸ and an internet search returned no relevant results.) A look in Glenechort reveals that many of the houses, presumably some of those built by the Loewensteins, are nearly identical to the side-gabled houses they built two miles north in Spotless Town a year later.

The 1930 census shows that Sol and Hazel Loewenstein had moved into the model house constructed at 1002 Bermuda on Spotless Town block 1, lot 1. Sol’s occupation was listed as “builder.” By 1940, the couple had moved to the city of Jennings, another inner-ring suburb northeast of Normandy, and were renting property there. At that time Sol was listed as a real estate salesman. His name disappears from the *Post-Dispatch* after 1931, except for a series of classified advertisements selling property in 1943.²⁹

Sol passed away on June 3, 1949. The four-line death notice in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* briefly stated that he was the beloved husband of Hazel Loewenstein and that the interment would be private.³⁰ His death certificate noted that the couple lived on Carl Avenue in Jennings. The cause of death was “believed to be coronary occlusion,” with nervous strain as a likely

²⁵ An example of such an advertisement is found in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 27, 1930. 6D.

²⁶ The 1937 aerial layer on St. Louis County’s real estate web site is accessible from <https://revenue.stlouisco.com/IAS/>.

²⁷ “Radio Bungalow Co.” Advertisement, *St. Louis Star*, June 2, 1928, 7; “24 New Bungalows are put on Market,” *St. Louis Star*, November 15, 1928, 25. The Glenechort subdivision is located about 2.2 miles south of Spotless Town.

²⁸ Business name search at www.sos.mo.gov conducted 3/21/2017.

²⁹ Newspapers.com search conducted on March 23, 2017. Classified advertisements found on April 13, 14, 18, and September 19, 1943.

³⁰ Death Notices, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 7, 1949. 26.

contributing factor.³¹ No death certificate or additional information was located for Hazel Loewenstein.



OPENING OF SPOTLESS TOWN

FREE ANNOUNCEMENT FREE
SOUVENIRS REFRESHMENTS

You and your family are cordially invited to come out to the opening of **SPOTLESS TOWN** today to see our **HONEYMOON BUNGALOWS**. They are the sweetest, loveliest, prettiest, nicest, coziest matt brick bungalows we have ever built. Several have been furnished *completely* through the co-operation of *Trorlicht-Duncker Furniture Co.*

They have Murphy In-A-Dor beds, built-in cooler, china closet, clothes chute, linen closet, ironing board and breakfast table combined, telephone nook, cedar closet, copper wired screens, shades, gas heater and a number of other features too numerous to mention. All for \$5500 and \$6500 on very easy terms. We will show you how to teach your dollars to have cents.

A word of advice—Postpone all engagements and whatever else you do, be sure and be here without fail. We will have a surprise for you.

Directions:—Drive out to 7600 Florissant Road. Turn to your right for ½ mile to 1000 Bermuda Av. or take the Ferguson bus from Wellston to Bermuda Av. and walk to 1000 Bermuda.

The Albert Wenzlick Real Estate Co.

Downtown Office
1010 Chestnut Street
Phone CHestnut 6900



Display Houses
Phone ATwater 611

Figure 12: Opening day advertisement (featuring the house at 1102 Bermuda Drive). Source: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 8, 1929. 11B.

³¹ Missouri Secretary of State Death Certificates, http://www.sos.mo.gov/images/archives/deathcerts/1949/1949_00025686.PDF, accessed March 4, 2017.

Naming Spotless Town

In the early 20th century, “Spotless Town” had become a common phrase in the American vocabulary thank to a visionary advertising campaign for soap.

Sapolio soap was produced by Enoch Morgan’s Sons Company beginning in 1869. The brand was known for its catchy advertising by the mid-1880s, but it was the Spotless Town campaign that made it a national phenomenon. In 1900, a series of advertisements in streetcars, magazines, and newspapers introduced the residents of the fictional “Spotless Town” (Figure 13). Each resident was known for his or her cleanliness, and of course, achieved it with Sapolio. The campaign’s popularity was so great that “allusions to Spotless Town soon became a familiar sight in newspapers, on the streets, in public speeches, and even on stage.”³² As the phrase made its way into the mainstream, city councils “passed resolutions calling upon the inhabitants to cooperate in making them real Spotless Towns,”³³ and at least one community changed its name to Spotless Town.³⁴

Within the subdivision, street names honored cities in California: San Diego, Santa Monica, San Bernardino, and Santa Barbara (platted as part of the Spotless Town Addition but never developed). Throughout the 1920s, it was common for subdivisions and streets in the St. Louis area to be named for California communities. In some cases, it appears that this was an intentional strategy to evoke the glamor of Hollywood, particularly in cases where revival style homes could recall the famous homes of celebrities.³⁵ It is also possible that for some subdivisions, the use of California place names was intended to bring to mind the modern domesticity found in the style still called the “California bungalow.” The North County subdivisions of Beverly Hills (1920), Pasadena Park (1924) and Pasadena Hills (1928) used California place names. The streets in Spotless Town appear to be the only local streets named for California locations.

³² Juliann Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising* 2nd ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012). 70-72.

³³ “Spotless Town Advertising” letter to the editor, *Printers’ Ink* v. 106 No. 2, January 9, 1919. 48

³⁴ Julian Lewis Watkins, *The 100 Greatest Advertisements 1852-1958: Who Wrote them and What They Did*, Dover reprint, 1993. 13.

³⁵ NiNi Harris and Lynn Josse, “Holly Hills Historic District” nomination to NRHP, listed March 22, 2016.

Ye Folkes of Spotless Town



This is the Mayor of Spotless Town,
The brightest man for miles around.
The shining light of wisdom can
Reflect from such a polished man,
And so he says to high and low:
"The brightest use

SAPOLIO



The Cook of Spotless Town you see
Who takes the cake as you'll agree.
She holds it in her fingers now.
It isn't light - but anyhow
'Twill lighten her domestic woe -
A cake of plain

SAPOLIO



This is the butcher of Spotless Town.
His tools are bright as his renown.
To leave them stained were indiscreet,
For folks would then abstain from meat,
And so he brightens his trade you know
By polishing with

SAPOLIO



This brilliant man walks up and down
Upon the streets of Spotless Town.
The glitter of his shining star
Arrests attention from afar.
It lights the beat and goes to show
That naught can beat

SAPOLIO



This is the maid of fair renown
Who scrubs the floors of Spotless Town.
To find a speck when she is through
Would take a pair of specs or two,
And her employment isn't slow,
For she employs

SAPOLIO



This lean M. D. is Doctor Brown
Who fares but ill in Spotless Town.
The town is so confounded clean
It is no wonder he is lean.
He's lost all patients now, you know,
Because they use

SAPOLIO



You see the Cook has raised the dough to take the Mayor to the show
And Spotless Town is in surprise to see them win the cake-walk prize—
The pan-cake offered at the show—
It cleans the pans—

SAPOLIO



Good for the Spotter of Spotless Town! He spotted a spot on the Butcher's gown
'T would not be meet, for justice' sake, to roast the Butcher at the steak.
And so behind the bars he'll go.
Bars of what?—

SAPOLIO



"Why bless my heart!" said Dr. Brown, "I've found a case in Spotless Town."
"If that's the case you're well repaid," replied the cleanly little Maid.
"Your diagnosis ought to show
The case is plain

SAPOLIO



We dance because of the great renown that greets the folks of Spotless Town.
Our jests have won a wondrous name, our gestures too are known to fame.
But we're averse to verse you see, it hampers versatility.
And so as we're about to close
We'll just descend to simple prose—

USE SAPOLIO

Full set of the above designs, as they appear in the street cars, each 11 x 21 inches, will be sent to any address in the U. S. on receipt of fifty cents in postage stamps. Address "SAPOLIO," New York

Figure 13: Sapolio Advertisement. Source: *Colliers Weekly* vol. 27 no. 9, June 1, 1901. 12.

Spotless Town as a private place

The development of “private places” has long been recognized as a phenomenon which began in and shaped St. Louis in the second half of the 19th century. Private places are streets that are privately owned and maintained by the residents, and which use devices such as deed restrictions to regulate growth and development.³⁶ While the development of private places in the City of St. Louis is well understood, the later history of private places as they spread through St. Louis County has not been extensively studied.

St. Louis’ first private place was Lucas Place, laid out just west of the city limits in 1851 (now the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Locust Street, considered a downtown location). Property owner James Lucas and architect George I. Barnett planned the new subdivision to restrict traffic, and to exclude commercial and industrial uses.³⁷

Later private places, beginning with Benton Place in 1868, generally adhered to the same principles. Streets were the responsibility of a residents’ association; use and residency restrictions were enforced to the extent practical;³⁸ and minimum standards for construction were almost always set. For example, in Westmoreland and Portland Places (laid out in 1888 as the “fullest and finest development” of the private place concept, according to Savage³⁹), lots were 100 feet wide, building lines were 40 feet back from the property’s front line, no house could cost less than \$7000, and building designs required approval from the trustees.⁴⁰ These and related measures resulted in an architectural consistency that protected the character of the new neighborhood.

The first private subdivision in St. Louis County was Webster Park in the city of Webster Groves (1892). By 1915, large sections of the inner-ring suburbs of Clayton and University City had been developed with private places.⁴¹ Pasadena Hills, opened directly south of Spotless Town in 1928, was the last of the private places to erect a monumental entrance gate.⁴²

Pasadena Hills would have been the closest and most recent precedent when Sol and Hazel Loewenstein filed the plat for Spotless Town in the following year. Both Santa Monica and San Bernardino Avenues were owned by the trustees of Spotless Town, a board which was to be

³⁶ The seminal work on private places in St. Louis (and still the standard) is Charles C. Savage’s *Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1987). Savage explores the history and possible precedents for these streets, with emphasis on architecture and design.

³⁷ Savage, 8 and 13. James Lucas, by the way, was the son and primary heir of Judge J. B. C. Lucas, who had claimed the Normandy tract. James inherited $\frac{3}{4}$ of that tract (the other quarter going to his sister Anne Lucas Hunt) and was responsible for developing it as one of the county’s great estates.

³⁸ The trustees of Bell Place had, by the 1920s, backed away from testing the limits of their powers of enforcement, having come to the conclusion that they might not win in a court battle to prevent the construction of multi-family housing where the “private place” fronted on Delmar Boulevard. Lynn Josse, “Waterman Place/Kingsbury Place/Washington Terrace Historic District” National Register nomination, listed 6/12/2007.

³⁹ Savage, 42.

⁴⁰ Savage, 43.

⁴¹ Esley Hamilton, Hampton Park Historic District National Register nomination, listed 12/21/2005. 22.

⁴² Karen Bode Baxter et al, “Pasadena Hills Historic District” National Register nomination, listed 12/04/2004. 109.

elected annually. (San Diego Avenue was not privately owned.) The property restrictions on the residential lots were fairly standard:

No dwelling shall be erected in any part of this subdivision which shall cost less than \$3000.00, nor shall any dwelling be constructed of other than brick or similar fireproof material.... No house or lot or any portion of a lot in this subdivision shall be sold to, owned, leased, erected or occupied by person or persons other than the Caucasian Race. No saloon, slaughter-house, dairy, livery-stable, or other nuisance shall be erected, maintained or operated in any part of this subdivision. ...⁴³

While private streets are extremely common in some parts of St. Louis County (it has been estimated that two-thirds of the suburb of Ladue is private),⁴⁴ their extent has never been systematically studied.

Spotless Town may be the first private subdivision of intentionally modest houses identified as part of the survey process in St. Louis County, but there is at this time no evidence to indicate it is the only one that exists. Dozens of subdivisions opened up in north St. Louis County in the first few decades of the 20th century. As yet, very few of them have been studied.

Our understanding of Spotless Town as a small private place of near-identical cottages is limited by lack of context. This facet of the neighborhood's history is fascinating, but its significance cannot be explored without a fuller knowledge of the use of private streets in small residential development throughout all of (or this part of) St. Louis County.

Residents of Spotless Town

In April 1930, census takers enumerated the first 21 households on Santa Monica and San Diego Avenues. All 21 of the houses were occupied by their new owners; there were no renters in the subdivision. Seven of the 21 households were occupied by couples with no children at home (presumably the target of the “honeymoon bungalow” advertising). One household consisted of a widow with two adult daughters. All twenty husbands were in the workforce, and three wives. Most occupations were blue-collar: glaziers, laborers, a mason, a taxi driver, etc. There was also one attorney.

During the Depression, County Directories show that there was a high rate of turnover in Spotless Town. More than two thirds of the households had changed residents between 1932 and 1934. Some of the early sales failed during the first years of the Depression, as in the case of

⁴³ Spotless Town plat, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds plat book 20 page 28.

⁴⁴ Conversation with Esley Hamilton, January 3, 2017.

7623 Santa Monica, which was advertised for sale in 1931 “for balance of mortgage” with the sad, enticing phrase “former owner’s loss your gain.”⁴⁵

By 1940, the worst years of the Depression were behind. Spotless Town was no longer a new subdivision, and most of the houses in it were no longer owner-occupied. More women were in the workforce, but not that many more:

TABLE 1: HOUSEHOLDS IN 1930 AND 1940 CENSUS

| | 1930 | 1940 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Number of households counted | 21 | 61 |
| Owners vs. renters | 100% owners | 56% renters (34/61) |
| Wives in the workforce | 15% (3/20) | 21% (13/61) |

In 1940, three households kept lodgers or boarders (neither of which had been found in Spotless Town in 1930). The largest household in 1940 was a couple who kept a family of five as lodgers, all in a 900 square foot two-bedroom house. Even so, the average number of occupants actually decreased between 1930 and 1940, from 3.48 to 3.33.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS PER HOUSE, 1930 VS. 1940

| | 1930 | 1940 |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| 2 | 33% (7/21) | 26% (16/61) |
| 3 | 14% (3/21) | 31% (19/61) |
| 4 | 29% (6/21) | 30% (18/61) |
| 5 | 19% (4/21) | 11% (7/61) |
| 6 | <1% (1/21) | - |
| 7 | - | <2% (1/61) |
| | | |

While the average number of occupants went down, the average age of heads of household increased greatly over the Depression decade. This may be because ownership or even rental were less accessible to younger people who were just starting out in life. In 1930, more than half of the heads of household were under the age of 30, and nineteen out of 21 were under the age of 40. But in 1940, only about ten percent were in their twenties, and twenty percent were 40 or older.

⁴⁵ Classified advertisement, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 7, 1931, 31.

TABLE 3: AGE OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD (BY DECADE)

| | 1930 | 1940 |
|-----|-------------|-------------|
| 20s | 48% (10/21) | 11% (7/61) |
| 30s | 43% (9/21) | 59% (36/61) |
| 40s | - | 20% (12/61) |
| 50s | <1% (1/21) | 7% (4/61) |
| 60s | - | 3% (2/61) |
| 70s | <1% (1/21) | - |
| | | |

An interesting note on the 1940 census is that in more than half of the households, the women had more years of education than their husbands (32 out of 61). Women were more likely than men to have a high school or college education. Of the twelve women who had some college education, though, only four were in the work force, and only one was in a professional field (nursing).

With the economic recovery that accompanied World War II, the stability of the neighborhood appeared to increase. From the late 1940s onward, it is very common to find the same residents occupying a given address for a decade or more. Tom Urani, who lived at 7633 San Diego Avenue from his early childhood in 1948 through his high school graduation in 1966, remembers the neighborhood as stable – and still completely occupied by Caucasians at the time he left. While Spotless Town’s race-restrictive covenants were rendered unenforceable by the Supreme Court’s *Shelley v. Kraemer* decision in 1948, there was no immediate effect on Normandy neighborhoods.

North of the Loewenstein’s house at 1002 Bermuda Drive, a six-storefront brick building at 1004-1014 housed Clem’s Market (also known as the Bermuda Market). It was operated by Clem and Helen Urani beginning in c. 1932, and they bought the property in 1944.⁴⁶

For a decade after the development of the subdivision, the Deutschmann family continued to live in their house at the southwest corner of the block, which had not been included in the original sale to the Loewensteins (see Figure 11). After Augusta’s death in 1939, the property was purchased by the Urani family. Clem Urani’s parents moved into the Deutschmanns’ three-room farmhouse. In c. 1948, the eastern end of the property was divided into lots. Clem’s brothers John and Silver built the houses that would become 7633 and 7635 San Diego Avenue. In 1945, when Spotless Town was one of the four subdivisions that led the petition for Normandy’s incorporation, Clem Urani was the trustee that represented them.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Store Building in Normandy Bought by one of Occupants,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* April 16, 1944. 1C.

⁴⁷ There is an unresolved contradiction between records that list the Urani family, including Clem, and the later reporting of Clem’s last name as “Oroni.” The county directory and all of the materials found relating to Normandy’s incorporation refer to Clem Oroni, a contradiction that his nephew Tom Urani is unable to explain.

Results

By the Numbers

Sixty-seven separate parcels are included within the boundaries of the Spotless Town Residential Survey, including two vacant lots. A total of 65 dwellings were surveyed, along with 18 associated outbuildings.

Property Styles and Types

The analysis of property types in the survey area gives us the opportunity to study in-depth the built resources of the area. In the case of Spotless Town, the analysis is somewhat simpler than most, since the houses that Sol and Hazel Loewenstein built conform to two basic floor plans.

Within the area, there are 65 single family residences and 18 outbuildings. Most of the original garages noted on the 1937 aerial map did not survive; the majority of those outbuildings noted in the survey do not appear to be original. Of the residences, 63 were built between 1929-1931 as part of the Spotless Town Subdivision and Addition. Three additional residences (no longer extant) were also part of the original Spotless Town development. The house at 7603 San Diego was apparently destroyed in “an explosion of unknown origin” in January 1933.⁴⁸ The house at 7515 San Diego Avenue was torn down between 1997 and 2000, according to St. Louis County aerial map data. Sol and Hazel Lowenstein’s own house at 1002 Bermuda (outside of the survey area) was razed between 2012 and 2014.

TABLE 4: DATES OF CONSTRUCTION WITHIN SURVEY BOUNDARIES

| Date | Number of residences | Number extant | Property type |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1929-1931 | 65 | 63 | Side-gabled Massed Plan Form: 46 |
| | | | Front-Gabled Massed Plan Form: 17 |
| c. 1948 | 2 | 2 | Minimal Traditional/Cape Cod: 1 |
| | | | Minimal Traditional/other: 1 |
| Total | 67 | 65 | |

⁴⁸ “Normandy Home Wrecked by Unexplained Explosion,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 6, 1933, 11A.

1929-1931: Massed Plan forms

All of the houses developed in the initial buildout of Spotless Town conform to two basic plans. Both the side-gabled and front-gabled variations were built beginning in 1929 and continued through 1931. Both subtypes include stylistic details borrowed from popular trends of the 1920s: scalloped vergeboards evoking medieval antecedents and the popular Tudor Revival style;⁴⁹ knee brace brackets from the Craftsman vocabulary; and hipped gabled ends that suggest cottage coziness.⁵⁰



Figure 14: 7605 Santa Monica Avenue.

Side-gabled Massed Plan Form

The side-gabled variation of the massed plan form is the most common house type in Spotless Town: 46 out of the 63 original houses were built to this general plan.

The definition of a side-gabled massed plan form is a dwelling with a rectangular footprint that is generally two rooms deep. According to McAlester, this flexible folk form became common throughout much of the United States in the post-railroad era, when the spread of lightweight lumber and modern framing techniques allowed roofs to span a depth of more than a single room.⁵¹

In Spotless Town, the type has a three-bay façade with an off-center entrance (door and sidelights) under a gabled hood. It is not known if all of the hoods originally featured the scrolled vergeboards that are so distinctive on houses where they remain. Paired windows

⁴⁹ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.) 450.

⁵⁰ Per McAlester, Eclectic-era builders often referred to the hipped front gable building as “Germanic Cottages.” 456.

⁵¹ McAlester, 144.

(originally 3/1s) are at the left and right bays. The side gable ends are hipped. According to St. Louis County records, these houses have a total floor space of 750 square feet.

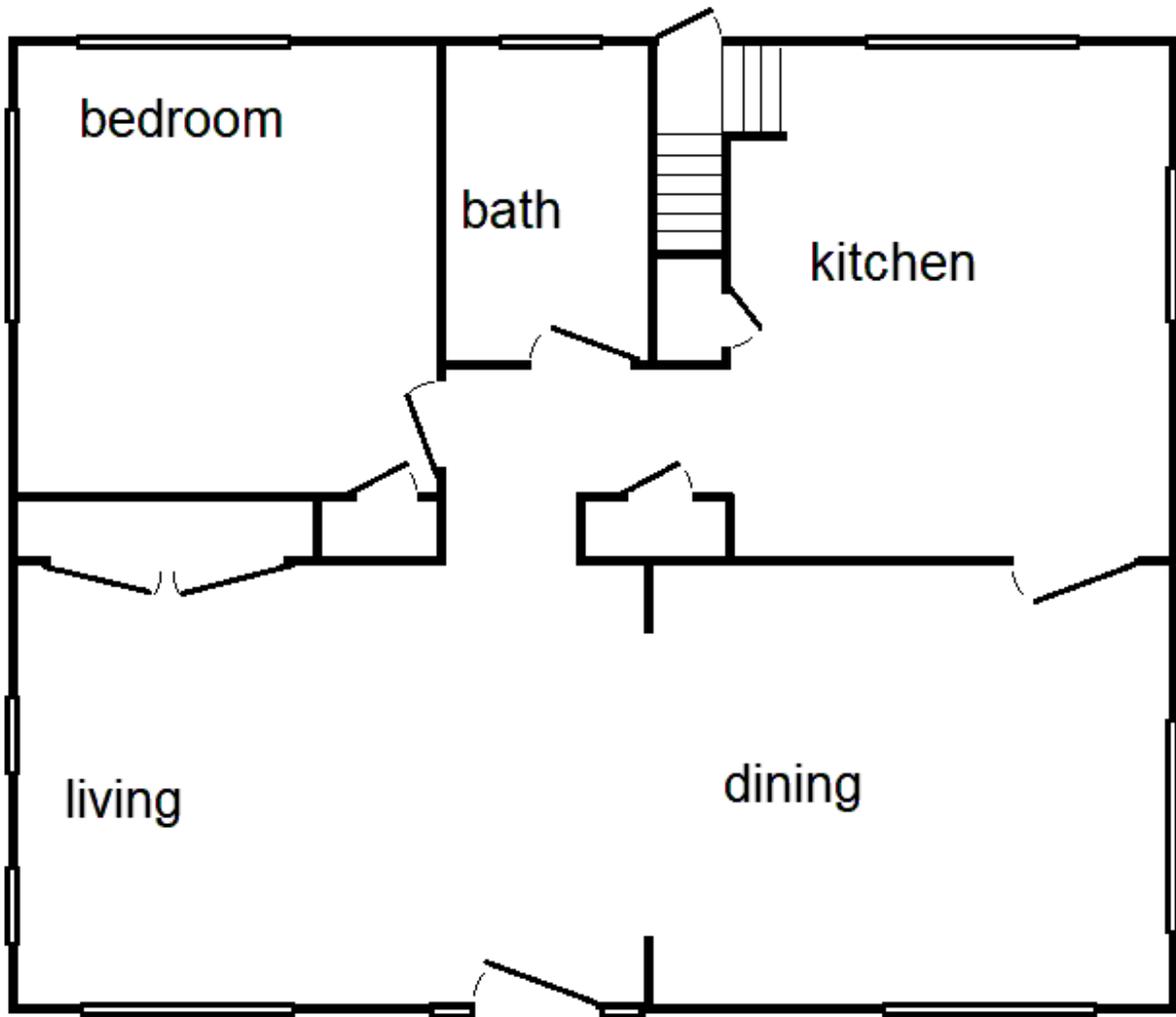


Figure 15: Speculative original floor plan of side-gabled house, based on 7640 Santa Monica Avenue and 7607 San Diego Avenue (both of which have been remodeled; 7640 Santa Monica also has extensive fire damage). Not to scale. Drawing by Lynn Josse.

Seven of the 46 side-gabled houses include an additional sunroom set back at one of the side elevations (which can be read as a fourth façade bay). Four of them are located back-to-back at 7608-12 Santa Monica and 7609-11 San Diego and were permitted in 1929. The remaining three are at the western end of Santa Monica Avenue (7629, 7631, and 7640), and were permitted in 1930.



Figure 16: 7608 Santa Monica Avenue.

Front-Gabled Massed Plan Form

Seventeen of the extant 63 houses from the Spotless Town subdivision have front gabled roof forms and narrower facades. McAlester places single pile and massed plan gable-front houses in the same folk family, and notes that the Craftsman movement inspired many such folk houses in the 1910-1930 period.⁵²

Like the side-gabled massed plan buildings, the front-gabled massed plan buildings have a rectangular footprint and hipped gable ends. Unlike the side-gabled variant, the front doors in these houses were not built with sidelights. The gabled hoods are accordingly narrower. The entrances are slightly off-center in the three-bay facades, with paired windows (originally 3/1s) at the left and right bays. These houses are larger than their side-gabled counterparts at 900 square feet.

None of the front-gabled massed-plan houses were available for interior inspection, so no floor plan is available.

⁵² McAlester, 138.



Figure 17: 7627 San Diego Avenue.

Mid-century forms and styles

The houses at 7633 and 7635 San Diego Avenue, constructed nearly two decades after Spotless Town was platted, are stylistically unrelated to the rest of the subdivision. Both were constructed c. 1948 for members of the Urani family.

Minimal Traditional at 7633 San Diego Avenue

The house at 7633 San Diego Avenue is an example of the Minimal Traditional style. McAlester identifies such houses by their small size, low- or intermediate-pitched roof; minimal eaves; and minimal architectural detail.⁵³ The front-gabled variant, although mentioned, is so uncommon that McAlester does not include a representative photograph. In the case of 7633 San Diego Avenue, the textured brick and exterior chimney evoke some of the romance of the Eclectic period which preceded the advance of the Minimal Traditional. Some of the decorative features of this house, specifically the imitation stone veneer and added shutters, are not original.⁵⁴



Figure 18: 7633 San Diego Avenue.

⁵³ McAlester, 587.

⁵⁴ Tom Urani remembers the installation of the imitation stone veneer in the 1950s. Interview with Tom Urani by Lynn Josse, January 12, 2017.

Minimal Traditional: Cape Cod at 7635 San Diego Avenue

Cape Cod style houses (classed by McAlester as part of the Minimal Traditional movement) have side gable roofs and are one to one and one-half stories. Some classification systems make a stylistic distinction between variants with blind front roof slopes and those with gabled dormers, which are considered to be in the Williamsburg style.⁵⁵ According to Washington State's style guide, the Williamsburg Revival took off after the restoration and opening of Colonial Williamsburg (1928). With hipped dormers and a projecting bay window, the house at 7635 San Diego Avenue is not a textbook revival, but combines elements of contemporary styles in the minimal traditional framework.



Figure 19: 7635 San Diego Avenue.

Alterations

The most common alteration in the survey area is the replacement of doors and windows. Many of these replacements were undertaken in the early 2000s after the nearby Lambert-St. Louis International Airport offered owners the opportunity to soundproof their property with new doors, windows, and insulation. Almost all of the windows replaced during this period are single- or double- hung (like the originals), with either single pane or simulated divided 3-pane upper sashes. There are also a few cases of less appropriate replacements, including slider windows and fixed-pane. All of the replacement façade windows in the survey area, regardless of type, are placed on the original sills within the original openings. Doors also show a great variety of styles, but all replacement doors are within the original openings.

It is common for sidelights at the front doors (of side-gabled houses) to be altered (through replacement) or even covered over (with materials such as tile or imitation stone veneer). Imitation stone veneer was also used to cover some foundations., and in a few cases it is used as a decorative framing element around doors and even windows.

One of the character-defining features of the homes of Spotless Town is the bracketed gabled hood found over the front doors. Many of the hoods are embellished by scalloped wood vergeboards, while others have plain wood boards. (It is not possible to determine how many of the houses were built with the scalloped detail and how many were originally built with the simpler plain design.) In many cases it is clear that the original hood has been altered, and in a few cases the hoods have been replaced by front porch elements or removed altogether.

⁵⁵ Washington State gives a good explanation of the separate antecedents here: <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/styles/williamsburg-revival>.

With only one exception, the brick houses of Spotless Town remain unpainted.

National Register Eligibility

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is a designation which is conferred on properties with demonstrated historic significance and which have the integrity to convey that significance.

Significance

In the development and history of the Spotless Town subdivision are reflected many stories and themes found in the history of Normandy, the surrounding area, the region, and the country as a whole. Some of the stories related to the history of the neighborhood include the rise of suburbs and automobile culture, and the use of the private place strategy to create and maintain a neighborhood.

To decide if a resource has significance, the National Register instructs us to determine “whether it [the historic resource] is important in illustrating the historic context.”⁵⁶ Again using the example of suburbanization, it appears that Spotless Town illustrates this context, but from a National Register of Historic Places perspective, it does not appear to have more importance than any of its neighbors.

In one area, though, it is possible that Spotless Town may be an important illustration of an aspect of a significant historic trend. As a private place, Spotless Town was designed to protect its owners from perceived detriments to the neighborhood by permitting only certain types of construction, uses, and even neighbors (through the use of race-restrictive language). The use of private streets and associated restrictions in a distinctly blue collar neighborhood is not a phenomenon which has been studied before. No context for evaluation has ever been developed. Additional work on this theme could be accomplished by studying plats and deeds for other subdivisions.

At this time, then, it appears there is not adequate context on the use of restricted private places in St. Louis County to determine if Spotless Town possesses the quality of significance under Criterion A (association with significant events and trends). It does not appear that there is any basis to claim significance under Criterion B (association with a significant individual), Criterion C (by embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, etc.), or Criterion D (potential to yield information – usually used for archeological sites).

⁵⁶ National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* Section V.

Integrity

The National Register defines seven aspects of integrity which must be considered when making an overall assessment: Materials, workmanship, design, association, setting, feeling, and location.

Different aspects of integrity are important when considering different areas of significance. For example, if we were evaluating Spotless Town's integrity as a representative automobile suburb, we would look at the physical features of Spotless Town that are associated with the use of the automobile. It would have to be noted that almost all of the original garages have been demolished, and as a result, Spotless Town might not be the best candidate to illustrate what an automobile suburb looked like.

Likewise, if Spotless Town were being considered for its architecture, it would have to be noted that Lambert Airport paid for window, door, and sidelight replacement in the 1990s-2000s when it was determined that this was part of the new runway's flight path. Many (although not all) owners took advantage of this offer, and as a result there have been significant changes in those physical features.

In general, Spotless Town can be considered an intact subdivision. All of the houses retain their primary materials, and only one of the houses has a major addition which impacts the view from the street (the added fourth bay at 1101 San Bernardino Avenue). According to the National Register, "the integrity of a historic residential subdivision relies in part on the cohesion of the historic plan and aspects of spatial organization, including street design, setbacks, and density."⁵⁷ These aspects of Spotless Town remain intact.

⁵⁷ *Historic Residential Suburbs*, "Evaluation" section.
<https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/part5.htm>

Local District Eligibility

To be eligible for consideration as a Normandy local landmark or local historic district, a building or neighborhood must meet one or more of ten criteria:

- a. Significant inherent character, interest or value as part of the development or heritage of the community, State or nation; or
- b. The site of an event significant in history; or
- c. Association with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the community, State or nation; or
- d. Exemplifying the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic or historic heritage of the community, State or nation; or
- e. Individually, or as a collection of resources, embodying distinguishing characteristics of a type, style, period or specimen in architecture or engineering; or
- f. The work of a designer whose work has influenced significantly the development of the community, State or nation; or
- g. Containing elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or
- h. Part of or related to a distinctive element of community planning; or
- i. Representing an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or community; or
- j. Yielding, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.⁵⁸

The criteria are more flexible than those of the National Register of Historic Places, appropriately allowing the community a great deal of leeway in determining which sites are representative of its past and worthy of preservation.

At this time, the City of Normandy has not designated any historic districts; as a result, there is no precedent to indicate how the criteria for designation are to be applied. Spotless Town appears to meet both of these criteria:

- Significant inherent character, interest or value as part of the development or heritage of the community, State or nation;
- or Part of or related to a distinctive element of community planning.

⁵⁸ City of Normandy Code 130.160, available online at <http://www.ecode360.com/29148791>. Accessed 4/13/2017.

Recommendations

With this survey, the City of Normandy has made an excellent first step towards compiling a full survey of Normandy's historic resources. These are the recommendations that are being made as a result of this survey.

National Register Eligibility:

At this time, Spotless Town and its individual resources are not believed to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Further exploration of the context of private place development in North St. Louis County or countywide could call for the re-evaluation of Spotless Town as an example.

Local Historic District Eligibility:

Spotless Town appears to meet at least two criteria for listing as a local historic district. Because the City of Normandy has not as yet designated any districts, there is no body of work to show the practical application of the criteria. Spotless Town may possess particular significance to the City of Normandy as one of the four subdivisions that worked together to gain incorporation in 1945.

Further Research Recommended:

If the Commission is looking for a worthwhile small project to take on, an overview of nearby subdivisions would be useful. Desirable information to collect would include date of platting, approximate number of lots, date range of houses constructed (an approximate idea could easily be garnered from St. Louis County's web site), and whether the subdivisions were originally public or private. Such a document could provide valuable context for additional subdivision surveys.

Further Survey Recommended:

Spotless Town was an interesting starting point in the overall program of identifying Normandy's historic resources because of its architectural cohesion and its association with the incorporation of Normandy in 1945. As a next step, it might make sense to look at the other subdivisions involved in the incorporation of Normandy (Normandy Heights, Normandy Grove, and Normandy Place). Alternatively, it would be logical to go to the chronological beginning of the subdivision of Normandy by studying the subdivisions of Normandy Heights and Oehler's Place.

Public Education Projects:

The Historic Preservation Commission is encouraged to use the information contained in this report to further its educational mission and celebrate the historic resources of Normandy. Possible uses for this material include brochures, a web page, or tour.

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Appendix A: Lois Wittke's Pecan Crispies

In September 1948, Mrs. Charles Wittke of 7519 San Diego Avenue submitted her recipe for Pecan Crispies to the *St. Louis Star-Times*' "St. Louis Prize Recipes" column. Lois Wittke was listed in both the 1946 and 1949 St. Louis County Directories as the wife of Charles, a machine operator for General Cable Corporation. For her prize-winning recipe, she was awarded a check for three dollars. The recipe is reprinted below.



Figure 20: 7519 San Diego Avenue, where Lois Wittke baked her cookies after World War II.

COOKIES

PECAN CRISPIES

| | |
|---|--|
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shortening (or use all butter or margarine) | $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup margarine or butter | $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups sifted all-purpose flour |
| $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups brown sugar | 1 cup chopped pecans |
| 2 eggs, slightly beaten | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt | |

Cream shortenings well. Add sugar and vanilla and mix until creamy. Add eggs, beat, then add sifted dry ingredients. Blend in pecans last. Drop by teaspoonful on a greased cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake on rack above center at 350 degrees for 15 to 17 minutes. Remove immediately. Yield: About 6 dozen crispies.

MRS. CHARLES WITTKÉ
7519 San Diego ave.
Normandy, Mo.

Figure 21: Lois Wittke's Pecan Crispies. Source: *St. Louis Star-Times*, September 23, 1948. 23.