

B o u l e v a r d O a k s

1927 NORTH BLVD, HOUSTON, TX 77098-5417

About

The Boulevard Oaks Historic District is one of the finest residential neighborhoods constructed during Houston's building boom in the 1920s. It consists of seven different subdivisions, built between 1923 and 1940; the homes were designed by some of Houston's most prominent architects. Today, the neighborhood is best known for its esplanades lined with giant oak trees, along North and South Boulevards. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

During Houston's early days, many prominent residents lived in a downtown neighborhood called "Quality Hill." As the city grew, that neighborhood began to shift from exclusively residential to a mix of residential, public and commercial buildings.

Spurred by a housing shortage (Houston's population doubled between 1900 and 1910) and a desire for newer, cleaner neighborhoods, fashionable Houston families began to move from downtown. Some built larger homes south of downtown. Others moved north to Houston Heights, which developed in the 1890s. As the twentieth century unfolded, a number of upscale subdivisions developed southwest of downtown and became known as the "South End." These included Westmoreland, Courtlandt Place, Avondale, Hyde Park, Cherryhurst, and Montrose. The Rice Institute, Hermann Park, Museum of Fine Arts, and Hermann Hospital were built south of Montrose.

Houston's population had doubled yet again by 1920 and the South End became the fashionable place to live. More exclusive subdivisions were built, including Shadyside, West Eleventh Place, Waverly Court, Jandor Gardens, and Shadowlawn. On three blocks along North and South Boulevards, a collection of small subdivisions developed their own collective identity. This area is now known as Boulevard Oaks.

The subdivisions that make up Boulevard Oaks are Edgemont, West Edgemont, Ormond Place, and West Ormond Place. Sixteen more lots at the west end of the boulevards were developed in the same pattern. All of these were developed between 1923 and 1935.

The first subdivision to be built, Edgemont, set the tone for the entire neighborhood. North and South Boulevard were built with esplanades. When the first lots in Edgemont were offered for sale, the developers planted grass on the esplanades and continuous rows of live oak trees on either side of the streets. As the other subdivisions in the neighborhood were developed, residents planted different trees along the street. Throughout the year, trees have remained a focal point of the neighborhood. Much of this can be attributed to a resident named Evie Jo Craven Wilson, who lived in her childhood home at 1921 North Boulevard. Mrs. Wilson worked with the City Parks Forester to

create a plan for planting oak trees and maintaining the esplanades. Her oak tree planting program has continued throughout the years.

Boulevard Oaks also has a unified appearance because of its architecture. The original houses in the neighborhood were built in the Revival styles that were popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the historic homes on North and South Boulevards are Tudor Revival. Other styles found in the district are Colonial Revival, French Eclectic, Italian Renaissance, and Spanish Eclectic.

Many of the original residents stayed in Boulevard Oaks until their later years. By the 1970s, young families began to move into the neighborhood and update the houses. Boulevard Oaks never experienced a downturn like other Houston neighborhoods. It is one of Houston's best examples of neighborhood planning in the 1920s.

History and Culture

Boulevard Oaks was designated as an historic district in 2009. The designation was based on the significant architects and builders who created the houses; the public landscaping of North and South Boulevard; the variety of house styles on the boulevards; and the maintenance of the neighborhood since it was built.

- **The Russell Brown Company** also contributed to the character of the neighborhood.

The company designed and built many houses in this part of Houston between 1902 and 1940. In Boulevard Oaks, it was responsible for the homes at 1611, 1612, and 1636 South Boulevard and 1611 and 1908 North Boulevard. Brown built 1927 North Boulevard for his daughter, Virginia Brown Angly, in 1938.

Defining Features

This Historic District Profile was developed to help property owners. It explains the typical features of buildings found in Boulevard Oaks. This can be helpful when you are planning a project that would change your home's exterior.

The historic homes in the Boulevard Oaks Historic District are formally designed, with clear stylistic influences. The defining features of those architectural styles are the most important features of these buildings.

This neighborhood differs from earlier developments in its treatment of garages, which are accessed via driveways at the side of the house, rather than via rear alleys or service streets.

Historic District designations are used to maintain the character of a neighborhood. Once an Historic District is created, certain rules apply to the entire neighborhood. These rules require that changes to properties in the District must be appropriate. In other words, the historic character of the property must stay the same.

Exterior changes must be approved in advance. The Planning Department can help with this process. If the project is approved, the property owner receives a Certificate of Appropriateness. In many Houston neighborhoods, deed restrictions require that the neighborhood civic association also approve changes to a property. The civic association's regulations and standards may differ from those of the City. The information shown here refers only to City requirements. Property owners should check with their neighborhood association before beginning any project.

When planning a building project within the Boulevard Oaks Historic District, please refer to this chart. It shows which building elements are compatible and which are not. Definitions of common architectural terms can be found in the [glossary](#).

	Compatible	Incompatible
Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raised pier and beam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slab on grade
Porch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small or no front porch ▪ Square or round columns (Colonial Revival) ▪ Fluted classical columns with Ionic or Corinthian capitals (Neoclassical) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Porch that wraps around house ▪ Turned or square tapered porch supports
Roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hipped or gabled roof shapes ▪ Pitched roof ▪ Wide or shallow boxed eaves ▪ Dormers ▪ Composition shingles ▪ Slate or tile roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shed, flat, gambrel or mansard roof shapes ▪ Dentils or classical eave moldings ▪ Cupolas or towers ▪ Metal roof
Exterior Wall Cladding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horizontal lapped, bevel, or drop wood siding ▪ Patterned or plain brick masonry ▪ Stucco ▪ Half-timbering (Tudor or French Eclectic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vertical siding ▪ Corrugated metal ▪ Flat modular panels

Front Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single door that faces street ▪ Recessed panels ▪ Glass lights ▪ Sidelights ▪ Pediments (plain or scrolled) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single door that faces side property line ▪ Transoms ▪ Round fanlights ▪ Pilasters
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Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large, vertically proportioned ▪ Double-hung, single-hung, or casement ▪ Wood or wood clad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aluminum ▪ Pediments above windows ▪ Large plate glass ▪ Fanlights ▪ Patterned upper panes
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Setting

The setting of a house – how it is located on and sized to fit a lot – should also be compatible with the rest of the historic district. Most homes in Boulevard Oaks are two or two-and-a-half stories in height and set back 40–50 feet from the street. Garages or carports are detached, located behind the house at the rear half of the lot, and accessed via driveways.

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When considering a building project within the Boulevard Oaks Historic District, please refer to this chart. It shows which setting-related elements are compatible and which are not. Definitions of common terms can be found in the [glossary](#).

	Compatible	Incompatible
Driveways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Driveways next to the house (mid-block) ▪ Driveways from side streets (corner lots) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking pads in front of the building

Garages and Carports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detached ▪ Located in rear half of the lot; often fully or partially obscured visually by house in front 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attached to the building ▪ In front of the house ▪ Carport
Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two or two-and-a-half stories ▪ Finished attic space with dormers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One story ▪ Three or more stories
Front setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 40-50 feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 40 feet ▪ More than 50 feet

Boundaries

The Boulevard Oaks Historic District is roughly bounded by Milford Street to the north, Mandell Street to the east, Bissonnet Street to the south, and Hazard Street to the west. It includes three full blocks and nine partial blocks along North Boulevard and South Boulevard. Cross streets in the district are Woodhead and Dunlavy.

The Boulevard Oaks Historic District is made up of the 1500 through 1900 blocks of North and South Boulevards. This includes both sides of North Boulevard and South Boulevard for three blocks east of Hazard Street. Ten additional properties are also part of the district. These include seven facing Mandell Street, just north of North Boulevard. The other three lots make up the 1600 block of Bissonnet Street; two of those serve as backyards for homes on South Boulevard. In total, the district contains 107 properties.

The district is made up of seven different subdivisions. The first to be built, Edgemont, filled the blocks between Mandell and Dunlavy Streets. It is the largest subdivision in Boulevard Oaks, with 39 properties. West Edgemont was comprised of 16 lots along North and South Boulevards, starting at Dunlavy and extending toward Woodhead Street.

Continuing west was Ormond Place, a subdivision of 33 lots, which extends almost to Hazard Street. The remaining lots along North and South Boulevards are part of West Ormond Place (three lots), the Chevy Chase Plat (10 lots), and six lots from the Obedience Smith survey. The Smith lots were never formally platted.

Although these subdivisions developed independently, they all followed the pattern of development established by Edgemont. In addition, the later subdivisions continued the esplanades and landscaping found in Edgemont. This gives the entire district a unified identity.

