

HOFFMAN
HEIGHTS

Aurora, Colorado

HOFFMAN
HEIGHTS
RECONNAISSANCE
SURVEY

CLG Project # 08-09-011

June 2010

HOFFMAN HEIGHTS - AURORA, COLORADO RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Architectural & Historical Survey Report

Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
CLG Project Number 08-09-011



Hoehn Architects PC (June 2009)

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I. INTRODUCTION



Hoehn Architects PC (April 2010)

Figure 1.

The combination of non-linear streets and the variation in brick colors and roof forms in Hoffman Heights breaks the monotony possible in a typical subdivision.

The goal of this reconnaissance survey was to document the single-family houses in the post-World War II subdivision of Hoffman Heights in Aurora, Colorado. The City of Aurora is located east of Denver and is the third largest city in Colorado with an approximate population of 285,000 people and a total geographical area of 144 square miles.

A reconnaissance survey of 1,696 properties in Hoffman Heights was conducted. The purpose for collecting the survey information was not only to inform local property owners, business owners, and the general public about the history of Hoffman Heights, but also to enhance preservation planning efforts within the City of Aurora. The information gathered during the reconnaissance survey, the first of its kind to occur in Hoffman Heights, will provide guidance for the possible formation of a historic district that may potentially be eligible for listing at the local level or on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, future preservation planning studies that provide for the management and protection of cultural resources may be based on the results of this reconnaissance survey.

Hoehn Architects, PC was responsible for carrying out the reconnaissance survey, with guidance from the technical staff at Colorado Historical Society's Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) as well as the Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office (AHSPO).

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A custom reconnaissance survey form for collecting specific information about each historic resource in the Hoffman Heights neighborhood was prepared by Hoehn Architects and then reviewed and approved by the technical staff at the OAHF. Three architectural interns from the University of Colorado at Denver were hired by the AHSPO to conduct the necessary field work in July and August of 2009; Lauren Mead and Meagan McColloch collected the required information for the survey forms, while Erik Nuhfer photographed the houses. Follow-up survey field work was completed in April of 2010 by Hoehn Architects. Historical research was conducted by Hoehn Architects throughout the duration of the project, beginning in June of 2009.

The architectural interns completed an “Architectural Features Site Form” for each house. The survey form requested information regarding the house model, the roof configuration, the house’s primary exterior wall material, the window type, the garage arrangement, and whether a front porch had been constructed; the form also included the surveyor’s assessment of whether the house retained enough of its original architectural integrity to be intensively surveyed in a future phase of this project. Of the 1,696 properties included in the initial reconnaissance survey, 136 houses or approximately 8 percent were considered worthy of intensive-level survey. Many of the houses in Hoffman Heights no longer retain their historic architectural integrity due to renovations in the past.

Three house models were initially identified through historical research: the Deluxe Brick Model, the Economy Frame and Shingle Model, and the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. Each house model has its own unique floor plan. The Deluxe Brick Model is the only house type that was originally built with an attached garage. All three house models incorporated three bedrooms. During the survey, a fourth or “other” model was identified, which is the economy version of the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. Featuring the same floor plan with a centrally-located living room, the economy version originally had asbestos shingle siding rather than brick for its exterior wall material.

Research on the post-World War II housing construction industry revealed Sam Hoffman was a community builder and followed many of the precepts the National Association of Home Builders and the Urban Land Institute recommended in their handbooks. The high demand for housing following the war resulted in many builders exploring ways to speed up the construction process. Hoffman often referred to himself as the “Henry Ford of the home-building industry”.¹ In Aurora, Sam Hoffman created a self-contained community that not only offered affordable housing to the former servicemen of World War II but also provided public facilities including a school, library, fire station, and park. A shopping center was also provided to serve the residents of Hoffman Town, which later became more commonly known as Hoffman Heights in 1952.

Hoffman Heights serves as a reminder of Sam Hoffman’s legacy as a community builder and is a reflection of the City of Aurora’s growth following World War II. The results of the reconnaissance survey in Hoffman Heights are detailed in the following sections of this report.

¹ “Building Three Places at Once”. *Business Week*; June 25, 1953.

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II. PROJECT AREA

The project area includes historic architectural resources within the subdivision of Hoffman Heights in Aurora, Colorado. The boundaries of Hoffman Heights include Peoria Street to the west and Potomac Street to the east. East Sixth Avenue is the subdivision's southern boundary. East 13th Avenue serves as the northern boundary, although the lots along the north side of this thoroughfare are included in Hoffman Heights. (Also refer to the maps on pages 36 and 37 of this report.) A total of 1,696 reconnaissance survey forms were completed. The project area for the reconnaissance survey, shown in the map below, encompasses approximately 434 acres, including roadways.

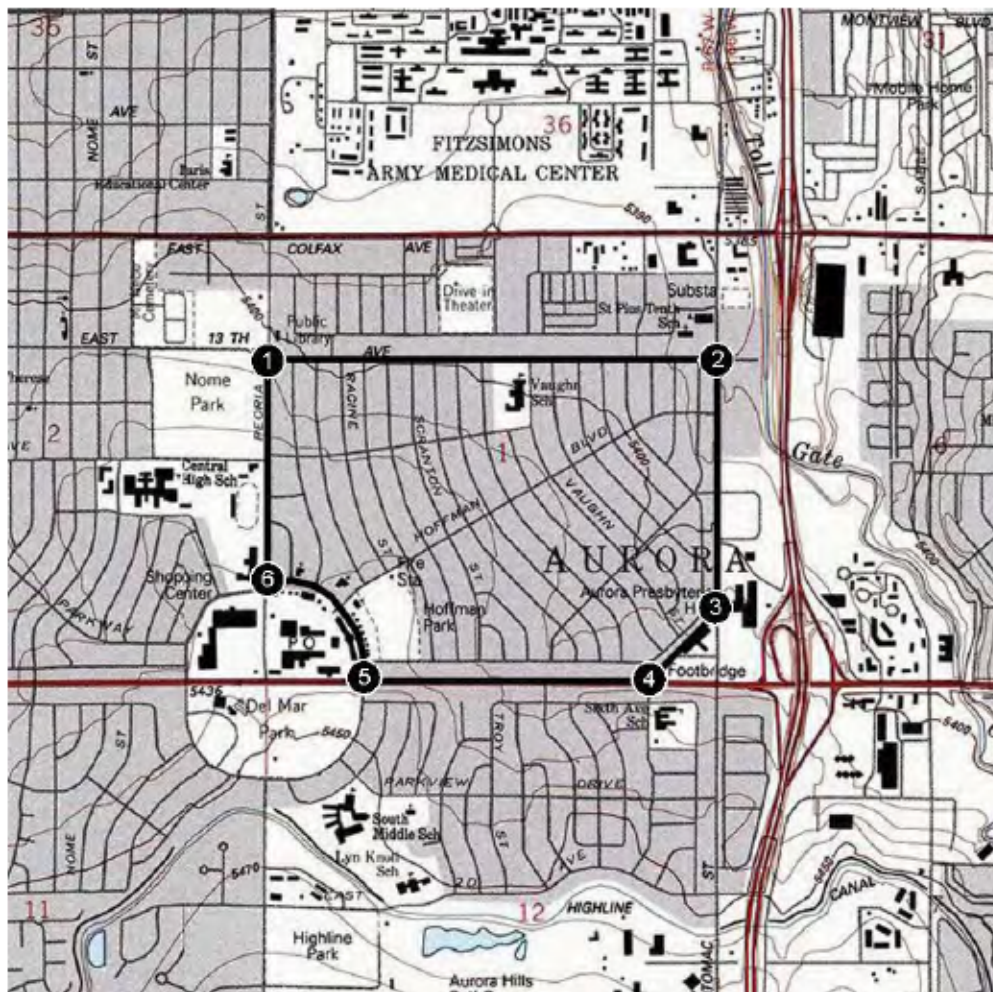


Figure 2.

The project area included in the Hoffman Heights Reconnaissance Survey is shown above on this map. The project area is located in the Sixth Principal Meridian, Township 4S, Range 67W, Section 1 (USGS Fitzsimons Quadrangle). The UTM's at the six locations on the map are as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Zone 13; 513115 mE / 4398529 mN | 4. Zone 13; 514477mE / 4397345 mN |
| 2. Zone 13; 514702 mE / 4398529 mN | 5. Zone 13; 513455mE / 4397347 mN |
| 3. Zone 13; 514702 mE / 4397569 mN | 6. Zone 13; 513108mE / 4397690 mN |

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS



Hoehn Architects PC (April 2010)

Figure 3.

A Cosmopolitan Brick Model advertising "Taxes" can be seen in this image, looking southeast along Del Mar Circle. The road serves as a boundary between the commercial development and apartment complex at the southwest corner of Hoffman Heights and the adjoining single-family houses.

Type of Survey and Survey Objectives

The objective of this reconnaissance survey was to document historic architectural resources (single-family houses) within the boundaries of the post-World War II subdivision of Hoffman Heights. Since this was the first cultural resource survey to be accomplished in Hoffman Heights, a reconnaissance-level survey was conducted with the purpose of identifying the general distribution, location, and nature of the various model houses within the subdivision. The work was accomplished by first defining the boundaries for the survey that contained approximately 1,700 individual houses and then conducting the reconnaissance survey. The process resulted in a written and photographic record of the current condition of these historic architectural resources for use by the City of Aurora's Historic Sites and Preservation Office (AHSPO) as well as the Colorado Historical Society's Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP). Once the reconnaissance survey is completed, the AHSPO would like to identify specific houses for intensive-level survey in order to determine their eligibility for listing at the local level, on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties or on the National Register of Historic Places. The AHSPO is also interested in assessing the eligibility of Hoffman Heights as a local historic district or as a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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Primary research questions about the existing historic architectural resources follow:

1. Does the survey area provide information about the former residents regarding their heritage, lifestyle, and economic, social, educational, spiritual, and civic activities?
2. How does the physicality of the survey area reflect the plans of the developer, influence of economic conditions, and local, state, and national movements?
3. What varieties of architectural model houses and construction materials are represented? What is the range of design quality and craftsmanship represented by extant structures within the survey area?
4. How do the natural landscape and local building materials influence construction patterns and methods?
5. How have former and recent development pressures impacted the study area?

Scope of Work, Schedule, and Project Participants

Initial steps in the survey process included the design of a reconnaissance survey form. Due to the nature of the survey and the large number of individual houses to be surveyed, it was important to design a form that allowed for the collection of pertinent information in a short time frame. Although a survey form for another post-World War II subdivision (Harvey Park South) was available from the OAHP, Hoehn Architects PC designed an "Architectural Features Site Form" specific to Hoffman Heights after reviewing historical information and conducting a windshield survey of the neighborhood in order to understand the configuration and construction of the three typical model houses. The technical survey staff at the OAHP provided input regarding the recommended information to be collected for this type of survey and reviewed the custom-designed form. (Refer to page 10 for the Architectural Features Site Form.) Concurrently, the Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office (AHSPO) prepared a notification letter that was posted at public buildings in the survey area, explaining the scope of the project and requesting information that property owners may have regarding their property. The AHSPO also introduced the reconnaissance survey project to the Hoffman Heights/Jewell Heights Neighborhood Organization during the fall of 2009.

The project was scheduled to begin in June 2009 and end in June 2010. The AHSPO hired three architectural interns from the University of Colorado at Denver to undertake the necessary fieldwork. Prior to beginning the fieldwork, Hoehn Architects conducted a training session with the interns on July 23, 2009, at the Aurora History Museum, with a follow-up meeting on July 28th after the interns had spent time in the field collecting information. Hoehn Architects presented a project map of Hoffman Heights, which showed street names and individual parcels with building addresses. The session included a review of the Architectural Features Site Form and a laptop computer presentation of the various house models and their corresponding character-defining architectural features. Following the initial training session, interns Lauren Mead, Meagan McColloch, and Erik

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Nuhfer accomplished the required fieldwork on the 25th, 27th, 28th, and 29th of July and the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of August. Lauren Mead and Meagan McColloch completed the site forms while Erik Nuhfer photographed the front of each house; the interns used the project map to keep track of their completed survey work. Hoehn Architects then transferred the information from 1,696 site forms to a database for ease in organizing, analyzing, and presenting the collected data. On approximately 10 percent of the site forms, discrepancies were found that required clarification. There were also photographs where foliage or vehicles shrouded or blocked the view of the house. In April and May of 2010, Hoehn Architects conducted follow-up site work to improve the quality of the collected information.

OAHP File Search

A file search at the OAHP indicated that thirteen properties were previously recorded in the survey area. These properties include:

State I.D. #	Street Address	Name	Assessment
5AH.2359	1248 Vaughn Street	Whitlock Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2513	1272 Xapary Street	Grinder Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2521	1200 Yost Street	Sherwood Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2526	880 Troy Street	Gordon Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2915	1045 Xanadu Street	Gray Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2917	785 Salem Street	(No Name Given)	(None given)
5AH.2929	972 Zion Street	Brydon Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2980	1264 Ursula Street	Winston Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2985	941 Quentin Street	Darnell Residence	Not eligible
5AH.2986	915 Quentin Street	Bruner Residence	Not eligible
5AH.3007	831 Quentin Street	Vanderveer Residence	Not eligible
5AH.3052	966 Victor Street	Duffield Residence	Needs data
5AH.3127	750 Revere Street	(No Name Given)	(None given)

The properties were recorded between 2002 and 2009. They were found to not be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, with the exception of 785 Salem Street and 750 Revere Street; the fields for their assessment were not completed. All of the thirteen previously-recorded properties were re-recorded with this survey.

Background Research

Information, both background and site-specific, was obtained from local and regional institutions. The Aurora History Museum served as a source for newspaper clippings, literature related to the construction of the Hoffman Heights subdivision, historic photographs, and books. The Denver Public Library's Prospector catalog of twenty-three Colorado and Wyoming libraries provided access to books published by the National Association of Home Builders and the Urban Land Institute during the 1950s, including the Home Builders Manual for Land Development, The Community Builders Handbook, and the National Association of Home Builders' Research Institute's Operation Trade Secrets. The

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Aurora Historical Society published a guide entitled, “Historic Aurora House Tour of Hoffman Heights - A History and Guide to Aurora’s First Large Tract Home Project”, which not only provided historical information about the construction of the subdivision but also the associated public buildings. Published histories of the City of Aurora provided background information about the development of the Hoffman Heights subdivision, as well as facts about significant individuals and events. These important references included Aurora: Gateway to the Rockies by Steven F. Mehls, Early Aurora by Carl Vincent McFadden, Images of Aurora: Architecture and Lifestyles by Barbara Miller, and Aurora: First Sun of Colorado by Rebecca Dorward.

Hoehn Architects obtained existing parcel information and subdivision filings of Hoffman Heights from the AHSPD and the Arapahoe County Assessor’s Office in order to understand the historic development of the subdivision. Map graphics required for the Hoffman Heights project map were produced with the aid of a computer aided design (CAD) program, Bentley MicroStation. The database was created with Microsoft Access 2007 software.

Acknowledgements

The surveyors wish to thank Jeanne Ramsay, Historic Preservation Coordinator for Library and Cultural Services, Historic Sites and Preservation for the City of Aurora for her help in organizing the project and facilitating information-gathering efforts. Architectural interns Lauren Mead, Meagan McColloch, and Erik Nuhfer played an important role for their collection of reconnaissance field data. The database table and associated reporting features could not have been created without the assistance of Michelle Chichester. And much appreciation is extended to the OAHF, which provided the funding for this Certified Local Government Grant, with Mary Therese Anstey, Historical & Architectural Survey Coordinator, providing valuable oversight and helpful advice on performing the survey and preparing the report.

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Architectural Features Site Form



Property Address: _____

Property Name (Current or Historic, if applicable): _____

Date of Survey/Photograph: _____ Name of Surveyor: _____

House Model:

- ☐ Deluxe Brick Model
(3-BR / Attached garage)
- ☐ Economy Frame & Shingle Model
(3 BR / No attached garage)
- ☐ Cosmopolitan Brick Model
(E. 7th Avenue / No attached garage)
- ☐ Other

Roof:

- ☐ Gable Roof
- ☐ Hip Roof
- ☐ Front Wall Gable
(At end of façade/garage)
- ☐ Separate Hipped Roof
(At end/garage/over entry door)
- ☐ Chimney
 - ☐ Brick
 - ☐ Metal
 - ☐ Expressed full-height at front/side

Façade:

- ☐ Brick
 - ☐ Single Color: Red
 - ☐ Single Color: Blonde
 - ☐ Combination of Red and Blonde
- ☐ Asbestos Shingle Siding
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Gable Ends (Front or Side, where applicable)
 - ☐ Horizontal Wood Siding
 - ☐ Other

Front Porch:

- ☐ Wood-framed Roof
- ☐ Wood Posts
- ☐ Rail Infill between posts
- ☐ Other

Garage:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Attached
 - ☐ Projecting
 - ☐ Recessed
 - ☐ Flush with house
- ☐ Detached
- ☐ 1-Car ☐ 2-Car
- ☐ Garage converted to living space
- ☐ Additional Garage Bay(s)
- ☐ Carport
- ☐ Enlarged/Widened Driveway
- ☐ Other

Windows:

- ☐ Steel Casements
- ☐ Replacement
 - ☐ All those visible from street
 - ☐ Portion replaced
 - ☐ New muntin pattern (or none)
- ☐ Wrap-around corner window
- ☐ Picture window with muntins

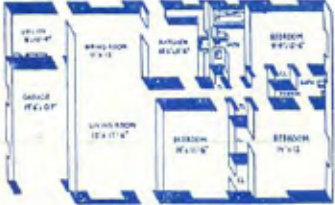
Intensive Survey:

- ☐ Recommended

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IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

**STILL . . .
YOUR BEST BUY**



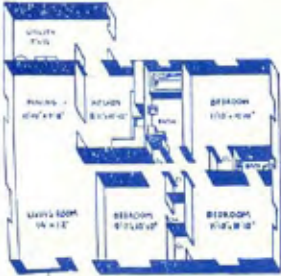
DE LUXE HOME

only \$1250 DOWN
G. I.

FHA
\$2,650 Down
(Approx.) \$86 Mo.

\$12,450 Total
\$78 Monthly (Approx.)
3 Bedrooms
2 Baths
1,521 Sq. Ft.

Brick Veneer Construction
Ceramic Tile in Kitchen
and Bath
Asphalt Tile Floors
Throughout



THE ECONOMY HOME

only \$550 DOWN
G. I.

FHA
\$1,250 Down
(Approx.) \$61 Mo.

\$9,250 Total
\$62 Monthly (Approx.)
3 Bedrooms
1 1/2 Baths
1,055 Sq. Ft.

Cedar Shingle Siding
Copperwell Drains and
Splash in Kitchen
Asphalt Tile Floors
Throughout

PLUS

Paved Streets, Curbs and Sidewalks
Steel Casement Sash
Copper Lifetime Plumbing
Automatic Hot Water Heater
Fully Insulated

Choice of Color Selection
Plenty of Kitchen Cabinets
Thermostatic Heat Control
City of Denver Water and Sewerage
Incinerator and Clothes Poles

HOFFMAN HOMES
 MODEL: 850 and 876 PEORIA STREET
 HOMES: OPEN 9 'TIL 9 WEEKDAYS, SAT. 9 'TIL 6

Aurora History Museum Archives (Circa 1951)

Figure 4.

This excerpt from a Hoffman Heights brochure features the floor plans for the Deluxe Brick Model and the Economy Frame and Shingle Model.

The Post-World War II Housing Construction Industry

In 1938 during the end of the Great Depression, the housing construction industry consisted primarily of independent, small-scale builders who typically constructed a maximum of four single-family houses per year. The few homebuilders who were capable of building larger numbers of houses constructed approximately ten houses during a twelve-month time period. The low supply of new houses was a result of a low demand for them, due to the difficulty in financing a single-family house. Lending institutions

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typically financed 60 to 70 percent of the purchase price and offered mortgages with five year terms or less, with a balloon payment required at the end of the term.

The National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which laid the groundwork for changes in the housing industry. Formed when approximately two million construction workers were unemployed, FHA initiated a program that insured a lending institution against loss of principal in case a borrower failed to meet the terms and conditions of the mortgage. The borrower paid an insurance premium of one-half of one percent on declining mortgage balances for the lender's protection and, in return, received a lower interest rate on the mortgage. Although lending institutions welcomed this assistance from the federal government, the Depression greatly reduced the impact of the program. The enactment of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the "GI Bill", stimulated the economy with its provisions, including the opportunity to obtain low interest home loans with no required down payment. The return of millions of servicemen to civilian life at the end of World War II, coupled with government mechanisms for affordable financing in place, created an unprecedented demand for low-cost single-family housing beginning in the mid-1940s.

The high demand for housing resulted in many builders exploring ways to speed up the construction process. These builders became large-scale housing developers after the war and standardized their product by industrializing the home construction process. Known as "operative builders" or "operators," these developers purchased large tracts of land; laid utilities and other infrastructure, including the streets; built the houses; and then sold them as part of a new community. The house construction process was organized similar to an assembly line where individual construction trades moved from one building site to another in an effort to construct houses at a rapid rate. For example, once a site was excavated for a foundation, the excavator would move to the next housing site and perform the same work. The concrete crew would then be called to install formwork and pour the foundation, followed by the rough carpenters, who framed the walls. As each work crew completed a task at one house, it would move to the next house to perform a similar task. Some of the builders, including William Levitt of Levittown, New York, purchased stands of timber in California and set up temporary sawmills on their construction sites for the fabrication of wall and roof framing members as well as other lumber. By 1949, operative builders dominated the housing construction industry with approximately 4 percent of all builders being responsible for 45 percent of new housing units.

Where the developments included commercial and public buildings, the builders were known as "community builders". Often the housing developments were located in unincorporated areas without zoning regulations or any other form of government planning. As a result, the community builders developed standards for land use; they prepared plans that incorporated public buildings including schools, libraries, fire stations, churches, and parks as well as commercial buildings, such as shopping centers. The community builders also abandoned the traditional orthogonal street layout of urban areas, preferring curved and looping streets. Although this decision was partly based upon aesthetics, the community builders considered this street layout safer, especially for residents with children, by reducing the speed and volume of traffic through the development.

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The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) was founded in 1941. The Community Builders Council, a subgroup of the Urban Land Institute, was founded one year later in 1942. The Community Builders Council first published the Community Builders Handbook in 1947, which provided guidelines for community development. The Third Edition, published in 1954, includes a section titled "Planning the Development". Excerpts from Section B Planning the Site, Neighborhood Planning follow:

The creation of well balanced, self-contained communities should be the objective of all subdividers and operative builders. This can be accomplished more easily when a large tract is under one ownership, but the development of a complete neighborhood is not precluded even when there are several small subdivisions in separate ownership in the area. By careful, cooperative planning they can be integrated into a development which will eventually form a complete community of homes, schools, shops, recreation, and other facilities...

A complete and self-contained neighborhood unit of sufficient population should have its own local shopping center, elementary school and recreation facilities. It should be bounded by main traffic arteries but not cut by them. Local streets within the neighborhood should be designed to serve the local needs of the neighborhood and to discourage their use by through traffic. Normally, two or more dwelling types (single family, two-family, apartments, etc.) at varying densities should be provided in appropriate locations... (Refer to Figure 5 for an illustration of "generally accepted neighborhood unit principles".)

To illustrate the principles of neighborhood units as applied to a large-scale community development, Belmont near Pueblo, Colorado is cited.

The 1200-acre site is designed to accommodate a community of five neighborhood units, each with its own centrally located elementary school combined with park and recreation area. Construction was begun in November, 1951. The program calls for the eventual construction of 10,000 homes at the rate of 2,000 per year...

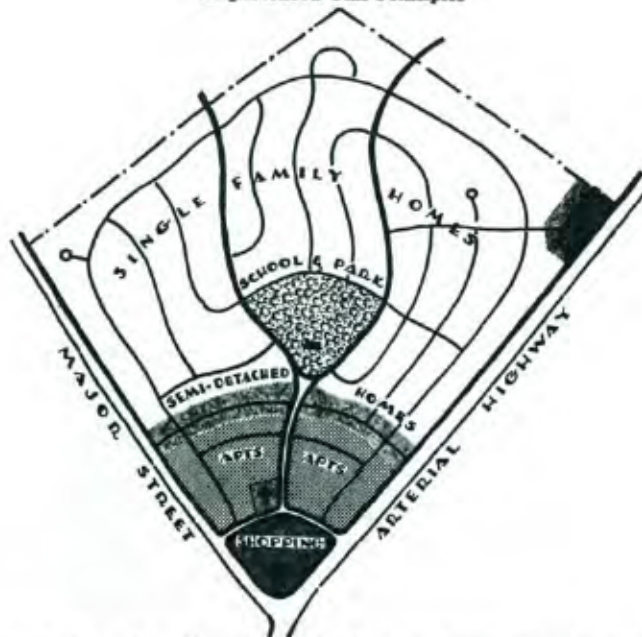
Attention is called to the careful arrangement of land uses in the community plan made by the land planners. A natural valley park has been utilized as a buffer between the shopping center and Neighborhood No. 2. Apartments have been effectively used as a transitional use between commercial and single-family dwellings. The apartments also provide a maximum of close walk-in trade for the shopping center. (Refer to Figure 7 for the General Community Plan for Belmont, Pueblo, Colorado. Also refer to Figure 6 for "A Well Conceived Community Development Fitted into the Typical Section Line Pattern of the Mid-West".)

The National Association of Home Builders began publishing bulletins on neighborhood development in 1947; the bulletins were combined into a single volume in 1950, resulting in the publication of the Home Builders Manual for Land Development. A revised edition in 1953 served as a guide for solving a wide range of land planning issues and was recommended to "...the home builders of America as a valuable aid to sound community

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development". The National Association of Home Builders' Research Institute published "Operation Trade Secrets" in 1952, which contained individual reports on construction techniques, including wall framing methods (Report No. 1) and trussed rafter construction (Report No. 2). The purpose of Report No. 1 included eliminating costly labor and material waste and to show various degrees of on-site production line methods used for the single housing unit as well as small and large developments. (Refer to Figure 8 for an excerpt from "Operation Trade Secrets".)

Figure 11.
Neighborhood Unit Principles



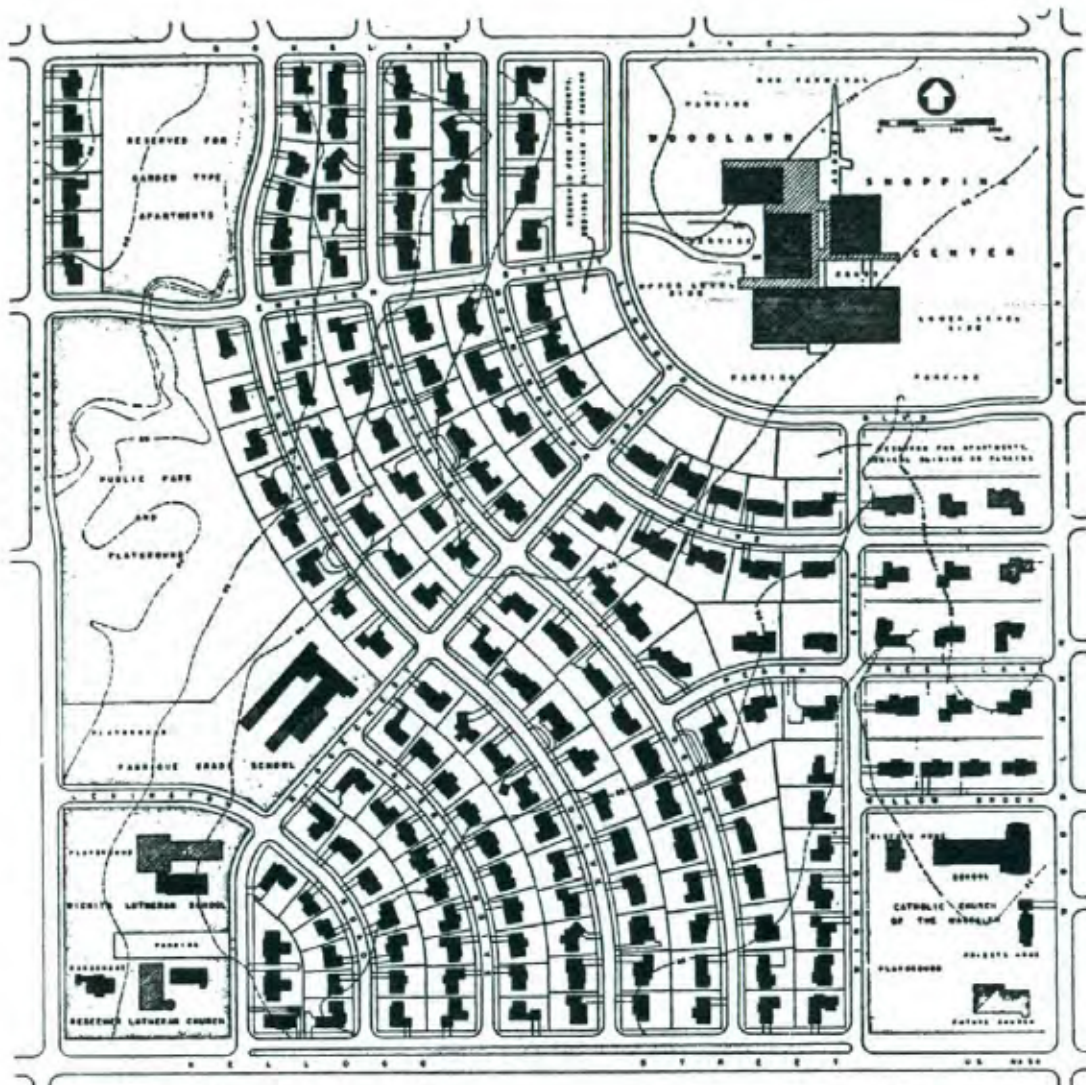
1. **Size.** A residential unit development should provide housing for that population for which one elementary school is ordinarily required, its actual area depending upon its population density.
2. **Boundaries.** The unit should be bounded on all sides by arterial streets, sufficiently wide to facilitate traffic by-passing the neighborhood instead of passing through it.
3. **Open Spaces.** Small park and recreation space, planned to meet the needs of the particular neighborhood, should be provided.
4. **Institution Sites.** Sites for the school and other institutions having service spheres coinciding with the limits of the unit should be suitably grouped about a central point, or common.
5. **Local Shops.** One or more shopping districts, adequate for the population to be served, should be located preferably at traffic junctions and adjacent to similar districts, if any, of adjoining neighborhoods.
6. **Internal Street System.** The unit should be provided with a special street system, each highway being proportioned to its probable traffic load, and the street net as a whole being designed to facilitate circulation within the unit with good access to main arteries, and to discourage its use by through traffic.

Adapted from New York Regional Plan, Vol. 7.

Figure 5.

The Community Builders Handbook (Third Revised Printing in 1954 and prepared by the Community Builders' Council of the Urban Land Institute) cited this plan as incorporating "generally accepted neighborhood unit principles". Note the similarity between this conceptual plan and the Hoffman Town / Hoffman Heights plan in Aurora, Colorado. This handbook was available to community builders beginning in 1947.

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Town and Country Estates, Inc.
Wichita, Kansas—Developers

Site Planning by
Harman & O'Donnell
Denver, Colorado

Figure 12.
A Well Conceived Community Development Fitted Into the Typical
Section Line Pattern of the Mid-West.

Figure 6.

The Community Builders Handbook also included this plan for a community development. The plan was designed for a section of land, similar in size to the Hoffman Heights subdivision in Aurora. A shopping center is shown in the northeast corner of the site, a school is located along the diagonal road that terminates at the shopping center, and churches were planned for the southeast and southwest corners of the development.

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Figure 13.
Belmont—A Realization of Neighborhood Planning Principles



General Community Plan for Belmont, Pueblo, Colorado.
Present development is in the lower left corner.
Contour intervals are five feet.

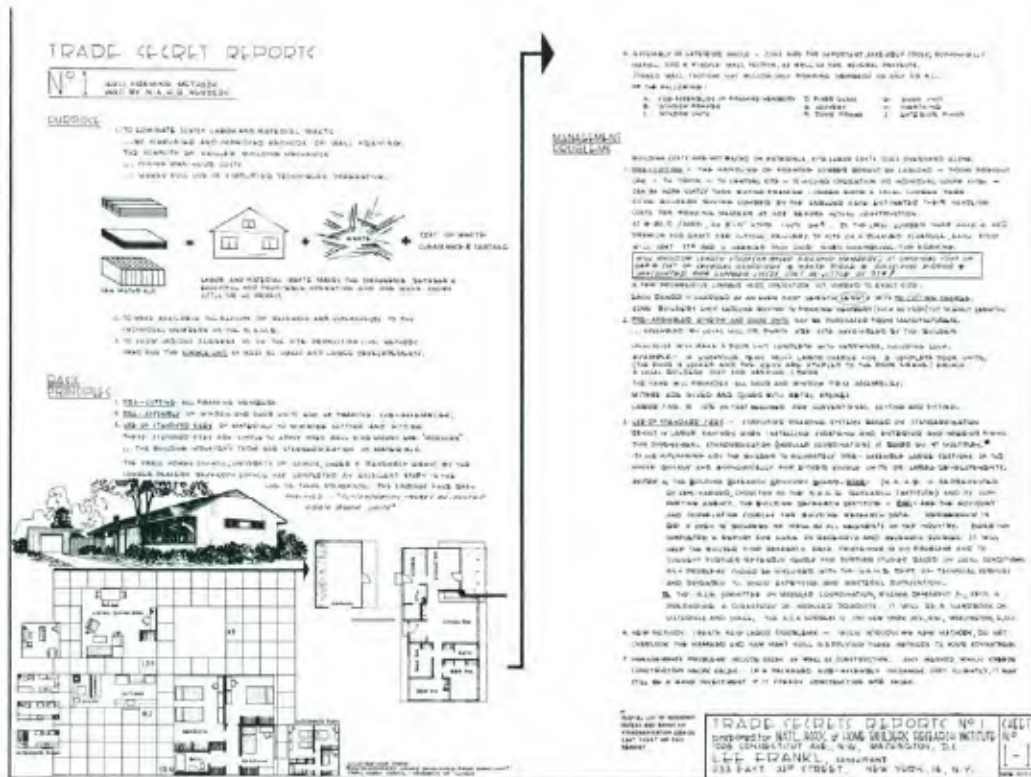
The Community Builders Handbook

Figure 7.

Although not developed by Sam Hoffman, the Belmont Community Plan in Pueblo, Colorado, reflects the design principles that community builders like Hoffman were following for Post-World War II subdivisions. Note that the site plans for both this figure and the preceding one were prepared by Harman & O'Donnell, a Denver, Colorado-based planning firm established in 1946 with an international client base.

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Operation Trade Secrets, Report No. 1

Figure 8.

Originally printed in 18" x 24" format, this report was issued by the National Association of Home Builders' Research Institute and was the result of research and experiments conducted by members of the NAHB. Included at the end of the report was a list of important papers and books on construction standardization.

Sam Hoffman, Community Builder

Born in Russia in 1901 to Jewish parents, Sam Hoffman left home at an early age and traveled to North America where he worked in a tannery in Canada and learned to speak English. Hoffman then immigrated to the United States, became a U.S. citizen, and landed in Detroit, Michigan, where he learned the plastering trade during the 1920s. The stock market crash in 1929 and the consequent collapse of the construction industry caused Hoffman to turn to the trucking business. With partners, Hoffman built up a large fleet of trucks known as "Erie Freightways". After over-extending its operation, the trucking company fell into bankruptcy in 1943 and closed. Hoffman then moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he began buying houses and making small profits on the sale of each one. In 1947, he founded the F & S (Father and Son) Construction Company with his son, Jack Hoffman.

Sam Hoffman often called himself the "Henry Ford of the home-building industry." This description seems appropriate for the following reasons:

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- He used assembly-line construction methods, stressing the economies of industrialized home construction that were described in The Community Builders Handbook and the Home Builders Manual for Land Development.
- He constructed houses that appealed to the mass middle-income market. In the July 25, 1953 issue of *Business Week* magazine, Hoffman stated his philosophy about affordable housing: "Frank Lloyd Wright says he builds houses around the personalities of the people who live in the house. I build houses around the pocketbooks of the people."
- He operated on the basis of a small profit (less than 5 percent) with a fast turnover. He said "I want fast nickels, not slow quarters."



Photo taken from "Building Three Places at Once" *Business Week* Magazine July 25, 1953

Figure 9.

Sam Hoffman stands in front of a sign advertising one of his communities. Hoffman liked to point out that he did not build houses. Rather, he manufactured them utilizing an assembly-line technique.

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Over a six year period beginning in 1947, Hoffman developed communities in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; Cleveland, Ohio; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Salt Lake City, Utah; Las Vegas, Nevada; Pueblo, Colorado; and Thornton, Colorado. Some of these communities were named "Hoffman Town," including the one that is the subject of this report, now known as Hoffman Heights. (Refer to Figure 10.) Hoffman later created Hoffman Estates in Cook County, Illinois, in 1954.



Aurora History Museum Archives (Circa 1954)

Figure 10.

This brochure for Hoffman Homes lists all of the completed communities, including the largest consisting of 2,000 homes in Pueblo, Colorado (Beulah Heights). All sixteen communities were touted as being "...complete with schools, parks, recreation centers and the ultimate in modern shopping centers. Streets are planned for easy parking, easy access and smooth traffic flow."

Hoffman Town in Aurora, Colorado

Sam Hoffman developed a tract of land in unincorporated Arapahoe County that was previously known as the Cottonwood Farm. Owned by the Union Pacific railroad as early as 1867 through 1888, the land eventually came under the ownership of the Platte Land Company, which had numerous holdings in the area. By 1911, Albert Montgomery was the owner of Cottonwood Farm and Max K. Maul farmed it for the Montgomery Land

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Company. Here Maul raised beets, alfalfa, potatoes, and grain; a reservoir, located on the south side of the property and surrounded by large cottonwood trees, provided irrigation for the crops. The Maul family resided in a farmhouse near the present-day intersection of East 11th Avenue and Quari Street.

As Aurora grew in population and World War II ended, development pressures resulted in the farm passing into the hands of Albert L. and Alice F. Johnson. A friend of the Johnson family returned from a trip to Albuquerque and told Al Johnson about homes built by Sam Hoffman he had seen and admired there. Johnson had experience building several homes in Denver's Park Hill neighborhood and was interested in using his property for a housing development. As a result, Al and Alice Johnson, with Edward J. Dempsey as President and T.W. Anderson as Secretary, formed the Cottonwood Development Company and hired Sam Hoffman to build houses on the former Cottonwood Farm. The prolific builder agreed to move forward with the project as long as he had control over the design, construction, and price of the houses as well as the layout of the overall community, named "Hoffman Town."

The Cottonwood Development Company requested the annexation of Hoffman Town to the City of Aurora numerous times, beginning in 1948, but was denied. (In an interview, Ed Dempsey noted that the request was made 51 times.) Aurora's local builders were unhappy with the competition from Sam Hoffman as well as his rapid construction methods and persuaded several city council members to vote against the annexation. But water and sanitation services were needed for the development, so Sam Hoffman formed the Cottonwood Water District and the Cottonwood Sanitation District, with water and sewer services to be provided by the City of Denver. A lawsuit resulted when the Aurora City Council refused to allow access to Aurora's street right-of-ways for the installation of the underground utilities to Hoffman Town. Fortunately, the lawsuit was eventually settled when the court ruled Arapahoe County, not the City of Aurora, held the public right-of-way. Hoffman transferred ownership of the water district to the residents in 1952 with the sanitation district following in 1953 after directors were selected from the community.

Other services were needed for Hoffman Town, including police and fire protection, schools, churches, and recreational space. Hoffman donated land for Vaughn Elementary School, located at 1155 Vaughn Street. He also donated 11.6 acres for Hoffman Park, located at 12600 Hoffman Boulevard, with an additional donation of \$2,500 for playground equipment. The new homeowners agreed to provide landscaping for the park. In 1952, Hoffman formed the Hoffman Heights Fire Protection District; an all-volunteer fire department provided the necessary protection for the community and a \$75,000 bond residents approved in 1952 allowed for the purchase of firefighting equipment. The fire station is located at 12600 Hoffman Boulevard. Churches also were built to serve the community, including Burns Memorial Methodist Church at 11th and Newark. Constructed at the corner of East 11th Avenue and Newark Street in 1952, services and a church school were initially conducted in the home (and parsonage) of Reverend Dean Shaw at 1000 Ursula Street. (Refer to Figure 11.)

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A quarter-circular site, located at the southwest corner of the subdivision and bounded by Del Mar Circle (originally named Larkspur Parkway) served as the prefabrication site and materials storage yard for F & S Construction Company. Sam Hoffman's son-in-law, Sol Dichter, developed the site into a shopping center once all of the houses in Hoffman Heights had been built. The Hoffman Heights Shopping Center opened in January 1954 and attracted a variety of merchants.



Aurora History Museum Archives

Figure 11.

The caption at the top of this photograph from the June 21, 1954, issue of Life Magazine reads "The Shaws' brick home at 1000 Ursula Street is off to its busy Sunday as the first youngsters arrive for their Sunday-school classes."

Hoffman Town became more commonly known as "Hoffman Heights" when the local residents responded to a Civic Association poll conducted in 1952 to change the name. The community was annexed to the City of Aurora on October 19, 1954. Aurora's town attorney reviewed earlier petitions for the community's annexation and determined that Aurora's petition against annexation was invalid. The self-contained community with all necessary services in place would be a benefit to the City of Aurora's tax base. However,

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many of the Hoffman residents raised money to protest the annexation, due to their frustration with Aurora in the past, and filed suit in December 1954. The Colorado Supreme Court reviewed the case in 1955. In February of 1956, a decision was reached: evidence against annexation had been entered late and the Court refused to hear the case. The annexation of Hoffman Heights to the City of Aurora was now official and final.

Following the guidelines of The Community Builders Handbook, which recommended the number of types of dwelling units be kept to a minimum where low-cost homes are to be built by one operator, Hoffman decided to offer a maximum of three different house models: the Deluxe Brick Model, the Economy Frame and Shingle Model, and the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. The Deluxe Brick Model was the first to be built in the northwest corner of the development. Of all three models, the Deluxe Brick Model had the most amenities with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and an attached garage. The house sold for \$12,950. (Refer to Figure 4. Other literature available from the Aurora History Museum Archives indicates the Deluxe Brick model cost \$12,450 and \$11,950. The price difference may have been due to variations in architectural features.) A Deluxe Brick model house, available for showings to prospective buyers, was built at 876 Peoria Street. The Economy Frame & Shingle Model cost \$9,250 and included three bedrooms and 1½ bathrooms within a footprint of 1,055 square feet; a model house was built at 850 Peoria Street. (Refer to Figure 4.) The third house model, the Cosmopolitan Brick Model, contained 1,055 square feet and sold for \$10,050. This model was built along East 7th Avenue and utilized the brick left after the construction of the Deluxe Brick Models; a model house was built at 800 Peoria Street. Both the Economy Frame & Shingle Model and the Cosmopolitan Brick Model were constructed without garages.

In order to avoid the monotony of a duplication of the same unit along any street, Hoffman offered variations in each house model. A "List of Standard Extras" effective February 20, 1951, for Hoffman Town included a fireplace with heatilator (\$700); an extension of the garage to the back of the house (\$450); a front porch, four feet wide (\$12 per running foot); the replacement of the garage door with a window measuring 44" wide by 24" high (\$200); the replacement of a standard window with a wrap-around corner window (\$150); and a finished garage, which included a window in front, plastered and painted interior walls, and a door from the living room to the garage (\$900).

Other variations in each house model were available, although not listed as "standard extras" and determined through on-site observations; one brochure for the Deluxe Brick Model indicated that ten different "styles" or elevation options were available to prospective buyers. Although illustrations or descriptions of these styles have not been located, on-site observations indicate these elevation options included a gable or hipped roof; a front wall gable or separate hipped roof at the end of the house over the garage or above the entry door; a single brick color (red or blonde) or a combination of the two brick colors on the Deluxe Brick Model; and an attached garage that was available in three positions relative to the front exterior wall of the house: recessed (as shown on the floor plan in Figure 4), projecting or flush with the house. Steel casement windows were provided in every house.

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Hoffman's plans called for the construction of 1700 homes, with 100 houses simultaneously under construction and a target of twelve houses completed each day. Four hundred houses were sold prior to the start of construction. The increase in the population of Aurora, coupled with the site's proximity to Fitzsimons Army Medical Hospital and Lowry Air Force Base, made Hoffman Heights an attractive subdivision for potential homebuyers. The servicemen were able to obtain attractive financing through the GI Bill; Hoffman advertised a down payment of \$1,250 for the Deluxe Brick Model and \$550 for the Economy Frame and Shingle Model when utilizing this financing option. An FHA loan required larger down payments of \$2,650 and \$1,250 for the Deluxe Model and Economy Model, respectively. Reports vary regarding the number of each house model built over a three year period. One source ("Local Arrangements for Local Government in Hoffman Heights") reported 884 Deluxe Brick Models, 770 Economy Frame and Shingle Models, and 51 Cosmopolitan Models were constructed for a total of 1,705 houses; another source (Early Aurora) indicated 940 Deluxe Brick Models, 505 Economy Frame and Shingle Models, 210 Cosmopolitan Models, and 2 four-bedroom houses were built totaling 1,657 houses (although the source indicated a total of 1,705 homes).

When Hoffman announced his plans for Hoffman Town, many people doubted the development's success, saying that "No one will want to live way out beyond Aurora." Yet Hoffman knew commuters in Chicago drove an hour from their homes to their workplace. Hoffman replied that "This is only half an hour." The subdivision ended up being a great success, attracting young professionals as well as federal and military employees.

Prior to the completion of Hoffman Heights in Aurora, Hoffman purchased 640 acres north of Denver and built 5,000 houses in a new community, which he named "Thornton" for Colorado governor Dan Thornton.

Sam Hoffman ended his own life on October 13, 1959. He killed his wife, Ann, and then himself in their home in Phoenix. Sol Dichter, who had worked with his father-in-law at Hoffman Heights, continued his work in the Denver metro area.

V. RESULTS



Erik Nuhfer

Figure 12.

This Cosmopolitan Brick Model at 12610 East 7th Avenue is eligible for an intensive-level survey because it retains most of its original historic fabric. This house has single-color red brick veneer, hipped roof, a separate hipped roof at the end of the façade, and casement windows. Note the smaller, horizontally-oriented windows at the ends of the façade.

Types of Resources Surveyed

The Hoffman Heights Reconnaissance Survey resulted in the completion of 1,696 Architectural Features Site Forms documenting resources in the survey area. One of the goals of the survey was to determine the number constructed of each model home and to identify its original character-defining features. If the house retained most of its architectural integrity, then it was considered eligible for a future intensive-level survey. One hundred and thirty-six (136) houses were found to meet this criteria, including one hundred and ten (110) Deluxe Brick Models, sixteen (16) Economy Frame and Shingle Models, five (5) Cosmopolitan Brick Models, and five (5) “other” models. (Refer to the “Survey Log” in this section of the report for the address of each resource.) Two of the 136 houses were previously recorded and are on file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation: 915 Quentin Street (State I.D. #5AH.2986 - Bruner Residence) and 785 Salem Street (State I.D. #5AH.2919 - No Name Given). Another house located at

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1179 Salem Street (The Dale House) was nominated as an Aurora historic landmark but was not designated.

Construction Dates

The construction dates of the houses in Hoffman Heights can be approximated by the dates of the various subdivision filings, which occurred over a three-year period between 1950 and 1953. The houses in the northwest corner of the subdivision were initially built with the First Filing, dated November 13, 1950. The Second Filing is located in the northeast corner of the subdivision; this plat was filed in Arapahoe County on July 9, 1951. The Third Filing was recorded on October 2, 1951 and is located in the west central portion of the subdivision. The plat for the Fourth Filing is located in the east central portion of the subdivision and was filed on February 18, 1952. Subsequent filings occurred on August 28, 1952 (Fifth Filing); October 28, 1952 (Sixth Filing); and November 10, 1953 (Seventh Filing). Refer to the Filing Map on page 36 for the locations of each of the subdivision filings.

House Models

The house models identified during this survey and through historic research include the Deluxe Brick Model, the Economy Frame and Shingle Model, the Cosmopolitan Brick Model, and the “other” model. Refer to the House Model Map on page 37.

The Deluxe Brick Model was the most popular house built in Hoffman Heights. Based upon the reconnaissance survey, 940 of this model were constructed. The Deluxe Brick Model can be distinguished not only by its brick veneer, but also by an attached garage. A front entry door provides direct access to the living room, which is located at the end of the house adjacent to the garage. The living room and two of the three bedrooms have casement windows that face the street; the living room window is larger than the bedroom windows. (Refer to Figure 13 for an example of this model and to Figure 4 on page 11 for the floor plan.)

The Economy Frame and Shingle Model was the second most constructed house in Hoffman Heights. The survey results indicate that 586 of this model were built. The Economy Frame and Shingle Model was not available with an attached garage, but it contains three bedrooms and 1½ bathrooms. The siding originally installed on the house was asbestos shingle siding in a combed or smooth finish, according to field observations. Similar to the Deluxe Brick Model’s floor plan, the economy version has a living room located at the end of the house that features a large picture window. The two smaller windows provide natural light and ventilation for the two bedrooms that face the street. (Refer to Figure 4 on page 11 for the floor plan and to Figure 14 for a photograph of this typical model.)

The third model, the Cosmopolitan Brick Model, was reportedly built with brick left over from the construction of the Deluxe Brick Model. There are 56 examples of this model in Hoffman Heights. Although a floor plan was not available from the Aurora History

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Museum archives or other sources, one can assume from the study of the house model's front elevation that the entry door provides direct access to the living room, which is located in the center of the house and has a large window facing the street. The two smaller, horizontally-oriented windows at opposite ends of the façade provide natural light and ventilation for the bedrooms. (Refer to Figure 12.)



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Figure 13.

This Deluxe Brick Model at 1179 Salem Street (The Dale House) has a hipped roof, a veneer of red brick, a recessed garage, and steel casement windows. This house was identified as being eligible for an intensive-level survey.

The "other" model identified during the reconnaissance survey was an economy version of the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. In a few limited locations, the "other" model was selected on the Architectural Features Site Form because the house could not be readily identified as any particular model. (For example, the house at 992 Uvalda Street appears similar to the Economy Frame and Shingle Model with its large picture window with muntins, but it has a brick veneer and the plan was modified for a corner site.) The economy version of the Cosmopolitan Brick Model is distinguished by its centrally-located living room and entry door, flanked by two bedrooms with their associated smaller, horizontally-oriented

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windows at each end of the house. These houses were built on the 700 block of Uvalda Street and the 700 / 800 blocks of Vaughn, Victor, and Zion Street. (Refer to Figure 15.)



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Figure 14.

This Economy Frame and Shingle Model at 1140 Vaughn Street has a hipped roof with a separate hipped roof at the end of the façade, original asbestos shingle siding, steel casement windows, and a picture window with muntins. This house is eligible for an intensive-level survey due to its retention of character-defining features.

Topographic Influence on Building Form

Hoffman Heights was constructed on former farmland that was relatively level and treeless, with the exception of the cottonwoods that grew along the perimeter of the reservoir at the south end of the property. Some streets in the community exhibit noticeable grade changes, including East 7th Avenue. (Refer to Figure 16.) Sam Hoffman was experienced in proper site selection and also may have been influenced by the recommendations of The Community Builders Handbook, which follow:

Moderately sloping sites are preferable to either steep or very level land. As a rule it has been found that improvement costs rise sharply on slopes of over 8 to 10

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percent. Heavy grading creates settlement and erosion problems...for higher priced properties where lots are large, broken topography and wooded areas may work out very well, but for low cost homes where lot costs must be held to a minimum, gently rolling and well drained land is by far the best. Very flat land presents numerous problems in sewerage and storm drainage that may raise improvement costs to a very high figure.

The shape of the subdivision site should be compact. Irregular boundaries and the presence of utility or railway easements may result in waste areas and uneconomical street and lot layouts.

Scattered existing trees are desirable, but if low cost houses are contemplated, heavily wooded, brushy or stony sites requiring extensive clearing should be avoided.



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Figure 15.

This "other" model at 724 Uvalda Street is an economy version of the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. The house has a hipped roof, original asbestos shingle siding, and steel casement windows. This house can be found in the Survey Log as one recommended to be intensively surveyed in the future.

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Hoehn Architects PC (April 2010)

Figure 16.

Although most of the streets in Hoffman Heights are relatively level, this view of East 7th Avenue shows the street gently dropping and then rising to the east.

Due to the fairly level terrain in the survey area, the houses were constructed in a conventional way, with grade remaining typically level around all sides. The interior floor elevation was set no more than one step or approximately six inches above exterior grade; access to the back yard is provided at the rear of the house. The houses have no basements, but were rather constructed with concrete slabs-on-grade. This decision may have been based upon a desire to construct the houses quickly and economically or the knowledge of a high water table, evidenced by the presence of the former reservoir on the site.

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Survey Log

The following houses were found to be eligible for a future intensive-level survey. Their locations are shown on the Filing Map on page 36.

Street Address	House Model	Property Name & OAHP Site Number, if available
12610 E. 7 th Avenue	Cosmopolitan Brick	
13010 E. 7 th Avenue	Cosmopolitan Brick	
13160 E. 7 th Avenue	Cosmopolitan Brick	
13710 E. 7 th Avenue	Economy Frame and Shingle	
12102 E. 10 th Avenue	Deluxe Brick	
12103 E. 10 th Avenue	Deluxe Brick	
12605 E. 13 th Avenue	Deluxe Brick	
12655 E. 13 th Avenue	Deluxe Brick	
800 Peoria Street	Cosmopolitan Brick	
850 Peoria Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
904 Peoria Street	Deluxe Brick	
1030 Peoria Street	Deluxe Brick	
1270 Peoria Street	Deluxe Brick	
1296 Peoria Street	Deluxe Brick	
852 Quari Court	Deluxe Brick	
871 Quari Court	Deluxe Brick	
1092 Quari Street	Deluxe Brick	
1127 Quari Street	Deluxe Brick	
1204 Quari Street	Deluxe Brick	
1245 Quari Street	Deluxe Brick	
1298 Quari Street	Deluxe Brick	
801 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
903 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
915 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	Bruner Residence / 5AH.2986
967 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1003 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1006 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1024 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1101 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1117 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1118 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1129 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1139 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1234 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
1294 Quentin Street	Deluxe Brick	
845 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
917 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
920 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	

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Street Address	House Model	Property Name & OAHP Site Number, if available
965 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
981 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
1095 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
1119 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
1175 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
1189 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
1296 Racine Street	Deluxe Brick	
701 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
708 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
751 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
797 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
801 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
821 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
954 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1036 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1039 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1093 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1188 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1220 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1234 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
1241 Revere Street	Deluxe Brick	
700 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
733 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
755 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
775 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
785 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	(No Name Given) / 5AH.2919
795 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
857 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
881 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
901 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
911 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
926 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
959 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
995 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
1053 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
1118 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
1179 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	The Dale House
1235 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
1290 Salem Street	Deluxe Brick	
716 Scranton Court	Deluxe Brick	
723 Scranton Street	Deluxe Brick	
925 Scranton Street	Deluxe Brick	

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Street Address	House Model	Property Name & OAHP Site Number, if available
1021 Scranton Street	Deluxe Brick	
1280 Scranton Street	Deluxe Brick	
1293 Scranton Street	Deluxe Brick	
750 Toledo Street	Deluxe Brick	
769 Troy Court	Deluxe Brick	
777 Troy Court	Deluxe Brick	
812 Troy Street	Deluxe Brick	
860 Troy Street	Deluxe Brick	
876 Troy Street	Deluxe Brick	
963 Troy Street	Deluxe Brick	
1201 Troy Street	Deluxe Brick	
773 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
861 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
901 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
931 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
940 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
990 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
1043 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
1104 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
1139 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
1175 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
1203 Tucson Street	Deluxe Brick	
701 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
780 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
810 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
811 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
830 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
881 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
950 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
971 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
1010 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
1037 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
1070 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
1077 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
1100 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
1180 Ursula Street	Deluxe Brick	
992 Uvalda Street	Cosmopolitan Brick	
715 Vaughn Street	Other	
857 Vaughn Street	Other	
899 Vaughn Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1140 Vaughn Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1160 Vaughn Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	

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Street Address	House Model	Property Name & OAHP Site Number, if available
1216 Vaughn Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
830 Victor Street	Other	
1265 Victor Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
939 Wheeling Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1151 Wheeling Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1041 Worchester Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1233 Worchester Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1280 Worchester Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1061 Xanadu Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1125 Yost Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1185 Yuba Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
1201 Yuba Street	Economy Frame and Shingle	
716 Zion Street	Other	

Conclusion

The results of the Reconnaissance Survey of Hoffman Heights do not entirely match the expected results in the Research Design.

- It was anticipated that 1,705 historic resources would be recorded, based upon historic research. A total of 1,696 homes were documented with this reconnaissance survey.
- Three model homes were expected to be recorded during the survey, including the Deluxe Brick Model, the Economy Frame and Shingle Model, and the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. A fourth model was identified as the “other” model, which is an economy version of the Cosmopolitan Brick Model. There were also a limited number of houses that could not be identified as any particular model because they had been modified for corner sites or utilized materials that were not typical for the model that they appeared similar to. The total number of each model is as follows:
 - Deluxe Brick Model: 940
 - Economy Frame and Shingle Model: 586
 - Cosmopolitan Brick Model: 56
 - “Other” Model: 114
- Due to changes in taste and other factors, including maintenance and energy concerns, most of the houses in Hoffman Heights do not retain all of their original character-defining features. The majority of the modifications to the houses include window replacement and the cladding of the original asbestos shingle siding on the Economy models with wood or vinyl siding. One hundred and thirty-six (136) houses were found to be eligible for a future intensive-level survey, which represents approximately 8 percent of the total number of houses in Hoffman Heights.

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The historic character of the residential portion of Hoffman Heights is enhanced by the multi-family housing, commercial development, and public buildings constructed as part of Hoffman Town. The churches, the elementary school, the library, the apartment building, the Hoffman Heights Shopping Center, and the individual commercial buildings along Del Mar Circle were constructed during the same time period as the houses. Research for this reconnaissance survey did not reveal whether Sam Hoffman was involved in their design or construction, but many of these buildings are architecturally significant and deserve further study. (Refer to Figure 17 below.)



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Figure 17.

This unique commercial building with its upswept roof faces Del Mar Circle. Its style of architecture could be classified as “Googie”. This building contributes to the historic character of Hoffman Heights.

Although the individual houses in Hoffman Heights are not high style examples of the Mid-Century Modern Movement, together they form a significant collection worthy of recognition. Fortunately, at the present time, there have been no “scrape-offs” or demolition in the subdivision for the construction of larger homes. The addition of second stories or “pop-tops” was not observed in the neighborhood either. Possible reasons for this retention of architectural fabric include property values that cannot support the

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construction of larger houses and their consequent larger price tags; the perception of Hoffman Heights as a neighborhood of affordable homes for young couples and “empty nesters”; and the current residents’ satisfaction with the size of their homes. There are no zoning restrictions or local ordinances that would prevent changes to the individual houses in the neighborhood. Although some of the modified houses do not possess materials integrity because they do not retain key exterior materials dating from the period of their historic significance, they still convey their importance through their location, design, setting, feeling, workmanship, and association.

Given all of these factors, there is potential for the creation of a historic district, both at the local level and for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. National Register Bulletin 15 provides the definition of a district, which “...possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often composed of a wide variety of resources. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties.” Hoffman Heights potentially meets Criterion C: Design/Construction, since the subdivision represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Hoffman Heights also may potentially meet Criterion A: Event for its association with a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community.

Much of Hoffman Heights’ distinctive character lies in the planning of the overall community, including the street layout, the location of the various model houses, and the construction of the public and commercial buildings that serve the community. Despite the fact that many of the houses in Hoffman Heights have been altered, the design and construction of the houses and other buildings convey a postwar suburban neighborhood with a period of significance of 1950 through 1954. The boundaries of the potential historic district should encompass all of these important elements of the Hoffman Heights community.

HOFFMAN HEIGHTS

Aurora,
Colorado
Reconnaissance
Survey

FILING MAP

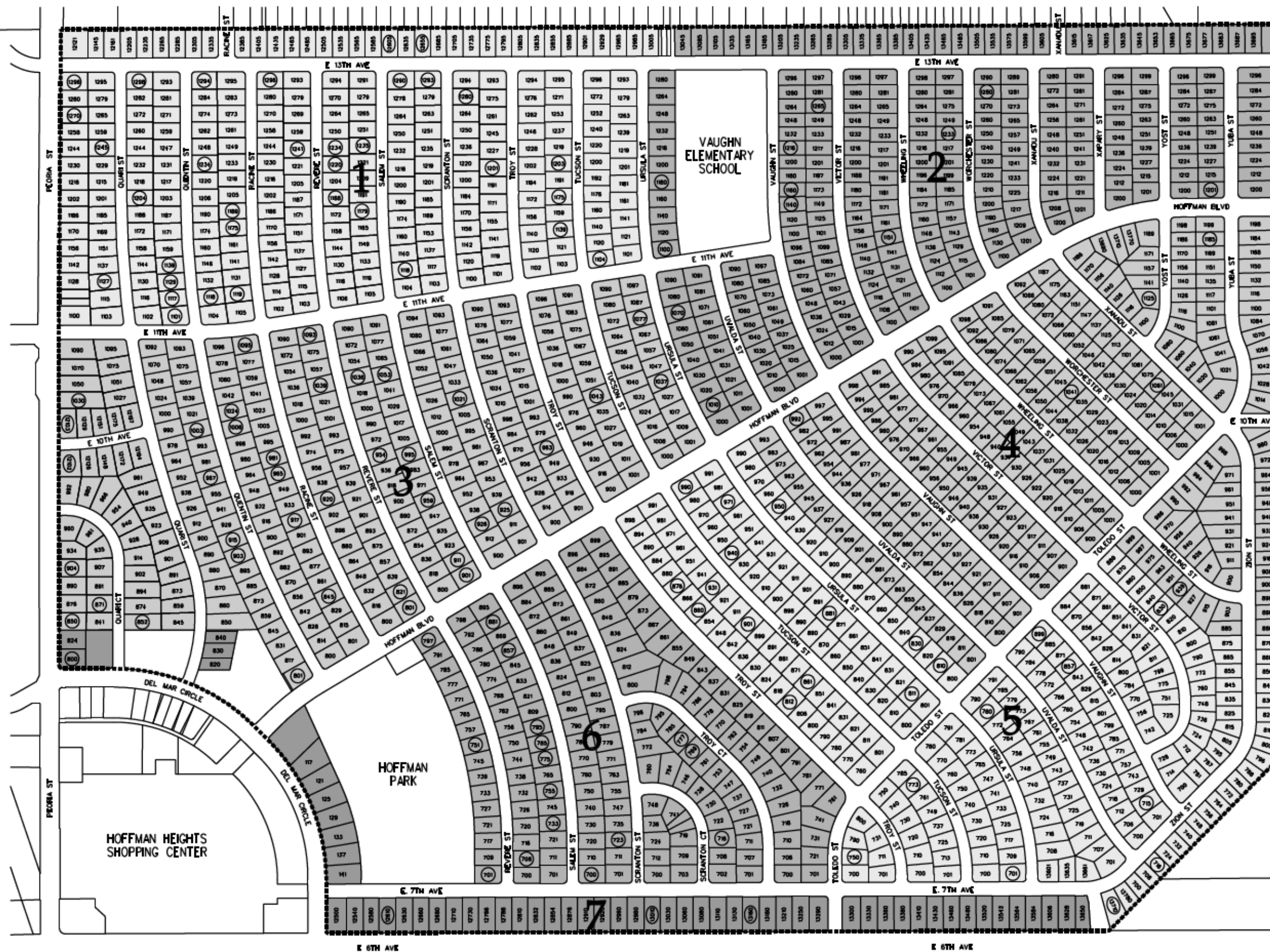
SCALE 1"=440'

HOEHN ARCHITECTS PC
PROJECT NO. 0907

COLORADO HISTORICAL
SOCIETY - CERTIFIED
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PROJECT NO. 08-09-011

- 1 FIRST FILING
NOV 13, 1950
- 2 SECOND FILING
JULY 9, 1951
- 3 THIRD FILING
OCT 2, 1951
- 4 FOURTH FILING
FEB 18, 1952
- 5 FIFTH FILING
AUG 28, 1952
- 6 SIXTH FILING
OCT 28, 1952
- 7 SEVENTH FILING
NOV 10, 1953

○ DENOTES HOUSES
DEEMED ELIGIBLE
FOR FUTURE
INTENSIVE SURVEY



- ☐ NO. **DELUXE BRICK**
☐ NO. **ECONOMY FRAME AND SHINGLE**
☐ NO. **COSMOPOLITAN BRICK**
☐ NO. **OTHER**

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the results of the Reconnaissance Survey of Hoffman Heights, the following recommendations are made:

- Research the history of the churches, the elementary school, the library, the apartment building, the Hoffman Heights Shopping Center, and the individual commercial buildings along Del Mar Circle in Hoffman Heights that were constructed during the same time period as the houses and still retain their character defining features. Many of them are architecturally significant and contribute to the community Sam Hoffman created.
- Research the source of the community site plan for Hoffman Heights. The community development in Wichita, Kansas was cited in The Community Builders Handbook as “well conceived”; the site plan for this community was prepared by Harman & O’Donnell and is strikingly similar to the plan for Hoffman Heights. (Refer to Figure 6 on page 15.) The Denver-based planning firm of Harman & O’Donnell, established in 1946, may have worked with Sam Hoffman in Aurora and other locations.
- Continue to educate and inform the public regarding the significance of Hoffman Heights and how it contributes to the City of Aurora’s cultural and architectural heritage. Many local residents do not realize the significance of this post-World War II subdivision. Future population growth and development pressures may result in the destruction or alteration of the architectural resources within Hoffman Heights. The Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office should be commended for their recent photographic exhibit of Hoffman Heights at the Aurora History Museum. More public outreach and education is needed, including presentations to the local neighborhood association and citizens of Aurora. The neighborhood could be marketed as possessing features of the “not so big house”. The results of this survey, including the survey and database reports, could be linked to the City of Aurora’s website through their Historic Sites and Preservation Office to ensure widespread distribution of the information.

One of the goals of the Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office was to assess the eligibility of Hoffman Heights as a local historic district or for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Although this survey found that most of the houses had been altered, much of Hoffman Heights’ distinctive character lies in the planning of the overall community, including the street layout, the location of the various model houses, and the construction of the public and commercial buildings that serve the community.

One hundred and thirty-six houses were identified in the “Results” section of this report as eligible for intensive-level survey. However, consultation with the OAHF staff determined that the information collected in this reconnaissance survey, in combination with future research of the multi-family housing, commercial development, and public buildings associated with Hoffman Heights, should provide the necessary information to move forward with a National Register historic district nomination. Hoffman Heights potentially meets Criterion C: Design/Construction, since the subdivision represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Hoffman Heights

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also may potentially meet Criterion A: Event for its association with a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of the community. These criteria will be substantiated with the preparation of a historic district nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and consultation with the National Register staff at the OAHP.

Hoffman Heights may soon face development pressures, especially from the reuse and expansion of the nearby Fitzsimons Army Medical Center for the Fitzsimons Life Science District and the Denver Medical Campus of the University of Colorado. It is important to move forward with the district nomination soon before any significant architectural resources are lost.

There is no doubt that Hoffman Heights is a reflection of post-World War II planning standards, Sam Hoffman's legacy as a community builder, and the City of Aurora's growth during the early 1950s.

HOFFMAN HOMES
Builds
communities
not just
homes

\$12,950 TOTAL
\$1300 DOWN G.I.
(attractive terms to all others)
\$97 MO. (Approx.)
Includes Principal, Interest,
Insurance, Taxes
(PLUS CLOSING COSTS)

the **DELUXE**

the features found in your new Hoffman Home

1621 sq. ft. • brick construction	thermostatically controlled heating
2 baths • ceramic tile stall showers	forced air furnace duct heating
city of Denver water and sewerage	a new large and spacious kitchen
3 bedrooms • attached garage	sliding doors in the kitchen
ceramic tile in kitchen and bath	paved streets, curbs and sidewalks
walls and ceilings fully insulated	automatic hot water heater
every home built on a large choice lot	copper lifetime plumbing throughout
your choice of color selections	plenty of kitchen cabinets
loads of electric outlets throughout	exterior doors weatherstripped
steel casement sash windows	doors and windows screened

850
PEORIA ST.
DENVER, COLORADO

Aurora History Museum Archives

Figure 18.

This brochure for Hoffman Homes, which was apparently available at one of the model houses located at 850 Peoria Street, describes the Deluxe Brick Model. Note the drawing of the baseball bat on the left side of the brochure, which is a reminder that Sam Hoffman and "Hoffman Homes builds communities not just homes."

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