

Clifton

Historic Preservation District Designation Report



CLIFTON'S HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The Clifton neighborhood is located in eastern Louisville, and is composed of approximately 423 acres of land bounded by Brownsboro Road to the north, Interstate 64 to the south, Ewing Avenue to the east and Mellwood Avenue to the west. It is a compact and cohesive neighborhood that effectively displays the evolution of the area from a sparsely populated rural community to a densely settled urban Louisville neighborhood. It has been evaluated for this proposed Local Landmark District designation within the context of community planning and development. This Local Landmark designation report chronicles Clifton's historic and architectural evolution by examining the following phases of the area's development: transportation-related development; the emergence of gentleman farms and truck farms; the proliferation of industry, subdivision of land, and residential development; and finally, Clifton's commercial development. This Local Landmark District designation identifies ___ buildings as historically and architecturally contributing and ___ as non-contributing. ___ structures and sites contribute as well.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries chosen for the Clifton District are based on the original lots historically associated with those buildings and sites which share a common architectural style, physical characteristics representing established and familiar visual features, historic development, and function and reflect the neighborhood's evolution.

Previous National Register Listings

The Clifton Neighborhood District was **listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983** based on the area's significance related to architecture, education, and industry between the years 1870 and 1930. At the time of listing, 623 buildings were listed as contributing historically and architecturally to the district and approximately 40 buildings were included as non-contributing.

In 1994 the original National Register District was expanded based on community planning and historic development contexts. This expansion included an additional 200 acres, and added 332 contributing and 129 non-contributing sites and two contributing and no non-contributing structures to Clifton's inventory of resources.

Four buildings within the boundaries proposed for Local Landmark District designation have been individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

1. The **Albert A. Stoll Firehouse/Hook and Ladder Company #3** (listed in 1980 as a contributor to the thematic “Firehouses of Louisville” National Register nomination) at 1761 Frankfort Avenue;
2. **Widman’s Saloon and Grocery/Irish Rover Pub** (listed in 1990) at 2319 Frankfort Avenue;
3. **Clifton’s Three Mile Tollhouse/Ray Parella’s**, (listed in 1990) at 2311 Frankfort Avenue; and
4. **St. Frances of Rome School/Clifton Center**, (listed in 1987) at 2117 Payne Street.

Historic and Architectural Continuum

The Clifton area stands apart from nearby neighborhoods in terms of its historical development, commercial and residential building stock and feeling of time, place, and association. The **Butchertown National Register District** (1976) is located immediately to the west of the district while the **Crescent Hill National Register District** (1982) adjoins it to the east.

Butchertown, like Clifton, is a working class neighborhood composed of a residential mix. However, its major period of development is slightly older than that of Clifton. Therefore, its building stock reflects earlier architectural trends and technologies. Butchertown reflects a historically mixed-use character with residential and industrial buildings standing side-by-side, whereas Clifton reflects a more exclusively residential character.

Crescent Hill, to the east of Clifton, experienced its major period of growth between 1890 and 1920 making its building stock slightly newer than Clifton’s. It too has a mixture of residential and commercial uses, however, little industry historically existed there. Crescent Hill has always attracted solidly middle to upper-class residents who could afford the fine homes (some designed by architects) built upon generously sized lots. Middle-class residents whose homes were modest in size and built on lots that were small, by contrast, have historically populated Clifton.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Phase I: Transportation Related Developments in Clifton

Records indicate that in the years before the 1830s Clifton was primarily a rural community near Louisville. Its location approximately five miles east of Louisville's center, meant it was accessible only by foot, horse, or carriage.

Two early nineteenth century transportation-related developments, which had a major impact on the neighborhood in terms of later development, were the construction of a toll road and the construction of a railroad. Both shaped the Clifton neighborhood's physical expansion and commercial development.

The toll road, officially called the **Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike**, follows the path of what is presently known as Frankfort Avenue. By 1830 it passed through rural farms whose acreage was carved from the original land grant parcels issued to soldiers for their service in the French and Indian War of 1773. The toll road was built upon a high ridge that ran through present-day Clifton on a trail originally formed by migrating buffalo and Native Americans.

The second major development, which occurred in the late 1840s, was the establishment of the **Louisville and Frankfort Railroad**. This railroad, which was intended to facilitate the movement of goods and people to and from Louisville, converged in what would become the heart of Clifton with the already existing turnpike road at a point known as Bowles' Station. There it followed a path parallel to the turnpike road.

As the turnpike road and the rail line made areas east of the city more accessible, an increasing number of people moved out to the country. With the City of Louisville as the hub, streets and highways radiated from it like the spokes of a wheel. Traveling in an eastward direction from the heart of the city, Phoenix Hill and Butchertown were settled first (circa 1840 to 1880), followed by Clifton, and later, Crescent Hill (circa 1860 to 1920). Therefore, Clifton's development straddles the historic and architectural continuum in Louisville's development outward from west to east.

The earliest remnant of Clifton's building stock that can be definitely traced to its turnpike origins is the Federal vernacular style **Three Mile Tollhouse** (National Register listed, 1990). It was constructed circa 1830 at about the same time the toll road was completed. Its placement on the lot close to the road and its simplicity of design denote a building intended to be functional. It was here that the tollgate keeper and his family lived while collecting tolls and maintaining their five-mile stretch of road. Its construction in brick implies it was to be durable as well. Indeed, after the turnpike system was discontinued in 1901 the tollhouse continued to be used for the public good. City Directories indicate that around 1910 it was used as a police substation/jail.

It was common for certain types of businesses to sprout up near tollhouses and tollgates. Saloons, taverns, grocery stores, inns, livery stables, blacksmith shops and the like were logically located near transportation systems. Turnpike travelers, who were tired, hungry and thirsty, would stop to get a bite to eat, perhaps something to drink, and could allow their horses to rest, and cool down. For the thirsty and hungry traveler, there were several saloons and groceries nearby. **Widman's Saloon and Grocery/Irish Rover Pub** (2317 Frankfort Avenue), which dates from 1858, and **Spect's Saloon** (2255 Frankfort Avenue), built in 1887, were typical of bars and eateries in Clifton that operated along the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike. Located approximately one block away from each other, they are remarkably similar in design. Both are two story brick structures with storefronts on the ground level and living quarter above. Each was constructed in the Italianate style and are sited close to the street. Their façade arrangement, style, setback, and massing are quite typical of commercial structures found throughout Louisville from the 1850s time period. Several similar commercial buildings constructed along the turnpike road are still standing in Clifton as well.

Phase II: The Emergence of Gentleman Farms and Truck Farms in Clifton

Before the 1850s large landowners in Clifton fell into two categories: Gentleman farmers and truck farmers. Gentleman farmers grew a limited amount of crops. Goods harvested by such farmers were generally intended for household consumption rather than for retail sale or trade. The primary means of support for gentleman farmers was from a source other than farm based (ie. business, government or manufacturing). Gentleman farmers earned enough money in these outside endeavors to purchase houses and other means of conveyance (usually a carriage or horses) that would enable them to travel from their rural home into the city where they customarily conducted business. Truck farmers, on the other hand, grew crops intended for sale or barter to outside markets. Trucks farmers in Clifton generally sold their goods to neighbors or to city dwellers by transporting them by wagon to Louisville market houses.

Clifton's earliest and most influential settler was gentleman farmer, Colonel Joshua B. Bowles, who built an estate east of town between 1817 and 1842, and named it "Clifton". It is from the **Bowles/Clifton estate** that the surrounding neighborhood derives its name. The Bowles estate (demolished circa 1970) is believed to have been the only gentleman farm sited in what is now the Clifton neighborhood. Other gentleman farms outside of the proposed Clifton Local Historic Preservation District but located close by in the eastern quadrant of Louisville include the Colonial Revival style mansion of **Chatsworth**, built by manufacturer Joshua B. Speed circa 1820 (demolished); Greek Revival style **Selema Hall**, built circa 1838 – 1842, by David Hall a dry goods merchant; and finally, **Beechland**, a Greek Revival style home built circa 1838 – 1842 for a steamboat captain named Anders. Both Selema Hall and Beechland have been individually listed in the National Register.

There are records of at least three truck farming families who owned land and had homes in Clifton before 1860: The **Rastetters, the Westermans and the Raymonds**. Only one home has survived to the present day: the **Thomas Rastetter House**. In 1843, Rastetter purchase a fifteen-acre tract of land in Jefferson County south of the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike. The

1858 Bergmann map confirms its location between Frankfort Avenue and Payne Street. By 1859, Thomas Rastetter, along with son Joseph Rastetter, were listed in city directories as gardeners. Census records from 1860 indicate typical ownership patterns common to Clifton. Thomas Rastetter owned 15 acres of land valued at \$4,600 as well as two horses, two dairy cows, 10 bushels of peas and beans, 250 bushels of potatoes, 50 bushels of sweet potatoes, truck and garden produce valued at \$600, and 100 pounds of butter. The Rastetter House is the oldest farm house still standing in Clifton. As originally constructed, it faced the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike and had a deep setback to the street. The Rastetter House is a two story brick “I” house with five bays on both the primary and secondary facades. Its most unusual feature is a two-story wooden gallery, set between two brick end walls that runs the entire length of the original rear of the house. Unfortunately, all traces of the Rastetter House, which reflect antebellum farmhouse building styles, have been compromised by extensive porch additions on the Frankfort Avenue facade. However, Victorian architectural trends are still evident on its Payne Street façade. At some point after 1884, the year Payne Street first appears on the City of Louisville Atlas, the main door to Rastetter house was re-oriented away from the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike and instead faced Payne Street. In later years, perhaps circa 1890, Victorian embellishments were added to the porch and even later, circa 1960, the center bay of the gallery was in-filled with wooden lapped siding. The house remained in the Rastetter family until 1923.

All of the historic farms known to have been in the present Clifton neighborhood, including the Rastetter house, reflect settlement patterns typical of the mid 1800s. In each instance the houses were sited a great distance away from the turnpike road, the primary means of access onto their property. This building placement differs from subdivision patterns that would emerge in later years and would often distinguish these earlier farm estates from the uniformity of later subdivision development.

Phase III: The Proliferation of Industry, Subdivision of Land, and Residential Development

Industry

Aside from the gentleman farms and truck farms that dotted Clifton’s countryside in the mid-1800s, very little planned residential development had occurred. However, industries were emerging toward the southern boundary of the Clifton neighborhood. The employment opportunities these businesses provided had a profound impact on the residential development in the area. Several naturally occurring features contributed to the area’s industrial development. Entrepreneurs took advantage of the constant water supply provided by the middle fork of the Beargrass Creek for distilling spirits and for the **slaughtering and processing of meats**, while the abundance of limestone attracted quarry men who slowly carved away huge chunks of hillside. Traces of the **quarry industry** are still visible, particularly in the area’s southeastern quadrant, near present day Crescent Springs Condominiums, along the Interstate 64 corridor, and along Brownsboro Road at Kenilworth Avenue (now the site of a strip shopping mall). The City

Workhouse, destroyed by fire in 1968, was another notable remnant of quarrying activity located in the adjacent Irish Hill neighborhood.

The workers who found employment in these nearby slaughterhouses, quarries, and distilleries were the logical target for the marketing pitches of land speculators who geared their sales, and the prices of available homes, to these working class employees during Clifton's subdivision boom in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Additionally, by the 1880s, city provided services such as police and fire protection, schools, and the availability of water, sewers and electricity, provided important amenities that would enhance the quality of life for potential homebuyers.

Subdivision of Land

Subdivision development occurred in the Clifton neighborhood as early as the 1850s but it started out slowly. It wasn't until after the Civil War that the division of land and subsequent home building proliferated. Land subdivision in Clifton, following trends typical in Louisville, occurred first in the areas closest to the center city. In Clifton this meant the area to the west developed before areas to the east. The earliest residential development patterns migrated along the two original 1830s turnpike roads: the Louisville and Shelbyville Pike and the Louisville and Brownsboro Pike. Payne Street, located south of these two turnpike road, was laid out around 1880 (it first appears on the 1884 city atlas) almost fifty years after these two turnpikes. Generally speaking, the earliest houses built in Clifton were the most modest in scale. As time went on, the housing stock gradually increased in size, scale, and durability.

Residential Development

Clifton is a product of development over a long time period and reflects a diversity of architectural styles. Pockets of houses that are obviously the result of rapid development by a single developer are characterized by identically sized lots upon which were built houses of nearly identical building size, scale, massing, and placement. Often, it is only signature details such as sunburst designs or fish scale shingles that distinguish one house from another. Wood is by far the most prevalent building material but brick, stone, and stucco can be found in Clifton as well.

Annexation and the Formation of the Township of Clifton (mid to late 1800s)

Although Clifton was sparsely settled by the mid 1800s, the City of Louisville sought to annex portions of it so it would fall under municipal jurisdiction. Successful annexation of the western tip of Clifton first occurred in **1856**. Perhaps in reaction to this 1856 annexation and borne out of a desire by the residents to remain autonomous, a group of civic minded Clifton residents in **1876** petitioned the State Legislature to grant a charter to the township of Clifton. The population of Clifton at that time totaled 75 people. The 1856 annexation was centered around the **Bowles Estate/Clifton** (near the point where the turnpike and railroad intersected) and to the north, across the Brownsboro Turnpike. Later annexations occurred in **1895, and 1897**.

Construction of Institutions, Schools, and Churches

As the population of Clifton increased so did the number of institutions, schools, and churches. **The Kentucky School for the Blind** (1853 and 1899), **The Printing House for the Blind** (1858 and 1883, with later additions), **The Vernon Avenue School** (1891 – 1919), **Franklin Elementary School** (1892, 1966), the **Hook and Ladder Company #3** (___- ___), **The Sacred Heart Convalescent Home** (1892), the **German Evangelical Church/Clifton Unitarian Church** (circa 1900), and **St. Francis of Rome Catholic Church** (1887 and 1910) and **St. Francis of Rome Catholic School** (1930) are all located within the boundaries of the Clifton Neighborhood. All were built in an attempt to provide a positive educational, spiritual, and social atmosphere for Clifton residents.

Commercial Development

Commercial buildings in Clifton are, for the most part, sited along the Frankfort Avenue corridor. Frankfort Avenue was never exclusively commercial or residential. In its early years commercial and residential development co-existed on Frankfort Avenue. Typical two-story brick and frame buildings with commercial ground level storefronts topped by storage or residential uses on the second floor were side-by-side with shotgun houses. Frankfort Avenue was the most traveled of all of Clifton's transportation routes and thus was the most highly visible to shopkeepers who attracted customers directly from the neighborhood as well as those just passing through on the toll road. All commercial buildings in Clifton are of modest scale. None exceeds two stories in height.

As the trend moved away from residential uses along Frankfort Avenue, circa 1910, many former homes were converted outright to commercial uses with little or no change to the building's main façade. In other instances, homes were altered at the ground floor level with new storefronts, additions were constructed where the front yard had been, or wholesale sheathing of all or part of the primary façade with a new "commercial-looking" skin occurred. The dates of these changes run the gamut from the late 1800s up to the present day. Those that were constructed between 1830 and 1953 have achieved significance because their architecture reflects historical changes in use and design. Thus, these buildings contribute to the district by showing the importance of Frankfort Avenue as a focus of commercial activity.

Clifton conveys a sense of historic transition in a way that few other areas in Louisville can. Geographically it sits between areas that developed earlier and later: Butchertown and Crescent Hill. The architecture of Clifton conveys the transition between the period of development of Louisville's large farms to the city's more intensive industrial developments of the late nineteenth century. The ambience of this Victorian community is still evident in its diverse architecture and unusual topography. It remains as one of the most interesting of the working-to-middle class Victorian neighborhoods in Louisville.

INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Resources in Clifton are categorized as structures, sites, objects, and buildings.

STRUCTURES

Structures, as defined by the National Register of Historic Places, "...are a functional construction made for purposes other than creating shelter, such as a bridge."

Transportation Overview

Clifton is home to five major transportation routes or structures all of which have a roughly east/west orientation:

1. The old **Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike** road (now Frankfort Avenue) was laid out between 1818 and 1830. It runs along a ridge top, forms the spine of the district, and has served up to the present as a conduit for a commercial and residential mix of buildings.
2. **Mixed-use buildings also historically flanked Brownsboro Road, another nineteenth century turnpike**, but it is now almost exclusively late-twentieth century commercial in character. Much of its original historic character has been compromised.
3. **Payne Street** is south of Frankfort Avenue and runs parallel to it. Historically it was the least traveled of these east/west arteries. It has always been primarily residential in character.
4. The **Louisville and Frankfort Railroad line**, now owned by **CSX**, intersects Frankfort Avenue. Its presence in the neighborhood, beginning circa 1840, lured industries such as coal processing, stone quarries, distilling, and manufacturing to Clifton, all of which had a major impact on residential and commercial development patterns.
5. **Interstate 64**, a mid-twentieth century expressway, defines the southern boundary of the Clifton neighborhood.

Secondary streets intersect all of these major thoroughfares except I-64 in a pattern roughly reflecting a grid. However, in a number of instances, secondary streets are cut off by man-made barriers such as the railroad tracks of the CSX line which are above grade in some parts or by natural barriers such as gullies, ravines, cliffs and the like.

Integrity Standards Related to Structures Present

Based on the information described above and detailed in the historic overview section, the following major transportation resources within the Clifton Neighborhood contribute to establishing the district's sense of time and place: the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike (now Frankfort Avenue), Brownsboro Road, Payne Street, and the Louisville Frankfort Railroad (now CSX Railroad).

SITES

Natural Site Features

In addition to the building types mentioned that establish the feeling of association in the district, there are several natural features of note which contribute to Clifton's sense of time and place: natural rock formations, gullies, ravines, cliffs and earth berms, and open farm land.

One of the Clifton neighborhood's most character-defining features is its unusual topography. The terrain ranges from sheer cliffs to the south created by quarrying activities (and later by the Interstate 64 Expressway cut-through), to deep ravines and sinkholes (the site of Angora Heights, Billy Goat Hill and Fritz Whalen's goat farm), to gently rolling hills (Albany Street), steep inclines (Saunders Avenue), and substantial earth berms (Payne Street). These natural features affected how nineteenth century builders and land subdividers approached construction on a given plot of land. Since land reconfiguration was impractical for real estate speculators during the period of significance they made the most of these naturally occurring features by working around them. Therefore, building placement in the Clifton Neighborhood is given a high priority when evaluating integrity because it conveys the required historic associations. Retention of natural terrain is encouraged.

One natural site of particular note is Billy Goat Hill. It is situated at the south end of the district, in the 1700-1900 blocks of Payne Street, on high ground just above the cliffs adjacent to Interstate-64. It was here that Fritz Whalen grazed over 200 goats since before the turn of the century. Records as far back as 1884 document this use, as do written accounts, most notably the St. Frances of Rome 65th Anniversary Booklet, published in 1964. This pastureland was historically characterized by an open meadow upon which the goats roamed freely. According to the *Encyclopedia of Louisville*,

“...to honor the goat farm owned by Ed Whalen, a subdivision named Angora Heights was created [in Clifton] in the late nineteenth century. Feeling that the name was too highbrow for their neighborhood, the residents changed the name to Billy Goat Hill. The goats, largely unrestrained and free to roam the streets and climb the rocky cliffs, inspired the street names of Angora Court, and Angora Avenue, along with the Billy Goat Hill Democratic Club [demolished by Interstate 64 construction]. By the mid-twentieth century, most of the goats had either fled the area or had been shot by hunters. The street names are the only reminders of the area's origins.”

Also on the Billy Goat Hill site was a public spring and the old Osborne estate (demolished). Since 1892 a portion of the site has been owned as passive green space by the Sacred Heart Home, an infirmary for the aged, and owned by the Sisters of Charity. In as much as it retains its open meadow appearance, upon which few new buildings have been constructed, it is deemed to contribute to establishing a sense of Clifton's very early agricultural character.

Man Made Site Features

Man made features contribute to Clifton's sense of time and place as well. Contributing man made features include: quarries, brick streets and sidewalks, limestone curbs, iron fences and stone walls, the "Chicken Steps", a horse watering trough, and a the hitching post.

Quarries

As mentioned previously there were several quarries in the Clifton vicinity. One of the most notable was the Henry Bickle Quarry on the site of present day Crescent Springs Condominiums. While quarrying was an important industry to the neighborhood in that it provided jobs to area residents, none of the quarries active in the late 1800s and early 1900s are currently used for their original purpose. While the quarry walls are still visible, many of the larger quarry tracts have been in-filled with housing complexes, new industries, or commercial developments. Quarry walls, in as much as they contribute to Clifton's historic past, should be retained whenever possible, to reflect past industrial activities of the area.

Streets, Sidewalks, Fences, Walls and Stairs

Adding to the patina of the Clifton neighborhood is a variety of textures related to street and sidewalk improvements and land ownership. These include brick streets and sidewalks, limestone curbs, iron fences and stone walls, and the Chicken Steps.

As the tiny enclave of Clifton was subdivided and developed, and later came under municipal jurisdiction through annexations, the City of Louisville improved unpaved roadways by installing brick streets and alleys. Limestone curbs defined the edges of these roadways. In turn property owners, in an attempt to enhance the appearance of their property and to visually define public from private spaces installed iron fences and stone walls around the perimeter of their property. Materials used reflect not only the abundance of iron and stone in the Louisville area, but the taste and financial status of the individual property owners. Original wooden fences from the late nineteenth century have long since disappeared or been replaced while many of the more durable (and expensive) iron and stone fences are still visible in Clifton to this day. One of the most unusual pedestrian accommodations to survive to the present day is the so-called "Chicken Steps" located on the hillside north of Vernon Avenue. Neighborhood lore points to these concrete steps as a type of sidewalk extension constructed to enable pedestrians to more easily traverse the steep hillside from Vernon Avenue down toward Brownsboro Road. The name "Chicken Steps" likely came about from the days when area residents raised chickens, some of which chose this hilltop site upon which to roost. The date of installation of the steps is not known, nor is the original construction material. The steps as they stand today are constructed of formed concrete and are maintained by Louisville Metro government.

Care should be taken to retain historic site improvements such as brick streets and sidewalks, limestone curbs, iron fences and stone walls, and the Chicken Steps.

Parks

Clifton is home to two municipal parks: Clifton Park and Bingham Park. Clifton Park, a one acre park at Arlington Avenue and Charleton Street, was created in the late 1960s by a remnant of land left over from land acquisition for the construction of Interstate 64 (the interstate was formally dedicated in 1970). It is a rectangularly shaped, relatively flat vest pocket park with fixed playground equipment and passive recreational space. The famed Olmsted Brothers landscape firm designed Bingham Park in 1915 with money donated by the Robert Worth Bingham family. It is located at Brownsboro Road and Coral Avenue and comprises four acres of land. Triangular in shape, with steep hills on two of its three sides, it likely was deemed suitable only for parkland because it was subject to episodic flooding and rainwater washes. It too has fixed playground equipment and passive recreational space. Both parks are under the jurisdiction of the Louisville Metro Parks Department. Proposed changes to land contour, landscaping, placement of recreation equipment, or construction or alterations to structures should be coordinated with the Louisville Metro Parks Department and the Landmarks Commission. Additionally, the Olmsted Conservancy and the Friends of Olmsted Parks should be consulted if any changes are proposed to Bingham Park.

Archaeological Potential

Structures are related to their surrounding environment. Archeology provides insights into an environment's past uses, and occupants that are often unobtainable through other forms of research. Archaeological investigations conducted throughout the city in the past have yielded mixed results depending on the level of disturbance present at each site. Successful investigations have occurred at the following urban sites: the Point Neighborhood 15JF592-15JF599 (Esarey 1992; McKelway 1995), the Portland Warf (## Jf), the Convention Center 15JF 646(Stottman 1995a), Highland Park 15JF607 (Stottman and Granger 1993), and the Russell Neighborhood 15JF 600-15JF 606 and 15JF624-15JF626 (McBride 1993;Stottman and Watts-Roy 1995). Investigations may involve survey, excavation, incidental discovery and/or monitoring of activities taking place at a site.

Archaeological investigations have not yet been conducted in the Clifton neighborhood. The neighborhood's first extant structure was built in 1830, and construction continued beyond 1953, the end date for the period of significance. In between there were numerous constructions and reconstructions in the area that may have disturbed the historical context. Archeology can be an effective tool in revealing information on the location of demolished buildings, privies, wells, cisterns, foundations, walkways, fences, and trash pits. It can be a valuable tool in the research of the suggested areas of future study, and provide additional direct knowledge into the transitional periods of Clifton's development. Archaeological remains should be considered in any development of this property. If, in the course of work, it becomes evident that the site might reveal archaeological information, it is recommended that work cease and the appropriate KHC staff be notified.

OBJECTS

Street objects reflecting the pre-automobile, horse and buggy era are rare objects citywide. The Clifton neighborhood has two such artifacts: a horse watering trough at 2036 Frankfort Avenue and a horse hitching post at 2212 Payne Street. The watering trough, a simple iron post topped by a round iron water basin embedded in the sidewalk, was strategically located in front of Liebert's Clifton Market, a mercantile store and saloon. Here a horse could quench his thirst outside after a long journey, while his rider could quench his thirst inside the saloon. The horse hitching post, consisting of a simple iron post embedded in the sidewalk and topped by a ring, was used to tie up horses. Both the horse-watering trough and the hitching post are rare and irreplaceable treasures of the late nineteenth century and should be retained.

BUILDINGS

Building types in Clifton can be grouped into five primary categories: residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and ecclesiastical.

1. Residential Buildings

Residential structures are by far the most prevalent of Clifton's building types. The earliest residences were constructed in the 1800s as farmhouses or rural retreats for the wealthy and thus pre-date any formal grid street pattern, setback, or subdivision. Houses constructed in later years (circa 1870 to 1930) conform to land plats drawn at the time the subdivisions were laid out and thus share consistent lot size, building type and style, setback, massing, and materials with adjacent houses constructed by the subdivision developer or developers during the period of greatest expansion. Residential buildings can be found on all major and minor streets in Clifton. Their character as far as scale, type, setback and orientation all reflect their date of construction and subdivision patterns (or lack thereof) at the time of construction.

The Clifton neighborhood developed slowly in its early years. The first houses were built on gentleman farms like the **Bowles Estate/Clifton** constructed between 1817 and 1842 near present day Vernon Avenue and Sycamore Streets (demolished) and the **Rastetter House** (JFEG 704), built circa 1843-58 for Joseph Rastetter, a truck farmer. The formation of the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike Company in 1818 and the later construction of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad circa 1840 made this area east of the city accessible and eventually led to more intense development in the years after the Civil War.

2. Commercial Buildings

Commercial buildings in Clifton, the earliest of which dates to circa 1830, run the spectrum of commercial architectural types and styles popular between the years 1830 to 1953. The earliest structures that have survived to the present day are brick and date from the early to mid-1800's. The oldest frame commercial buildings date from about the 1880s. Commercial structures in the district built before the 1920s have very shallow setbacks from the street. This placement allowed for maximum visibility to passersby traveling at pre-auto speeds. Starting in the 1920s

that setback pattern changed as the increased popularity of the automobile affected building patterns. From the 1920s until the 1940s, and continuing to the present day, buildings have deep street setbacks to allow for “front yard parking”. In instances where an older commercial building had a zero street setback, business owners would either rely on street parking for their customers or would demolish existing adjacent buildings and pave the site to accommodate automobiles. This accounts for the presence of parking lots in the district and displays the evolution of the Frankfort Avenue corridor from a pedestrian-oriented street to an automobile-oriented corridor. Commercial buildings located in the district are categorized by their dates of construction and/or alteration (ie. pre-1900 commercial buildings, post-1900 commercial building, and pre-1900 commercial building with post-1900 additions to their primary façade).

Building materials and building styles of commercial structures in Clifton followed popular trends both locally and nationally; most were vernacular in nature. In other words, few high style, architect designed commercial buildings were constructed in the Clifton neighborhood. Most were owner or contractors built and, thus, were quite simple in design and articulation. As new building materials and styles become popular, these materials were used when new commercial buildings were constructed. Often, overlays of new materials were applied to older structures in an attempt to create a more contemporary appearance. Such is the case in instances where glass block, structural tile, and Carrara glass were employed. An example of this treatment is visible at Clifton’s Pizza Company (2226-2230 Frankfort Avenue) where Carrara glass was used circa 1930 to update a circa 1900 building. In other instances, previously constructed commercial structures on a given site were simply ignored as new commercial structures were built in front of, or attached to, previously constructed buildings. This method was used at 2341 Frankfort Avenue where a late nineteenth century residence has a circa 1940 storefront addition.

3. Industrial Buildings

Industrial buildings in Clifton historically were constructed of brick, were sited close enough to the Louisville and Frankfort Railroad to facilitate shipping of raw and finished material, and were generally one to five stories in height. Most were modest in design and lacked significant architectural detail or fenestration, especially those industrial concerns that were visible only from the railroad tracks. Those that were sited on Frankfort Avenue (most notably the now demolished late nineteenth century, Richardsonian Romanesque style **Mellwood Distillery**) generally had a higher degree of design detail. For an industrial building in the Clifton Historic District to have integrity it must be sited by the railroad, tracks or close enough to the rail lines for the easy transportation of goods, the building or group of buildings must have been built before 1953, and it must retain enough architectural and historic integrity to convey that it is a product of the years 1830 to 1953, the period of significance upon which this Local Landmark designation is based. The existing National Register District has several industrial concerns: **The American Printing House for the Blind** (manufacturers of large print and Braille literature), **Recordings for the Blind** (talking books and taped recordings), and the **Industries for the Blind** (brooms and handicrafts). Their presence in the neighborhood dates to the mid and late 1800s. Historically and architecturally contributing buildings still extant in the district include

the former Industries for the Blind building at Frankfort and Bellaire Avenues and the Louisville Gas and Electric sub-station at on Bellaire Avenue between Payne and East Main Streets.

4. Institutional and Ecclesiastical Buildings

The proliferation of subdivision development in Clifton and the people that were housed in the neighborhood soon brought both churches and institutions to the area.

The most notable institution is the **Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB)**, a state-supported grade and high school for the visually impaired. It is one of three extant school buildings sited in the Clifton Neighborhood. Elias E. Williams (and not by architect Francis Costigan, a previous attribution) designed KSB. It was constructed in 1855 and was razed in 1967. The **Colored School for the Blind** was constructed in 1886 based on plans by local architect Charles J. Clarke and demolished in 19___. The **Sacred Heart Home**, built in 1892 as a home for the aged and infirmed, and originally operated by the Sisters of Mercy, and the **St. Frances of Rome School** built in 1930, and designed by Thomas Nolan are also noteworthy neighborhood institutions.

Churches in the neighborhood include: the **St. Frances of Rome Catholic Church** (1887); the **German Evangelical/Clifton Unitarian Church** (circa 1900); **James Lees Presbyterian Church** (1914), **Third Lutheran Church** (1931); **Clifton Baptist Church** (1923, 1934); **Clifton Christian Church** (1891, 1972) and the **Beargrass Baptist Church** (built circa 1900, demolished and replaced in 1966). All but Beargrass Baptist are housed in buildings that historically and architecturally contribute to the district.

All of the institutional and ecclesiastical buildings constructed in Clifton during the 1830 to 1953 period of significance exhibit high style architectural characteristics. Although assignment of an architect to each individual building is difficult because of the lack of available historical accounts and records, the degree of sophistication of each building design suggests each was conceived by an architect, or at the very least, a well schooled contractor-builder with access to architectural books. Institutional and ecclesiastical buildings in Clifton are generally formal in appearance (well balanced and/or symmetrical), of solid masonry construction, although some were of frame construction, stand one to three stories in height, exhibit some level of sophistication in detail, and were constructed before 1953. Both the **St. Frances of Rome School** (Italian Renaissance Revival in style and designed by local architect Thomas Nolan) and the **St. Frances of Rome church** (Gothic Revival in style, architect unknown) fit these criteria as does **Clifton Unitarian Church** (Gothic Revival in style, architect if any, unknown). There is one non-contributing institution in Clifton: the **Sacred Heart Home**. It does not meet the integrity standards established for the district. Portions of the 1892 **Sacred Heart Home** still stand but have been totally enveloped by mid-twentieth century additions that obscure the original building.

INTEGRITY STANDARDS

Evaluation of Historic and Architectural Integrity

Evaluation of the architectural integrity for buildings in the Clifton Neighborhood is based on the overall historical character of the district. The basis for decision-making with regards to historic and architectural integrity are based on the National Register of Historic Places integrity standards which include:

- 1. Location**
- 2. Design**
- 3. Setting**
- 4. Materials**
- 5. Workmanship**
- 6. Feeling**
- 7. Association.**

Each building's contribution to the district has been evaluated in relation to the relevant context and integrity standards for the larger district. The following integrity guidelines establish which factors are most important in showing the district's and individual property's importance. They should be used as the basis for decision-making with regard to future renovation and restoration projects (including Investment Tax Credit Rehabilitation projects) or for other federally funded renovation or rehabilitation projects that impact historic resources.

Integrity Standards

In establishing integrity standards for buildings in the Clifton Local Landmark District, a strong emphasis must be placed on the historic evolution of the neighborhood and how it represents the broad patterns of Clifton's past within the context of community planning and development over the years. Therefore, evaluation of the individual architectural characteristics of each building in the district is most effectively conveyed by the following basic design elements: overall scale and massing; street setback; orientation to the street conveyed by building placement, and rhythm; and texture and the relationships of solids and voids to the overall appearance of building in the district.

Location and Setting

It is preferable that each building in the district be sited in its original location and be an intact building unit as originally constructed (ie: no major demolition of all or part of the front or rear facades) in as much as this aids in establishing the context and boundaries for the district. However, retention of the building or structure on the original location, while preferable is not mandatory. Those wishing to move an historic building should consult with the Landmarks Commission and other appropriate local and state historic preservation professionals well in advance of any anticipated move in order to ensure National Register eligibility after the move has taken place. There are no buildings in this proposed district expansion that have been evaluated as contributing that have been moved.

Design, Materials and Workmanship

Scale and Massing

Residential buildings in Clifton range in height from one to three stories. The basic building types present in the district convey distinct characteristics of scale and massing: the area's shotgun houses are three to four times as deep as they are wide which makes for very narrow buildings (both in the single story and camelback examples); the American Four Square houses are four cell, two-story structures which often times have roof or wall dormers; and the bungalow plans are one or two-story houses that have widely projecting eaves and cornices and truncated elements such as columns and porches that give a sprawling horizontal emphasis to these buildings. Residential building styles in Clifton include the Federal, Italianate, Queen Anne, Princess Anne, Tudor Gothic and Bungalow Craftsman, each of which conveys a distinct scale and massing as identifying features of their respective designs. All except the Federal, Bungalow, and occasionally the Italianate style examples, have asymmetrical massing. The basic design forms as outlined above should be retained for a building to be considered a contributing element to the Clifton Historic District.

Setback, Orientation To the Street, and Rhythm

Residential buildings in Clifton in most instances are set back a substantial distance from the street they face. This allows for a front yard between the house and the sidewalk and street it faces. Numerous blocks with this consistent configuration convey a sense of unity and continuity that is the result of concentrated development during the period of significance established for the district. The rhythm created by this consistency of building placement in each block is, for the most part, not varied even when a mixture of building styles is present in a given block. Thus, the entire range of building styles outlined above still effectively conveys the sense of community planning and development. The relationships characterized by buildings of this period convey the proper associations for buildings to contribute to the Clifton Local Landmark District. In instances when a building interrupts the established pattern, that building may be assigned a non-contributing status.

Texture and the Relationship of Solids to Voids

In each given block face in the Clifton Historic District a pattern can be identified by each building's basic components (doors, windows, rooflines, chimneys, porches, steps and the like) and by the building materials present. Their consistency from street to street forms an easily identifiable pattern that should be present for a building to contribute to Clifton's sense of time, place, and the required historic associations. Parking lots, or vacant lots that historically do not pre-date 1953, and contemporary construction (1953 and after) have a great impact on the overall character of the district. Therefore, these deviations from the norm may be considered non-contributing for the purpose of this designation.

Residential, Commercial and Industrial Architectural Styles

Mid to late Victorian and early twentieth century building styles such as Federal, Italianate, Queen Anne, Princess Anne, Tudor/Gothic, Bungalow as well as vernacular building types are

present in the neighborhood. In the instances where an identifiable historic style is present, its characteristics should be retained whenever possible, because it contributes to the overall character of the neighborhood.

Commercial Buildings

The primary facades of commercial buildings in the Clifton Local Landmarks District should, at the ground level, exhibit their original configuration and historic fabric, including entrances, commercial display windows and transoms, and structural elements such as load bearing brick walls. Wholesale replacement and/or sheathing of the original ground level storefront in a non-historic manner, while not particularly desirable, is acceptable if the alterations are easily distinguished from the original storefront (i.e. windows in-filled) and if the majority of the upper stories of the façade retain integrity. Above the ground level on the upper floors of the facade, each building must retain its original window placement and light configuration. Changes in light configuration or obstruction of windows, while not desirable, is acceptable if the change is easily identifiable and retains intact window surrounds including sill, fascia, lintels, hoods, pediment, and other decorative details. Infill of the windows is acceptable only if this treatment is recessed so that it is easily distinguished from the original. Decorative parapets should remain intact although enveloping them in a non-historic material is acceptable if non-historic material duplicates historic ornamentation from the same time period or if the historic fabric remains intact under the added non-historic fabric. Although the secondary facades and especially the rear alley facades will not be subject to the same standard as the primary facades, their design, workmanship, and materials are recognized to be important in assessing significance and should be honored. In those instances when later additions have been made to an earlier commercial building, those later additions shall be evaluated for their integrity as it relates to the larger period of significance, established for the district (up to 1953). In some instances, these later additions may have achieved significance in their own right. Building additions will result in an assignment of non-contributing if the addition was made after 1953 and it obscures more than half of the historic primary façade of the building.

Feeling and Association

Building placement and conditions specified under the integrity discussion of design, workmanship, and materials, will communicate the required feeling and association of an historic district from the defined period.

Subject for Future Study: African-Americans in Clifton

Although the recorded history of Clifton indicates that whites of European ancestry have historically occupied the Clifton community, there are indications that a small number of African Americans historically lived and worked in Clifton. While the number of this ethnic group formed a small minority and records of their settlement patterns, occupations, and social affiliations are scant when compared to their white counterparts, their presence in Clifton is significant and warrants additional study. Topics that might be examined included study of census records from the antebellum period which would indicate slave ownership; the social and religious affiliations between area residents and the predominantly black Beargrass Baptist

Church; the relationship between industries and residential settlement patterns; the influence of W.A. Brown, a Negro physician in the 1700 block of the Frankfort Avenue; the “Negro Shanties” that once stood adjacent to the Mellwood Distillery in the 1700 block of Frankfort; the presence of the Colored Department of the School for the Blind on the campus of the Kentucky School for the Blind from 1886 up to court ordered desegregation; and the overt or subtle social factors that lead to tiny enclaves of blacks residing in several concentrated areas of Clifton (specifically on Jane Street and in the 1700 Block of Frankfort Avenue). While the number of blacks in the Clifton area historically and contemporarily is quite small, the study of this ethnic group, their patterns and histories, has long been over looked.

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Joanne Weeter, Historic Preservation Officer
Louisville Metro Planning and Design Services
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