

DISTRICT SURVEY FORM

1	<u>District</u> Sunset Hills Historic District		<u>Surveyor</u> Timothy F. Hegglund	<u>SHSW Staff</u>
	<u>City</u> Madison	<u>County</u> Dane	<u>Survey</u> Near West Side Neighborhoods Intensive Survey	<u>Date</u> 2012
<u>Streets</u>		<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Streets</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
Alden Dr.		106, 109, 110, 113, 114, 117, 118, 122	Priscilla Lane	3901-3930 (16)
Hillcrest Dr.		3902, 3906, 3910, 3918, 3922, 4002, 4006, 4010	Regent Street	3901, 3905, 3909, 3913, 3917, 3926, 3933, 3937
Larkin Street		134, 138, 142	Standish Court	101-121 (9)
Plymouth Circle		3901-3999 (42)		

2	<p><u>Boundary Description</u></p> <p>The district boundaries begin at a point on the S curbline of Regent St. that corresponds to the NE corner of the lot associated with 3901 Regent St. The line then turns 90° and continues S along the W curbline of Larkin St. to the SE corner of the lot associated with 3902 Hillcrest Dr. The line then turns 90° and continues W along the N curbline of Hillcrest Dr. to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 4010 Hillcrest Dr. The line then turns 60° and continues N until reaching the NW corner of the lot associated with 3954 Plymouth Circle. The line then turns 20° and continues in a NNE</p>
3	<p><u>Boundary Justification</u></p> <p>The boundaries of the district enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the district's resources.</p>

4	<p><u>SOURCES OF INFORMATION</u></p> <p>A. City of Madison Assessor's Office</p> <p>B. City of Madison Building Permits</p> <p>C. Madison City Directories (various)</p> <p>D. <i>Wisconsin State Journal</i> (various)</p> <p>E.</p>
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DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
HP-02-66 (7/16/98)

5	<p><u>MAP REFERENCE</u></p> <p>USGS quad: <u>Madison West</u> scale: <u>1-24,000</u></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>UTM References</td> <td>H.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A. 16/301100/4771040</td> <td>I.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B. 16/301300/4771030</td> <td>J.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C. 16/301300/4770600</td> <td>K.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D. 16/301020/4770660</td> <td>L.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E.</td> <td>M.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F.</td> <td>N.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G.</td> <td>O.</td> </tr> </table>	UTM References	H.	A. 16/301100/4771040	I.	B. 16/301300/4771030	J.	C. 16/301300/4770600	K.	D. 16/301020/4770660	L.	E.	M.	F.	N.	G.	O.
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6	<p><u>Opinion of National Register Eligibility</u></p> <p>date: _____ initials: _____ _____ eligible _____ not eligible _____ unknown _____ national _____ state _____ local</p>																

7 DESCRIPTION

General character, building types, styles, environment, important natural and man-made features, qualities that distinguish district from surroundings, nature of intrusions, and generally excepted properties.

The Sunset Hills Historic District is a large residential district located on the near west side of Madison that consists of the entire platted subdivision of Sunset Hills and which contains 94 single family Contemporary Style, Ranch Style, and Wrightian Style houses that, for the most part, were built between 1955 and 1965. The north and west sides of the district are located directly across Regent Street and Owen Parkway from the City of Madison's Hoyt Park while the south side lies opposite the older Pilgrim Village plat and the east side lies opposite the City of Madison's Reservoir Park and large unplatted lots. The edges of the district that consist of already existing streets (Larkin St., Regent St., and Hillcrest Dr.) are mostly straight but the streets within the district itself are curvilinear and most of the houses in the district face onto these curvilinear streets and occupy irregular-shaped, heavily wooded lots of varying sizes.

All of the houses in the district were architect-designed, they range from one to two-stories in height, and many of them are of considerable size. Not surprisingly, given the individuality of architectural expression that characterized this period, the designs of these houses exhibit a wide range of architectural trends, but they are unified to some degree by the fact that their exteriors almost all utilize natural materials such as wood, stone, and brick, or various combinations of them, although houses partially sheathed in plywood can also be found, and the number of these houses that are partially or completely sheathed in vertical wooden boards is especially notable.

The fact that such an individualistic group of house designs manage to coexist together in relative harmony is perhaps attributable to the fact that the suburb's design committee had veto power over designs that they felt did not meet standards or that, presumably, were too extreme to be good neighbors. These standards, however, seem to have been based less on inhibiting individualism than on ensuring that whatever was built reflected the prevailing high standards of design and workmanship.

The buildings in the district are especially notable within their local context for being excellent and frequently outstanding examples of the various facets of the Contemporary Style that they represent. They are also notable for being larger and much more expensive than houses in neighboring areas, for their associations with locally notable owners, and for their high degree of integrity. Collectively these houses represent the finest collection of Contemporary Style residential architecture of this era in the city and their significance is greatly enhanced by their high degree of integrity and their very well-maintained status.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

Areas of significance

Architecture: Contemporary Style History: _____
Ranch Style _____
Wrightian Style _____

Period of Significance: 1955-1975

Historical Development and Statement of Significance.

The Sunset Hills Historic District is believed to be of architectural significance under NRHP Criterion C (architecture) because it contains largest and finest concentration of architecturally important and intact Contemporary Style single family residences built in Madison during the period of significance, but mostly in the ten-year period from 1955 to 1965. The district contains 94 houses, all of which are architect designed and several of which are the work of some of the finest architects who practiced in Madison and elsewhere during the 1950s and 1960s.

The Sunset Hills Historic District includes the whole of the Sunset Hills Addition plat, which was first developed by the First Wisconsin Trust Co. in 1941 on heavily wooded land located immediately to the south of the newly developed Hoyt Park that at that time lay outside the city of Madison's corporate boundaries. The entrance of the United States into World War II in that same year, however, put a stop to any development activity and the plat languished until July of 1946, when Willis B. Gifford, Jr., who had previously developed the adjacent plat of Pilgrim Village in 1939, purchased the land from the First Wisconsin Trust Co. and proceeded to lay out a new plat. Gifford's first attempt to develop this plat included a proposal to build apartments there but permission was denied after protests came from homeowners in neighboring plats. Consequently, Gifford decided to reinvent the plat as an exclusive residential subdivision in 1953. All of the new plat's single family houses would be architect-designed, they would be Contemporary in style, and the designs had to be submitted to Gifford's Sunset Hills Corp. for approval.

Three of the first houses built in this new subdivision were designed by Racine, Wisconsin architect John Randal McDonald (3922 and 3930 Priscilla Lane and 3934 Plymouth Circle), and these set the tone for what was to follow. Most of the houses that were subsequently built in this plat were constructed between 1955 and 1965, and they include houses by such well known local architects as William V. Kaeser (3942, 3972, 3976 and 3994 Plymouth Circle and 102 and 105 Standish Ct.) and Herb Fritz, Jr. (3918 and 3964 Plymouth Circle). The district also contains three fine houses designed by district resident Elizabeth Mackey Ranney as well, who was one of just three licensed women architects in Wisconsin during the 1960s and 1970s.

Twenty-four of the original owners of the district's houses were University of Wisconsin professors and nine were doctors and dentists, while others included the managing director of CUNA, business owners, writers, and attorneys, and the district continues to attract comparable owners today. Because the houses in this subdivision were both expensive and architect-designed, the district is also something of a showcase for the building trades. These houses represent the best workmanship of which these builders were capable and the materials they used were also of excellent quality as well and as result, the district's resources are still in excellent condition today and are highly intact as well.

2. Boundary Description, Continued

direction until reaching the NW corner of the lot associated with 3937 Regent St. The line then turns 65° and continues E along the S curblineline of Regent Street until reaching the POB.