

# **Mt. Lebanon Cultural Resource Survey Final Report**

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December 2007

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## Introduction

As a classic early example of the automobile suburb, Mt. Lebanon contains valuable historic resources that collectively document a phenomenon that has come to dominate the American landscape. Subdivisions like Mission Hills, Beverly Heights, Lebanon Hills, the Hoodridge area, Seminole Hills, and both old and new Virginia Manor were among the first neighborhoods built in the United States that were designed specifically with the automobile in mind.

Yet those resources are threatened by development pressures, insensitive renovations, the high cost of maintaining aging structures, and incompatible new construction, as well as parking demands and transportation corridor expansions. Before a truly effective program for preserving and enhancing the built environment can be implemented, the resources that reflect the history and unique character of the area must be identified.

No comprehensive survey of the six-square-mile municipality has been conducted, although more than half of the buildings and other resources are at least 50 years old. The

comprehensive Allegheny County Survey completed two decades ago by the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation identified 31 sites as having individual significance when viewed against the generally high-quality architectural fabric of Mt. Lebanon. Of those 31 resources, at least one has been demolished, and at least nine have been substantially altered so as to jeopardize their architectural significance and their eligibility for landmark status.

The Mt. Lebanon Cultural Resource Survey represents a successful partnership among several entities with an interest to advance preservation values and action and to maintain a high quality of life in the community. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission provided \$15,000 grants to fund each phase of the three-phase project. The Municipality of Mt. Lebanon was the grantee for the project, and provided a match for the Phase 1 grant through a cash allocation and in-kind services, including public information through *Mt. Lebanon Magazine* and GIS mapping through its staff. The Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board oversaw the project on behalf of the Municipality, and was largely responsible for the recruitment of volunteers. Eliza Smith Brown served as

Project Director, initially under the auspices of Brown, Carlisle & Associates (BCA) and subsequently as Eliza Brown Consulting.

The Phase 1 Final Report was submitted in December 2004.

The Phase 2 Final Report was submitted in June 2006. Online final reports were submitted to the PHMC in January 2005, June 2006, and June 2007.

*Eliza Smith Brown  
Project Director  
December 2007*

## **Acknowledgements**

The Mt. Lebanon Cultural Resource Survey represents the expertise, hard work, and wisdom of a number of individuals. Their dedication in seeing this project through warrants considerable acknowledgement.

Staff from the Bureau for Historic Preservation who have provided overall direction, contract management, technical assistance, and moral support include Carol Lee, Scott Doyle, Edith Walsh, Noel Stratton, and Amanda Schafer.

The Mt. Lebanon Commissioners – Dale Colby, Ty Ely, David Humphreys, Barbara Logan, and Keith Mulvihill – are to be applauded for their vision in promoting historic preservation through sponsorship of this Survey. The Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board members have served as an unflagging beacon of support and spearheaded the recruitment of volunteers. Those board members are Wallace F. Workmaster, Dan Gigler and John V. Conti, who served as consecutive Chairs during the four-year project, as well as Bill Callahan, Amelia Dean, Jennifer C. Cox, Paul Ostergaard, Louise Sturgess, Sam Taylor, and Susan Morgans, who serves as the

Municipal Staff Liaison as well as the point of contact between the Municipality and the Bureau for Historic Preservation. Susan Morgans deserves particular thanks for her tireless efforts to keep the project on track, and Wally Workmaster provided not only ongoing research assistance, but also good counsel born of decades working as a professional in the historic preservation field. John Conti, who served as Chair of the Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board during the final phase of the project, was also an unflagging source of support. Lori Humphreys, who began as a survey volunteer in the Mission Hills neighborhood, also served as a diligent research volunteer on the project, personally following up with property owners who contacted the survey team with information about their properties.

Mt. Lebanon staff members who provided building permit, mapping, and database development assistance included Joe Berkeley, Kevin Sweeney, Michael Meseck, and Keith McGill. Additionally, Christina Worsing provided graphic design for brochures, information cards, posters, and identification cards.

The Mt. Lebanon Public Library deserves thanks for dedicating a records storage and research area and for welcoming volunteers who came there to work.

The Survey would not have been possible without the enthusiastic and conscientious work of the Volunteer Survey Team, who dedicated hundreds of hours to completion of field work, photography, and research with a clear commitment to the benefits of historic preservation that the project promises. Enormous thanks are due to Luann Barron, Michael Boyd, Debbie Brash, Pat Calvelo, Kathy Dax, Marti Carney, Marcia Cohen, Karen Cullen, Sally Dawson, Ian and Michele Donaldson, Debra Dundas-Broeker, Susan DeWalt, Franci Eberz, Lori Humphreys, John Kerber, Sharon Lehr, Maggie McDermott, Rob McDowell, Carroll McGowan, William Madden, Lee Maddex, Jean Misutka, Ann O’Goreuc, Dick Price, James Vandeck, and Emma Waterloo, who served not only as a field survey volunteer, but also as an intern photography archivist. In addition, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation interns who worked on the project include: Aimee Briley, Caryn Brown, Lauren Cambest, Virginia Charitaki, Wayne Chatfield, Kristin Cullen, Emily

Frank, Justin Greenawalt, Erika Hicks, Heather Hogan, Dana Kremer, Jennifer Mastri, Kim Mitchum, Zsolt Zavodszky.

Lori Humphreys deserves additional mention for her help in both managing volunteers during Phase 1 and responding to offers of historical information from community residents. Jim Smith is to be thanked for his help in assessing and working through challenges associated with the computerized database. Julie Aher entered the first 750 records into the original ACCESS database. Finally, Ben Macken, a paid temporary with Pancoast Services completed all the data entry into the PHMC-revised ACCESS database. Any omissions from this list are unintentional.

## **Methodology**

### **Organization and Schedule**

The Survey is organized into three phases, beginning with the oldest areas of the municipality. Since Mt. Lebanon was developed according to a neighborhood school model, chronological phases of development are readily keyed to the schools. Phase 1 examined the areas clustered around Lincoln and Washington Schools, which contain resources that date from the community's earliest settlement but are dominated by construction of the 1920s and 30s. Included in that first phase were the two primary business districts of the township, Washington and Beverly Roads. Phase 2, covered by this report, looked at the neighborhoods surrounding Howe, Markham, the High School, and the main municipal park, which tend to be slightly later in date. In Phase 3, the survey covered the neighborhoods surrounding Foster, Jefferson, and Hoover Schools, which tend to contain more post-war construction.

Given the time investment in launching the project (which under the grant requirements could not begin until after the

January 1, 2004), the challenges of completing field work with an entirely volunteer work force, and the difficulties with the ACCESS database, the Scope of Work for Phase I was modified to include project set-up, research, field work and photography of approximately 2,000 resources, database redevelopment, and historic context development. Phases 2 and 3 included documentation of the balance of the resources.

Phase 1 of the project began in early 2004 and the Final Report was completed in December of that year. Given the magnitude of the work and the experience of others doing similar projects in Pennsylvania, Phase 2 was scheduled to last 18 months, with completion in June 2006. Phase 3 also lasted 18 months, with completion in December 2007.

### **Recruitment and Training of Volunteers**

Volunteers were recruited through *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*, the school PTAs, the Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board, and the Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon.

Volunteers for Phase 3 included some veterans from Phases 1 and 2, augmented by additional individuals identified through *Mt. Lebanon Magazine* and through word of mouth.

Throughout the project, the supply of volunteers ebbed and flowed, with an average of 12 people actively involved at any given time.

The *Mt. Lebanon Cultural Resource Survey Historic Context* and *Mt. Lebanon Cultural Resource Survey Volunteer Handbook* developed during Phase 1 were used to train new volunteers for the project. The Project Director conducted several training sessions to ensure that each volunteer was given a consistent explanation of the methodology for both fieldwork and research. Volunteers continued to meet with the Project Director periodically to discuss findings, questions, and difficulties. They were also provided with photo IDs, and all volunteers' names were on file with the Police Department to facilitate response to any concerns on the part of residents or property owners who encounter surveyors in the field.

### **Data Collection**

At the suggestion of the Bureau for Historic Preservation, the Project Director developed a two-sided field form that included the data fields called for in the ACCESS database tailored by the Bureau for use in cultural resource surveys. The form also included fields that are not in the ACCESS database, but were nonetheless deemed to be important, such as building permit numbers, photo references, roof and window type, and an assessment of integrity.

Volunteers generally worked in teams of two or more to complete fieldwork, research, and photography in their assigned neighborhoods.

### **Photography**

Photography was approached with a multi-format strategy that, it is hoped, will offer maximum flexibility for the future. After considerable discussion among Municipal staff, members of the Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board, the Bureau for Historic Preservation, and the Project Director, it was decided that volunteers would shoot 35 mm black and white film. The film was processed and printed as contact sheets. In addition,

each roll was scanned to provide an electronic database of images. Most volunteers used their own 35mm cameras, but the Municipality also purchased a camera for use by those without adequate equipment of their own.

### **Research**

During Phase 1, the Project Director conducted preliminary research for use in preparing an historic context for the survey. The research included community histories, planning studies, public records, historic maps and real estate plat books, and oral histories. The context was revised and expanded during Phase 2.

Critical to the accuracy of this project was Mt. Lebanon's remarkable collection of building permit applications. The permit applications, filed chronologically, are relatively complete, and include most buildings and alterations that post-date 1924. Working in close cooperation with municipal staff, the Project Director secured several boxes of these applications from the basement of the Municipal Building in the summer of 2003, just as the municipal offices were being moved and the records being put into storage for the duration of an 18-month

renovation. The Mt. Lebanon MIS Department was able to produce an index to the entire collection by address, facilitating retrieval by volunteers. Among the information available on the permit applications are the original owner, the builder, the approximate construction date, the original materials and cost, and the subdivision name/number. During Phase 3, the plans associated with the permits, stored on microfiche, were also made available. These records continue to be maintained in locked file cabinets at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library.

To solicit additional historical data, volunteers carried both project brochures and printed cards requesting that property owners who would like to provide more information contact the Municipality. The Municipality, in turn, passed along these contacts to volunteers who followed up, gathered and verified information, and provided the information to the appropriate volunteer or the Project Director.

### **Review**

To ensure consistency and quality control, all forms were reviewed by the Project Director, with some assistance from members of the Historic Preservation Board. The review

process included verification of photo identification numbers and block and lot numbers, as well as architectural styles and descriptions.

### **Data Entry**

The PHMC specified an ACCESS database for this project, from which reports can be generated as needed in the future.<sup>1</sup> As the data entry began, however, it became immediately apparent that the ACCESS template provided for the project presented some difficulties. Consequently, the Project Director retained a technical consultant to redesign the template to both make it more user-friendly and to add fields and expand drop-down menus.

The revised template included fields for roof and window types, for integrity, and for building permit numbers, a feature that is particularly pertinent given this project's records

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<sup>1</sup> It is notable that use of this technology is a relatively new innovation for survey work. Until the final phase of the project, the PHMC was able to offer very limited support in this area. The National Park Service, in fact, admits in its Bulletin on Historic Residential Suburbs that "the lack of experience using these sources and methods to document suburbs . . . makes providing more detailed guidance impractical at this time." The Bulletin goes so far as to refer to those projects that utilize computerized databases as "pioneering."

resources. It also expanded the drop-down menu under the Architectural Style section to include styles that are prevalent in Mt. Lebanon and, in fact, in other post-World War II suburbs across Pennsylvania. In addition, it expanded the comment section to permit more extensive historical background or descriptive data. Finally, the revised template provided a field for photos to be imported from the digital files created for the project. It was expected that this revised template would be made available through the PHMC to all consultants embarking on survey projects using ACCESS.

Data entry had begun as a volunteer effort, but during the later months of Phase 2, the PHMC redesigned the database as a more extensive and complex template, which dictated that data entry begin anew. Given the time constraints, the difficulty of setting volunteers up with adequate computer resources, and the limited time in which to enter all the resources, a decision was made during Phase 3 to retain a paid data entry specialist to enter the bulk of the records. Ultimately, the Project Director and other volunteers stepped in to complete the work.

### **GIS Mapping**

Upon completion of the data entry process, staff of the Mt. Lebanon MIS department imported GIS information into the database.

## Historic Context

### Overall Significance

Mt. Lebanon relates to the themes of transportation, community planning, and architecture identified in the National Park Service's national multiple property listing entitled "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960." The National Park Service has defined an historic residential suburb as an historic district as follows:

A geographic area, usually located outside the central city, that was historically connected to the city by one or more modes of transportation; subdivided and developed primarily for residential use according to a plan; and possessing a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of dwellings on small parcels of land, roads and streets, utilities, and community facilities.<sup>2</sup>

Arguably, Mt. Lebanon contains elements of all four stages of suburbanization, each named for the mode of transportation that spawned it:

1. Railroad and Horsecar Suburbs, 1830 to 1890;
2. Streetcar Suburbs, 1888 to 1928;

3. Early Automobile Suburbs, 1908 to 1945;
4. Post-World War II and Early Freeway Suburbs, 1945 to 1960.

Mt. Lebanon's primary significance, however, lies in its reflection of the "Early Automobile Suburb, 1908 to 1945." As a community that evolved suddenly in response to improved transportation accessibility, Mt. Lebanon represents an unusual concentration of 1920s and 30s suburban housing that reflect a breadth of styles inspired by the Small House Movement in street patterns that evolved from simple grids to more picturesque, terrain-responsive street patterns. Other examples from the period do not incorporate all of these qualities. Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania, a Philadelphia suburb, for example, is laid out on a grid. Scarsdale, NY contains a smaller concentration of homes and does not reflect the Small House Movement.

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<sup>2</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part I, p. 11.

## Early Days

Mt. Lebanon covers over six square miles, with historic roots dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. According to the earliest historical overview of the community, the land comprising Mt. Lebanon “belonged to the Delaware and Shawnee Indians and is said to be part of the purchase at Fort Stanwix for land all over the Six Nations in 1768.”<sup>3</sup>

The earliest permanent white settlers, who began arriving in the 1770s and 1780s, were believed to be Alexander and James Long, John Henry, James McFarlane (McFarlane was one of the leaders of the Whiskey Rebellion and was killed at Bower Hill home of General John Neville in July 1794), and James Brady. Scattered around the tract that would later become Mt. Lebanon, each owned hundreds of acres of land, which they operated as farms.<sup>4</sup>

Mt. Lebanon later developed as a settlement along the road from Pittsburgh to Washington, Pennsylvania, which was begun in 1797. Stagecoaches traveled the primitive road until

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<sup>3</sup> “Annals of Mt. Lebanon,” Commemorating the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of Mt. Lebanon Township, 1937, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> The Way We Were, Mt. Lebanon Magazine, p. 3-4. According to the Warranty Atlas, the James McFarlane tract was surveyed in May of 1770. Further research is warranted to document these early land holdings.

the 1870s, while farmers used it to transport herds of sheep, cattle, and hogs, as well as crops of hay, straw, grains, vegetables, and fruits to market in Pittsburgh.<sup>5</sup> Just before the Civil War, the Gilfillan family had the idea to create a turnpike from Coal Hill (Mt. Washington) to Upper St. Clair. The proposed method was to assess owners along the road. Owners protested, however, so the Coal Hill and Upper St. Clair Road never became a reality. By 1870, the route was known simply as Washington Road, although some maps still called it the Old Pittsburgh and Washington Road as late as 1876. It would seem that its use declined with the development of the Washington Turnpike through the Chartiers Valley about 1835.<sup>6</sup> It nonetheless remained the primary transportation spine through Mt. Lebanon and was macadamized as far out as Clifton as early as 1897, a full 23 years before the community’s roads were paved.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that a tavern stop along this road was located at the five-mile mark from Pittsburgh, at the current intersection of Cochran and Washington Roads (site of the Lutheran Church), a location that was not yet part of Mt. Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> Wallace F. Workmaster, “The Day the Trolley Came to Town,” Mt. Lebanon Magazine, June/July 2001.

<sup>7</sup> A macadamized road has three layers of stone covered with a clay surface that is often oiled.

The land that is now Mt. Lebanon was first part of St. Clair Township when Allegheny County was formed out of Westmoreland County in 1788. It then separated as part of Upper St. Clair in 1806 and Scott Township in 1861.<sup>8</sup>

By the mid-1800s, the area came to be called Mt. Lebanon. The name was thoughtfully selected to incorporate Biblical references and associations with the geography and trees of the Holy Land. The original “Mount Lebanon” region was actually a major mountain range in the province of Lebanon in the Ottoman Empire, later named the Republic of Lebanon when the Middle East was split up following World War I. In this region, cedars grow natively in what are considered to be the oldest documented forests in history. They were sufficiently important to bear mention in the earliest written records, Sumerian cuneiform writings of the Third Millennium, B.C. Cedars had broad practical and medicinal uses and strong Biblical association, and were significant enough to the region that they are featured on the national flag, the national airline, government logos, Lebanese currency, postcards, art, and more.

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<sup>8</sup> Some sources indicate that the separation from Upper St. Clair occurred in 1841. This warrants further research.

It seems that the Rev. Joseph Clokey, fourth minister of the Associate Reformed Congregation of Saw Mill Run, brought two of these renowned cedars back from a trip to the Holy Land and planted them in front of his house on Bower Hill Road. This proved sufficient connection with the ancient forests to inspire the name Mt. Lebanon. An early post office in a general store at the current Washington and Bower Hill Roads, established in 1855, was called Mt. Lebanon, the first apparent use of the name in this area.<sup>9</sup> That post office was closed in 1901 when Rural Free Delivery service was introduced to the area, but the name was revived upon the opening of a new post office in 1907 at Lusden L. Finley’s drug store in a building that still stands next to the Denis Theater on Washington Road.<sup>10</sup> The name “Mt. Lebanon” was nearly claimed in 1909 when the borough that would become Dormont was formed to the north, but residents to the south

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<sup>9</sup> See Wallace F. Workmaster, “The Name ‘Mt. Lebanon,’” unpublished manuscript, 2003. See also [www.greenline.org](http://www.greenline.org). When the two cedar trees on Bower Hill Road were cut down, three gavels were made from the wood and presented to the Township Board of Commissioners, the Mount Lebanon United Presbyterian Church, and the Mt. Lebanon Women’s Club. See Wallace F. Workmaster, “The Name ‘Mt. Lebanon,’” unpublished manuscript, 2003.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

(the future Mt. Lebanon) actually took the matter to court, contending that neither of the post offices that bore the name was in the newly proposed borough. The name, then, was secured.

### **An Oasis in the Country**

As the fledgling settlement took form, local residents early recognized the need for a burial ground. The first burial ground in the area, St. Clair, had filled up since its establishment in 1806.

The population of Scott Township in the mid-1870s was about 1,500, with no particular aspirations or expectations of growth. Yet some anticipated future pressures. “The present cemeteries of Pittsburgh and Allegheny are, unfortunately, too near the great centers of business,” claimed the 1874 Mt. Lebanon Cemetery by-laws. “Some of them, quite rural when first located, are now entirely surrounded, and in a few more years others will be in the same predicament.”<sup>11</sup> According to the by-laws, that predicament had “agitated the minds of many of

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<sup>11</sup> Mt. Lebanon Cemetery By-Laws, 1874. Quoted in M.A. Jackson, “At the Cemetery: How a Bucolic Farm Became a Peaceful Burial Ground,” *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*, October 2003, p. 39.

our citizens . . . where shall we find a suitable burying ground, sufficiently near to be accessible to all, and properly protected against the tumults of trade, the intruding foot of commerce, and the encroaching tide of population?”<sup>12</sup>

Their solution was found in a 97-acre tract along Washington Road that was originally owned and farmed by John L. Snyder and then purchased by Henry Bockstoe in 1854 and converted into an extensive nursery selling ornamental and fruit trees, shrubs, vines, and flowers. The operation included three greenhouses, two propagating houses, and six springs. By 1874, Bockstoe had transferred the property to the Mt. Lebanon Cemetery Association. Dedicated on June 25 of that year, the cemetery was designed in the image of the popular “park cemeteries” of the time, an oasis with “finely graveled drives and beautiful promenades”<sup>13</sup> that promised an escape from urban blight and pressures. It reflected the national movement toward “free” or independent cemeteries, not associated with any religious entity. The short-lived venture was sold at sheriff’s sale in 1880,<sup>14</sup> and was not purchased and

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> “The Annals of Mt. Lebanon,” 1937. Quoted in Jackson, p. 41.

incorporated as the Mt. Lebanon Cemetery Company until 1899.

The 65-acre cemetery is about 98% occupied. The gatehouse, a significant architectural anchor along Washington Road, dates to the late 1880s or early 1890s, while the stone pillars and entrance gates carry a date of 1904. In 2000 the Municipality purchased 1.2 acres of the cemetery property for its new Public Safety Building and Caste Companies bought 11.5 acres for residential development.

### **A Coal Patch**

In the midst of Mt. Lebanon's bucolic rural hills, a coal patch developed that would recall a segment of western Pennsylvania's industrial heritage. What came to be known as "Beadling," near the intersection of today's Beadling and Gilkeson Roads was a classic coal town or "patch." The Harrison Coal Mine there was owned by the Beadling Brothers from 1883 to 1912.<sup>15</sup> The Hopkins Atlas of 1917 shows Beadling with a Post Office, a Presbyterian Church, and the

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<sup>15</sup> *Mt. Lebanon: 75 Years, 1912-1987: Designs that Distinguish.* Mt. Lebanon Diamond Jubilee Steering Committee, 1987, p. 7.

Beadling Public School. A number of coal-era houses still stand along Old Gilkeson Road.

### **Enter the Railroad**

As early as 1872, a narrow gauge railroad, the Pittsburgh & Castle Shannon, offered seven daily round trips, including service to the Arlington Camp Meeting Ground on a hill above the present day Castle Shannon Boulevard.<sup>16</sup> The railroad operated until about 1886.

The line was leased to Pittsburgh Railways in 1905, who electrified it, added another rail, and operated both daily interurbans and nightly narrow-gauge coal trains. They stopped hauling coal on May 1, 1912. In 1915, steam passenger service ended, except in the vicinity of the South Side at the base of Mt. Washington, where service possibly ran as late as 1919.

The narrow-gauge Pittsburgh and Southern Railroad ran four daily trains for only six years – from 1878 until 1884 – over an

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<sup>16</sup> Wallace F. Workmaster, "A Brief History of Mt. Lebanon," unpublished paper, 2000.

inside rail on the standard gauge Little Saw Mill Run Railroad. The exact route of this line is as yet unknown,<sup>17</sup>

### **Enter the Streetcar**

The streetcar gave birth to the next phase of suburbanization in America. With the advent of the electric streetcar, commuters could travel in 10 minutes what they could previously walk in 30 minutes. Plus, the new technology was less expensive to construct than its predecessor, the steam railroad. Cities across the country adopted the new technology, and the number of miles of streetcar tracks jumped from 5,783 to 34,404 between 1890 and 1907.<sup>18</sup>

In 1901, as the nation moved into what some have called “The American Century,” Mt. Lebanon was moving into the new trolley era. On July 1 of that year, the first streetcar came to

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<sup>17</sup> The route is not clearly marked on historic maps, and sources differ as to its exact location. Some say that it traveled from the West End (Temperanceville) at Carson Street along Banksville Road to Beverly Road, then tunneled under Bower Hill and Washington Roads and emerged near Alfred Street before continuing on to Washington, PA. According to the 1987 history, however, the P&S crossed Mt. Lebanon from the Arlington neighborhood to Banksville Road, crossing Washington Road in a cut and traveling above McFarland Road on a high trestle. (p. 6.). This warrants further research.

<sup>18</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part I, p. 23.

the fledgling Scott Township hamlet on the electric street railway line of the Pittsburgh & Birmingham Traction Company. At the time, few people owned automobiles, and horse-drawn vehicles plodding along the muddy Washington Road could take two hours to reach the city.<sup>19</sup> The streetcar promised a less expensive and more efficient commuting option. And, while Mt. Lebanon was never a “streetcar town” like its neighbors to the north, the streetcar nonetheless had its impact on the town’s development.

The Pittsburgh & Birmingham Traction Company saw the new line as a means of increasing revenue by extending their established South Side service even further south. The streetcars descended Warrington Avenue and tracks were laid on West Liberty Avenue. The new line advertised travel time from downtown Pittsburgh as 25 minutes, an appealing incentive for downtown workers to explore living in Mt. Lebanon.

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<sup>19</sup> Wallace F. Workmaster, “The Day the Trolley Came to Town,” *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*, June/July 2001. Further research is necessary into the Pittsburgh and Chartiers Electric Railway route shown along Washington Road and towards Pennsylvania Avenue in the 1905 Hopkins Atlas.

Also in 1901, expansion of the line was begun by the Mellon-controlled Pittsburgh & Charleroi Street Railway Company to connect with communities in the Monongahela Valley to the southeast. The connection was located at the terminus of the Pittsburgh & Birmingham Traction at a double-ended passing siding in Washington Road between Cedar Boulevard and the current Towne Fair Building. That electric interurban railway service began operation on October 1, 1903.

The impact of the trolley was immediate. The crafters of Mt. Lebanon set about engineering the new community with a clear vision of the quality built environment and the exclusive social fabric they were trying to achieve. The “Mt. Lebanon Plan,” the area’s first real estate subdivision, was laid out later that same year, on November 22, 1901, and included property in the vicinity of Cedar Boulevard (then known as Ammann Avenue<sup>20</sup>), Academy Avenue, Shady Drive West, and Washington Road. It was subsequently developed by L. D. Statler and R. E. Edsall.

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<sup>20</sup> Ammann is sometimes spelled with a single “n”.

A second plan, the “Clearview Plan,” followed in 1902, laid out by Justus Mulert and advertising large, “beautiful plots with sewers, water, gas, etc.,” as well as “proper restrictions,”<sup>21</sup> all making it “the beautiful suburb: The cleanest spot in greater Pittsburgh. It was “Healthful (no smoke, soot or fog), Convenient (home to office in 25 minutes) and Picturesque.”<sup>22</sup> The Harmon Company, whose Avondale was laid out in 1908 down the street from the Clearview Plan, earned praise from the editor of the *Mt. Lebanon Messenger* in 1916 for “procuring a good class of people” for the township.<sup>23</sup>

Pittsburgh Railways Company was created in 1902, and operated both the Pittsburgh & Birmingham and the Pittsburgh & Charleroi. The Mt. Washington trolley tunnel opened December 1, 1904.

In 1909, interurban service shifted to a route following the old Pittsburgh & Castle Shannon right-of-way via Overbrook to the South Hills junction. The Clearview Loop (the site of present-

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<sup>21</sup> Steven J. Hoffman, “Entrepreneurship on the Urban Fringe: The Making of Mt. Lebanon, A 1920s Automobile Suburb,” unpublished paper for Carnegie Mellon University, April 19, 1990, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> *The Way We Were*, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Hoffman, p. 22.

day Clearview Commons) was completed in 1921, connecting downtown with Castle Shannon.<sup>24</sup> The Loop replaced a previous passing siding on the west side of Washington Road in front of the Clearview Garage/Walker Pontiac/Towne Fair building, which was used until 1984.

The streetcars would operate for more than 63 years until the Port Authority replaced them with the Light Rail Transit system in the early 1980s. Following the path of the streetcars, the Light Rail system even adapted the power pick-up that had utilized a round wheel on an overhead wire, and continued use of the original cars before ultimately phasing them out in c.2000. The streetcar tracks were removed (or, in some places, covered with asphalt) after 1984.

The portions of Mt. Lebanon that date to the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reflect, for the most part, the distinguishing characteristics of the streetcar suburb. Configured as continuous corridors along routes where the streetcar made frequent stops at short intervals, these areas developed as rectilinear subdivisions within a five- to ten-minute walk that

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<sup>24</sup> A book on the Clearview Loop is currently underway by Upper St. Clair resident Madelyn Roehrig.

featured small lots and modest homes. As streetcars and feeder line buses continued in use past the dawn of the Automobile Age, ridership dwindled somewhat, although it continued to serve a broad spectrum of riders at all times of the day.

### **Incorporation**

On February 6, 1912, Mt. Lebanon separated from Scott Township and was established as a separate government entity. Citing the need for city services that differed from those needed in the more rural, western portion of Scott, a determined group of local residents had brought the issue to vote three times before succeeding.<sup>25</sup>

At the time of the incorporation, Mt. Lebanon had 1,705 residents, one fire hydrant, 75 gas street lights, a golf club on Bower Hill Road that served as a community center and one school with approximately 200 pupils.<sup>26</sup>

The separation allowed Mt. Lebanon to focus its resources on gas, water, electricity, sewers, fire and police protection, and

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<sup>25</sup> *Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph*, January 10, 1937 and “Mt. Lebanon 1912-1937,” in *Annals of Mt. Lebanon*, February 6, 1937.

<sup>26</sup> *Mt. Lebanon, 75 Years*, p. 8.

schools, rather than on roads, which consumed a disproportionately large portion of the budget in more rural areas like Scott. Indeed, Mt. Lebanon's new commissioners set to work immediately, and within the first year had authorized electric service, a sewer survey, road work, and wooden sidewalks.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, it created a wealthier and less diverse community.<sup>28</sup>

The actual delivery of municipal improvements and services came a bit later. The Police Department was created in 1914. The Mt. Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department was established in 1918, although it had no truck until 1922. Street paving began in 1920. By 1937, the Township had 43 miles of paved streets, 75 miles of sewer lines, 508 street lights, 200 fire hydrants, three modern fire trucks, and a professional police

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Hoffman, p. 5. Hoffman thoroughly documented the economic realities that justified Mt. Lebanon's separation from Scott Township, as well as the process of separation. He maintains that such separations were common in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, leaving the less affluent communities to fend for themselves.

force of 17 officers.<sup>29</sup> It also had a Shade Tree Commission, and between 1922 and 1925 1,000 trees were planted.

The first major subdivision approved by the new Commissioners – Rockwood, along the interurban line on the Castle Shannon border -- confirmed the continued importance of the interurban cars to the township's early development.<sup>30</sup>

By 1917, three institutions appeared on the Mt. Lebanon map that reflected the impact of Progressive-era social service initiatives in the community: DePaul Institute (chartered in 1910)<sup>31</sup>, Seraphim Home on Toner Institute property on Dorchester Avenue, and the Baptist Orphan & Home Society, or "Old Folks Home" on Castle Shannon Boulevard. Also present that year was the Pittsburgh Coal Company's Summer Hill Power Plant on a manmade pond at the northwestern corner of the Township, which had been in existence as early

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<sup>29</sup> "Annals of Mt. Lebanon," 1937, p. 6. The sewerage disposal beds were shown in the 1917 Hopkins Atlas on municipal property at the western corner of Amman (now Cedar) and Beadling.

<sup>30</sup> Mt. Lebanon Public Works Records and Mt. Lebanon Township Commission Meeting Minutes, July 7, 1913, cited in Hoffman, p. 20, with accompanying FN#71.

<sup>31</sup> It is thought that the DePaul Institute was actually a part of Brookline. This warrants further research.

as 1912. Known today as Cedar Lake, the pond was originally created by damming up the Willow Brook. Lastly, the 1917 map shows St. Clair United Presbyterian Church and cemetery, located on Scott Road, which dated to 1804 and would become Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian Church in 1919.

### **Enter the Automobile**

When Henry Ford introduced his mass-produced, affordable Model-T in 1908, he ushered in an era in American history that would completely transform our lifestyles, our landscape, and our collection of cultural resources. Federal Highway Administration statistics indicate that 8,000 automobiles were in operation in 1900, ½ million in 1910, 9 ½ million in 1920, and nearly 27 million in 1930. To accommodate the growing population of cars, asphalt paving, introduced in the 1890s, became the nation's dominant road surface by 1916.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the United States Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1916, authorizing federal funding for up to 50% of the cost of State road projects within its network. Not surprisingly, most States established highway departments during the 1920s, and the total miles of surfaced highways in

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<sup>32</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 1, p. 25.

the nation doubled.<sup>33</sup> Further, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 authorized a National System of Interstate Highways, which incorporated metropolitan expressways intended to relieve traffic congestion and facilitate urban redevelopment.

Mt. Lebanon's character as a streetcar suburb surrounded by farms and undeveloped rural land would change dramatically as the township incorporated and planned for its future in this new Motor Age. It is notable, however, that "there was no distinct break between the streetcar and automobile use from 1910 to 1930. As cities continued to grow and the demand for transportation increased, the automobile was adopted by increasing numbers of upper-middle to upper-income households, while streetcars continued to serve the middle and working class population."<sup>34</sup>

At the time of the incorporation of Mt. Lebanon, discussion of a South Hills traffic tunnel was rampant. Not only had Edward Manning Bigelow, by then State Highway Commissioner, insisted that "something is to be done at once about

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<sup>33</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 1., p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 1, p. 24.

construction tunnel and bridge routes to beyond the hills,<sup>35</sup> but real estate entrepreneurs were already speculating in anticipation of future tunnel and bridge developments. And Mt. Lebanon actively promoted the idea. The Mt. Lebanon Township Commissioners adopted a resolution in September of 1912 in support of the Allegheny County Commissioners' plans for two automobile tunnels under Mt. Washington.<sup>36</sup> In addition, community development and professional organizations – such as the South Hills Board of Trade and the South Hills Tunnel Association -- and private citizens worked on behalf of the cause. Nonetheless, state authorization for the Liberty Tunnel and Bridge would not come through until 1917.<sup>37</sup> And, in a highly politically charged environment, no less than six different tunnel projects were considered before the Commissioners and the County Planning Commission settled on the current site in 1919.<sup>38</sup> Construction began in January 1920, with completion delayed until 1924. The first

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<sup>35</sup> *Pittsburgh Daily Dispatch*, January 13, 1912, p. 1, cited in Hoffman, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Mt. Lebanon Township Commission Meeting Minutes, September 30, 1912, Book 1, P. 61, cited in Hoffman, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> Hoffman, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Hoffman, p. 13.

car through the new tunnel was driven by Fred Haller, a longtime Mt. Lebanon resident.<sup>39</sup>

In 1912, Mt. Lebanon reportedly had only six automobiles, yet they were already becoming an issue for consideration by the Township Commissioners, who posted speed limit signs that year.<sup>40</sup> And the numbers would increase dramatically over the next few years. In 1910, there were 1,601 automobiles registered in Allegheny County; by 1929 that number had increased to 203,866.<sup>41</sup> By 1934, cars outnumbered dwelling places in Mt. Lebanon, with 3,966 cars versus 3,460 houses or apartments. That year, 97.3% of the chief wage earners in Mt. Lebanon owned at least one car, 58% of residents commuted by car, and 82% of the houses had garages. With 4,521 spaces for cars located in 2,841 buildings with garages, there were more indoor parking spaces in Mt. Lebanon than there were cars to fill them.<sup>42</sup> The commuting statistic represents a sharp departure from the norm among exclusive middle class suburbs. These are particularly remarkable statistics

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<sup>39</sup> Hoffman, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Hoffman, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> Hoffman, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Hoffman, p. 23.

considering that the nation at the time was mired in the depths of the Great Depression.

### **Bus Service**

Augmenting the heavy use of automobiles by Mt. Lebanon residents, the area was also served by several suburban bus companies. The Oriole Motor Coach Line, a Greentree-based operating founded in the 1920s, provided service between Mt. Lebanon and downtown and to the High School from various neighborhoods. Its Route #1 bus serviced Banksville to Cochran to Florida and Cedar Avenues, while Route #2 serviced Virginia Manor and the West End. Brentwood Motorcoach Buses ran into the Rockwood area from Washington Road. An additional company from Bridgeville ran bus service on Bower Hill Road as recently as the 1960s. The Port Authority did not assume these routes until the 1980s.

### **Boom Years – A Sequence of Subdivisions**

The 1920s nationwide represented the beginning of a population boom time for suburban areas, which were growing faster – at 33.2% -- than were central cities, an increase of nearly 10% over the 1910s. During the 1940s, that growth rate

increased to 36%. The National Park Service noted that “For the first time, the absolute growth of the population residing in suburbs nationwide, estimated at nine million, surpassed that of central cities, estimated at six million.” In the 1950s, the population of suburban areas increased by another 19 million, as compared with an increase of six million in the core cities. By 1960, the population balance in metropolitan areas had tipped in favor of the suburbs, and by 1990, the majority of all Americans lived in suburban areas.<sup>43</sup>

In the wake of the stock market crash of 1929, President Herbert Hoover established housing as a national priority and convened the President’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership in 1931. In addition, federal legislation in the 1930s established a system of home loan banking and created insurance for long-term, low-interest home mortgages, putting the ideal of home ownership within reach of many Americans who, particularly in the years following World War II, would come to equate home ownership with coveted middle class status. Among significant pieces of legislation were the Federal Home Loan Bank Act (1932), the National Housing

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<sup>43</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 1, p. 10.

Act (1934), and the creation of the Federal National Mortgage Association, or “Fannie Mae” (1938). Modifications to these laws, including the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, or GI Bill (1944) and the Veterans’ Emergency Housing Act of 1946 would continue into the mid-1950s.

The story of suburbanization is, at its core, the story of subdivisions. The National Park Service has identified several types of subdivision developers:

- **The Subdivider** acquired and surveyed the land, developed a plan, laid out roads and building lots, improved the overall site, and sold the lots to builders, land speculators, or prospective homeowners.
- **The Home Builder** constructed houses on a limited number of lots to help convince prospective buyers that the plan would ultimately materialize into a neighborhood. Home Builders, however, were still primarily in the business of selling land, not houses.
- **The Community Builder** appeared during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as planned communities came into vogue. The Community Builder was a real estate entrepreneur who developed according to a

master plan, often restrictive, with the input of professional site planners, landscape architects, architects, and engineers.

- **The Operative Builder** took advantage of the restructuring of the home financing industry and the introduction of mass production, standardization, and prefabrication to engage in large-scale development of neighborhoods of small single-family houses as well as rental communities.
- **The Merchant Builder** was a large-scale corporate builder who capitalized on the increased credit provisions of the 1948 Amendments to the National Housing Act and developed houses by the thousands.

This typology does not account for the smaller scale contractors at work in Mt. Lebanon, who left their mark in large numbers of small subdivisions and houses that provided a consistency in quality and style throughout the community. One of the earliest of those was Betterbuilt Homes, started in the 1920s by Harry C. Workmaster.

Following the lead of Los Angeles, where the first zoning ordinance was passed in 1909, zoning became a popular tool nationwide for controlling land use and ensuring the health, welfare, and safety of the American public. After World War I, in the midst of the Better Homes Movement, the U.S. Department of Commerce advocated local zoning legislation. By 1926, more than 76 cities had adopted zoning ordinances, and by 1936, 85% of American cities had instituted zoning.<sup>44</sup>

Also during the 1920s, according to the National Park Service, “deed restrictions became the hallmark of a range of planned residential communities, fashioned as country club or garden suburbs that were attracting an increasing professional and rising middle class of American cities.”<sup>45</sup> The Committee on Subdivision Layout at the 1931 President’s Conference, in fact, endorsed deed restrictions as the primary means of ensuring neighborhood stability, maintaining real estate values, and preventing intrusions by non-conforming industrial or commercial uses in communities without zoning. Likewise, the Urban Land Institute’s 1947 *Community Builder’s*

*Handbook* endorsed the use of deed restrictions to preserve neighborhood stability and property values.

In Mt. Lebanon, the boom period was triggered 12 years after its incorporation. Once the Liberty Tunnels opened in 1924, followed by the Liberty Bridge in 1928, development of the Township began in earnest. The population grew from 1,705 in 1912 to 2,258 in 1920 to 13,403 in 1930 to 17,000 in 1937 and 35,361 in 1960. Over 4,500 lots were subdivided during the decade of the 1920s, as compared with 954 for all previous years.<sup>46</sup> Building permits also reflected the development frenzy of the 1920s, with 2,164 issued between 1924 (when the Township began recording them) and the end of the decade. Included in that number were 1,937 single family homes.

Typical of suburban growth patterns, the evolution of Mt. Lebanon was a developer-driven process, and entire neighborhoods can be traced to subdivision plans that took farmland and converted it – on paper, at least – in a matter of months.

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<sup>44</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 1, p. 36.

<sup>45</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 1, p. 35.

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<sup>46</sup> University of Pittsburgh Bureau of Research Statistical Handbooks, Number 1, *Real Estate Statistics for Allegheny County Base Book* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1936), p. 10, cited in Hoffman, p. 18.

For the most part, Mt. Lebanon was the work of Subdividers, Home Builders, and Contractors. Many of these developers were outside entrepreneurs, drawn by the area's potential. Four of the township's major developments of the 1920s, in fact, were the work of outsiders and accounted for 1,260 of the 2,330 lots platted between 1921 and 1925.<sup>47</sup> More specifically, Stevenson, Williams and Johnson Co. developed Mission Hills (342 lots), W. A. Bode and John Wenger laid out Sunset Hills (421 lots), William J. Parker subdivided Parker Gardens (250 lots), and Christian Shannon created Seminole Hills (247 lots).<sup>48</sup> Many of these "outsiders" ultimately became Mt. Lebanon residents.

And yet, in the midst of the development and the appearance of many new players in the real estate arena, as Steven Hoffman points out, many longtime Mt. Lebanon residents also played an important role. "A comparison of landholdings in 1898 and 1924 reveals many continuities. Of the approximately 75 parcels of undeveloped farmland within the township in 1924, at least 25 of them were held by families owning Mt. Lebanon

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<sup>47</sup> Hoffman, p. 18 and accompanying FN#63.

<sup>48</sup> Hoffman, p. 18-19.

farmland in 1898."<sup>49</sup> Among the individuals who apparently subdivided their farmland were Margaret Boyd, C. W. Clatty, and Ella Long. Other longtime Mt. Lebanon residents whose land was involved in early subdivisions of the 1920s included Myrtilla Schreiner (Orchard Hill), Katherine Vitte (Sunnyside), Howard B. Salkheld, a township commissioner (Colonial Heights, 130 lots and, with fellow commissioner J.C. Roush, St. Clair Terrace, 138 lots), Frederick and Mary Haller (Hoodridge Plan #1 and #2, 31 lots), F. E. McGillick (Lebanon Hills), and E. W. Smith.<sup>50</sup>

By about 1928, the general outline of Mt. Lebanon's development was fairly well established through real estate plats, despite that actual building construction lagged behind the subdivisions. Still undeveloped were the Boyd and Roth Farms at the southern end of the community, just west of the Pittsburgh Railways Company line, and at the four corners of the Township. As late as 1933, 53.4% of the 7,409 lots platted in Mt. Lebanon remained vacant.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Hoffman, p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> Mt. Lebanon Public Works Records, Subdivisions, microfilm, cited by Hoffman, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> *Real Estate Statistics for Allegheny County*, pp. 16-17, cited in Hoffman, p. 19, with accompanying FN#68..

In the midst of this subdivision frenzy, the actual number of building permits issued reflected the economic realities of the times, as well as a population boom from 2,000 in 1918 to 20,000 in 1941. According to Steven Hoffman,

From a high of 440 permits for single family homes in 1928, the number of permits issued dropped to 189 and 168 in 1930 and 1931. With only 24 permits issued, 1932 marked the low point of the depression in Mt. Lebanon. The number of permits issued rose slightly to 39 and 37 in 1933 and 1934 before jumping to 92 and then 218 in 1935 and 1936. The construction of new homes continued at between 203 and 337 per year until the outbreak of World War II, when the number of permits for new single family homes again plummeted, reaching absolute zero in 1944. With the end of the war came renewed interest in home building and the number of permits issued consequently rose. Reaching almost a post-war high of 344 in 1947, the number of permits issued remained between 209 and 346 per year until building activity again slacked off in 1958 and 1959.<sup>52</sup>

The nature of these developments reflected the new mobility of the automobile, as contrasted with subdivisions linked to the streetcar. Even as early as 1917, the subdivisions were anticipating the arrival of the automobile. The plan of the Clatty Farm subdivision, for example, was dominated by the

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<sup>52</sup> Hoffman, p. 27.

rectangular grid that characterized the trolley-driven developments, but was located a good 14 blocks from the nearest streetcar line.<sup>53</sup> At least seven more subdivisions came along between the actual start of construction of the Liberty Tunnels in 1920 and their completion in 1924, all somewhat removed from the trolley lines. Lebanon View, Mission Hills, Sunset Hills, and Lebanon Hills were located along Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon Country Club was located along Scott Boulevard, and Marlin Place and Parker Gardens were both located along Beverly Road.<sup>54</sup>

Soon, street patterns would also reflect the coming automobile age. Rooted in the suburban ideal espoused by Alexander Jackson Davis and others beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the new suburban landscape was also influenced by the Parks and City Beautiful Movements, and by an emerging interest in city planning as a tool for Progressive reform.

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<sup>53</sup> Mt. Lebanon Public Works Records, cited in Hoffman, p. 21, with accompanying FN#71. It should be noted that Clatty long remained as paper streets and did not get built until after World War II. This subdivision was later cleared for the Thomas Jefferson School and Ward Home for Children.

<sup>54</sup> Hoffman, p. 21.

To augment Hoffman's analysis of early subdivision activity, this survey is including subdivision plans as part of its data collection process, which should ultimately provide a fairly clear sense of how the community evolved in sections.

Two of these developments--Mission Hills and Virginia Manor – might be better characterized as the work of “community builders.” Laid out on the site of an orchard, Mission Hills was the first suburban plan in the South Hills designed specifically to accommodate the automobile, developed in anticipation of the planned 1924 opening of the Liberty Tunnels. The development of Mission Hills has actually been traced to a Kansas City suburb by the same name. Mt. Lebanon's Mission Hills was conceived by local real estate developer, Lawrence T. Stevenson, who served as a Director of the National Association of Real Estate Boards with his Kansas City counterpart, Jesse Clyde Nichols. The Kansas City development was begun in 1913, and Stevenson had gathered quite a bit of useful ideas from it before he began his Mt. Lebanon project in 1921. Among the features incorporated in both Mission Hills developments were gently curving streets that followed the natural contours of the land, park-like

dividers on main streets, small triangular green spaces at the intersections of curving streets, and rolled curbs, the first such curbs east of the Mississippi. Even the names of the streets, “Drives,” represented a departure from the gridiron streets that had dominated residential areas up until this time. The designers also made dramatic use of vistas that showcased some of the neighborhoods' grandest homes. Lots were large, and construction prices were high, ranging between \$12,000 and \$15,000 for a new house, as compared with \$6,000 elsewhere in Mt. Lebanon. Streets were originally brick. Trees in Mission Hills' five parklets and two planting islands were the responsibility of the developers for the first ten years, then deeded to the Township.

Following the nationwide trend for upscale developments, both Mission Hills and Virginia Manor instituted controls to ensure consistent construction quality. In Mission Hills, those restrictions foreshadowed the township's first zoning ordinance, which would not be adopted for another 4 ½ years, in 1926. Indeed, Mt. Lebanon's Mission Hills was advertised by Stevenson as “the restricted suburb,” a label that he apparently believed offered the promise of stability and the

protection of homeowners' investments.<sup>55</sup> Promotional materials promised that buyers would be "surrounded by single family homes only," with restrictive covenants to "protect the value of [their] property for fifty years, a feature in which this beautiful home section stands alone in all Western Pennsylvania."

Development of Virginia Manor was laid out on the former Bell farm and orchards in 1926 by James H. Duff, later Governor of Pennsylvania and a United States Senator. Duff carried the notion of deed restrictions to an even greater extreme in Virginia Manor. The Land Company stipulated that homes be designed by private architects or by Thomas Garman, the Land Company's architect, who had to approve all plans. All houses had to be constructed of brick or stone, and have minimum lot size and street frontage. It was also required that garages not face the streets.<sup>56</sup> Further subdivision of lots was prohibited.

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<sup>55</sup> John Conti, "Mission Hills, Kansas: Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery," *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*, March 2003. Also *Pittsburgh Press*, June 11, 1922, and Jennifer McDowell, "Birth of a Trolley Town, Part III: Mission Hills Sets the Standard," *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*, September 1986, pp. 21-22, both cited in Hoffman, p. 21 and accompanying FN#75.

<sup>56</sup> Hoffman, p. 23.

The transformation of Mt. Lebanon into an Automobile Suburb continued through the 1930s and into the post-war period, with each successive period introducing improved access, which was critical to continued growth. Development of the Virginia Manor, or northwestern, portion of Mt. Lebanon was largely enabled by the widening of Banksville Road in 1938. Post-war development culminated with the opening of another major link with downtown, the Fort Pitt Tunnels, in 1961. Yet even with that high-speed access route, Mt. Lebanon has never truly transformed into the fourth state of suburbanization, the Early Freeway Suburb.

### **Notable Community Design Features**

Mt. Lebanon consists generally of rolling hills varying between 900 and 1,200 feet in elevation. The terrain is particularly well suited to the more picturesque street patterns that came to dominate the landscape beginning in the 1920s. This curvilinear street pattern also created opportunities for planted triangles and parklets that appear throughout the community.

While the narrower, or “yield” streets in older neighborhoods foster a sense of intimacy, post-war streets of 36 to 40 feet in width create a greater sense of openness. A sense of openness throughout the community is enhanced by the fact that the municipality prohibits front yard fences.

The street edges exhibit a full range of treatments. Since no sidewalks were required by law between 1940 and 1955, many neighborhoods are without them, but they are common in many of the older neighborhoods. Mature shade trees line many of the streets.

Traditionally, development in Mt. Lebanon has been scale sensitive. Apartment buildings close to the Washington Road and Beverly Road commercial areas provide good scale-down convention between commercial buildings and streets of smaller single family dwellings. Like the best planned communities of our time, Mt. Lebanon’s building fabric accommodates eccentricities and diversity, with duplexes existing harmoniously with small apartment buildings and single family houses, particularly in the area surrounding Lincoln School. In addition, living units above storefronts are

generally occupied, which helps to ease the transition between residential and commercial uses.

The single family homes in Mt. Lebanon display a variety of approaches to outdoor living: front porches on many of the earlier homes, with patios and side porches becoming popular in the 1930s and 1940s.

Garage treatments have changed in tandem with changing trends in outdoor living, with the earliest detached garages being replaced by integral garages beginning in the 1920s. Alleys serve some of the earlier clusters of housing with detached garages. In Virginia Manor, developer James H. Duff stipulated that garages should not face the streets. In selected locations, alleys remove cars from the street and the property fronts.

### **Residential Architecture – From Customs to Catalogs**

Like the majority of suburban residential neighborhoods of the period, Mt. Lebanon is distinguished by a variety of styles drawn from a variety of traditions, many of which are unrelated to our local cultural identity. The National Park Service

attributes this “nationalization of housing styles based on historical prototypes” to widespread publication of home designs and a renewed interest in America’s diverse cultural heritage following World War I.<sup>57</sup> Extending beyond mere architectural styles, this interest in housing manifested itself in such initiatives as the Better Home Campaign and the Small House Movement. Better Homes in America, Inc. was founded in 1922 to educate homeowners about quality design and construction, and to promote demonstration projects, including “Home Sweet Home” on the National Mall in 1923. Small, architect-designed houses of six rooms or less were first advocated during the 1920s by groups such as the Small House Architects’ Service Bureau, established by the AIA in various cities beginning in 1919, or New York’s Home Owners Service Institute, and by popular magazines. Interest in small, high-quality, affordable homes increased as the Depression deepened, the homebuilding industry collapsed, and the federal government stepped in. The 1931 President’s Conference, in addition to looking at subdivisions, also established committees to consider Design, Construction, Affordability of Building Systems, and Landscape Planning and Planting. In the years

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<sup>57</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs.

that followed, the FHA instituted a national program based on its principle of “providing a maximum accommodation within a minimum of means,”<sup>58</sup> while allowing for attractive design, expandability, standardization, and variability. By the 1930s, innovators in government, private industry, and the non-profit sector were exploring mass production and prefabrication to reduce the cost of materials and, ultimately, of housing.

By 1945, in the face of continued population growth, the return of six million veterans, and a housing shortage, and spurred by the growing home finance industry, American suburbs were headed into the largest building boom in the nation’s history, with single family housing starts jumping from 114,000 in 1944 to 1,692,000 in 1950.<sup>59</sup>

Mt. Lebanon features a few examples of widely recognized and consistently labeled styles that pre-date the 1920s:

- **Vernacular Farmhouses** – Today standing as anomalies in the midst of subsequent developments, the vernacular farmhouses of Mt. Lebanon take on particular significance as reminders of the community’s earliest days. The Mt.

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<sup>58</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 2, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 2, p. 12.

Lebanon Cemetery Gatehouse is perhaps the most prominent example, and its strategic location along Washington Road makes it visually as well as historically significant.

- **Queen Anne** – A handful of Mt. Lebanon houses near the core of the community are in the Queen Anne style that dates to the days before the streetcar. Often constructed with a mix of materials, these large homes are characterized by square massing, complex rooflines, asymmetrical facades, and a variety of fanciful details to towers, cornices, windows, doors, and porches.
- **Colonial Revival** – The Colonial Revivals of the very early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, also found near the core of the community, are generally grand in scale, square in massing, and feature large one-story porches and classical detailing, though not necessarily symmetrically arranged.

Yet much of Mt. Lebanon’s residential architectural fabric defies the traditional style guides. Consequently, local resident John Conti has developed a typology of styles that captures

many of the most common designs that exist there.<sup>60</sup> His analysis includes the following common types:

- **Tudors** – Mt. Lebanon’s Tudors, like their counterparts in other automobile suburbs, are not truly Tudor in style, but incorporate “a wide variety of architectural features adapted from medieval and folk precedents in England.”<sup>61</sup> Characteristic features of the Tudors include brick or stone construction; steeply pitched roofs of slate or tile, often with front-facing gables and copper gutters; asymmetrical facades; large, prominent chimneys; half timbering; casement windows with small panes and sometimes stained glass; arched doorways; and no front porches.
- **Colonials** – Like the Tudors, the Colonials used an established traditional architectural vocabulary to express stability, but often represented loosely-interpreted revivals of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century originals. These homes, of wood, brick or stone, are characterized by box-like massing; gabled or hipped roofs with prominent cornices; symmetrical facades; double-hung windows, and

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<sup>60</sup> The National Board of Realtors has also created a list of labels that needs to be revisited. Given the limitations of the ACCESS database, these style names must be included as modifiers to the “Other” category under “Architectural Styles.”

<sup>61</sup> John Conti, *Living With Styles*, Mt. Lebanon Magazine, 2002, p. 8.

elaborately-detailed doorways. They sometimes include corner quoins. Variations include the Dutch Colonial, with its gambrel roof and extra-wide dormers, and the Cape Cod, a smaller, 1 ½ story version, often with an overhanging, wood-framed second story. These are post-World War I Colonials, not to be confused with the earlier Colonial Revivals.

- **Bungalows** – Bungalows are a more indigenously American style dating to the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Originally popularized in California during the Arts and Crafts Movement, they were also influenced by the Midwest Prairie School,<sup>62</sup> and are often referred to as the “Craftsman Style.” Characteristic features include a 1 ½ layout, often with all major rooms on the first floor; a horizontal emphasis with wide, low-pitched, deeply overhanging roofs of slate or tile; and prominent porches with heavy supports.
- **Foursquares** – Harkening back to Mt. Lebanon’s early days as a trolley suburb, the Foursquares were built primarily between 1905 and 1915, with few later than the 1920s and provided solid and economical housing that was

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<sup>62</sup> The name “Bungalow” was derived from India, where the name was given to low-profiled houses with wide verandas.

often constructed by builders without the aid of an architect. Identifying features of the Foursquares include square massing; hipped or pyramidal roofs with integral box gutters and often with distinctive dormers; large, one-story porches that generally extend across the entire front; and double-hung windows, most often with three or four panes over one. While the typical Foursquare carries no ornament, some are enhanced with Colonial, Classical, or Renaissance detailing. These are often classified according to their detailing rather than their basic form.

- **Minimal Traditionals** – This diverse style developed in response to the lean times of the Depression and was perpetuated to adapt to the shortage of labor and materials during World War II and the high demand for affordable housing during the post-War years. Most closely related to the Tudors of the 1920s and 1930s, the Minimal Traditionals are identified by their asymmetrical facades, front-facing gables, and minimal detailing. Materials and windows vary. These are the vernacular designs of their day.
- **Ranches and Split-Levels** – Only recently aged to the point of warranting recognition in an historic survey,

Ranches and Split-Levels reflect the 1950s emphasis on a relaxed, informal lifestyle that accommodates the television and promotes private outdoor living. The Ranch was born in the 1930s in California, influenced by the casual, one story homes of the Spanish ranchers who settled there in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the Prairie Style popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright and others around Chicago in the very early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The one-story Ranch and the Split-Level are both horizontal in silhouette and rambling in plan. Other characteristic features include low pitched roofs with deep eaves, mixed building materials, and integral (and often featured) garages. Despite these features, a great deal of variation appears among houses of these styles.

Less common were a series of eclectic revivals of the 1920s through the 1950s:

- **Spanish Eclectic** – More common in the Southwest and Florida, the Spanish Revival made a brief appearance in modified form in Mt. Lebanon. Deriving their inspiration from architecture of the Mediterranean, these houses are

characterized by low-pitched red tile roofs, asymmetrical facades, stucco exteriors, and arched windows and doors.

- **French Eclectic** – In some ways closely related to the Tudors, the French Eclectic houses are distinguished by their roofs, which are complex hipped structures or variations on the mansard.
- **Italian Renaissance** – Quite rare in Mt. Lebanon, these houses feature low-pitched hipped roofs, symmetrical facades, and rounded archways.

And, finally, a handful of examples exist of the styles that derived from the International Style that was born in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s:

- **Modern or Moderne** – These streamlined, flat-roofed houses sometimes feature a prominent rounded-corner element, glass block windows, corner windows, simple roof coping, and horizontal banding.

In addition, Mt. Lebanon boasts at least five prefabricated houses sold through Sears Roebuck and Company's Modern Home Department between 1908 and 1940. During that period, Sears offered approximately 370 home designs and sold

about 75,000 homes nationwide. Demand in Pittsburgh was sufficient to warrant a sales office in the Jenkins Arcade Building (formerly on the site of Fifth Avenue Place) to supplement catalog sales.<sup>63</sup>

The Sears houses were shipped in 30,000 pieces, along with a 75-page instruction book. After 1911, the kits included precut lumber. Prefabricated outhouses, furnaces, electricity, and plumbing were extra, and the buyer could finance the house with a Sears mortgage. The Sears house offered a simple solution to the housing shortage following World War I.

Four Sears houses in Mt. Lebanon have been identified to date. All four are bungalows from the 1926 catalog. They include 231 Mabrick Avenue (“The Argyle”), 1 Broadmoor Avenue (“The Avalon”), 196 Birch Avenue (“The Lakecrest”), 244 Spruceton Avenue (“The Rodessa”), and a house at Parkview and Chalmers (model unidentified).

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<sup>63</sup>Metzger, William, “Suddenly Chic: Sears.” *Mt. Lebanon Magazine*. June 1987, 30-37. See also Matthew G. Boyas, “Independent Study – Sears Houses,” 2004.

Duplexes appeared as early as 1917. The Hopkins Atlas of that year shows a cluster of 10 “duplex houses” on Schaffer Place.<sup>64</sup> Differentiated from the double house with its side-by-side configuration, the duplex is divided into an upper and a lower unit. They tend to appear closer to the streetcar lines and the commercial districts.

According to a 1934 study, Mt. Lebanon already boasted a housing stock that was a cut above the rest. Fully 87.7% of Mt. Lebanon houses were built primarily of brick or stone. 36.5% had seven rooms or more. And, unlike the average home in Allegheny County, Mt. Lebanon homes were nearly 100% centrally heated, with a third of them burning natural gas rather than the more conventional coal, and 71% had mechanical refrigeration. Not surprisingly, given these amenities, the median value of a Mt. Lebanon house in 1930 was also way above average, \$14,746 versus \$6,658 for Allegheny County as a whole.<sup>65</sup>

### **Commercial Districts**

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<sup>64</sup> Hopkins Atlas, 1917.

<sup>65</sup> Hoffman, pp. 24-27. Note that Mary Corbin says that middle class suburban homes after 1870 had central heating as a fairly standard amenity.

Washington Road has always been the primary commercial district for Mt. Lebanon. With the advent of the Automobile Suburb, it was augmented by two additional retail districts. Development of Beverly Road began in 1925 with a gasoline service station. A third area began on Castle Shannon Boulevard two years later.

While Castle Shannon Boulevard has lost much of its character as a commercial district of the 1920s and 1930s, Washington and Beverly Roads still retain elements of their original scale and architectural fabric. Significant clusters of two-story brick structures with retail below and office or residential space above show vestiges of the Art Deco, Classical, and Commercial styles that typified the era. Despite the design diversity, however, these clusters are united by compatible scale and a generally restrained use of detail. On Washington Road, for example, buildings that vary as significantly as the Rosalia Building and the Stevenson Building nonetheless fit comfortably into the overall streetscape.

The Washington Road commercial district is anchored at its southern end by the newly-renovated Municipal Building.

Designed by William H. King, Jr., it reflects the Art Deco or Art Moderne style that was sweeping Paris when King is said to have received his architectural training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts between 1911 and 1913 to supplement his Carnegie Technical Institute training. Art Deco did not become popular in the United States until after it was showcased at the 1925 Paris Exhibition, making the new Municipal Building, built between 1927 and 1930, something of a pioneering design. It was, in fact, the subject of great controversy among the Township Commissioners of the time.<sup>66</sup>

### **Schools**

Concurrent with the residential boom, Mt. Lebanon set about expanding its public education system, providing convenient neighborhood schools to serve each new residential area as it developed.

The earliest school reportedly had been held in a one-room log house on the Higbee Farm, on upper Fort Couch Road, now

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<sup>66</sup> Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation conducted a major research effort on the Municipal Building and published its findings during 2004.

part of the Township of Upper St. Clair.<sup>67</sup> It is believed to have been used until about 1836.<sup>68</sup> The schoolhouse structure was disassembled, “restored,” and moved to Mt. Lebanon Park in 1930. The building was subsequently vandalized and demolished in the late 1960s.

The next recorded school, the Mt. Lebanon Academy, was reportedly built in 1855 at Washington Road and Academy Avenue, and it served the community for 15 years.<sup>69</sup> The Academy was succeeded in 1870 by two one-room frame schoolhouses: Hultz School at Washington Road near Sunnyhill Drive and the other behind the Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church (then St. Clair United Presbyterian Church) at Washington and Scott Roads.

The new Mt. Lebanon School District, formed when the Township was incorporated in 1912, was initially served by two existing schools. The 1895 Ammann Avenue School (at

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<sup>67</sup> Mt. Lebanon, 75 Years, p. 15. See also, Wallace F. Workmaster, “History of Mt. Lebanon Schools,” unpublished manuscript, 2000.

<sup>68</sup> Know Your Town, Mt. Lebanon, League of Women Voters, 1960, 1961, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Mt. Lebanon, 75 Years, p. 6. The deed for this property was dated 1864, so this date should be researched. In addition, further research is necessary to determine if the school was public or private.

the corner of Washington Road and the current Cedar Avenue) was a two story, four-room wood frame structure with a prominent central bell tower. In contrast, the one-room Beadling School was built between 1905 and 1910 on private Gilkeson property (near the intersection of Beadling Road and Gilkeson Road) to serve primarily miners’ children.

Once streetcar service improved mobility in 1901, high school students from Mt. Lebanon began to commute to either Union High School in Knoxville or South Side High School in the City of Pittsburgh. Between 1912 and 1915, high school classes were held in two rooms of the Truby Building, 677 Washington Road. The students then returned to the two City high schools until approximately 1924, when they began attending Dormont High School. In 1928 and 1929, they returned to home turf and held classes in Washington School pending completion of the new High School in 1930.<sup>70</sup>

Meanwhile, the Beadling School closed in 1920, transferring its 45 students to the Ammann Avenue School, which in turn moved its students to the newly-constructed Washington

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<sup>70</sup> Virginia Elliott, “Mt. Lebanon . . . Fostered These Classrooms,” in Mt. Lebanon Fiftieth Anniversary, 1912-1962, p. 32.

School in 1923. The new 18-room schoolhouse, which was designed by Ingham & Boyd and featured, landscaping by Tell W. Nicolette, was viewed as an impractical extravagance by many locals who did not share the vision of how the young community would grow. A 1937 *Liberty Ledger* article on the history of Mt. Lebanon, in fact, suggested that to many citizens the project “seemed foolhardy and wasteful and on a location out in the country, remote from the center of the town’s population with a capacity far in excess of any needs such a rural community would ever realize.”<sup>71</sup>

In fact, the district quickly outgrew Washington School, and others were to follow:

Lincoln School	1925
Julia Ward Howe School	1927
Edwin Markham School	1929
Mt. Lebanon High School	1930

The new schools were augmented by the construction in 1925 of St. Bernard’s Parochial School, where enrollment peaked at 1,900 by 1959.

In anticipation of continued development, the sites for Stephen Foster School in the Hoodridge neighborhood and Jefferson School off Bower Hill Road were acquired in 1929 and 1931 respectively. Then there followed more construction:

Andrew W. Mellon Junior High School	1939
Stephen C. Foster School	1941
Thomas Jefferson Elementary School	1952
Thomas Jefferson Junior High School	1959
Hoover School	1963

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<sup>71</sup> *Liberty Ledger*, February 5, 1937, quoted in Virginia Elliott, *Mt. Lebanon Fiftieth Anniversary*, 1912-1962.

All but Hoover School were originally designed by the firm of Ingham & Boyd. From the initial construction in 1923 through the early 1970s, those original designs were periodically enlarged with compatible additions to accommodate ever increasing enrollments. Toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dropping enrollments triggered a redistribution of students and the temporary closing of Mellon School, but today all of the buildings remain intact and operational as neighborhood schools. Five of the seven elementary schools, in fact, have been restored in recent years.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Mt. Lebanon boasts 13 parks totaling 250 acres, as well as a 99-acre municipal golf course. These parks vary in size from small neighborhood green spaces, to the Main Park, with its full range of recreational amenities, and Bird Park, a nature park incorporating reforestation, hiking trails, and educational labels.

In addition, the Township Code of 1960 accepted the dedication of 25 street parks scattered throughout the various neighborhoods. Roughly half of these tiny oases are bounded

by three or more streets, which constitute an allocation of green spaces that enhance their neighborhoods and provide highly accessible recreational spaces to their residents.<sup>72</sup> (See the Appendix for a listing of these street parks.)

### **Houses of Worship**

As an intensely family-oriented and conservative community, Mt. Lebanon developed a rich network of religious institutions to serve a variety of traditions. The central role of religion was supported by the state-imposed “Blue Laws” that prohibited retail sales (other than food) on Sundays until well after World War II, and by the limited presence of establishments serving alcohol in Mt. Lebanon until late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Following the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, Mt. Lebanon was never a completely dry town, yet it maintained a restriction on new liquor licenses. Two notable establishments were Andy’s Loop Café in the Washington Road business district and Atria’s, still extant in its original location at Beverly and McFarland Roads.

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<sup>72</sup> *The Code of the Township of Mount Lebanon Pennsylvania 1960: The General Ordinances of the Township.* Michie City Publications: Charlottesville, VA (1961). 127.

Paralleling the subdivision frenzy of the 1920s through the 1950s in Mt. Lebanon, 14 of the community's houses of worship fall within the time period of this survey:

Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church (1804)	1929
St. Bernard Roman Catholic Church (1919)	1925
St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1924)	1930
Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church (1925)	1955
Southminster Presbyterian Church (1925)	1929
Beverly Heights United Presbyterian Church (1929)	1930
First Church of Christ, Scientist (1939)	1946
Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church (1940)	1947
Church of Our Lady of Grace	1947
Mt. Lebanon Christian Church (1950)	1953
Our Savior Lutheran Church	1953
Bower Hill Community Church (1950)	1955
Temple Emanuel of South Hills (1951)	1955

Their individual histories have been documented with their individual survey forms.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church (1909), built in 1924, and Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church (1907), built in 1929 are actually located outside the municipal boundaries in the Borough of Dormont, but received their Mt. Lebanon names prior to the incorporation

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of Mt. Lebanon and the attendant definition of its boundaries.

## Preliminary Data Analysis

The scope and methodology for the project, and the lack of training of survey staff in report generation, have not permitted the level of data analysis that should be possible with the ACCESS database. With the database content, it should be possible to define defensible districts that might warrant historic designation by the National Register or any future local ordinance. It should be possible, for instance, to map all the bungalows in Mt. Lebanon, identify the area(s) of greatest concentration, and delineate those areas that represent the best collections.

Without such systematic analysis, any historic district recommendations must be based on windshield surveys or random reviews of the database. In particular, the following collections of buildings are notable as representations of some of the more prevalent styles and types in the community:

- Two neighborhoods developed according to conscious plans and representing a range of styles from the 1920s through the 1950s (and beyond) are Mission Hills and Virginia Manor. These neighborhoods represent two of

the finest collections of architect-designed homes in Mt. Lebanon.

- Neighborhood 28 contains many Cape Cods. On Sunnyhill Drive in Neighborhood 16, the Cape Cod is seen in various forms with cross gables in addition to dormers; depending on the materials and detailing, it may look like a classic Colonial, a Tudor Cotswold cottage or a hybrid Post-War Traditional.
- In the neighborhood around Lincoln School, particularly along Edwards Avenue, is a collection of modest homes of a type that are common in the community. They represent a hybrid style that incorporates the architectural vocabulary of a Four Square in the form of a bungalow, with a broad shed dormer that is somewhat reminiscent of the Dutch Colonial.
- Bungalows appear throughout the community, but a particularly nice collection is located Shady Drive East.
- One of the finer collections of ranch and split level houses in Mt. Lebanon is in the Cedarhurst Manor and

Carleton Manor neighborhoods on Firwood and  
Pinewood drives and Elatan Drive.

Finally, the built environments that contribute to Mt.  
Lebanon's character are not all of architectural significance,  
but have value in terms of urban design, scale, and use. In  
particular, Mt. Lebanon's business districts along Washington  
and Beverly Roads present notable environments that would  
likely not meet the criteria for National Register eligibility, but  
are nonetheless worthy of preservation in some capacity.

## **Recommendations**

### **Methodology**

For other communities considering conducting a comprehensive survey such as this one, using volunteer labor and the PHMC database, we offer a number of suggestions to ensure that it runs smoothly:

- Secure some sort of written understanding from a volunteer that clarifies expectations and communicates the importance of the volunteer commitment.
- Assign one volunteer to log in all work as it is completed and maintain a map illustrating the progress of the work.
- Assign one or more volunteers to follow up on informational leads about specific properties to ensure that anecdotal oral histories are captured without slowing down the progress of the field work.
- Be sure that the database is established, that the necessary software is workable from the outset, and that adequate training is provided.

- Use digital photography exclusively, and assign one or more volunteers as the photo archivists for the project from the outset.

### **Database Maintenance**

The ACCESS database should be maintained by the Municipality on a dedicated server. Going forward, a keeper of the database should be assigned to input additional information as it becomes available. Consideration should also be given to how the database might be made available (on a read-only basis) to the public.

### **Further Research**

Because the microfiche collection of building permit plans only became available during Phase 3 of the project, additional research is warranted to gather the names of architects for resources surveyed in Phases 1 and 2. This work could be

completed by volunteers, either enthusiastic veterans or neophytes.

### **Further Data Analysis**

The database provides a solid basis for further analysis. Given the capabilities of the ACCESS database and the needs of the Mt. Lebanon community, analysis can be conducted in a variety of directions. Consider, for instance, some of the reports that might be generated from the database:

- All buildings designed by a specific architect.
- All buildings built by a specific builder.
- All buildings of a particular style or substyle.
- All commercial buildings of a particular style or time period.
- All buildings within a specified distance of a proposed new road or building project.

One query to consider in conducting further data analysis is the following: To document highlights of Mt. Lebanon as a premiere automobile suburb, is it preferable to identify neighborhoods that represent a broad range of styles and types, or those that represent specific styles almost exclusively? This issue is discussed further in the next section.

### **Historic District Ordinance**

The Historic Preservation Board should review the range of historic district ordinances currently in effect in comparable communities and consider a recommendation to the Commission that it study the possibility of instituting such an ordinance. In reviewing its options, the Board should reference *A Citizen's Guide to Protecting Historic Places: Local Preservation Ordinances*, published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2002. Consideration should be given to the role an ordinance can play beyond mere aesthetic regulation, to include such broader public purposes as economic development, heritage education and neighborhood revitalization. This broader perspective will ensure that an ordinance best serves the interests of all community constituents, including residents, property owners, business operators, and public officials.

Among the standard provisions of an historic preservation ordinance are:

- statement of purpose

- establishment of a review body with powers and duties
- criteria for designation
- designation procedures
- review procedures
- reviewable actions
- review standards
- demolition by neglect
- penalties and appeals
- provisions for economic hardships

Perhaps the most challenging choices *if district designation is pursued* will be establishment of criteria for designation. Just what will Mt. Lebanon choose to identify and preserve as the most significant buildings and environments? To preserve the community as a premiere automobile suburb, is it preferable to identify neighborhoods that represent a broad range of styles and types, or those that represent specific styles almost exclusively? Will the focus be on architecturally significant areas or cast a wider net to include those that represent a more modest suburban fabric through repetition and consistency in style and materials?

Designation and review procedures should include provisions

for interim protections to prevent rash undertakings in the face of pending designation.

Review standards should provide detailed provisions that extend well beyond the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and pertain to the particular styles, design features, details, materials, etc. that characterize any given district.

Other provisions, beyond control of exterior alterations and demolitions to individual structures, that might be considered in an ordinance could include:

- promoting a more pedestrian-friendly environment by banning or limiting gas stations, drive-in businesses, and surface parking, and by requiring landscape review for exceptions to these limitations.
- maintaining the scale of commercial districts that provide a certain environmental setting, but may not contain architecturally significant structures.
- encouraging land use choices that favor small-scale, owner-operated businesses over large, big-box retailers, thereby preserving and enhancing the unique local flavor of the community’s commercial offerings.

Such provisions will help to preserve the general environmental context that gives Mt. Lebanon its unique character.

Recommendation of an historic preservation ordinance will likely encounter resistance from sectors of the community, so significant public education should be conducted prior to taking it to a vote. The Board should continue its education campaign with presentations to public agencies and committees, as well as the general public.

### **National Register Designation**

It would appear that a number of areas in Mt. Lebanon would meet the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, and Mt. Lebanon may also decide to pursue listing of one or more districts. This option, and its implications, should also be incorporated into the public awareness campaign. The tendency among the lay public is to assume that National Register listing carries major restrictions on alterations and demolitions and/or that it offers the possibility of public grant money for preservation. Neither, of course, is the case, unless public money is involved or the owner of an income-producing

property is seeking historic preservation tax credits. This message cannot be repeated enough to the public.

### **Infusing a Preservation Ethic in Municipal Government**

Finally, it should be noted that each branch of municipal government can play a role in supporting preservation of Mt. Lebanon's unique collection of resources. It is the job of the Historic Preservation Board to define those roles and to promote the participation of all public departments to ensure that the value of Mt. Lebanon's architectural character is recognized and defended.

## **Community Awareness and Involvement**

The Survey team has used several avenues to promote awareness of the project and solicit both volunteers and information.

### **Community Talk**

In November 2003, before the project officially kicked off, Project Director Eliza Brown spoke to a gathering of The Historical Society of Mount Lebanon and the Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board to provide an overview of the survey and its anticipated applications. This talk was repeated periodically throughout the three-phase project.

### **Brochures**

Project Director Eliza Brown worked with the Mt. Lebanon Public Information Office to write and design a brochure for use throughout the three-phase project. The brochures were distributed through the Library, the Municipal offices, the schools, and, in response to inquiries, by mail and by volunteers in the field.

### **Calling Cards**

The Mt. Lebanon Public Information Office produced cards to be left in selected doors by survey volunteers, indicating that the Survey had visited the neighborhood and soliciting architectural and historical information from property owners.

### **Schools**

Project Director Eliza Brown contacted the principals and PTA heads for both Lincoln and Washington Schools to alert them to the project. In addition, she spoke to every class at Lincoln School about the project, and provided brochures for distribution to all students in Lincoln and Washington Schools. This effort reached approximately 800 students and their families.

### **Media Coverage**

*Mt. Lebanon Magazine* and others found the Cultural Resource Survey to be newsworthy.

### **Tours and Other Programs**

Several tours conducted during the project both reflected and generated public interest in the Survey. These tours ranged from walking tours as part of the District's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curriculum, to Trolley Tours, to a full-day workshop as part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference held in Pittsburgh in November 2006.

## Appendix: Street Parks

1. Beverly Heights Plan. Longuevue Drive and Washington Road, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 30, page 188.
2. Beverly School Plan. Altadena Drive and Markham Drive and Markham Drive and Seneca Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 33, page 178.
3. Cedarhurst Manor Addition Plan. Academy Place and Summer Place, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 35, page 56.
4. Cedarhurst Manor Plan. Bower Hill Road and Greenhurst Drive and Firwood Drive and Pinewood Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 34, page 140.
5. Clearview Revised Plan. Florida Avenue and Lebanon Avenue as recorded in Plan Book Volume 23, page 134.
6. Colonial Heights Plan. Beverly Road and Meadowcroft Avenue, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 30, page 174.
7. Hoodridge Terrace Plan. Ridgeview Drive and Woodland Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 37, page 82.
8. Kennedy Forest Plan No. 2. North Meadowcroft Avenue and Oak Forest Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 35, page 164.
9. Lebanon Hills Plan. Connecting Drive and Lebanon Hills Drive, Lebanon Hills Drive and Main Entrance Drive, and Park Entrance Drive and Washington Road, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 29, page 177.
10. Marlin Place Plan. Marlin Drives East and West and McCully Street, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 30, page 110.
11. Mission Hills Plan. Jefferson Drive and Washington Road, Mission Drive and Orchard Drive and Parkway Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 29, page 64.
12. Mission Hills Plan No. 2. Avon Drive and Jefferson Drive and Jefferson Drive and Parkway Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 29, page 130.
13. Mission Hills Plan No. 3. Jefferson Drive and Orchard Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 30, page 28.
14. Parker Gardens Plan. Beverly Road and Newburn Drive as recorded in Plan Book Volume 30, page 48.
15. St. Clair Terrace Plan. Mt. Lebanon Boulevard and Washington Road and St. Clair Circle, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 31, page 13.
16. Seminole Hills Plan. Allendale Place and Iroquois Drive; Cherokee Place and Ordale Boulevard; Iroquois Drive and Seminole Drive; Ordale Boulevard and Standish Boulevard; and Standish Boulevard and Washington Road, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 31, page 168.
17. Seminole Terrace Plan. Navahoe Drive and Terrace Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 33, page 6.
18. Seminole Terrace Plan No. 2. Mohican Drive and Navahoe Drive; Mohican Drive and Pueblo; and Mohican Drive and Terrace Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 33, pages 188 and 189.
19. Sunset Hills Plan. Parkside Avenue and Sunset Drive and Sunset Drive and Tampa Avenue, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 29, page 102.

- 20.** Sunset Hills Plan No. 3. Thornwood Drive and Thornycroft Avenue, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 31, page 157.
- 21.** Virginia Manor Addition Plan No. 5. Colony Circle, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 36, page 94.
- 22.** Virginia Manor Amended Plan. Neulon Avenue and Parker Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 35, page 116.
- 23.** Virginia Manor Plan. Midway Ridge and Parker Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 32, page 22.
- 24.** Willow Terrace Plan. Parkview Drive and Willow Drive, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 31, page 208.
- 25.** Virginia Manor Extension Plan, Cochran Road and Osage Road; Osage Road and Valleyview Road, as recorded in Plan Book Volume 34, page 116.