

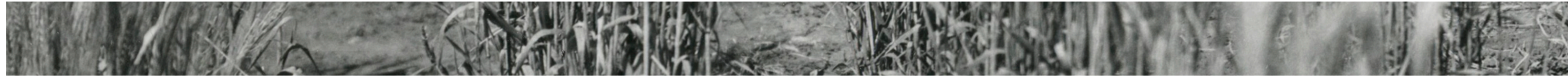
# Midcentury Suburban Fort Collins:

## *University Acres*

Anna Simpkins

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*The author would like to thank Maren Bzdek, Karen McWilliams, and Cassandra Bumgarner with the City of Fort Collins for access to historic property files and GIS software; Brad March at March, Olive & Pharris, LLC Attorneys at Law for private University Acres records and city directories, Sharon Rostek Ross for information about John Rostek, and Dale Terrel for information about Frank Terrel.*

# University Acres

## ***Cover Photos***

Top Row: 809 Buckeye St., 905 Garfield St., 1204 Newsom Street

Middle Row: 1300 Lory St., 805 East Pitkin Street, 1024 East Lake Street

Bottom Row: 1401 Stover St., 801 E Pitkin St., 1201 Ellis Street



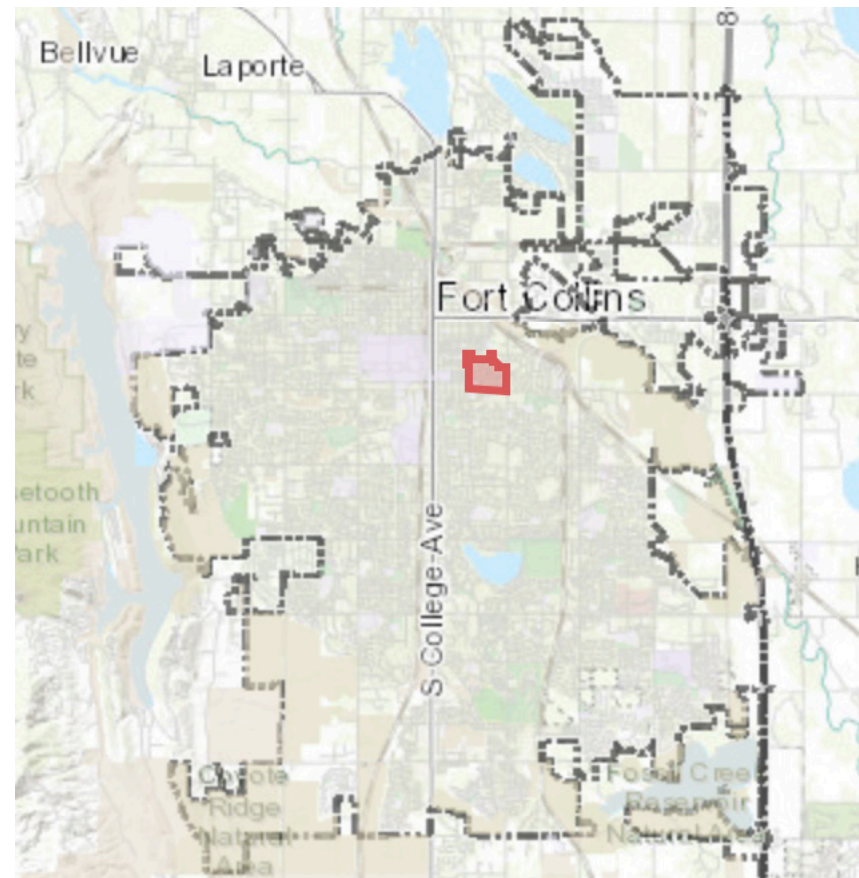
## Summary

University Acres is a residential neighborhood in north Fort Collins, Colorado. The subdivision includes 327 residential properties, two places of worship, one school, and two small retail parcels along Lemay Avenue. The neighborhood was one of a few midcentury developments that added housing units as Fort Collins grew to the south.<sup>1</sup> The street network is primarily contained within the neighborhood with collector streets and arterials leading out of the neighborhood. The neighborhood does not follow the grid-pattern found in the older, established neighborhoods it borders on the north and west. The neighborhood is dominated by one-story ranch houses, very few of which have had major modifications on the street-facing exterior facades. The neighborhoods' location and history link it to Colorado State University, less than a mile to the west. University Acres is a great example of a midcentury suburban housing development that has become a central area within an expanding city.

## Neighborhood Context

University Acres is a medium-sized development in a residential area within the City of Fort Collins. The neighborhood is roughly bound on the north by East Elizabeth Street on the east by South Lemay Avenue on the south by East Prospect Road and on the west by Stover Street. The neighborhood was near the eastern city limit when it was developed between the late 1950s-1972 and has since been engulfed by residential and commercial development as the city has continued to expand east and south. Poudre Valley Hospital and its associated

buildings and support services are located near the northeast corner of the neighborhood. Colorado State University is located one-half mile to the west of the neighborhood. Spring Creek runs just a few hundred feet from the neighborhood's southern boundary along East Prospect Road and the Cache la Poudre River cuts diagonally across Fort Collins three-quarters of a mile to the north. The neighborhood is relatively flat, sloping slightly between East Lake Street and East Prospect Road.



**Figure 1:** Neighborhood location within current city limits. *FC Maps.*

<sup>1</sup>Additional neighborhoods included Indian Hills and South College Heights located south of Spring Creek and the Sheely Drive neighborhood located southwest of East Prospect Road and South College Avenue. Sheely Drive is designated as a Local Landmark District.



**Figure 2:** East Pitkin Street looking west. Pitkin widens at it approaches the western neighborhood boundary at Stover Street..

East Pitkin Street is the main east-west thoroughfare through the neighborhood. East Pitkin Street is divided by a tree-lined median as you enter the neighborhood from the west at Stover Street. There is no primary north-south thoroughfare; instead arterials can be accessed from local streets within the neighborhood or via Stover Street and South Lemay Avenue along the eastern and western neighborhood boundaries. Bus routes currently serve the neighborhood along Stover Street, East Prospect Road, and South Lemay Avenue. Narrow sidewalks abutting the street with a sloped curb and gutter are present throughout the neighborhood. East Pitkin Street, Lory Street, East Lake Street, Morgan Street, Stover Street and Garfield Street all provide pedestrian and vehicular access outside of the neighborhood. Dedicated bike lanes are

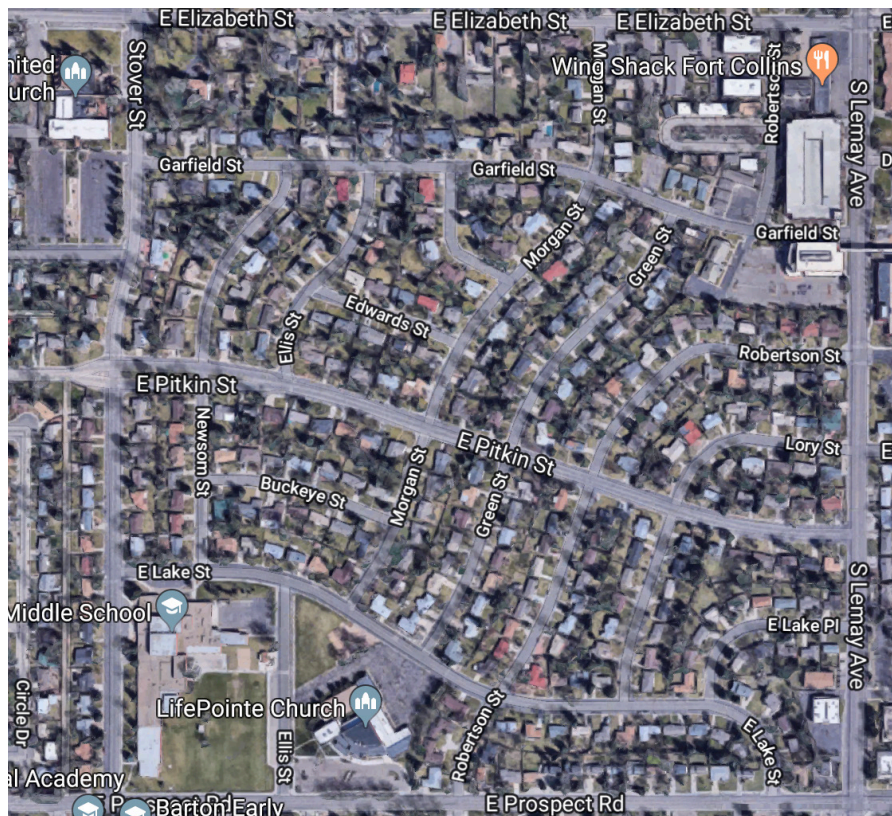


**Figure 3:** Poudre Valley Hospital looking NE from Robertson Street.

striped along South Lemay Avenue, East Pitkin Street, and Stover Street. The Pitkin Bikeway passes through the neighborhood, following East Pitkin Street with a jog north along Lory Street to provide a safe crossing at Lemay Avenue.

University Acres is predominantly residential. There are two places of worship, one school, and two small commercial buildings within the neighborhood boundary. The majority of the neighborhood is in the Residential Low-Density (RL) zone district; the west side of Stover is in the Neighborhood Conservation Low-Density (NCL) zone district. The two commercial properties and one apartment building at the southeast corner of the district are zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC). University Acres marked a shift in traditional development patterns in Fort Collins and epitomizes local early suburban characteristics. The neighborhood deviated from the grid pattern found throughout the Eastside and Westside neighborhoods. Eliminating the grid pattern





**Figure 4:** Current neighborhood configuration. *Google Maps.*

eliminated alleyways and brought the garage to the front of the house, emphasizing the role of the automobile in shaping the neighborhood.

## Development Patterns

University Acres was one of the first major postwar subdivisions in Fort Collins, following the adjacent Circle Drive neighborhood,

Sheely Drive, the Mantz Addition, and Miller Subdivision, among others. The houses and lots in University Acres are generally larger than other postwar subdivisions in Fort Collins and developed concurrently with the City's decision to bury utilities. The City of Fort Collins annexed the land encompassing University Acres with the Second College Addition in 1957.<sup>2</sup> The neighborhood is situated on the south half of the southeast quarter of section 13, township 7 north, range 69 and the north half of the southeast quarter of section 13.<sup>3</sup> Select previously developed parcels along the south side of East Elizabeth Street were excluded from the annexation. The additional housing in University Acres and surrounding neighborhoods proved vital as additional businesses including WaterPik and Woodward moved to the south end of town, attracting new residents as their workforce. Colorado State University also experienced steady growth throughout the 1950s and the new neighborhood was an attractive for new faculty and staff and their families due to its proximity to campus.

This land had been exclusively farmland until agricultural activities on the property ceased in 1958 when the State Board of Agriculture put the land up for sale.<sup>4</sup> Local developers purchased the land and laid out a pattern deviating from the traditional adjacent street grid pattern. This deviation was not uncommon for midcentury residential suburbs across the country as "larger parcel[s] [were] developed to form a more private, or nucleated, enclave separate from busy thoroughfares; such subdivisions frequently reflected principles of landscape architecture in the layout of streets and lots to follow the existing topography and

<sup>2</sup> City of Fort Collins, Ordinance 1 (1957).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> State Board of Agriculture ownership will be discussed in greater detail in the Property History section.



# University Acres



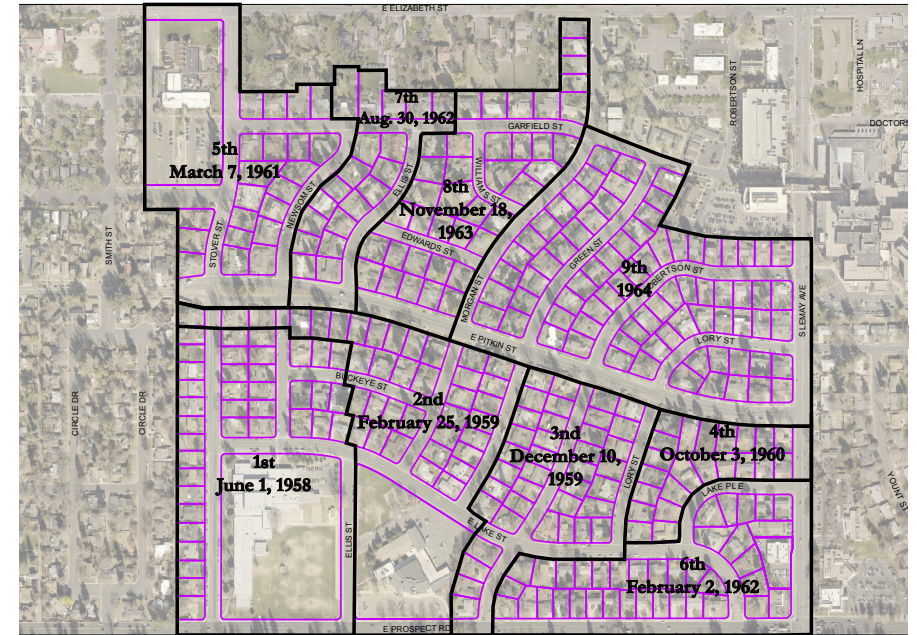
**Figure 5:** Property prior to annexation, May 1956. *Fort Collins History Connection*

create a parklike setting that fulfilled the ideal of domestic life in a semi-rural environment.”<sup>5</sup> The undulating street pattern was the one of the first in Fort Collins and followed the natural topography to help drainage toward Spring Creek.<sup>6</sup> The neighborhood maintains the uncommonly wide streets that are found in Fort Collins’ turn of the century neighborhoods.

The neighborhood was platted through nine subdivisions between

<sup>5</sup> David Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, “Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for the Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places,” *National Register Bulletin* (2002): 10.

<sup>6</sup> Clark Mapes, City Planner, e-mail message to author, March 28, 2019.

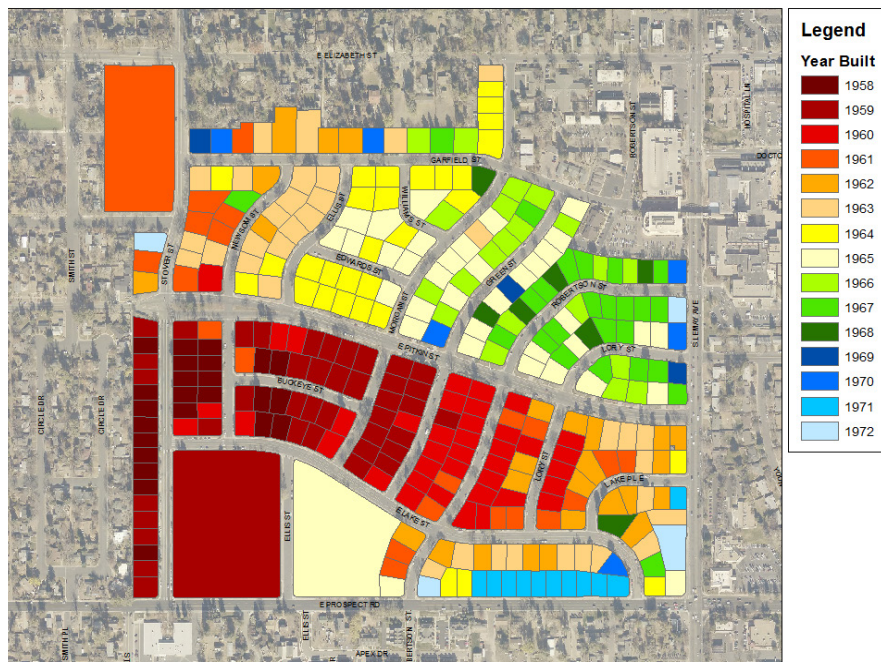


**Figure 6:** Nine University Acres subdivisions. Mapped by the author using *ArcGIS*.

1958 and 1968. The neighborhood generally developed from west to east and from south to north to connect with existing neighborhoods. Both builders and private owners purchased original lots. The neighborhoods period of significance spans from 1957 when the land was annexed into the City of Fort Collins until the last residential property was completed in 1972.

University Acres is well connected to adjacent neighborhoods compared to other midcentury suburban developments and does not require crossing any major arterials to access the historic Eastside





**Figure 7:** Heat map indicating neighborhood development pattern. Mapped by the author using *ArGIS*.

neighborhood. East Pitkin Street serves as the primary east west thoroughfare and Stover Street serves as a primary north south road. The neighborhood does have some vehicular accessibility limitations that are not unique for its time; there is no direct access from University Acres to the adjacent Circle Drive neighborhood to the west, even though these seventeen properties share an alley with the neighborhood. Additionally, to exit the neighborhood to the south or the east, users must utilize South Lemay Avenue or East Prospect Road, both major arterials that carry high traffic volumes throughout the City.

Each of the nine subdivisions is governed by a set of protective covenants. The covenants are essentially identical for each of the subdivisions, indicating land use shall be solely residential; the exceptions for the two places of worship and commercial buildings along Lemay Avenue are included. Dwelling size minimums were included ranging from 1,000 to 1,350 square feet, depending on the filing. Garages could not exceed three cars in size and buildings could not exceed thirty feet in height from finished grade. The covenants prohibit raising livestock or poultry of any kind on a property and require any new buildings or alterations to be approved by the Architectural Control Committee.<sup>7</sup> All covenants are tied to the land and continue in perpetuity with an option to amend every twenty-five years.<sup>8</sup>

The larger houses and lots in University Acres attracted more affluent families as they generally cost more. Individuals and families purchasing new houses in University Acres included doctors, University professors and employees, attorneys, and company managers.

## Community & Commercial Buildings

University Acres was originally envisioned as an entirely residential neighborhood. One school, two places of worship, and two small commercial properties were included in the original plats and remain such today. Leshar Junior High School (now Leshar Middle School) was included in the University Acres First Filing in 1958 encompassing Tract A. Fort Collins was experiencing an influx of young

<sup>7</sup> The Architectural Control Committee consisted of the original developers: Mae Tiley, Bob Everitt, and Bill Tiley.

<sup>8</sup> "University Acres Subdivision." Legal Records and Correspondence. Box U. March, Olive, & Pharris Attorneys at Law, Fort Collins, CO.

families because of new job opportunities and a growing university. The southeast part of town needed additional educational facilities to service the new neighborhood. Denver architect Alfred Watts Grant designed the new school in the International style.<sup>9</sup> Grant also designed Poudre High School in Fort Collins and other educational facilities around Colorado. Leshar was named after long-time Poudre School District Superintendent David B. Leshar and opened to students in the fall of 1960.



**Figure 8:** Leshar IB World Middle School. Photo by the author.

The building retains its International design, lacking building ornamentation and maintaining clean, straight lines, and remains an activity hub within the neighborhood. The building would be considered contributing to a potential future University Acres Historic District. The building is inherently linked to the residential development through its continued use as a school and the neighborhood's continued attraction

for young families.

The site for Plymouth Congregational Church was included in the neighborhoods second filing in 1959 encompassing Tract B.<sup>10</sup> The large property abuts Ellis Street and Leshar Middle School to the west and the neighborhood boundary to the south. The original building was built in 1959; however, it has undergone substantial modifications since its original construction and the original form and appearance have been heavily altered. This place of worship would be considered a non-contributing resource to a potential future University Acres Historic District due to the alterations.

First United Methodist Church sits at the northwest corner of the district and was included in the fifth filing in 1961 as Tract C. The



**Figure 9:** First United Methodist Church. Photo by the author.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Thomas, "In the Hallowed Halls of Learning," *Historitecture: Fort Collins, CO*, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Also formerly known as First Baptist Church; currently LifePointe Church.



building sits approximately where historic farm buildings sat prior to the neighborhood's annexation and development. Local architect William Robb designed the building and the brick building is architecturally significant for its folded plate roof and stained glass windows.<sup>11</sup> An International Style building was added to the west side of the site to accommodate educational and child-care programming. The 1961 building and surrounding landscaping provide a dramatic gateway when entering the neighborhood from the northwest at Stover and East Elizabeth Streets. This place of worship would be considered a contributing feature to a future University Acres Historic District.

Two small commercial buildings front South Lemay Avenue at the east neighborhood boundary near the intersection of South Lemay Avenue and East Prospect Road. Their inclusion is appropriate because the commercial application is the highest and best land use near a major



**Figure 10:** Former fueling station at the NW corner of East Prospect Road and South Lemay Avenue. Photo by the author.

intersection. The first building at 1517 South Lemay Avenue occupies the northwest corner of the intersection on land Humble Oil Company purchased from the neighborhood developer. The building served as a fueling station for from its construction c. 1965 until 1999 when it was sold and converted to a flower shop and the fuel pumps were removed. The building currently houses a dance studio. The building is a simple masonry rectangle with a steep shed metal roof. There is a mansard vinyl awning on the primary façade advertising the current business. The building would be considered a contributing property to a potential future University Acres Historic District for its association with various neighborhood-scale services since it's construction and inclusion in the original nine subdivisions..



**Figure 11:** Office building located at the eastern edge of the neighborhood boundary facing South Lemay Avenue. Photo by the author.

<sup>11</sup> "Our History," RB+B Architects, <https://www.rbbarchitects.com/story/our-history/>.



The second commercial property sits immediately to the north at 1501 South Lemay Avenue and was completed in 1972 as a medical office. This was a desirable location due to the proximity to Poudre Valley Hospital, a neighborhood anchor since 1925.<sup>12</sup> The building has housed numerous businesses since its construction but retains its original design and would be considered a contributing property for a potential future University Acres Historic District for its association with neighborhood-scale services.

## Residential Buildings

University Acres is a low-density residential neighborhood. There are 327 residential buildings spread over 154 acres. All residential buildings were constructed between 1958 and 1972. A few properties have had substantial exterior modifications, but nearly all retain their historic appearance and form. The majority of the houses found within the neighborhood are ranch-style or tri-level split.<sup>13</sup> Brick and stone are the predominant building materials with board and batten and other wood and composite siding materials.

Houses have generous setbacks from the public right of way and are organized on gently curved streets. The neighborhood roughly follows the adjacent grid pattern, and groupings of properties can loosely be classified as blocks. Parcels are generally larger than the adjacent historic neighborhoods and increased in size with the later subdivisions, ranging from 7,500 square feet to over 18,000 square feet. Houses are also generally larger due to the minimum square footages imposed with

the neighborhood covenants and the majority have basements. Few residential properties have been modified to such an extent that their original appearance is unrecognizable, while others rise to the level of being individually architecturally significant for their use of a particular style or inclusion of styled elements. Overall, the residential properties together form a cohesive neighborhood pattern with clear character and represent a specific development period within Fort Collins' history. Included examples are all found within University Acres.

## Styles

The earliest houses in the neighborhood follow the traditional one-story ranch style with eave overhangs, large chimneys and street-facing garages. Ranch-style houses grew out of financial controls put in place following World War II, and the style quickly grew in popularity and was the most frequently built style in the United States in the 1950s



**Figure 12:** Example of a typical ranch-style house. Photo by the author.

<sup>12</sup> Larimer County Hospital opened at this site in 1925, and later became Poudre Valley Hospital.

<sup>13</sup> All styles were assigned using Virginia Savage McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the accepted authority on residential buildings for historic preservation research.



and 1960s.<sup>14</sup> Ranches in University Acres range from very simple with minimal ornamentation to storybook-styled. The earliest ranches are generally located south of Pitkin and are slightly smaller in scale than later ranches. A one-car garage is also more typical for the early ranches rather than the two-car garage found on later iterations. The ranch style continued to dominate the neighborhood through the 1960s and their wide lots with mature trees and green space continue to characterize the neighborhood today.



**Figure 13:** Example of a contemporary-style house. Photo by the author.

Few high-style contemporary houses are scattered throughout the University Acres. These properties are characterized by low-pitched gable and slant roofs with broad expanses of windows. Some examples include covered walkways, exposed rafter tails and purlins, and carports. In University Acres, some of the earliest houses adopted the contemporary style, but had largely fallen out of fashion by the mid-1960s in favor of the ranch, split level, and two-story minimal traditional.



**Figure 14:** Example of a typical tri-level split form house. Photo by the author.

Tri-level split form houses are the second most prolific in University Acres following the ranch. Virginia McAlester explains “the tri-level split offered a practical way to incorporate a location for two new family possessions, the automobile and the television” by providing a garage level, family living level, and a quiet bedroom level.<sup>15</sup> The first tri-level split in University Acres was built in 1959, but the form was most common between 1963 and 1969.

Less common, but present in University Acres are bi-level split houses with a central entry evenly placed between the two floors, one of which is partially underground. Bi-level split form houses are scattered throughout University Acres, mostly concentrated at the east end of East Pitkin Street and fronting East Prospect Road. These were some of the later houses constructed in the district.

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 2015), 602.

<sup>15</sup> McAlester, 613.





**Figure 15:** Example of a typical bi-level split form house. Photo by the author.

While built later and encompassing more square footage than a typical minimal traditional, two-story minimal traditional examples are found throughout University Acres. The properties have simple detailing with relatively flat facades and broad siding. Most have shallow overhangs and sliding windows. These were also some of the later houses built in University Acres and provided more living space than the earlier styles.



**Figure 16:** Example of a typical two-story minimal traditional house. Photo by the author.

<sup>16</sup> McAlester, 688.



**Figure 17:** Example of a typical mansard-style house. Photo by the author.

More unusual but still present in University Acres are mansard houses identified by their mansard roofs. The examples in the district all feature symmetrical rooflines. Mansard houses were “the primary formal and ‘historic’ style built during an era dominated by more informal Ranch-style homes and Contemporary designs” as evidenced in University Acres.<sup>16</sup>

The architectural styles and forms found within University Acres reflect the changing tastes and user needs over the ten years the neighborhood developed. Landscaping, sensitive updates, and lack of any demolitions have ensured University Acres has retained the traditional building forms contributing to the setting and feeling.

## Materials

Brick and stone veneer were popular building materials for mid century neighborhoods due to new advances with veneer application technologies and its sturdy appearance. Mixing multiple cladding





**Figure 18:** Veneer examples clockwise from top left: Traditional brick, red clinker brick, brick with elongated stone, rough stone with brick, elongated stone, weeping mortar joints. Photos by the author.

materials on one facade was also a deliberate style choice for many of the housing types found in University Acres. The majority of University Acres houses incorporate brick or stone veneer to some degree. Variations include full brick veneer, half brick veneer with siding above, a stone feature wall near the primary entry, or a combination of brick, stone, and siding. Brick color varies from traditional red, to blonde that is common across the Front Range, to peach. Stone veneers appear in a variety of applications; some are cut to appear like elongated bricks and others are applied in a rough, natural pattern.

Board and batten siding is prevalent on the residential properties in University Acres; it was an economical option in the 1960s and is frequently combined with other materials. Wood clapboard, vinyl, and aluminum siding are also present. Wood shingle roofs were standard when University Acres developed, however as roofs have been replaced, most property owners have opted for the more typical asphalt shingle. This material change does not greatly impact a building's historic integrity, as it is considered a reversible change and wood shingles could be re-installed at any time in the future.

Brick and stone chimneys are present on sides, primary facades and interior to houses around the neighborhood. Ornate chimneys appear on some high-styled houses. Others have been replaced with gas inserts, and aluminum vent pipes are now visible where chimneys once protruded from a roof line.

Visible historic windows in the neighborhood are wood or aluminum. Wood hopper windows and aluminum sliding windows are



**Figure 19:** Original aluminum sliding window. Photo by the author.

common. Aluminum was the most common window type installed in the 1950s and 1960s; the historic wood windows indicate that property owners had some control in the materials used and invested in higher quality products. A number of the properties feature small sliding windows on the primary façade, indicative of bedrooms on the interior.

Egress windows have been added to the basement of many properties to create additional living space. This modification also does not detract from historic integrity as most are not visible or are easily disguised and are necessary for life safety.

Historic photographs indicate that garage doors were commonly used as an aesthetic outlet for the property; many doors were painted in alternating stripes or rectangles, had raised, painted diamond patterns, or had unconventional light placement. A handful of properties retain their original garage doors with decorative schemes; most, however, have been replaced over time as they wore out or the owners' style has changed.

## Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

University Acres contains 331 properties. Six properties have had significant exterior alterations and are considered non-contributing; the remaining 325 properties are contributing resources. While the neighborhood remains largely unaltered when viewed from the public right of way, certain properties have been altered, marring their original appearance and form. The following analysis and included inventory explain the resources and indicate whether they would be considered contributing or non-contributing to a local University Acres Historic District. As of today, there are twenty properties that are not yet 50 years old so cannot be considered historic-age. However, all properties were reviewed for local district contribution.

As discussed in the commercial property section, First United Methodist Church, Leshar Middle School, and the two commercial properties at the northwest corner of South Lemay Avenue and East Prospect Road are considered contributing properties. These resources are directly tied to the neighborhood's development and continue to serve neighborhood scale and oriented functions as they did when they were first constructed.

Non-contributing properties are properties where the primary building has been altered to such an extent that it no longer retains historic significance, is no longer recognizable as its historic form, and no longer adds to the overall neighborhood cohesiveness and feeling. The neighborhood survey identified three properties that are non-contributing. These properties have had extensive exterior alterations their historic form is no longer discernible. These properties have lost historic



integrity of workmanship, materials, design, or feeling.

## Property History

### Charles Bruce Andrews

Camp Collins was settled on the banks of the Poudre River in 1862, approximately one and one quarter miles from this property. Early settlers farmed the property; most early owners held the property for just a few years before selling. Charles Bruce Andrews bought the north half of the southeast quarter plus four acres of Section 13, township 7 north, range 69 from a Mary Harris in 1893. Andrews was well known in the community after passing through Fort Collins in 1871 and settling permanently in 1872. Andrews erected a residence, shed, barn, and two unmarked outbuildings. Some of the buildings appear on a 1956 aerial image of the area, and were likely demolished with the construction of First United Methodist Church in 1961.



**Figure 20:** Charles Bruce Andrews c. 1905.  
*Fort Collins History Connection*

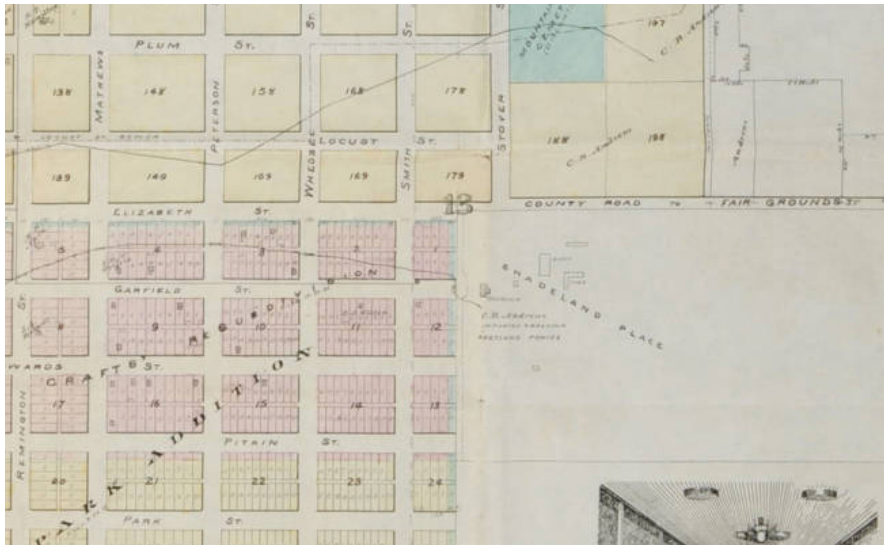
Andrew's first known residence in Fort Collins was the McHugh House at 202 Remington St., which he purchased unfinished and built the carriage house prior to the McHugh's tenure. Andrews also lived in a house at 211 Canyon Ave., the present site of the Rocky Mountain Bank Building. Andrews and Abner Loomis were business associates who were financially successful in the cattle industry. Andrews owned property up into Wyoming, throughout present day Fort Collins, Livermore, and up Poudre Canyon. Several prominent buildings are associated with Andrews married Julia Henderson in 1881 and they had one son, James. Charles Andrews was described as "a lovable character. Simple in habits, unaffected in manner, democratic in thought and actions and a very genial gentleman...he was a man who at all times and under all circumstances commanded the confidence and esteem of his fellow-men."<sup>17</sup> At the time of his death in 1905, Andrews was working as vice-president of Poudre Valley Bank.

An 1894 City plat map lists the property as Shadeland Place for "the fine grove of trees on the place, which comprises one hundred and twenty well-improved acres, within the city limits."<sup>18</sup> The map also noted Shetland ponies on the property; Andrews is remembered as bringing the first herd of Shetland Ponies to Colorado.<sup>19</sup> A residence and four agricultural outbuildings once stood near present day East Elizabeth Street, Stover Street, and Garfield Street, roughly the First United Methodist Church property. Apple and cherry orchards are noted on the

<sup>17</sup> Ansel Watrous, *History of Larimer County Colorado: Collated and Compiled from Historical Authorities, Public Reports, Official Records, and Other Reliable Sources—Stories of Indian Troubles and the Pioneer Days*. (Fort Collins, CO: The Courier Printing & Publishing Company, 1911) .355.

<sup>18</sup> *Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity Colorado*, (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1898), 364.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*.



**Figure 21:** Lower right corner of 1894 plat map showing the Andrews property. *Fort Collins History Connection*.

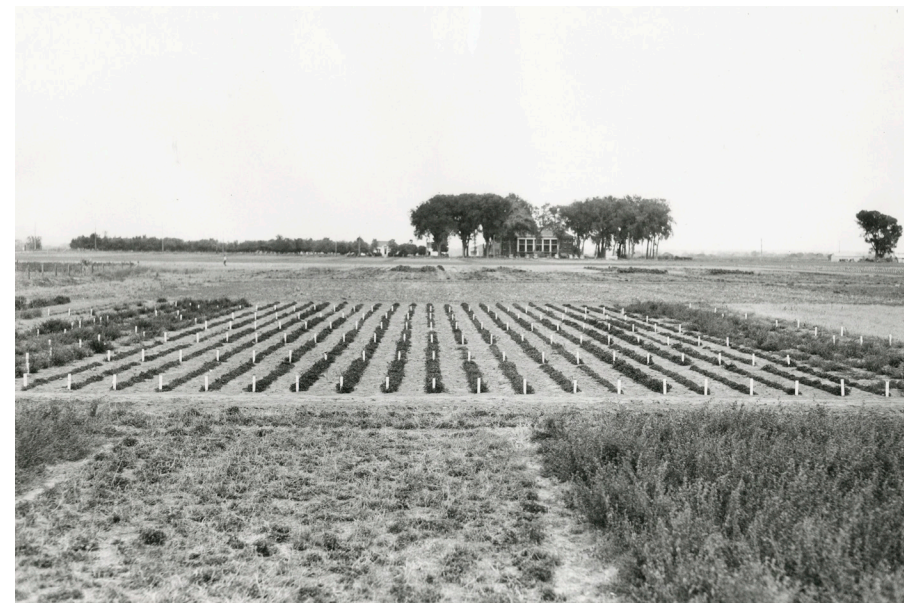
property, and Andrews also raised cattle during his tenure at Shadeland Place. It is not known whether cattle were raised on this property or some of Andrews' other vast landholdings.

Charles Andrews built a new house on Canyon Avenue c. 1902 and sold Shadeland Place to the State Board of Agriculture in August 1904 for a sum of \$30,000. Andrews died shortly after in November 1905 and is buried at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins. As fate would have it, Andrew's Canyon Avenue house was moved to 725 East Elizabeth Street in 1963, abutting University Acres and looking over his former land.

## State Board of Agriculture/Colorado State University

<sup>20</sup> Larimer County Deed Book 181, Pg 422.

The State Board of Agriculture purchased the property in 1904 for research and teaching purposes for the nearby Colorado Agricultural College. There is no recorded deed conveying the property sale; instead an agreement the county recorded an agreement between the parties noting the \$30,000 sum.<sup>20</sup> The first ten years brought financial and manpower struggles to the agronomy farm. President Charles A. Lory made the Experiment Station his research focus. A 1915 mill levy and agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture propelled the agronomy farm's research efforts forward. Early research efforts included potential road surfacing materials and horse breeding. These efforts were abandoned



**Figure 22:** Agronomy Farm looking East toward Hospital Rd., 1937. *Archives & Special Collections- Colorado State University*.





**Figure 23:** Agronomy Farm looking W toward agricultural buildings with agronomist David Robertson, 1923. *Archives & Special Collections- Colorado State University*. The L-shaped building appears in the 1894 map showing the Andrews property. .

after a few years and research focuses shifted into crop and plant research.

The Experiment Station conducted potato disease research, seed research, and soil research throughout the site's operation. Additional staple research topics included alfalfa, apple trees, weeds to study Colorado plant diseases, beets, and fertilizers. Farming operations utilized the Andrews outbuildings and the dean of agriculture and later Agronomy department head occupied the Andrews house from 1903-1935. The College also built a fireproof seed storage shed on the property. It is unclear exactly when these buildings were demolished, but they are present in a 1956 aerial image.

<sup>21</sup> "CSU Farm Bought for \$2,150 Acre," The Denver Post, March 3, 1958.

As educational and research focuses shifted, Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College transitioned to Colorado State University, and development crept south, the Agronomy Farm became an attractive swath of land for potential development. The developer approached the State Board of Agriculture who finally sold the property in 1958, moving agronomy operations to other local properties and experimental properties around the State.

### ***Tiley/Everett Development***

Fort Collins residents and real estate developers Mae Tiley and her son Bill partnered with developer Bob Everitt in 1957 when the State Board of Agriculture put the agronomy farm land up for sale. The Denver Post reported:

The State Board of Agriculture has accepted a bid of \$2150 per acre for Colorado State University's 154-acre agronomy farm one mile from the main campus in Southeast Fort Collins. Mrs. Mae Tiley and Robert Everitt, the successful bidders, paid \$80,000 for immediate possession of the first 24 acres of property. They announced they plan a housing development to be known as University Acres. Ten Acres they sold at the bid price to School District 5 for a junior high school. Mrs. Tiley, a local developer, and Everitt, a lumber dealer, said they will take possession of the remaining 130 acres of agronomy farm land as the university surrenders the property. The university plans to establish its agronomy farm at a new location.<sup>21</sup>



The Tileys owned and operated University Realty and Everitt managed Everitt Lumber Company where he was a part owner. Together the trio formed University Acres, Inc. with Mae Tiley serving as president for the subsequent nine subdivisions. Present day Lemay Avenue, the east district boundary, was renamed from Hospital Road in the early 1960s.<sup>22</sup> after Mae Tiley and Bob Everitt's father, Les. The intended spelling was "Lemae," however it was never corrected. The Tileys and Everitt later partnered for other residential ventures including the Indian Hills Subdivision and University Mall.<sup>23</sup>

University Acres, Inc. selected the neighborhood name, University Acres, as well as new street names within the neighborhood. All streets that originate and terminate within the neighborhood are named after former Colorado State University presidents. Roads that exist outside of University Acres were extended through the neighborhood; they do not, however, honor individuals associated with the University. Elijah Evan Edwards (Edwards St.) was Colorado Agricultural College's first president, serving from 1879 through 1882. The State Board of Agriculture hired Alson Ellis (Ellis St.) in 1892 and he served until 1889. Charles A. Lory (Lory St.) took over from Barton O. Aylesworth in 1909 and invested his energy in developing the experiment station. Charles Green followed Lory's thirty-one year tenure in 1940; followed by Roy Newsom in 1948 and William Morgan in 1949. Robertson Street and Williams Street are the two outliers deviating from past presidents. David "Scotty" Robertson was an agronomy professor and led agronomy efforts at the Experiment Station beginning in the late 1940s. James

Williams was head basketball coach and athletic director at Colorado State when University Acres was developed.

University Acres is inexorably linked to Colorado State University through its name, street names, and physically due to its location on the site of the former agronomy farm, central to the original mission of land-grant colleges and universities.

## **1958-Present**

University Acres attracted a variety of residents as the neighborhood developed. Early residents included CSU employees and professors since the neighborhood provides convenient campus access. The neighborhood continues to attract young families, retired persons, and residents connected to Colorado State. Ten original owners still reside in the neighborhood. The last house built in University Acres was completed in 1972. Very few houses in the neighborhood have been modified from their original construction and none to date have been scrapped. The neighborhood has undergone little modification since that time. Two contextual changes include the Poudre Valley Hospital's continued growth at the east district boundary and Fort Collins High School's relocation outside of the immediate neighborhood vicinity.

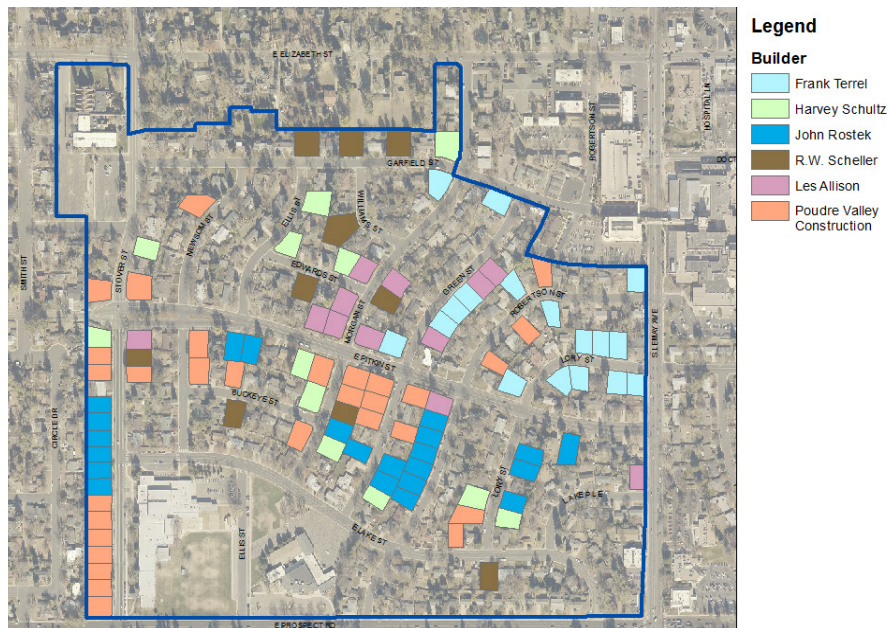
## **Developers & Builders**

University Acres, Inc. sold all original lots after the subdivisions were platted. The majority of the houses were built during the original land-owner's tenure; however, several parcels changed hands multiple

<sup>22</sup> Plats indicate the change from Hospital Road to South Lemay Avenue occurred sometime between 1960 and 1965. Long-time City Planner, Ted Shepard, indicated the change could have happened informally without a City Council resolution, as was no uncommon for the time.

<sup>23</sup> The University Mall is the extant shopping center on the west side of South College Avenue between Spring Creek and Drake Road.





**Figure 24:** Rostek, Miller, Scheller, Allison & Terrel houses. Mapped by the author using *ArGIS*.

times prior to a house being constructed. Six builders were responsible for constructing a combined ninety-one houses in University Acres.

### **John Rostek**

John E. Rostek is a prominent figure in Fort Collins' history. Rostek is a nationally known racecar driver who co-founded the Interstate Racing Association and raced #77 on tracks around the country from the late 1940s into the 1960s. Speedway Park opened in Fort Collins in 1950 and was one of Rostek's regular circuits. Rostek was one of the first builders in University Acres, completing twenty-two houses from 1958-1963 when he was not busy racing. He built primarily ranch style houses in University Acres, and was also involved in commercial

construction projects around Fort Collins including Charco Broiler



**Figure 25:** John Rostek by his car, c. 1951. Photo Courtesy of Sharon Rostek Ross.

Restaurant, the Lamplighter Motel on north College (now America's Best Value Inn), and the Elks Club on East Mulberry Road John Rostek died tragically in a plane crash at the age of 44 and is buried at Grandview Cemetery.

### **Harold Miller/Poudre Valley Construction**

Harold Miller was a well-known builder around the Front Range. Like Rostek, Miller and his Poudre Valley Construction business built both commercial and residential properties. Of the frequent builders, Poudre Construction was the most prolific, completing thirty houses between 1958 and 1967. Miller and Poudre Valley Construction built primarily ranch-style houses throughout University Acres. Harold Miller and his family lived at 1301 Green Street while he was busy building.





**Figure 26:** Harold Miller (L) with Chief Building Official, c. 1977. *Fort Collins History Connection*.

## **R.W. Scheller**

Little is known about Reinhart W. Scheller and his wife, Phyllis. The family lived in the South College Heights neighborhood while Scheller built ten houses throughout the neighborhood. Of the styles of houses in University Acres, R.W. Scheller built the widest variety including ranch style houses, styled ranch houses, contemporary, and minimal traditional houses.

## **Harvey Schultz**

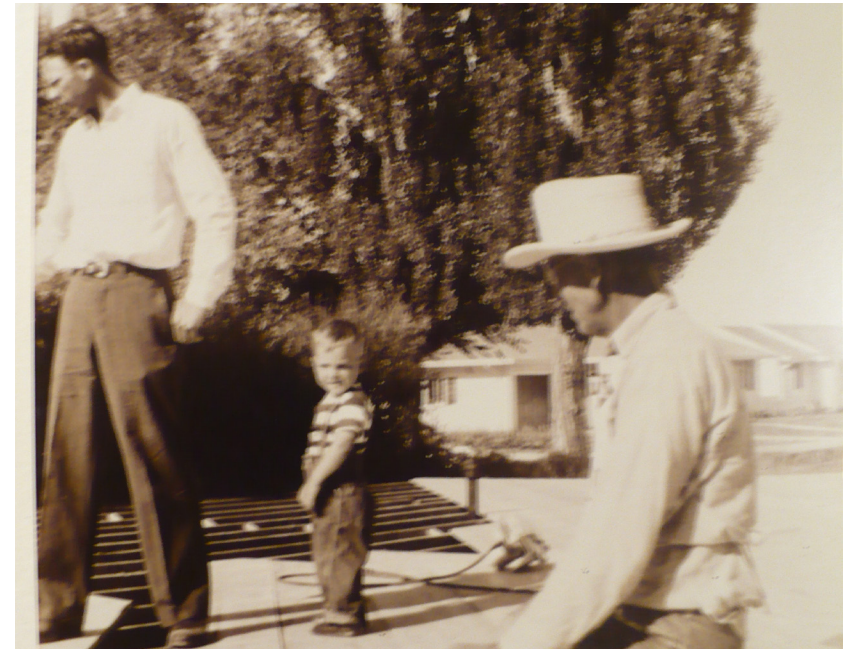
Harvey Schultz built twelve houses scattered throughout University Acres. Schultz was an active builder throughout Fort Collins in the 1950s and 1960s and built ranch-style and tri-level split houses in University Acres between 1959 and 1965. Schultz was an active union-member and lived in Old Town with an office on West Mulberry Road.

## **Les Allison**

Allison was also a University Acres resident while he was busy building new houses. The Allison family lived at 917 Edwards St., one of the twelve houses Les Allison completed in University Acres. Allison worked with the property owners to personalize house details and forms that were best suited to the future owner's needs. Les Allison built primarily ranch style houses in University Acres.

## **Frank Terrel**

Frank Terrel was one of the later builders to come to University Acres, building seventeen houses between 1965 and 1970. Terrel



**Figure 27:** Frank Terrel c. late 1940s. Photo courtesy of Dale Terrel.





built primarily tri-level split and two-story minimal traditional houses. Like Miller and Allison, Frank Terrel also moved his family into the neighborhood during the time he was busy building. The Terrel House is located at 1212 Green Street

**Notable Properties**

Sixteen properties within University Acres rise to the level of being individually architecturally significant. These properties retain their original detailing and form and are high-style examples of their more common form found around the neighborhood. These properties reach a level of being eligible for designation as local historic landmarks, independent of any inclusion in a future district nomination. Properties include:

813 Buckeye St..	821 Buckeye St.
901 Edwards St.	1101 Ellis St.
1109 Ellis St.	708 Garfield St.
1019 Garfield St.	1209 Green St.
1220 Green St.	800 E. Lake St.
820 E. Lake St.	1313 Lory St.
1212 Morgan St.	1329 Robertson St.
1105 Williams St.	

Additional property information is included in the residential index.

**Statement of Significance**

The land encompassing University Acres served as an agricultural property for the first 100 years of Fort Collins settlement and has been a neighborhood for the past sixty years. Early Fort Collins families farmed the property before it served as Colorado State University’s agronomy farm for fifty-three years.<sup>24</sup> Midcentury neighborhood development marked the beginning of steady growth for the City of Fort Collins. Campus historians note “as much as any, this site exemplifies Fort Collins’ rural to urban transformation.”<sup>25</sup> The neighborhood today is a vibrant community of young families as well as some original property owners. District boundaries follow the original nine subdivisions that created the neighborhood. These boundaries roughly follow existing collector streets and the College Addition second annexation. The neighborhood’s period of significance spans from 1957-1972, encompassing the year the land lost its agricultural function to the year the last building was constructed.

University Acres is locally significant under Criterion C for its distinctive characteristics of mid-twentieth century residential architecture and street pattern. The neighborhood represents the beginning of a shift toward suburban neighborhoods in Fort Collins centered around the automobile with attached, street-facing garages. The neighborhood resources were erected by local builders who lived and worked in the community and made community-wide impacts beyond the individual houses they built. The neighborhood is significant for its shift away from traditional development patterns; utilizing undulating streets that followed the natural topography, burying utility lines, and

<sup>24</sup> The agronomy farm is also referenced as the east farm and experiment station.  
<sup>25</sup> James Hansen, Gordon Hazard, and Linda Meyer, *CSU’s Sense of Place: A Campus History of Colorado’s Land-Grant University* (Fort Collins, CO, 2018), 223.



omitting alleyways. The neighborhood retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

University Acres is also locally significant under Criterion B for its association with developers and individual builders who created the physical neighborhood resources and their influence in creating this and other midcentury neighborhoods in Fort Collins. University Acres was the first partnership between the Everitt and Tiley families who later partnered on both residential and commercial projects as Fort Collins grew south. Everitt Lumber supplied building materials for the neighborhood while the Tiley's managed real estate transactions for University Acres, Inc.

**Location:** University Acres and each contributing property retain integrity of location. Buildings retain their original orientation with the streetscape and proximity to services around the city including shopping, medical services, and restaurants.

**Design:** The majority of the properties within University Acres retain their original design and style. Building permits indicate that a number of properties have had rear additions over the years to create additional living and or patio space, but the street-facing appearance and form remain largely unchanged. The few modifications that have occurred substantially altering an individual house's design do not detract from the overall neighborhood character and the overall development pattern and house form popular during the period of significance remains in tact.

**Setting:** Although Fort Collins has continued to grow and develop in all directions since University Acres was developed, the immediate context has changed very little over the last 60 years. Colorado State University and Poudre Valley Hospital remain the primary large public institutions near the neighborhood; however, their growth and expansion have not encroached upon or negatively impacted University Acres' setting. The neighborhood retains its connectedness to adjacent neighborhoods and quiet walkability.

**Materials:** Materials used when originally constructing the houses in University Acres appear to have very minimal change. Brick veneer, stone veneer, board and batten siding, and clapboard siding are the primary building materials found around the neighborhood. Cladding materials are character defining features for many properties with a variety of brick colors, brick quoins, a combination of veneer and wood siding, and weeping mortar joints.

**Workmanship:** The houses in University Acres very much "illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic period" through their workmanship, embodied in their materials and design.<sup>26</sup> Houses constructed during this period were solidly built with high-quality materials. The houses in University Acres were built by individual builders rather than one developer each conveying their own style and aesthetic that carry through a cohesive but eclectic neighborhood aesthetic, reflecting the individual tastes of the property owner and the builder.

<sup>26</sup> National Register Bulletin, Historic Residential Suburbs..





***Feeling:*** University Acres retains the same residential neighborhood feeling as when it was constructed. Adjacent neighborhoods and land uses have not negatively encroached on University Acres and the majority of the properties have had little or no modification, retaining the cohesive pattern. The primary change from the neighborhoods construction is the addition of large trees that were likely planted soon after houses were constructed that have matured over the last sixty years, strengthening the neighborhoods residential feeling.

***Association:*** University Acres retains integrity of association for Criterion C. The individual properties taken as a whole embody the distinctive characteristics of a traditional mid-century neighborhood through the development pattern and architectural features. The neighborhood retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling; all contributing to the neighborhoods integrity of association.

## **University Acres**

Should the City of Fort Collins and property owners seek local landmark district designation, University Acres embodies the characteristics of suburban mid-century development that started Fort Collins' shift away from its agricultural heritage. The neighborhood is historically significant for moving Fort Collins away from a predominantly agricultural history to a city known for innovation, education, and craft beer. The neighborhood retains a high degree of historic integrity and is an intact example of suburban expansion.

# **University Acres**



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# University Acres



## Appendix: Property Inventory

This inventory contains records for all residential properties. Historic photographs are courtesy of the Fort Collins Museum of Discover Archive and were taken for historic tax assessor records. Historic photographs were not available for all properties. Current photographs were taken in April and May 2019 from the public right of way. Builders and year built were determined from building permits available through the City of Fort Collins via Citydocs. Select properties did not have corresponding building permits, so their year built was taken from county assessor records. Historic names are attributed to original owners based on named provided on building permits and in deed books, cross referenced with city directories. An intensive level survey is needed to determine additional original property owners. Current names were determined from Larimer County Assessor records; however some may have changed due to a lag in record-keeping and continual property sales. Determinations of eligibility (contributing/non-contributing) are based on houses architecture and retention of historic features and appearance.



**Address:** 800 Buckeye St.

**Historic Name:**

**Current Name:** Ginger Raper House

**Year Built:** 1961      **Builder:** Poudre Valley  
Construction

**Style:** Ranch

**Eligibility:** Contributing



**Architectural Description:** One-story, cross-hipped roof ranch with street-facing, two-car garage. Recessed entry with off-center chimney and sliding aluminum windows.. Asphalt shingle roof with a boxed-eave and blonde brick veneer. Elongated red stones are set randomly within the veneer.

**Notes:** The house appears relatively unchanged from its 1961 appearance.

**Address:** 801 Buckeye St.

**Historic Name:** Eugene & Claire Frink House (1)

**Current Name:** Jeffrey & Dana Koenig House

**Year Built:** 1959      **Builder:** Smith Turner

**Style:** Contemporary

**Eligibility:** Contributing



**Architectural Description:** One and one-half story contemporary with asphalt shingle cross-gabled and shed roof with a central chimney. Stone veneer and T-111 siding. Side street-facing two car garage with arced corner driveway.

**Notes:** The property appears relatively unchanged from the 1967 appearance; however, original aluminum windows were replaced with vinyl.