

# Forestdale Historic District est. 1916

**“Without a Doubt the Most Beautiful Residential Addition in  
Northwest Des Moines”[1]**

[1] Advertisement, “This Picture Tells the Story of Forestdale.”  
*Des Moines Register*. 25 June, 1916



Forestdale Historic District is the first automobile-related subdivision in northwest Des Moines to have winding streets adapted to the natural contours of the land.

Located 10 blocks west of Drake University on Forest Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Street

Built by German Brothers Development Company

Historically Significant

- ◆ Landscape Design
- ◆ Period Revival Architecture
- ◆ Social History



# Burt German, Developer

- Realtor/Developer in Des Moines for over 40 years.
- Developed 20 Des Moines Subdivisions.
- Chairman of the Real Estate Board's Post War Committee.
- Built his dream house in Forestdale and lived there until retirement.

# Automobile Suburbs



In 1920 an increasing number of Iowans owned automobiles from 100,000 in 1914 to 344,980 in 1919.

[2] James Jacobsen. [Draft] *Building A City of Homes, Des Moines, IA 1900-1951* (National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination: US Department of the Interior, 6 March 2001), Prepared for the City of Des Moines, IA.

Residential Suburbs moved west along University Avenue following the streetcar lines.

Forestdale was serviced by the Waveland Street car on University Avenue.

Designed for the automobile

- ◆ Focus on automobile rather than pedestrian amenities.





GERMANIA DRIVE – Named after the developers of Forestdale, the German Brothers.

WAVELAND DRIVE- named for the shopping district now known as Uptown.

MAQUOKETA DRIVE- named for the small town in northeast Iowa where the German brothers were born and raised.

LANEWOOD DRIVE- Named in honor of C.C. Lane, last owner of the tract of land.

FORESTDALE DRIVE- named for Forestdale Development Company and Forest Avenue, a landmark street in the area.

# Landscape Architecture





# Romantic Landscape Movement

Cottage Residences by Andrew Jackson Downing

Popularized the notion of rural living

Placed a moral emphasis on the aesthetics of home

Rural living was thought to be better for morality,  
hygiene, and lifestyle



# English Garden Suburb Model

During the 1920s housing shortage was a nagging problem and city planners were proposing the English garden Suburb

Spared land through use of:

- ◆ Narrow streets
- ◆ No alleys
- ◆ Winding streets to discourage through traffic



# Curvilinear Subdivisions











Enjoy a picturesque setting

Exhibits a diversity of stylistic influences and plans

Frequently maintains social and economic homogeneity

Located some distance from the work place

Unique use of street names and a street layout that differs from pre-existing street grid

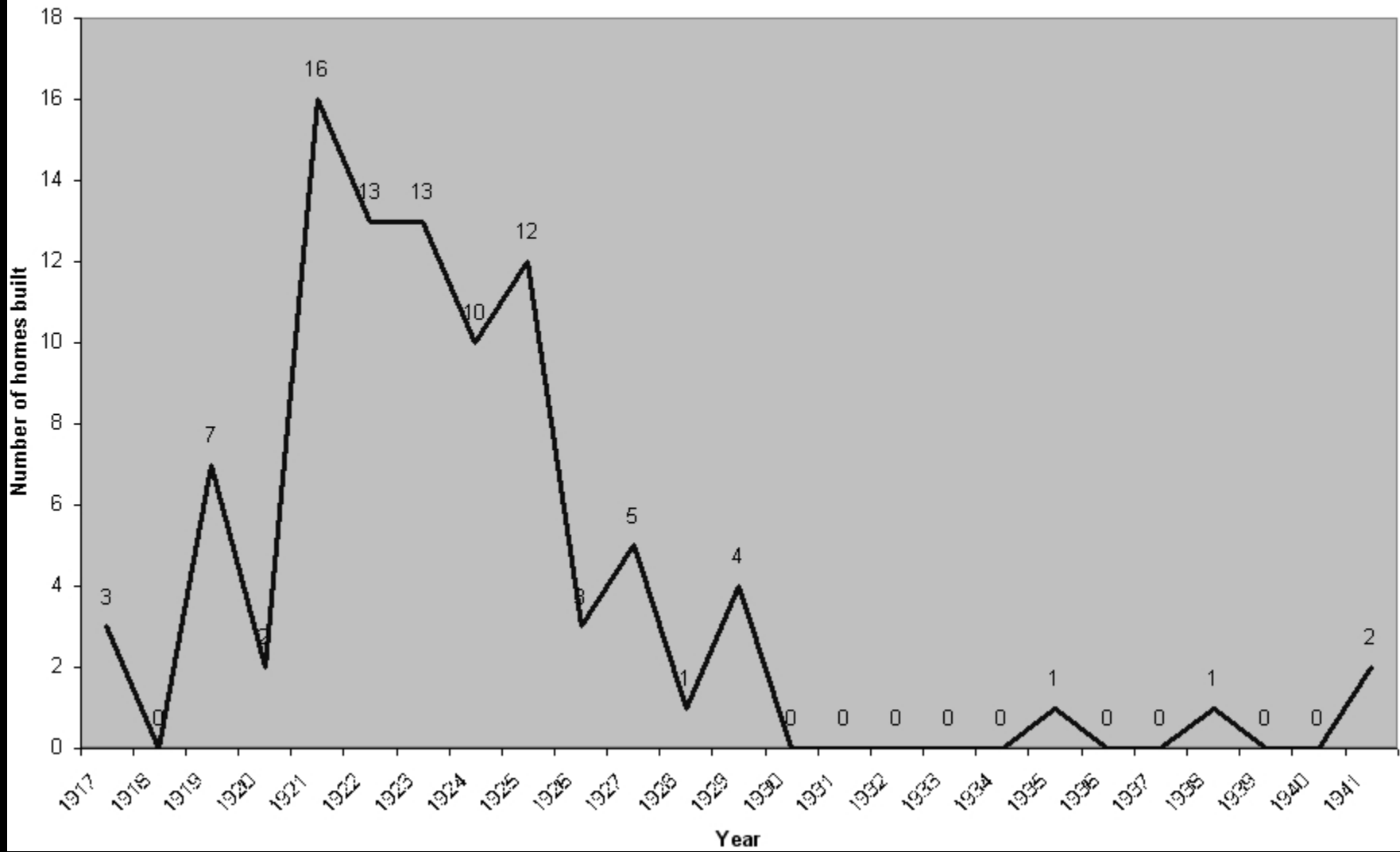
	Colonial
	Craftsman
	Tudor
	Cape Cod
	Mission
	Spanish Colonial
	Italian
	Non contributing property
	Empty Lot
	Date of Construction (1900's)





# Architecture of Forestdale

Total Homes Built in Forestdale







# Colonial Revival



Dutch Colonial  
Spanish Colonial  
English Georgian  
Cape Cod



# Tudor Revival



Jacobean

Cotswold Cottage Style

Heavy detailing around  
doorways, windows,  
chimneys

Half-timbering



# Craftsman ▪ Bungalow Square House Styles





# Italian Renaissance





# Social History

## Who lived here?

Middle to upper-middle class working professionals

Looking to live in a semi-rural setting outside of the central city

Residents often worked downtown and commuted either by the Waveland street car (42nd Street and University Avenue) or private automobile.

Shopping was done at the “Waveland” shops at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and University Avenue, now known as “Uptown Shopping Center.”



# 1920's Middle Class Values & Goals

modernity, social  
change

standardization

Period Revival  
Architecture

desire to live in a  
suburban setting

