Statement of Significance

The proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District is distinguished among American residential communities in land use and landscape design. From its founding as a residential park, Mountain Lakes has integrated family living with man-made lakes, natural streams and springs, woodlands and wetlands. Dedicated parkland and undeveloped borough-owned lots contribute to spaciousness in both the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District and the larger Borough. Throughout Mountain Lakes, forty percent of land is Borough-owned open space. At critical junctures in its history the Borough purchased additional undeveloped land to protect Mountain Lakes and the proposed district from intrusive development and to preserve its original design and character as a residential park. Mountain Lakes’ ability to regulate its growth and maintain continuity in both landscape design and architecture has been characterized as unique in assessments of recent American city planning. Its original housing stock--much of which remains today--was strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement in the United States. By their location on natural rather than graded terrain, and, the use of local building materials, the Craftsman-influenced homes closely connect to nature and critically contribute to Mountain Lakes’ identity as a planned residential park and lake suburb. Containing hundreds of existing historic homes, the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District has one of the largest and most distinguished collections of Craftsman style homes in a suburban park and lake community in the United States. The presence in the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District of at least several homes based on Gustav Stickley’s house designs published in “The Craftsman” magazine establishes a direct linkage between Stickley, the leading American figure in Craftsman home design and furnishings, and historic Mountain Lakes architecture. The Mountain Lakes Historic District qualifies for National Register Criterion A and C in the areas of community planning and development, landscape design and architecture.

Historical Narrative - The Early Years of Mountain Lakes

The physical boundaries of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District are defined by Herbert J. Hapgood’s early development of the Borough beginning in 1908. That year, developer and entrepreneur Hapgood began acquiring land to found Mountain Lakes as a planned suburban residential park in Morris County, New Jersey. The completion of railroad tunnels connecting New York and New Jersey in 1908-09 and the Hudson and Manhattan Railway through them heralded a new era in the development of suburban New Jersey. With such transportation innovations, daily commuting from city to more
rural New Jersey locales became feasible. Families could depend on income generated in New York City yet enjoy the benefits of year-round country living. Marking a new era in New Jersey suburban real estate development, communities such as Highland Park in Middlesex County and Mountain Lakes in Morris County evolved as a result of rapid transit access.

Boonton surveyor Lewis Van Duyne brought to Hapgood’s attention the large, rural wooded area that would become Mountain Lakes. Van Duyne surveyed most of the land for the future Mountain Lakes and in 1908 began to facilitate land purchase from local families. Van Duyne believed that this land—located near a branch of the Lackawanna Railroad—could become a prime location for residential development. Recently having developed a planned residential park in Shoreham on Long Island, Hapgood also recognized the potential in New Jersey for a new commuter town with man-made lakes nestled among the contours of the hills and lowlands of forest and wetlands. Within these New Jersey woodlands, first inhabited by Lenape Indians and later settled by Europeans in the first half of the eighteenth century, some English and Dutch homes remained from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These included the Righter House, the oldest house in Mountain Lakes, and the Grimes Homestead that once served as a station on the Underground Railroad. By damming wetlands, the Fox Lakes Ice Company had created Birchwood, Crystal and Sunset Lakes in the late nineteenth century. In 1910 Hapgood also began using dams to create six more lakes: Olive, Shadow, Cove, Reservoir, Mountain and Wildwood. They provided scenic beauty, recreation central to community life, and a design center around which houses were built. Man-made lakes provided a similar scenic and recreational function in American parks such as Central Park in New York City and Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York. The lakes also served to distinguish Mountain Lakes as “the first year-round residential lake community in northwestern New Jersey.”

Hapgood and his landscape engineer Arthur T. Holton sought to attract New York families to the developers’ vision of a healthy middle- and upper-middle class lifestyle in a community of large, comfortable homes situated in a natural, park-like setting that featured man-made lakes. Early twentieth century real estate marketing made promotional appeals to potential buyers by advertising the wholesome effects of country living newly available to families through rail and tunnel innovations.

Hapgood’s Mountain Lakes project was notable in that he was both the subdivider as well as the builder. Hapgood formed two companies to develop Mountain Lakes. Mountain Lakes Incorporated held title to the land and Oak Ridge Company constructed the houses, roads and related structures for Mountain Lakes, Incorporated. Building was underway
by 1910. From its earliest years, Mountain Lakes was identified as a residential park, joining other park suburbs established during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in England and the United States. The Arts and Crafts architecture known as "Craftsman" influenced Hapgood's building designs. This movement first emerged in England as a reaction to industrialization's cheaply produced, machine-made goods and the mechanization of production that treated workers poorly. From a design standpoint, the Arts and Crafts style also countered the excesses of the Victorian era. The Arts and Crafts Movement sought to revive the crafts tradition and stressed simplicity of design, quality workmanship, the uplifting effects of hand labor, the use of natural materials, and the integration of architecture with nature and the rustic environment.11 Hapgood's choices for architecture and landscape design were made when the Arts and Crafts Movement was at its peak of influence in America under the leadership of Craftsman furniture and home designer and builder Gustav Stickley.12 Hapgood's houses—ranging from small bungalows to large estates—exhibited Craftsman features through their boxy shape and functional design, extensive use of local, natural materials such as wood, stucco and boulderstone, and placement to fit the contours of the landscape.13 Public structures were constructed similarly. Hapgood's earliest homes were designed for upper-middle class living.

Lawrence W. Luellen and his family became the first residents of Mountain Lakes to live in a Hapgood-built house when, on St. Patrick's Day 1911, they moved to 46 Dartmouth Road. James M. Macfarland, who in 1913 moved to Mountain Lakes as a young child, characterized the early years as a suburban "adventure in living, calling for courage and sustaining optimism."14 Community life began in 1911 as soon as homes were occupied. The Community Church was founded that same year. The congregation met first in the home of John J. Houston and later at the home of Dr. Charles S. Macfarland. The first school sessions were held in the house located at 8 Larchdell Way. The Railroad Station was built in 1912 and Hapgood and Van Duyne planned an adjacent park that became known as "The Esplanade." Railroad companies customarily built public parks around suburban train stations that were under the jurisdiction and care of stationmasters; in this case the park was conceived and implemented by the developer/builder. Former New York City residents living in Mountain Lakes may have seen the Esplanade as a reminder of Central Park. The completion of the Mountain Lakes Railroad Station encouraged settlement, and by the end of 1912 approximately two hundred Hapgood homes had been built and occupied. That same year, the Mountain Lakes Association became the first of many town organizations to organize. It was founded to preserve and maintain property rights, general welfare and security, and to promote social relations among residents.15 Building construction intensified in 1914, resulting in several institutions essential to the
community life of the settlement that still exist today--the Community Church, the Schoolhouse that later became known as the Lake Drive School, the Mountain Lakes Club, and Yaccarino’s Grocery. The grocery is now called the Mountain Lakes Market and referred to locally as “The Market.”

A 1915 advertisement from Hapgood’s Manhattan-based business Mountain Lakes, Inc. located at 170 Broadway described this new 1000-acre development. The brochure featured impressive new buildings that reflected the high quality of family living that Mountain Lakes offered New York families. Photographs depicted the Community Church, the Lake Drive School and the Mountain Lakes Clubhouse built in Craftsman style with stucco and New Jersey fieldstone, also known as boulderstone. Also shown were the new, Craftsman-style train station and a row of stores that reflected a Tudor influence. In presenting the advantages of Mountain Lakes, the brochure claimed the community was located less than one hour from New York City and was a product of both “Nature’s Work” and “Man’s Work.” In “Nature’s Work” the appeal to urban clients emphasized the beauty of the natural landscape, the salutary benefits of country living, and the abundant recreation of the environment. It described a:

Series of connecting picturesque lakes.  
Eight miles broken [sic] shore front.  
Fishing, boating, bathing, hunting.  
Rolling mountain slopes, southern exposure.  
800 feet elevation, above mosquito zone.  
Air dry, pure and clear, no malaria.  
Cool in summer, sheltered in winter.  
Unobstructed view as far as eye can see.

Prices for houses were illustrated in the brochure, ranging in price from $6,000 bungalows to $20,000 estates.

In describing “Man’s Work,” the brochure emphasized the latest technological amenities and opportunities for refined social interaction, featuring a:

Complete pure artesian water system.  
Electric lighted street and houses.  
16 miles road laid out and macadamized.  
Express Trains D.L. & W.R.R.  
Club, Church, Exceptional School facilities.
Stores deliver household supplies promptly.
Living cheaper than in New York.
Long distance telephone, local service.
Social and Musical Associations.19

The above description taken from a promotional brochure for Mountain Lakes is titled, “A Restricted Residential Park.” Mountain Lakes provides an example in the early twentieth century of a “restricted community” defined by John Stilgoe as “an increasingly popular sort of real estate development,” that consisted of an “engineered, precisely restricted configuration of single family homes” on their respective lots.20 According to Stilgoe’s analysis of Francis H. Bulot’s 1916 American City article, “Developing A Restricted Home Community,” restrictions “written into every deed limited use of the property and specified the siting of houses ‘relative to the front and side streets’ and the number of residences per lot.”21 These restrictions combined with house design and the use of building materials in harmony with the local environment, aimed to create a model residential neighborhood or community. In the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District, individual historic house deeds contain restrictive clauses that, for example, allow only for the building of “a single family private dwelling house to cost not less than $5,000 and not to be located within 30 feet of the front line and 25 feet of the other boundary lines of said property and a private family garage of a design suitable to said property. . . .”22 Deeds, such as this example from 1911, present evidence of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District’s early attempts at self-regulation and planning to create and sustain a residential park. Provisions for garages from the very beginnings of this commuter suburb underscore the importance of automobiles to its development.

From 1912-to-1924, civic progress was made through the Mountain Lakes Association’s cooperation with developers. This era’s accomplishments included upgrading an artesian water supply through a private company, constructing new roads and an electrical lighting system to replace kerosene street lamps, installing hydrants, and creating a health board, and police and fire departments. Sewage disposal consisted of septic tanks and cesspools. In 1914, the Mountain Lakes Woman’s Club, with 100 donated books, started the first town library in the Lake Drive School Building. In 1916, the library was incorporated and in 1920 governance was turned over to a board of trustees. In April 1917 a town newspaper, the “Mountain Lakes News,” began publication. By 1923 Hapgood had built 482 structures in Mountain Lakes.
From the early years, extensive tree plantings significantly contributed to residential park design. Although many original trees were razed to make room for the construction of Mountain Lakes, replacement trees were planted—especially oaks—that in maturity now provide the park-like quality of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District. The over-grown quality of many plantings and extensive use of boulderstone in foundations and walls also contribute to the original plan of a residential community that harmonizes with the natural landscape. A distinctive row of trees borders the main thoroughfare through town—the Boulevard—on its west side. Sequentially planted in the 1930s, these trees consist of five different species. They are set between the roadway and the pathway, the latter being the former site of the trolley line.

Early travel throughout Mountain Lakes and to neighboring towns was facilitated by a trolley line that came from Morristown. It was owned and operated by the Morris County Traction Company. Hapgood planned for a grand street or boulevard through his town and went to great expense to obtain a trolley line for it. According to Norman Grimes, whose family sold farmland to Hapgood for the development of Mountain Lakes, the Morris County Traction Company originally planned "to run a spur to Boonton, using Denville as a junction." Grimes described how the trolley, traveling from Denville to Boonton was to cross Bloomfield Road, now "Route 46 to the right side of Lake Arrowhead Inn, and cut a bank of perhaps a hundred yards in that side of Route 46."

Hapgood’s vision for a Mountain Lakes planned residential park prompted him to offer significant inducement to the trolley company to abandon, at considerable cost, about one mile of already-laid road and shift toward the central street of the new community. The 1910 plan for Denville and vicinity showed a trolley route in Mountain Lakes. It became a single-track, electric trolley that ran along the north side of the Boulevard with stops at major intersections such as Crane Road, Lake Drive, Briarcliff Road and Glen Road. On March 1, 1914 trolleys began running for the first time throughout the entire system of the Denville/Boonton Trolley Line. In existence before automobiles became commonplace, the trolley was essential, inexpensive and convenient. Not only did residents rely upon it, but the trolley helped move workers to building sites. However, the trolley’s transportation service, while vital during the early years, did not endure. New technologies, especially the automobile and critical financial and management difficulties, brought the trolley to an end on February 4, 1928.

Historical Narrative - Community Planning and Development

Problems persisted in spite of developmental milestones. One was the community’s
presence in two towns—Boonton and Hanover—and the inability to control its own services. For example, the lake dams were insecure and the water supply was inadequate as also was the schooling of Mountain Lakes children in nearby towns. Compounding these problems were the financial difficulties of the developer. Hapgood overextended himself in widening Bloomfield Avenue to become State Route 6, now known as Route 46. In 1923, Hapgood went bankrupt and his company collapsed. The bank holding the mortgages on undeveloped properties established the Belhall Company to continue development. Hapgood left for Australia in 1923 where he later died. To protect against any outside group that might gain control of land held by Hapgood’s troubled Mountain Lakes, Inc. and to prevent the possibility that land could be auctioned without the property restrictions that residents desired, 100 property owners under the leadership of Joseph Nicchia developed a plan to take over the liabilities and assets of Mountain Lakes, Inc. These difficulties and challenges also contributed to the establishment of Mountain Lakes as its own distinct municipality.

The independent Borough of Mountain Lakes, incorporated on Feb 26, 1924, acted decisively with the development company to retain the character of Mountain Lakes as a residential park. The establishing of Mountain Lakes’ boundaries that extended to the Denville border on the west and to Intervale Road on the east underscored Borough leaders’ commitment “to permit continuity in development.” The newly constituted Borough also worked to secure more adequate and safe water supplies, to improve roads, and to expand educational opportunities for Borough children. The clear establishment of Borough boundaries in the 1920s, along with zoning ordinances, helped secure “continuity in development.” To protect and preserve the distinctive character of the community, the Borough of Mountain Lakes New Jersey Zoning Ordinance of July 28, 1927 limited residential and commercial development. These continuities can be seen even in Borough areas outside the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District. For example, in the 1920s the Arthur D. Crane Company also began building in Mountain Lakes. The Crane Company had purchased land from the St. Francis Health Resort for its Lake Arrowhead project that featured rustic architecture built to the contours of the land.

The 1930s culminated in another turning point in the early history of Mountain Lakes. During the Great Depression the Belhall Company also floundered financially, having paid no taxes on most of its land holdings since 1931. As a result, the titles of nearly all undeveloped land in the Borough were in question and such uncertainty inhibited further growth. The situation began to be resolved in 1937 with the creation of the North Jersey Liquidating Trust to assess and settle the assets of the Belhall Company to satisfy its
creditors. Under the leadership of Mayor Halsey A. Frederick, the Borough paid only $1,700 for most of the mortgages that totaled approximately $700,000. This purchase was possible due to prior Borough tax liens on the mortgaged properties. Mountain Lakes Borough then retained the Fidelity-Union Titles Guarantee Company based in Newark to insure the titles of land parcels. The Borough’s attempt to regain all lost taxes through new property sales was a success. Significantly, these sales marked the reopening of Mountain Lakes to residential development. Even more importantly was the Borough’s control over the nature of future growth through its ownership of these remaining undeveloped land parcels. According to Mayor Halsey A. Frederick:

We controlled the future development of Mountain Lakes in a way which zoning laws and deed restrictions could never have controlled because we owned it.²⁰

By 1938, the Borough—that to a significant extent consisted of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District—had acquired titles to most of the prime undeveloped building lots within its boundaries. This late 1930s Borough ownership of land extended and enforced the community’s power to regulate new development. This worked to maintain Mountain Lakes in general, and, the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District in particular, as a planned residential park suburb. Therefore, 1938 was a pivotal year for solidifying and implementing community-controlled planning and for restraining developer-led planning.

During the following decades the Borough of Mountain Lakes continued to control its own destiny. In many cities and towns throughout America following World War II, the need for more housing led to an unprecedented amount of suburban growth. This suburban boom mandated planning, but in many communities the sheer volume and rapidity of development led to uneven and unpredictable results. Mountain Lakes’ growth consisted of a regulated expansion. In 1946 two hundred citizens attended a Planning Board meeting to voice support for a home development plan between Intervale Road and the Lakawanna Railroad known as Midvale Acres and to oppose the erection of prefabricated homes in the Fox Hill Lakes area.³¹ The Midvale Acres development of 67 smaller homes along Midvale Road and surrounding streets was approved. Fueled by the baby boom of the late 1940s and 1950s, it became “Diaper Village” and is known locally today as “The Village.” However, residential building in the Fox Hill Lakes area continued to be controversial. Continuities of self-determination and vision were sustained again in 1952 when the Borough Council authorized the purchase of 250 acres of woodland around the Fox Hill Lakes section for parkland and recreational purposes.³²
Encompassing about 20% of the town’s total land area, this purchase was intended to prevent what then was regarded as potentially substandard residential development, and to protect the planned residential park nature of the community. According to Mayor Richard M. Wilcox, this land purchase, “makes it possible for us to control our own destinies from here on—we will control the type of town we are going to be.”

Although the 1952 acquisitions fall outside of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District, they demonstrate how the Borough of Mountain Lakes was committed to regulate its own growth and maintain continuity in planning, landscape design and architecture. By 1953, buildings in town had increased 42%, but this growth reflected the planned residential park components of the Borough’s original design. Thus, through the ownership of this property, Mountain Lakes Borough could prevent new, intrusive over-development and maintain its unique and distinctive character.

In assessing the state of suburban growth in his 1969 book, American City Planning Since 1890, planner Mel Scott observed:

Most planners could cite but one community which had acquired almost all the developable land within its boundaries and which was able to regulate the tempo of its growth by marketing only a limited number of lots annually. This was the wealthy borough of Mountain Lakes, New Jersey.

Scott noted that Mountain Lakes’ achievements were comparable to the long-term managed expansion exercised by many European municipalities. Throughout its history, Mountain Lakes’ financial resources had united design vision with planning continuity to achieve an unprecedented degree of sustained community control over the destiny of the Borough’s growth and maintenance.

As a result, the Mountain Lakes Association’s early vision of the future and wish for posterity became a reality throughout the life of the community and especially in the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District. The Association wrote in 1912:

That the Mountain Lakes, which you shall know, shall have fulfilled the splendid promise of the Mountain Lakes of 1912. That the pure air shall still be untainted by factory fumes, the serene blue of your sky undimmed by palls of smoke. That the water from your artesian wells shall be crystal, as clear, and as wholesome as that which we enjoy. That the scanty forest derelicts of our day shall have given place to stately shade trees umbragenous and beautiful. That your vegetable beds shall be prolific, your orchard boughs
bend beneath the burden of abundant fruitage, your flower gardens old-fashioned and alluring, your emerald lawns like your lives, all velvet. That Mountain Lake and the Wildwood Lake which you shall call yours shall be as lovely to your eyes as today they are to ours. That in all her aspects and through all the changing phases of the year, in the vernal green of spring, the full tide of summer, the glory of the painted hills of autumn, and the witchery of winter ice storms, Mountain Lakes in the maturity of her charms shall give to you the pleasure of the joy she has given us in her youth. 36

Over the years some large residential lots have accommodated the building of a second home. More recently, large lots have seen the razing of the original historic home and two new homes built in its place. In some instances, one historic home has been replaced by one new house. 37 Currently, the design of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District as a planned residential park and lake community continues to be maintained. However, most vulnerable to change 38 are the Craftsman-influenced Hapgood and Belhall homes that are integrally related to the original aesthetic vision for the Borough embodied in the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District.

Architecture

The proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District is distinguished by its large collection of Craftsman style homes. The Hapgoods and Belhalls were strongly influenced by Craftsman architecture and also display Colonial Revival, Mission and Tudor influences. Hapgood’s Craftsman architecture emphasized simplicity in design, authenticity in materials, and integration with the natural environment. Hapgood’s community of Mountain Lakes took shape as Gustav Stickley, a leader of the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States, was building Craftsman Farms, a utopian farm-school-estate on land that later would become part of present-day Parsippany, New Jersey. Designer Stickley lent critical intellectual leadership to the Craftsman aesthetic movement in the United States and his journal, “The Craftsman,” first published in 1901 became a manifesto for the movement. 39 Stickley’s Craftsman Farms located in nearby Parsippany, New Jersey has been designated a National Historic Landmark.

The strong Craftsman influence in Hapgood’s homes is illustrated by his use of natural materials such as stucco and boulderstone in walls, foundations and chimneys, oak flooring, exposed chestnut beams and trim, and brick, wood and boulderstone fireplaces. Built-ins and inglenooks also were common as simple, comfortable conveniences. The
boxy shape and naturally-based materials project a solidity as the structure also displays a snug fit into the landscape. The front porches, deep overhanging eaves, and string courses between the first-and-second floors underscore the horizontality of these homes that help solidly anchor them to the earth.

Additionally, first-floor porches that frame entryways, second-floor open air sleeping porches, trellises and outdoor boulderstone fireplaces all contribute to the Craftsman ideal embraced by Stickley of outdoor living’s healthy benefits. Hapgood believed that houses with such features set in a pastoral setting would attract people who valued the health benefits of outdoor living. His advertisements such as “The Advantages of Mountain Lakes, Home of the Nature Lover,” connected living in his development to a nature-appreciating lifestyle. In detailed descriptions of the Mountain Lakes setting, Hapgood’s brochures described in detail the natural beauty that led to healthy living:

A wonderland of mountains, lakes and forests…has been developed into a community for those house seekers who wish to combine…the freedom and beauty of country life amid faultless…surroundings with the advantage of unusual ease and rapidity of access to New York…. At Mountain Lakes nature has brought together with lavish hand her most charming allurements. Here the rugged hills of the Kittitinny range rise to one of the greatest altitudes within the State, high above mosquito zone…With a shore line several miles in extents, they (the Lakes) are of sufficient size to provide a perfect pleasure spot for all kinds of water craft, while their cool, clear depths, continually fed by crystal springs afford bathing, boating and fishing in the summer, and skating, hockey and ice boating in the winter. Fine old trees of oak, chestnut, cedar, birch, maple and cherry are everywhere, lending their particular charm to each rustic scene. Here the best of Nature’s offerings mingle in unparalleled abundance…. 40

Craftsman architecture and landscape design in northern New Jersey, especially in the bungalows and cottages of lake communities, and most notably in the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District, are attributed to Stickley’s influence. 41 The house located at 32 Woodland Avenue in the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District was built in 1923 and based on a 1909 Stickley house design, No. 78, described as a “Shingled Cottage Suitable for Country, Seaside or Suburban Life.” 42 Such a home was not custom-designed by Stickley, but built from his “house of the month plans” published in his periodical ”The Craftsman” and available by subscription. 43 Stickley also published collections of his most popular plans in two books, Craftsman Homes and More Craftsman Homes. 44 While 32 Woodland Road is an example of a faithful duplication of
Stickley’s No.78 house design, many Stickley-based homes were customized. In the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District, a Hapgood house has been identified as a Stickley design with some variation. Built in 1911, the house at 137 Boulevard presents Stickley plan No.1 of January 1904 with a dormer in the hip roof. Another Hapgood, 28 Hillcrest Road also built in 1911, is similar to a published Stickley house design of 1909.

Planned Residential Park Communities In Comparative Context

The proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District should be assessed comparatively with other planned residential park communities in the United States. These communities include Llewellyn Park, New Jersey; Lake Forest, Illinois; Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia; Riverside, Illinois; Short Hills, New Jersey; Tuxedo Park, New York; Shaker Heights, Ohio; Forest Hills, Queens; Hillside Colony, California; Shoreham, Long Island; and, Radburn, New Jersey. Early suburbs were located at considerable distance from cities and usually followed transportation innovations, such as new train lines. As a result, suburbs were usually marketed to upper-middle class buyers who could afford both the cost of commuting and high real estate prices.

Background--The New Suburban Movement

In the early 1800s, Jeffersonian democracy emphasized the value of rural life. During the nineteenth century, this legacy framed the rise of new cultural values that—along with the growth of cities, and industrial and transportation revolutions—brought about a suburban growth and affluence. A suburban ideal consisting of a detached dwelling in a semi-rural setting was widely embraced by middle-class culture. As cities and public places became more densely populated, families sought the protective refuge of home life. During the 1840s and 1850s the values of domesticity and privacy reached their fullest development in the United States. Between 1820 and 1850 as more men worked outside the home, greater responsibility was placed upon the wife and mother in the domestic sphere. As the family became more isolated and feminized, this women’s sphere came to be viewed as the superior environment where—through moral and religious training and careful house design—the home itself could become a heaven on earth. The single-family dwelling became the middle-class housing ideal. The home reflected the quality of life and virtue of its inhabitants and became their most visible symbol of success. Emphasis upon the
family dwelling also was linked to a new view of land. The ideal home resided in the middle of a manicured lawn or a picturesque garden. Suburban cottages embodied aesthetic, moral and healthful ideals. The American suburban movement embraced both a naturalistic and romantic approach to nature known as the “picturesque” that idealized the outdoors. This vision—combined with a dread of epidemic disease—viewed the house in a garden as a salubrious solution to man’s ills. These home designs used the existing terrain with curving paths, irregular groupings of trees and plants, and stressed an innovative use of land for recreation and enjoyment. Wealth and social standing became associated with the care of house and yard.

American cultural leaders Catharine Ward Beecher, Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted helped shape these new attitudes toward housing and residential space. Catharine Ward Beecher gained national influence through her instructional guide titled, Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School. She linked architectural and landscape design to her domestic ideal of purity and piety in the home—the sphere of women. For Beecher and her readers, the ideal family location was in the country or suburban cottage. Also in 1841, Andrew Jackson Downing in his work A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening articulated a suburban ideal with the individual residence or home at its center. Beginning in 1845 as editor of “The Horticulturist,” his essays on landscape architecture and home design reached a national middle-class audience. He advised Americans to make their homes in the countryside because a rural location would provide an escape from the city and demonstrate love of country and republicanism. Following the tragic death of Downing in 1852, Calvert Vaux emerged as a major figure in the development of American suburban architecture and landscape design. His 1857 book Villas and Cottages contained many affordable rural and suburban cottage and landscape plans. He observed that almost every American had a preference for the natural over the artificial, for “the works of God to the works of man.” Vaux was involved in many notable projects. Among them was his collaboration with park planner Frederick Law Olmsted that produced the winning design for Central Park in New York City. Olmsted, a Downing protégée, became the best-known landscape architect in America after the Civil War. His distinguished reputation was made as designer, architect and superintendent of Central Park. He became a critical figure in the development of American residential park communities. Olmsted viewed the suburb as a finely tuned balance between settlement and wilderness. He defined the suburban community as “detached dwellings with sylvan surroundings yet supplied with a considerable share of urban conveniences.” Olmsted and his partner Vaux laid out sixteen suburbs. The first and most influential was Riverside, a suburb of Chicago,
Illinois. Vaux, while working with Olmsted, also is credited with designing the “Park” section of Boonton, New Jersey.54

Planned Residential Park Communities

The earliest planned, residential park community in the United States was Llewellyn Park55 in West Orange, New Jersey. Llewellyn Solomon Haskell, a wealthy importer, retired from business to devote himself to his vision of a planned community. Purchasing an initial 350 acres in West Orange, Haskell enlisted the expertise and vision of Alexander Jackson Davis and Olmsted who, beginning in 1857, designed and built Llewellyn Park. Among the notable landscape features is the “Ramble,” a one-mile-long gorge that consists of a heavily wooded area with steep slopes designated by Haskell as the town’s greenway. With its curvilinear roads and natural open spaces, Llewellyn Park embodied picturesque ideals. Fifty garden home sites initially were laid out, ranging in size from three-to-ten acres. Llewellyn Park Historic District in 1986 became part of the National Register of Historic Places.

Concurrent with the beginnings of Llewellyn Park were the communities of Lake Forest56 located outside of Chicago, Illinois and Chestnut Hill57 in Philadelphia. Lake Forest’s greater distance from Chicago than other suburban communities led to its development primarily as a summer and weekend refuge from the city. The first land was sold in 1857 and the first properties developed in 1859. From the start, its architect and landscape designer Jed Hotchkiss placed residences in a park-like setting as homes were set on sites of two or more acres, situated far back from curving streets that followed the contours of the land. The picturesque was emphasized as gardens and lawns became large, naturalistic open spaces with widely spaced trees devoid of fences or walls.

Chestnut Hill is a residential section of Philadelphia located at the edge of the city adjoining Montgomery County. Its western boundary overlooks the northwest section of Fairmont Park. Known as the “Little Town” in the city, it was set amidst the notable landscape of the Wissahickon Valley. Within this scenic natural setting are examples of leading Philadelphia architects’ work ranging from the 1850s to the present. An organic unity knits together the natural environment, the high quality of design, fine craftsmanship, and the use of local building materials including Wissahichon schist, also known as Chestnut Hill stone. The town is distinguished by the neighborhood of Wissahicon Heights that railroad titan Henry Howard Houston also developed as a residential park.
During the post-Civil War decades, other planned residential park communities followed. These included Riverside in 1869, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois; Short Hills in 1874 as a part of Millburn, New Jersey; Tuxedo Park, New York in 1886, and Shaker Heights, Ohio in 1892. The appeal of residential parks continued through the first several decades of the twentieth century. What distinguished later residential parks was their identification as "restricted" communities. By the early twentieth century the use of the term "restricted" became a commonly used real estate device that emphasized a planned, exactly configured arrangement of single-family homes on small lots.58

Riverside, Illinois59 has the distinction of being viewed as the best example of Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of suburban design and one of the first modern American suburbs. Olmsted and Vaux began planning Riverside in 1868. With priority placed on both ample recreation and scenic areas, streets were designed to create more public space by following the curves of the land and avoiding right-angle intersections.

Similarly, inventor and businessman Stewart Hartshorn in his development of Short Hills Village sought to build a town that combined natural beauty with harmonious residential living.60 He began in 1874 by purchasing thirteen acres of land and building himself a home. He then acquired more land for his own estate and expanded Short Hills Village to 1552 acres. Hartshorn laid out roads around low hills in accordance with land contours. In 1980, the Short Hills Park Historic District joined the National Register of Historic Places.

Tuxedo Park61 began in 1886 as Pierre Lorillard IV's vision of a planned sportsman's preserve in a mountain wilderness. Landscape designer Ernest Bowditch and architect Bruce Price planned a community of homes to be built of natural materials and in harmony with nature. Italian and Slovakian immigrant laborers built miles of roads and stone walls designed to fit the land.

Shaker Heights62 in northern Ohio takes its name from the United Society of Believers, commonly known as Shakers, who settled there in 1822. Their utopian community called the North Union Colony was in decline by the late nineteenth century. Speculators purchased Shaker land but in 1911 brothers Oris Paxtin and Mantis James Van Sweringen began planning Shaker Heights as an exclusive residential garden suburb. Prominent Cleveland architects designed homes and landscaping to work harmoniously with the natural features of the land. To achieve this harmony, the Van Sweringen Company required strict planning and design standards for the sixteen model homes it commissioned in a range of sizes and prices. Today, many areas of Shaker Heights are
Contemporary with the early development of Mountain Lakes were residential parks such as Forest Hills Gardens, Queens; Hillside, California; and Radburn, New Jersey. Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage, widow of Russell Sage, directed the Russell Sage Foundation to develop Forest Hills, Queens in 1909 as a "garden suburb." Mrs. Sage was influenced by the work of Ebenezer Howard and his book "Garden Cities." The Foundation purchased 142 acres of land below Queens Boulevard and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. designed a planned community patterned on the style of English "garden cities." Architect Grosvenor Atterbury designed 1,500 homes for a plan that included a green and central square, a railroad station, and an inn. In 1911 Gustav Stickley's magazine, "The Craftsman," featured an article about the garden city of Forest Hills.

Architect Bernard Maybeck's chance meeting with local poet Charles Keeler on the San Francisco-Oakland Ferry led to Maybeck's commission in 1895 to design a home for Keeler in Berkeley Hills. The project grew as Maybeck and Keeler each sought to transform the hills of Berkeley into a garden landscape with rustic wooden homes. The result was Hillside Colony. Influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, Keeler in 1904 published a short book titled "A Simple Home" that described his vision of an idyllic arcadian suburban setting. The book was a guide for what Keeler viewed as the most appropriate development of the Berkeley Hills. He required the use of natural building materials and that homes and roads be placed in harmony with nature. This embodiment of Arts and Crafts ideals in Berkeley and throughout the Bay areas became known as the First Bay Tradition.

The beginnings of Shoreham, Long Island are tied to the Wading River extension of the Long Island Railroad's North Shore Branch with way stations that included Shoreham. Ohio banker James A. Warden anticipated the boost to land values. He purchased extensive land holdings and began to develop Wardencliff, a community with houses on two-acre plots. With the closing in 1902 of an experimental electronics laboratory for Nikola Tesla, Warden disposed of most of his lands. However, during the first decade of the twentieth century, many homes were built by the Oak Ridge Company. Charles J. Tagliabue and his son-in-law Herbert Hapgood—the future developer and builder of Mountain Lakes—saw the opportunity at Shoreham for a planned residential community. Tagliabue financed the company and Hapgood managed the engineering and construction. The development was concentrated in the village area west of Woodville Road and north of Overhill Road. Soon, it became apparent that the hilly terrain of Shoreham required the building of a street system free of washouts. The Village of
Shoreham was incorporated in 1913, primarily to issue bonds to finance this road construction. Among the road names were Briarcliff and Tower Hill Roads that are the same names later given to roads in Mountain Lakes. Throughout its history, Shoreham also acquired park and recreational lands that contributed to its landscape design as a residential park.

Radburn, part of the Borough of Fair Lawn in Bergen County, New Jersey was founded by architects and planners Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. They enlisted the support of financier Alexander Bing who had organized the City Housing Corporation in 1924. Bing brought his corporation to New Jersey and Radburn was founded in 1928. Stein and Wright were influenced by the work of Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes. Their vision was to design a community that provided open spaces and met the demands of modern life. It was intended to be a self-sufficient economic entity known as a “Town for the Motor Age,” that contained residential, commercial and industrial spheres. The basic design of the community consisted of “super-blocks,” cul-de-sacs or cluster groupings, interior parklands, and the separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic to promote safety. Every home also was accessible to park walks and Radburn became known for its backyard footpaths and pedestrian underpasses. Like other planned residential parks, all property within the boundaries of the Radburn Association is governed by “The Declaration of Restrictions” to maintain the distinctive physical features of the town.

Lake Communities In Comparative Context

The proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District must be evaluated comparatively with lake communities consisting of either natural or man-made lakes. Typically, lake communities that emerged around natural lakes evolved gradually from seasonal Victorian resort towns into year-round communities. Reflecting these patterns are natural lake communities such as Lake Caspian, Vermont and Lake George, New York.

Vermont residents and visitors began building camps around Caspian Lake in the late nineteenth-century. Gradually, seasonal recreational attractions became year-round and produced significant residential development. Lake George also distinguished for its scenic beauty and recreational pleasures, steadily acquired a year-round population. In 1885 residents formed the Lake George Association to take better care of the lake.
Similarly, in New Jersey natural lakes at Spring Lake and Lake Hopatcong first gave rise to recreational communities. In 1875 what was to become the resort town of Spring Lake in Monmouth County consisted of a clear natural lake called “Fresh Pond Creek,” three farms, some fishermen’s homes and the beginnings of a summer town called Brighton. Over the next 28 years the resort of Spring Lake emerged through the development of large hotels in four distinct-but-related areas—the Monmouth in Spring Lake Beach, the Wilburton-by-the-Sea in Brighton, the “Villa Park” in Villa Park, and a hotel-turned-private home in Como. Railroad stations opened, a park was designed around the lake, and land was divided into lots and streets for both commercial and residential development. In 1903, these areas were united into the town of Spring Lake.72 Gradually, Spring Lake expanded beyond resort status to become a year-round residential community.

Lake Hopatcong, the largest natural lake in New Jersey, consists of 2,658 acres on the boundary between Morris and Sussex Counties. It long has served as a site of rustic recreation. The lake also was critical to the development of an elaborate canal system completed by 1831 that made iron manufacturing a dominant industry in Morris County. Additionally, for decades it served as a major source of ice in Morris County before refrigeration became available in the 1920s. The coming of railroads to Lake Hopatcong and environs in the 1870s stimulated growth; and, in 1886 the construction of the Breslin Hotel helped attract wealthy guests and the building of lake estates. By 1900, residential construction boomed, weekend visitors increased, and the year-round residential communities that developed surrounding the lake gradually gave rise to the boroughs of Hopatcong and Mount Arlington and the townships of Roxbury and Jefferson.73 By contrast, man-made lake communities such as Mountain Lakes and Lake Mohawk in Sparta Township emerged quickly and dramatically as the landscape was both accommodated and transformed to implement the developmental vision.

The Arthur D. Crane Company,74 a pioneer in the building of planned recreational communities, designed and constructed Lake Mohawk. In 1926 the Crane Company purchased 2300 acres of farmland known as the Brodgen Meadow in the southern Wallkill Valley. It built a dam to stem the headwaters of a stream that connected the Wallkill River and created Lake Mohawk. With ten miles of wooded shoreline, Lake Mohawk became the largest private, man-made lake in the state. The company laid out roads and housing lots and by 1931 more than 300 homes had been completed along with fifteen miles of roads. By 1940, 1,200 homes had been built.75
Lake Mohawk originally was intended as a summer haven for wealthy residents and remained a summer community throughout the 1930s and the 1940s. However, by the 1960s more and more Lake Mohawk residents began winterizing their homes and year-round-home sales boomed. Lake Mohawk, like Mountain Lakes, developed a reputation for exclusivity and affluence, and property restrictions helped maintain the special features of these lake communities. Other man-made communities in New Jersey include Lake Lakawanna, Indian Lake, and Rainbow Lake. However, the Mountain Lakes Historic District remains distinctive as a planned residential park and lake community because from its inception it was built for year-round residency.
Notes

Statement of Significance

1. See "Listing of Open Space" in Section 7; also see "Open Space Map in "Additional Documentation."

2. An example of this recognition is Mel Scott, American City Planning Since 1890: a history commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Institute of Planners (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 508.


Historical Narrative - The Early Years of Mountain Lakes


12. A good starting point for the life of Gustav Stickley is Mary Ann Smith, Gustav Stickley: The Craftsman (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1983); see also Michael Clark and Jill Thomas-Clark, The Stickley Brothers: The Quest for an American Voice (New York: Gibbs Smith, 2002); Mark Alan Hewitt, Gustav Stickley’s Craftsman
Farms: The Quest for an Arts and Crafts Utopia (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001).


14. Special Supplement to The Citizen of Morris County, 1.


18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


21. Ibid.

22. Mountain Lakes House Deed for 11 Hillcrest Road, 1 June 1911.


Historical Narrative - Community Planning and Development


30. Special Supplement to the Citizen Bugle, 2; the same quote appears in, “A Little Mountain Lakes History”, Citizen Bugle, 15 Oct 1988; A historical account by Frederick is Mayor Halsey A. Frederick, “Fifteen Years of Progress,” in Mountain Lakes 1939. See also Fred A. Crane, “A ‘Cultured Community’: ‘Who’s Who Men Predominate In This Unique North Jersey Town,” Jersey Life, 20 May 1938, 8.

31. Special Supplement to the Citizen Bugle, 23.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.


35. Scott, American City Planning, 508.


37. Maria T. Iacullo, “The Disappearing Hapgoods,” Daily Record, Morris County,

38. An article by Susan Hussein and Marion Harris, “Hard Times in Mountain Lakes,” Preservation Issues from the Morris County Trust For Historic Preservation, vol. 7, no. 3 (Summer 1993) provides a detailed account of the Mountain Lakes Historic Preservation Commission’s efforts to have the town’s Borough Council pass a local historic district ordinance. Hussein and Harris concluded that the Mountain Lakes Preservation Commission did a good job of public education but failure to pass the ordinance made it clear “that the education did not reach enough citizens.” Opposition centered around “the standard issue of individual property rights vs. the community’s interest in architectural heritage.” The authors’ also noted that in preservation work “there is no such thing as enough education.” Designation of Mountain Lakes to the National and State Historic Registers will provide a critical educational tool for informing both Mountain Lakes residents and the larger public about the significance of the Borough’s distinctive heritage.

Architecture

39. Hewitt, Craftsman Farms, 42.


42. Rist, “Stuck on Stickley,” 72-73; Gustav Stickley, More Craftsman Homes: Floor Plans and Illustrations for 78 Mission Style Dwellings (New York: Craftsman


45. Stubblebine, “In Search of Craftsman Homes,” 29;


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53. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, 79.

54. Lawrence Korinda, “Profile of Boonton: an Architectural and Historical Perspective”


56. Paul E. Sprague, “Final Report of the Historical Consultant on the Lake Forest,
Illinois, Ordinance ‘Establishing a Residential Historic Preservation District and
Regulations Pertaining to It.’ ” http://www.lfpf.org/rep/Sprague/19820630_final.htm
(2 February 2003).


58. Stilgoe, Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 223. House placement had
followed no clear pattern before 1860.


60. Marian Meisner, “The Short Hills and Wyoming Developments.” A History of
Milburn Township. New Jersey: Milburn Free Public Library.

61. Laura Furman, Tuxedo Park (New York: Summit Books, 1986); Town of Tuxedo,

62. See the chapter on Shaker Heights in Stilgoe, Borderland, 239-251;

63. Stilgoe, Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 225-238; Claudio Henao.
“History and Development of Forest Hills Garden, Forest Hills, New York,” 1984 M.S.
Columbia University Thesis; Queens on the Internet, “Creation of Forest Hills Garden,”
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64. Sally B. Woodbridge, Bernard Maybeck: Visionary Architect (Abbeville Press
Publications, 1992); San Francisco Bay Area Arts & Crafts Movement, “Bernard
Maybeck (1862-1957),”
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65. San Francisco Bay Area Arts & Crafts Movement, “Charles Augustus Keeler (1871-
1937),” http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Orchard/8642/akeeler.html
(accessed 1 February 2003).

www.csdnet.net/shoreham/history.htm (accessed 24 June 2003); “Shoreham Long Island:

67. Ibid.

Planned Community,” http://www.radburn.org/geninfo/radburn-ontro.html (accessed 1
February 2003).

Restrictions No.1 Affecting Radburn, Property Of City Housing Corporation In The
Borough of Fair Lawn, Bergen County, New Jersey. Dated March 15, 1929.”

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71. Lake George Chamber of Commerce. “History of Lake George, New York.”

72. Charles D. Wrege, Spring Lake: A Resort of Elegance in Monmouth County, New
Jersey (Spring Lake, N.J.; Bicentennial History Committee, 1980). Robert Reynolds,
Ph.D. suggested lake communities for comparative discussion here. Robert Reynolds,
Telephone conversation about the lake communities of New Jersey with author Maria T. Iacullo, March 2002.


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The Boonton Times


Crane, Fred A. “A ‘Cultured Community’: ‘Who’s Who’ Men Predominate In This Unique North Jersey Town.” Jersey Life, 20 May 1938, 8


“Historic Map – 1910 ‘Property of Mountain Lakes, Incorporated, in Boonton, Rockaway and Hanover Townships, Morris County, New Jersey.’ ”

Lake Arrowhead Club Yearbook, 1932

“The Making of Mountain Lakes,” The Citizen of Morris County, 3 July 1974
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The Mountain Lakes News

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“1000 Acre Park Near Boonton Developed from Wild, Wooded Hills Into Unusually Attractive Colony,” The Boonton Times, 8 May 1914,


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The Times Bulletin


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The proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District consists of approximately three-quarters of the area of the Borough. The District, beginning at Route 46 and Crane Road, is bounded by the south side of Route 46; the northwest side of Crane Road; the northwest side of North Pocono Road; the northwest side of West Shore Drive to the Denville/Mountain Lakes Border through the Tourne; the southeast side of the Boonton Township/Mountain Lakes border through the Tourne; the middle of Rock Lane; the north side of Boulevard; the northeast side of Fanny Road; the southern side of the NJ Transit Railroad right of way, encompassing both sides of Woodland Road to the south side of Midvale Road; the south side of Midvale Road; and the south side of the NJ Transit Railroad right of way. To complete the circumference of the boundaries, turn right at the railroad trestle and proceed west on Route 46 to Crane Road.

Boundary Justification Statement

The boundaries of the proposed district incorporate the area of Mountain Lakes that first was included in Herbert Hapgood’s original plan for the development of Mountain Lakes as a planned residential park suburb. These boundaries can be viewed in the 1910 map entitled “Property of Mountain Lakes, Incorporated, in Boonton, Rockaway and Hanover Township,” included for reference. Based on the 1910 survey by Lewis and M.R. Van Duyne, the surveyors indicate on the map which properties are intended for inclusion in the original development and from whom Hapgood purchased the properties. The proposed district follows nearly precisely this original footprint for the planned development, including a swathe of what is now the Tourne, a Morris County-managed park. The boundary through the Tourne delineates exactly the original property of the Tourne that was Hapgood-owned – and is now borough-owned – land.

While roadways within the boundaries have been updated, and while the boundaries encompass both contributing and non-contributing buildings, homes and architectural details, the boundaries reflect the original intention of Hapgood’s footprint of Mountain Lakes and encapsulate all of the homes he and his company built for the original planned residential park.

A second plan, entitled “Map of Mountain Lakes, Morris County, New Jersey, Prepared for the Belhall Company, March 1924,” included for reference, reaffirms the rationale for boundary choice for the Mountain Lakes Historic District. The 1924 map hews precisely to the 1910 version, reiterating what has become the proposed boundaries for the district.

The two portions of Mountain Lakes today that are not part of the proposed historic district are: 1) the section of the Borough south of the NJ Transit Railroad and south of Woodland Avenue, which was
purchased subsequently, subdivided into smaller lots than the original planned development and was not
developed until after World War II; and 2) the northwestern area of the Borough, which is part of the
Lake Arrowhead development. This lake community is distinct in conception, architecture and
landscape design from that of the proposed Mountain Lakes Historic District. A significant percentage
of the Lake Arrowhead houses are log cabins built as summer residences that later became year-round
homes. The development is partly in Mountain Lakes and partly in Denville, outside of Hapgood's
original development plans.