

'The Terrace'

Waverly Terrace.

To most citizens, it's an older residential area that once was near the center of Columbus activity but has been left behind.

To residents, it's a quiet, comfortable neighborhood that is their home.

To historians, it's a rare example of how local people lived in the early part of this century.

Three views — all accurate, but reflecting different perspectives — of what residents fondly call "the Terrace."

Now it appears that the neighborhood may awake from its long slumber to a new importance.

If present plans bear fruit, Waverly Terrace is likely to become the second area in Columbus to be listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. The first was the Historic District on lower Broad.

It richly deserves the honor, on the basis of both history and condition.

Arising on pastureland north of downtown Columbus — bordered on the west by Hamilton Avenue (now Road), on the north by 30th Street, on the east by Peabody Avenue and on the south by 27th Street — Waverly Terrace was Columbus' first planned subdivision. It was developed by the Jordan Co.

The first homes were built in 1906 and construction continued until 1929.

From the beginning, it was neighborhood of front porches where residents liked to sit during warm weather. The porches bound neighbors together and gave the area its character.

Today Waverly Terrace does not differ greatly from what it was in the 1930s and '40s.

"It's one of the few intact neighborhoods of its time," Presley Tutherow, a school teacher who is president of the neighborhood association, said. "Most of the houses have been lived in continuously since being built. And most haven't needed any structural renovation."

That's what makes it especially valuable.

Historians say Waverly Terrace reflects the prevailing design principles and construction practices of early 20th century middle-class suburban housing.

The chief benefit of having the neighborhood listed as a historic district (the old Secondary Industrial School is already on the National Register) is protection. In Tutherow's words, "We will be protected from incursions of the commercial district, which has been moving from downtown this way."

Another advantage is tax breaks in restoring old structures.

We're pleased to see the effort to have Waverly Terrace designated as a historic district.

In addition to saving a community treasure, it again proves that historic preservation is more than just a pastime for the rich.