

## CITY OF SUMMIT HISTORIC DISTRICTS – BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

**Summit Downtown Historic District** *This district covers downtown Summit along Union Place, and Springfield Avenue from Kent Place Boulevard to Waldron Avenue, as well as the Village Green, post office, and Central Presbyterian Church.*

The Summit Downtown Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places for its well-kept period architecture, mostly built between 1890 and 1930. The area developed around the railroad station, and is largely consisting of commercial buildings with a variety of period styles, including Italian Renaissance Revival, Neoclassical, Richardsonian Romanesque, Late Gothic Revival, and Federal Revival. Notable buildings in the district include the Summit Railroad Station, Old Town Hall, the Van Cise Building, the Summit Diner, the old YMCA.

**Civic Center Historic District** *This area encompasses the important civic structures, including the train station, post office, Village Green, and Union Place.*

The development of rail transport created Summit and shaped its future. The stop at the top of the hill was “the Summit of the Short Hills” aka “Summit”. The town center, developed initially by businessman Jonathan Crane Bonnel, formed around the train station. Nearby William Littell’s store became the civic hub for the growing community. As New York vacationers gave way to new residents, important public, institutional, ecclesiastical and commercial buildings developed around the station and the “village green” forming the Civic Center Historic District.

**Deantown Historic District** *Includes much of what is sometimes called “East Summit”, east of Overlook Hospital, extending from roughly Baltusrol Place, and the area between Springfield Avenue and Morris Avenue up to North Street.*

Deantown was a community in its own right on maps until the 1900s. Unlike western Summit, Deantown started out as the farm of John Dean and his very large family. Several of the Dean family homes are still standing on Morris Avenue. Slowly over 100 years, Deantown grew into a self-sufficient community centered around hub manufacturing. The area still retains a visual identity and character different from the western parts of Summit, evoking a late 19<sup>th</sup> century working family’s community, predominantly vernacular Victorian houses, and vernacular front-gabled and shed-roofed houses.

**Hobart Avenue Historic District** *This district extends the length of Hobart Avenue, from Franklin Place to Morris Turnpike.*

Hobart Avenue Historic District is a sub-district of the North Side, running about a mile along the full length of Hobart Avenue. The street is named after the Bishop John Henry Hobart of NYC’s Trinity Church, who adopted the area as a summer retreat. Between Franklin & Springfield are some of Summit’s oldest houses from the “resort period”. Near Whittredge, lots become larger and houses are set further back on park-like plots. A variety of architectural styles can be seen, but 1895-1920s architecture predominates, included excellent examples of the most popular architectural styles of that period – some are Free Classic Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Shingle, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and others.

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**Mountain – Oak Ridge Historic District** *Roughly bounded by Mountain Avenue/Oak Ridge Avenue/Elm Place down to Glenside Avenue, from Morris Avenue to Magnolia Place.*

The Mountain – Oak Ridge Historic District is a residential district, with fine examples of late Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Mountain Avenue follows the path of an old Indian trail. Oak Ridge follows the crest of the Second Watchung Mountain, and with views of New York on the eastern side of the street, has been a desirable area in Summit's history.

**Silk Mill Historic District** *This district consists primarily of homes and buildings on Lafayette Avenue and Aubrey Street, as well as that portion of Morris Avenue, and a few structures on Weaver Street.*

The Silk Mill district largely represents a unique economic and cultural history of Summit – in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Summit had a thriving silk industry, and attracted newcomers of many ethnicities to work in the factories. This area is made up of an extant silk mill and surrounding housing which was constructed largely for the workers. Vernacular shed-roofed and front-gabled style houses predominate. Though most structures have undergone modern alteration, this remains an area of significance due to the unique influx of immigrant workers during this period of Summit's history, and the community formed by the workers.

**Beekman Terrace Historic District** *Includes several properties on Beekman Terrace as well as a few on that portion of Beekman Road.*

The Beekman Terrace Historic District is comprised of four estates and their outbuildings, which are outstanding early examples of Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival Styles. The homes were built for Augustus Libby, Charles Finch, R.S. Holt, and Gardner Pattison between 1892 and 1906. These remain architecturally significant structures.

**Prospect Street Historic District** *This district encompasses the homes on Prospect Street, roughly between High Street and Locust Drive.*

The Prospect Street Historic District is a small but outstanding collection of Eclectic residential buildings constructed between 1900 and 1915. Most houses here combine design influences from several styles, but still form a cohesive visually interesting district.

**Morris Avenue Area Historic District** *This district is located below Overlook Hospital, along Morris Avenue and extending from Doremus Street on the south side, to Walnut Street on its northern side, and includes all of William Street.*

The Morris Avenue Area Historic District is a small district neighboring Overlook Hospital. Most houses date from the 1880s to about 1920, with few modern builds. This area remains significant as a collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> century residential structures, with architecture styles ranging from Victorian, Queen Anne to Colonial Revival. Also in this district is the Mount Olive Temple, the Victorian Gothic architectural centerpiece of the area.

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**North Side Historic District** *The most extensive of the historic districts, the North Side includes most properties north of Springfield Avenue, bounded by Morris Avenue, Woodland Avenue and Canoe Brook Country Club, and Route 24.*

The North Side Historic District exemplifies Summit's history and reputation as a commuter suburb. Described "as if everything were designed as a harmonious whole", this area is defined by a variety of architectural styles often in park-like settings. 1890-1940's architecture predominates, with Late Victorian Queen Anne, Shingle and Colonial Revival houses in abundance, along with more than 100 examples of Tudor Revival homes. Much of the district has been excellently preserved.

**Kent Place Boulevard Historic District** *This district covers several significant properties on Kent Place Boulevard between Morris Avenue and High Street.*

The Kent Place Boulevard Historic District is comprised of a grouping of eclectic High Victorians with Stick style ornamental bracketing and porches, Colonial Revivals and gabled Queen Anne Houses. Several of these were built by local real estate speculator William DeForest, and evoke the park-like resort development of Summit's early days.

**Summit Home Land Company Historic District** *Includes homes East of Memorial Field, up to the Middle School, and bounded on the south side by Mountain Ave./Elm Place.*

The Summit Home Land Company Historic District was developed by the Bonnel family, descendants of the "father of Summit" Jonathan Crane Bonnel. The development of this area with its modest Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival homes on modest lots, was a marked departure from the park-like lots and Romantic style homes of the early "resort" period. This district is interesting as it marks an early example of 20<sup>th</sup> century planned development for moderate income families in this growing commuter suburb.