

Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District

The Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District was first developed as country estates, encouraged by more affordable land prices outside of what was then a much smaller city. In 1877, while much of Austin's upper class was building city mansions on high ground close to downtown, five country estates were built in Smoot/Terrace Park on larger parcels of land. These were likely influenced by the picturesque vision of Andrew Jackson Downing, a contemporary landscape designer and writer with a broad national following.

By the late nineteenth century, the taste for the picturesque spread to the development of residential suburbs that were accessible to the middle class. Suburbs such as Hyde Park were enabled by streetcar lines from downtown. Though the West Line streetcar was constructed along Pecan Street (now W. 6th Street) in 1891, suburban development along the line did not begin until the Wendlandt family created the Wendlandt Subdivision on the north side of W. 9th Street in 1911. In 1913, F.H. and Emma Smith subdivided a former country estate into the Terrace Park Subdivision and built Highland and Oakland avenues.

Through the 1910s and into the 1920s, middle-class families gradually purchased lots and constructed single-family houses (mostly Craftsman bungalows) in these new subdivisions. Between 1921 and 1935, Pressler Street was built between W. 6th and W. 9th streets. The residents along Pressler at that time were predominantly white and middle-class, with occupations like shopkeepers, repairmen, and office workers. Their houses were mostly more modest bungalows, often with elements of Colonial and Classical Revival. The west side of Pressler, across from the Smoot family home, was filled in with houses prior to 1956. Many of these homes were demolished for new construction or altered as demand for property near downtown increased in the 1990s and 2000s.

Period of Significance: 1877-1945

Description of the District

The Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District is roughly bounded by W. 9th Street, Pressler Street, W. 6th Street, and Highland Avenue (see map). It contains 81 principal buildings, of which 52 (64%) retain a high degree of historic integrity and contribute to the historic character of the district. All contributing buildings were constructed as residences, with nearly all remaining in that use.

Principal periods of construction within the Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District include:

- The Italianate "homestead" period (circa 1877 – 1894). All five homestead houses remain, most of them standing on large lots. Originally constructed with vertical emphases and Italianate detailing, some of the houses have later additions built in the Stick and Classical Revival styles.
- The Craftsman period (1911-1929). Houses constructed in the Craftsman style have more horizontal emphases, with wider windows, prominent porches, and broader eaves supported by brackets and rafter ends. Houses are one to 1½ stories tall.
- The Colonial Revival period (1921-1945). Houses constructed in the Colonial Revival style are generally more modest one- or two-story buildings. Roof forms were simplified, with shallower eaves.

Map of Smoot/Terrace Park Historic District (forthcoming)

[List of Properties](#)

[Smoot/Terrace Park Design Standards](#)