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Part One Five Points

Debra Brasher

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DEBRA BRASHER

A Twentieth-Century Landmark

While Five Points residents are proud of their neighborhood's historic significance, they agree that it is first and foremost a neighborhood, a place to raise children or visit with grandchildren in an environment that provides a sense of place and character by maintaining an important link to Huntsville's past.

The Five Points Historic Preservation District is Huntsville's newest locally designated district, but it was a concept long before it became a reality. A potential Five Points historic district was first seriously considered in 1982 when the Historic Huntsville Foundation sponsored a meeting for area residents to assess whether there was sufficient interest on the part of owners to pursue the idea. The target area extended from Oakwood Avenue to Maple Hill Cemetery and from Maysville Road to Andrew Jackson Way. Petitions were circulated, but the scope was too large and proved unworkable, in part because of a large number of absentee landown-

ers. Later the target area was reduced to south of McCullough Avenue, and work began again, but the requisite number of petitions still proved elusive. The idea lay dormant until 1994 when the city again received inquiries about the procedure from several home owners. This time they succeeded in securing the necessary support by restricting the boundaries to a small area where support was most concentrated. The plan was to establish a small district that could later be enlarged.



813 Pratt Avenue, Bungalow, ca. 1921

The district was designated by the Huntsville City Council in 1999 and the following year it was expanded by the addition of five more blocks to reach its current total of 329 structures. The district currently incorporates the properties along Ward Avenue, extends south to Eustis and the north side of Wells Avenues, and runs from California/Russell Streets on the west to Grayson Street on the east.

The Five Points district is the southeastern portion of the East Huntsville Addition, which was platted in 1892 in an effort to capitalize on Huntsville's growing economy in the late 19th century. Fifty acres were donated to entice the Dallas Manufacturing Company to locate adjacent to the city. The northwestern portion of the East Huntsville Addition was developed as the Dallas mill village to provide housing for mill workers, while on the east side of what is now Andrew Jackson Way



708 Ward Avenue, Victorian, ca. 1901, with later bungalow porch

individual lots were sold to families desiring to live in the suburbs, which was made practical by the construction of a streetcar line that connected East Huntsville and West Huntsville with the courthouse square. In 1925 all of the blocks currently part of the Five Points district were annexed into the city, making it the first suburb to be incorporated into Huntsville in the 20th century.

The district is significant because it retains its 19th-century grid of broad, parallel streets with narrow but deep lots, and rear alleys. Because the area east of Andrew Jackson Way built up slowly over the course of the last century, it is a prime example of 20th-century middle-class vernacular housing choices illustrated by a

range of styles starting with a scattering of Victorian cottages, followed by a preponderance of Craftsman bungalows, modest Cape Cods, and two-story Colonial Revivals, which were succeeded by rambling ranch houses and today's infill of contemporary dwellings.

Since the district's designation, the Five Points Historic Preservation District Association has designed and erected more than thirty-five historical markers, initiated the renovation and re-dedication of the Wellman Family Park at the Five Points intersection, published an already sold-out cookbook, hung banners, sponsored a study for the improvement of the commercial core of Five Points, and established a quarterly newsletter named *The Point*.



1209 Randolph Avenue, Bungalow