4 | Postwar Suburbanization and Development, 1946–1980

Though the postwar period was marred by several challenges, Fort Worth experienced explosive population, economic, and cultural growth during the three and a half decades after World War II. Despite a devastating flood in 1949, Fort Worth emerged from the 1940s economically prepared for the coming decades, having established itself as a center for national defense. Boosted by a growing manufacturing sector and highway construction, a period of suburbanization transformed the once-rural outlying farmlands into tract homes and strip malls. Growing pains created by the booming population and physical expansion challenged leaders and citizens, who collaborated on urban renewal projects, cultural endeavors, and heritage preservation. Together they restored the vibrancy of downtown, and the city emerged as one of the nation’s premier museum destinations by the end of the period. The city’s growth, coinciding with the civil rights movement, also highlighted existing racial tensions and activists helped usher in change for the city’s growing racial minorities. After an eventful postwar period characterized by growth and change, Fort Worth entered the 1980s with the same frontier spirit of independence that it started with in 1849.

**National Register Eligibility of Resources**

Various themes associated with this period in Fort Worth’s history include: Economic Diversification, Suburbanization, and Cultural and Social Development. Many of these themes can be broken down further into subthemes, including: Defense and Commercial Aviation, Continued Highway Development, Urban Renewal and Historic Preservation Efforts, Civil Rights and Integration, and Arts and The Cultural District. These themes played out their roles simultaneously during this period of Fort Worth’s history. Many extant resources constructed between 1946 and 1980 are located throughout Fort Worth, though high concentrations of these properties are likely located in areas annexed by the City during the period. Among the various property types associated with these themes, examples include: manufacturing facilities, air fields and airports, freeway and highway infrastructure, residential suburbs, commercial shopping strips and malls, motels, museums, Civil Rights Movement sites, LGBTQ sites, and parks and other civic improvements. Resources from this period may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A under the following Areas of Significance: Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Entertainment/Recreation, Ethnic Heritage, Industry, Landscape Architecture, Performing Arts, Social History, and Transportation. Extant resources may also have significance under Criterion C in the Area of Architecture.

See the one-page statement of significance examples throughout this section for examples of how extant resources, meet, or may meet, designation criteria under certain themes.

**POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

Fort Worth experienced explosive population growth in the immediate postwar years, nearly doubling its population between 1946 and 1960 (table 4-1). Despite a slight population decline in the 1970s, Fort Worth maintained its rank as one of the five largest cities in Texas in 1980. The city’s defense and aviation industries, as well as its robust manufacturing and retail sectors, attracted returning veterans, and men and women from rural areas across the state and the South seeking better paying jobs. The baby boom, and the doubling of the city’s square mileage, also contributed to Fort Worth’s growth.¹
Although the majority of Fort Worth’s citizens were white, the city grew more diverse after World War II (table 4-2). Whereas the white population increased 10 percent between 1950 and 1980, the African American population grew 137 percent, and the Latino population increased nearly 200 percent between 1960 and 1980. The diversification of the city’s population coincided with the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation, and played out in various aspects, including housing trends and governmental representation.

### Table 4-2. Population makeup of Fort Worth, 1950 to 1980.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>241,651 (86.7%)</td>
<td>299,346 (84%)</td>
<td>312,521 (79.4%)</td>
<td>265,451 (68.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>36,933 (13.2%)</td>
<td>56,440 (15.8%)</td>
<td>78,324 (19.9%)</td>
<td>87,723 (22.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic/Latino</strong></td>
<td>8,139 (2.9%)</td>
<td>16,388 (4.6%)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>48,696 (12.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian</strong></td>
<td>90 (&lt;1%)</td>
<td>201 (0.1%)</td>
<td>422 (0.1%)</td>
<td>2,340 (0.06%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

**MANUFACTURING AND BUSINESS DIVERSIFICATION**

While the aviation and defense industries anchored the city’s economy in the postwar period, a diversification of the city’s manufacturing contributed to Fort Worth’s robust economy. Between 1948 and 1963, the number of manufacturing plants in the city grew from 601 to 937, and in 1971, manufacturing firms employed more than 94,000 people, a third of the city’s population. While the end of an economic era occurred when the Armour and Swift meatpacking plants closed in 1962 and 1971 respectively, existing and new industries and companies helped bolster the city’s economy (fig. 4-1). Fort Worth’s expanded and modern highway network and air travel opportunities made it an attractive inland center of trade, manufacturing, and distribution (see Continued Highway Development beginning on page 199). Greater collaboration with Dallas, and an early 1970s advertising campaign branding the two cities as “The Metroplex,” also helped lure businesses to North Texas. In boasting of the city’s diverse industries in the 1970s, the head of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Bill Shelton, cited the various plants that contributed to the city’s growth during this period, including firms specializing in manufacturing umbrellas, false teeth, ballpoint pens, boats, glass eyes, and water skis.

During the postwar period, Fort Worth maintained its status as an important apparel, oil, and grain center. For its part, the garment industry added millions of dollars to the economy and employed
around 2,000 employees throughout the 1950s and 1960s. New companies, including the Big State Garment Company (125 South Jennings Avenue), opened factories in Fort Worth, joining existing companies including the Williamson-Dickie Company and H. J. Justin & Sons in the cluster of Southside garment factories. The oil industry also sustained its presence in Fort Worth. Though the East Texas Oil Field’s significance diminished as West Texas and the Permian Basin emerged as the state’s largest oil producer, some oil and petroleum companies with offices in Fort Worth benefited from the global energy crisis and inflated oil prices in the 1970s. Despite the dismantling of Gulf Refining Corporation’s Fort Worth refinery in the 1950s, other companies including Western Company of North America and Texas Refinery Corporation maintained offices downtown. Grain dealers and elevators continued operating in Fort Worth in the postwar period, making Fort Worth one of the nation’s most important grain markets. As the headquarters of the Texas Grain and Feed Association, Fort Worth was home to dozens of grain dealers, many with offices downtown. Grain elevators dotted the city’s landscape, including those belonging to Kimbell Milling Company, who added onto their complex on South Main Street in the early 1950s.

Food processing and manufacturing firms in the city also prospered, with many investing in multimillion-dollar expansions: Pangburn’s Candies added on to its West 7th Street building in 1946 (not extant), Waples Platter processing plant relocated to a larger facility in the suburb of Richland Hills (7133 Burns Street in Richland Industrial Park), and Great Western Foods, a wholesale food manufacturing company, built a new seven-and-a-half-story cooker for their famed Ranch Style beans in the late 1960s at 1734 East El Paso Street in southeast Fort Worth. Mrs. Baird’s Bakery, founded in 1908, also expanded. In 1971 the company built a new $6 million facility on 30 acres at 7301 South Freeway to replace its 1919 plant at 814 6th Avenue (fig. 4-2). The new facility was in far south Fort Worth, approximately 13 miles from downtown, in Carter Industrial Park, one of several new industrial districts in the city. Carter Industrial Park, like Rancho-North and Richland Industrial parks, developed in the period on the outskirts of the city on newly completed highways like the North-South Freeway (fig. 4-3). In addition to Mrs. Baird’s Bakery, other companies including MillerCoors Brewery (1964; 7001 South Freeway) and Container Corporation (1970; 6701 South Freeway) had manufacturing plants in Carter Industrial Park (figs. 4-4, 4-5). With so many manufacturing firms in the city needing to package their goods for transport, the Container Corporation was just one of 14 companies manufacturing boxes in Fort Worth during this period.

Figure 4-2. Sketch from 1970 of the new Mrs. Baird’s Facility at 7301 South Freeway in Carter Industrial Park (extant). Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, September 13, 1970, 69.

In addition to the myriad manufacturing companies in operation in Fort Worth, banking, insurance, and other non-manufacturing businesses established headquarters and satellite offices in Fort Worth. One man in particular, businessman Charles Tandy, played a large role in the diversification of businesses. Tandy, whose father cofounded Hinckley-Tandy Leather Company in Fort Worth in the early twentieth century, joined the business after World War II. There he pioneered mail ordering and direct advertising and began expanding and diversifying the business. Under the new name Tandy Corporation, Tandy acquired a number of businesses that relocated their headquarters to Fort Worth, including Pier 1 Imports, Color Tile, Merribee Art Embroidery Company, and Radio Shack in 1963. In the late 1970s, the company ventured into the field of personal computers with Tandy Computers, one of three companies in the United States that made computers. Tandy Corporation worked out of an office building on West 7th Street until the Tandy Center opened downtown in 1978 (see the Downtown Decline and Revitalization Efforts discussion beginning on page 231).
### Statement of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Postwar Economic Diversification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subthemes:</td>
<td>Manufacturing and Business Diversification, Defense and Commercial Aviation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary Statement of Significance:** Resources significant under this theme reflect the various industries and businesses that contributed to this period of economic prosperity in Fort Worth. Resources are likely to be eligible under the areas of Commerce, Industry, Military, and Transportation. Resources must retain integrity to convey significance and association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Significance:</th>
<th>Roughly between 1946 and 1980.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period of Significance Justification:</td>
<td>Covers the post-World War II economic development and period of diversification, as well as the establishment of significant industries and businesses that greatly contributed to Fort Worth’s prosperity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Geographic Location:** Citywide, though concentrations may be found downtown and in areas of post-World War II suburbanization and development.

**Area(s) of Significance:** Commerce, Industry, Military, and Transportation

**Criteria:**
- **National Register:** A, C
- **Local:** 1, 2, 5

**Associated Property Types:** Among the many resources associated with this theme include: manufacturing facilities, industrial complexes, office buildings, defense sites and buildings, airports and aviation-related buildings and infrastructure. Clusters of buildings may be a historic district.

**Example:** **Carter Industrial Park, 6000–8000 South Freeway**

*Carter Industrial Park in South Fort Worth is an example of an industrial park comprised of multiple manufacturing facilities, warehouses, and offices. It is associated with the theme of Postwar Economic Diversification and the subtheme of Manufacturing and Business Diversification. Located along the newly built South Freeway, the complex was a new property type that developed during this period alongside the expanded highway and freeway network. Carter Industrial Park opened in the early 1960s and was home to companies including Mrs. Baird’s Bakery, MillerCoors Brewery, and the Container Corporation. One of several industrial parks that opened during the period, the companies in these new complexes manufactured a myriad of goods including boxes, boats, ballpoint pens, and candy, and contributed to Fort Worth’s status as one of the nation’s significant inland centers of trade and manufacturing. Dependent on integrity, the industrial park, or individual buildings in the park, may be eligible as a local landmark and for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Industry.*

*Aerial view of the MillerCoors facility at Carter Industrial Park on the South Freeway. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 2020.*

*This sample provides a framework for the identification of resources associated with significant themes in Fort Worth’s history. Resources significant under one theme/subtheme may also be significant under one, or several other themes. Period of Significance dates are also just a guide, and resources may have periods of significance that start earlier or end later. Each resource needs to be evaluated individually for historical significance.*
DEFENSE AND COMMERCIAL AVIATION

Defense Aviation
Though World War II ended in 1945, the Cold War and continued conflicts in Korea and Vietnam provided steady business and federal contracts for the established defense firms in the city. Carswell Air Force Base also contributed to Fort Worth’s important defense role during the Cold War. Growing in the immediate postwar years with an influx of trainees, Carswell Air Force Base served as a major Strategic Air Command base and was home to the Seventh Bombardment Wing, whose mission during the Cold War was to support warfare and operations “utilizing the latest technical knowledge and advance weapons.” This included training flyers of B-29 and B-36 aircraft, the only aircraft in the fleet capable of carrying an atomic bomb. The presence of Carswell Air Force Base in combination with the US government’s policy of military preparedness created business opportunities for both established and new defense firms in Fort Worth throughout the period.

The Convair bomber plant cut jobs at the end of World War II, but the plant continued production of bombers, including the B-36 Peacemaker and B-58 Hustler in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1954, General Dynamics assumed operations of the bomber plant, and by 1957, in the wake of the start of Vietnam War, more than 31,000 people worked at the plant. During this period, the plant supplied bombers to Carswell Air Force Base and the Seventh Bombardment Wing. By the 1960s and 1970s, production at the plant had shifted to fighter jets, and employment numbers fluctuated between 8,000 and 30,000. In 1980, General Dynamics was the largest employer in Fort Worth and Tarrant County.

Fort Worth also welcomed new aviation companies with federal defense contracts. In 1949, Marine Aircraft Corporation began operations involving “secret military air service projects” at Eagle Mountain Lake northwest of downtown. Helicopter manufacturer Bell Aircraft relocated its headquarters from Buffalo to Fort Worth in 1951. The company chose Fort Worth for its strategic location, large population, and the number of established aviation firms already located in the region. The company’s new $3-million plant, located on a 55-acre tract near Hurst, northwest of downtown, opened in 1951 with around 2,000 employees and over $75 million worth of helicopter orders (fig. 4-6). Together, Convair, Marine Aircraft, and Bell Aircraft had an annual payroll over $105 million in 1952. By 1976, Bell had eight other facilities in the Metroplex, including one west of downtown Fort Worth at 2501 Montgomery Street (not extant), in addition to warehouses and storage buildings on over 900 acres of land, mostly in Fort Worth. In 1980, Bell (reorganized as Bell Helicopter Textron) employed 9,300 people and was Tarrant County’s second largest employer, and a leading employer in Fort Worth.

Commercial Aviation

As early as the 1920s, Fort Worth aspired to have a large regional airport located midway between Fort Worth and Dallas in eastern Tarrant County. Despite an agreement with Dallas and groundbreaking and initial construction of a new airport in north Arlington in the early 1940s, conflicts between the two cities led to their abandonment of the site, leaving Meacham Field as the city’s only commercial airport by the end of World War II. Without the collaboration and funding from Dallas, Fort Worth annexed the abandoned site and continued development of a regional airport with the support of American Airlines in the late 1940s. In 1953, Amon G. Carter Field (renamed Greater Fort Worth International Airport in 1962) officially opened (terminal demolished in 1980) (figs. 4-7, 4-8).28

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**Figure 4-7.** Photograph of Amon Carter Field, also known as Greater Fort Worth International Airport (not extant). The airport opened in 1953. Source: Aerial photo of Amon Carter Field, photograph, 19XX, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, from UNT Libraries Special Collections, accessed May 14, 2021, [https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc851413/](https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc851413/).

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**Figure 4-8.** The American Airlines ticketing area at Greater Fort Worth International Airport (not extant). Amon Carter, one of the founders of the airline, was influential in opening the airport and bringing American Airlines to the city. Source: “Amon Carter Field ticketing area,” Meacham-Carter Papers, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries Digital Gallery, n.d., accessed June 10, 2021, [https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/ima/g/20109993](https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/ima/g/20109993).
Serviced by five airlines, including Braniff, American, and Delta, the new airport had three runways and 17 gates. In 1957, American Airlines opened its Stewardess Training College, the first of its kind in the country. The facility, located near the airport, incorporated housing and training facilities in a country club-like setting (demolished in 2020) (fig. 4-9). Despite efforts at creating the region’s premier airport, Greater Fort Worth International Airport (GFWIA) never reached flight or passenger capacity. Dallas’s continued expansion and improvements to Love Field were in part responsible for the slow traffic through GFWIA, as few Dallasites chose to travel through Fort Worth. New runways and other improvements in the 1960s failed to increase the number of passengers, and by 1965 the airport handled less than one percent of the state’s air traffic, compared to 49 percent at Love Field.29

By this time, the Federal Aviation Agency declared it would no longer fund both Fort Worth’s and Dallas’s airports, and the Civil Aeronautics Board ordered the two cities to work together on a new regional airport.30 The project broke ground in 1968 after the cities approved a 17,500-acre site near Euless and Grapevine that incorporated part of the old GFWIA.31 The new Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, designed by architect Gyo Obata of Helmuth Obata and Kassabaum of St. Louis, also included a hotel, post office, and shops and restaurants (fig. 4-10). The first flight into the airport occurred in January 1974, and by 1980 Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport was the world’s seventh-busiest airport.32
The new international airport had much the same impact on Fort Worth as the railroad did in the nineteenth century. Open to new markets and more easily accessible, Fort Worth attracted new businesses after the opening of DFW. Arguably the largest company to relocate to Fort Worth during this period was American Airlines, which already had the Stewardess College, a reservation center, and a flight academy at the old GFWIA. In 1978 the company relocated its corporate headquarters to Fort Worth from New York City, and in the early 1980s it opened a new campus headquarters across from the old GFWIA on Amon Carter Boulevard south of Highway 183 and west of Highway 360 (demolished in 2016) (fig. 4-11). With around 6,000 employees, the airline was the county’s fourth-largest employer in 1980, behind General Dynamics, Bell, and the Fort Worth Independent School District.33
SUBURBANIZATION

Fort Worth experienced significant physical growth during this period. A series of annexations increased
the city’s size from 46 square miles to approximately 180 square miles between 1946 and 1975 (see fig.
2-1 in Chapter 2). Facilitated by expansive highway development, the new boundaries stretched in all
directions away from the central core. New industrial parks and residential subdivisions with commercial
nodes filled in these new areas within the city limits. As the city’s population grew less dense and more
suburban, the city experienced a decentralization of retail activity downtown. In response to the
challenges created by suburbanization, both the City and private individuals spearheaded various
planning and redevelopment efforts aimed at reviving downtown.

CONTINUED HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

By 1946, a network of federal and state highways connected Fort Worth with other cities in North Texas
and the state (fig. 4-12). Dating to the 1920s through early 1940s, these highways were predominantly
single-lane and followed city streets while traveling through and converging downtown. The main north-
south arterials, US Highway 81 and 81A, traveled along Hemphill and Main Streets, and the east–west
connections, US 80 and US 377 ran along Lancaster Avenue, Belknap Street, and Camp Bowie Boulevard
(fig. 4-13). The population boom and a dramatic rise in automobile ownership placed strains on the
existing transportation network, contributing to rapid freeway and interstate construction that
significantly altered the flow of automobile traffic in the city (see figs. 4-14, 4-15, and 4-16 for a
progression of highway building throughout the period). The expanded and modern road network
changed land-use patterns in the city, facilitating new residential, commercial, and industrial
development on the outskirts of Fort Worth while also disrupting some of the older neighborhoods and
commercial areas. As happened across the nation, the transportation authorities responsible for the
highway construction in Fort Worth during this period often selected affordable land for new roadways.
These areas, typically in low-lying areas and along railroad corridors, were also home to non-white
communities. To accommodate highway construction, the authorities acquired swaths of land and
demolished historic homes and neighborhoods. Additionally, the new network of roads divided historic
neighborhoods and often made travel from one side to the other difficult. As a result, the areas cut off
by the highways experienced disuse and disinvestment. Fort Worth was an early leader in the state in
highway construction. Having planned routes prior to World War II, and successfully secured right-of-
way funding from its citizens upon the war’s completion, Fort Worth had more miles of freeway in 1951
than any other Texas city.34 Prior to the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1956, which provided
federal funding for freeway construction and right-of-way acquisition, Fort Worthians approved a $9
million bond for “constructing, improving and extending the streets, thoroughfares and storm sewers . .
. and acquiring the necessary lands therefor” in 1945. 35 Shortly thereafter, work began on the North–
South Freeway. Following the alignment of US 81, parts of the southern portion opened in 1949.
Completed to downtown in 1955, the South Freeway cut through the Morningside neighborhood, a
historically white residential area comprised of early-twentieth-century houses and commercial
buildings (figs. 4-17, 4-18). 36 After a delay due to right-of-way obstacles and litigation over a gravel pit,
work on the North Freeway began in 1958 and was completed to Denton in 1969.37 The freeway was
absorbed into the Interstate Highway System in 1956 and designated Interstate Highway (IH) 35W in
1959. Traffic on the roadway easily surpassed its capacity, and by 1980 the Texas Department of
Transportation (TxDOT) began widening part of IH 35W. 38

Faced with disapproval and protest over sections of the route, Fort Worth delayed construction of the east-west companion to the North–South Freeway several years after passage of the bond issue. Led by the Highway Information Committee, comprised of some downtown business owners including Ben E. Keith, protests against the East–West Freeway focused on the demolition of buildings and displacement of downtown businesses along sections of the proposed alignment (fig. 4-19). Of issue was a section east of downtown that proposed a 369-foot sunken trench north of Lancaster Avenue that would remove over 60 buildings and displace over 70 businesses in its path (fig. 4-20). Because the acquisition cost of these properties was high, and solely the responsibility of the City, Fort Worth drew up a new plan for a smaller, surface-street alternative that was ultimately rejected. Though a new plan, known as the Lancaster Elevated, did not avoid demolition of buildings, in 1952 City Council approved the plan’s 10-block elevated four-lane freeway along Lancaster Avenue between Taylor and Jones Streets. This eastern section opened in 1960, six years after the completion of the western section to present-day SH 183 (fig. 4-21). Absorbed into the interstate system, the freeway was first designated IH 20 in 1959 and then IH 30 in 1971, after the realignment of IH 20 to its current location. Like the North–South Freeway, the East–West Freeway design was obsolete by the late-1970s, and by the 1980s the City and TxDOT worked on reconstructing and expanding the roadway.

Figure 4-19. Advertisement in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram placed by the Highway Information Committee opposing the East–West Freeway (IH 30). Listed are the buildings that would be demolished by the freeway’s construction. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, December 20, 1945, 21.
The completion of the Lancaster Elevated had been especially critical, as it connected the western portion of the East–West Freeway to another new freeway, the Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike, the first limited-access highway in North Texas.\(^4\) Also planned before the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, the $55.8-million project was funded by the sale of bonds, to be repaid by the collection of tolls.\(^4\) Completed in only 30 months, the 30-mile stretch of toll road connecting Fort Worth to Dallas opened to traffic in 1957 and cost 50 cents (fig. 4-22).\(^4\) The turnpike entered Fort Worth from the east,
near White Lake, on a new alignment before it turned south and roughly followed 20th Street where it terminated at its planned convergence with the East–West Freeway just southeast of downtown (figs. 4-23, 4-24). By 1977, the collection of tolls covered the cost of the project, and TxDOT assumed authority over the roadway and removed the tollbooths in 1978. The turnpike was redesignated IH 30.
A new four-level interchange, the first of its kind in Texas, opened in 1958 as a connector between the North–South and East–West Freeways (replaced in 2003) (fig. 4-25). Dubbed the “Mixmaster” due to its resemblance to the kitchen appliance with the same name, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported upon its completion that it “at first glance, appears to be some kind of monster gadget designed for the purpose of hopelessly confusing motorists.” Located near Boaz Street just southeast of downtown, the massive concrete interchange compounded the presence of the freeways by essentially separating the predominantly African American residential area—including the 1940 Butler Place public housing project, wedged between the freeways and the Trinity River—from downtown and other residential areas to the south (fig. 4-26). In the mid-1950s, the availability of more money for the construction of highways spurred more freeways, extensions, feeder roads, and interchanges in Fort Worth. In 1955, Tarrant County and Fort Worth approved a five-year street and highway improvement plan calling for over $21 million for right of way and construction in the city and county. A year later, the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 made federal monies available for highway projects. One of the most significant highways constructed afterward was a roughly 35-mile loop around the city to connect existing and developing outlying suburbs to one another and to Fort Worth (see figs. 4-15 and 4-16). Championed by Congressman Jim Wright, who led the way in securing federal approval and funding, the project was completed in 1982 after 26 years of construction. Interstate Highway 820 comprises the east, north, and west portions of the loop, and IH 20 forms the southern section. Constructed largely in undeveloped areas, the loop spurred new development along its path (fig. 4-27).
### Figure 4-25. Aerial view of the North–South Freeway (IH 35W) and Dallas–Fort Worth Turnpike interchange, known as the “Mixmaster,” 1960 (replaced in 2003).


### Figure 4-26. Inset of 1957 map showing location of the “Mixmaster” in the predominantly African American neighborhood southeast of downtown. The construction of freeways in this area essentially isolated this neighborhood.

Throughout the rest of the period, Fort Worth and TxDOT constructed more highways in the city. Among the other highways completed were US 287 (Southeast Freeway), SH 183, and SH 199. State Highway (SH) 121 East (the Airport Freeway), connecting downtown Fort Worth to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, was built between 1964 and 1988.50 Constructed in predominantly undeveloped sections in the areas farther from downtown, SH 121 did cut through Riverside, a residential area comprised of both white and Black residents close to downtown (fig. 4-28). The alignment wiped out early and mid-twentieth-century houses.51

The impact of massive highway construction during this period was two-fold. The expanded transportation network enabled residential, commercial, and industrial development in areas far outside
the city center. As a result of this suburban development, Fort Worth entered into a period of annexation, as it absorbed large amounts of newly developed land. In addition to spurring suburbanization, the road network also impacted the historic inner city. Roadway construction disrupted historic neighborhoods and downtown experienced a decline in activity as more and more people utilized new shopping centers in the suburbs. In response to this decline, the City and private entities employed various urban renewal and historic preservation projects in an effort to revitalize downtown.

RESIDENTIAL SUBURBANIZATION

Auto-Based Residential Growth

The postwar population boom, facilitated by highway expansion and advances in building technology, played out as rapid suburbanization across the county. The availability of low-cost mortgages to white families also aided the trend. The mortgages provided by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) since 1934 remained available, and the G.I. Bill home loan program backed millions of dollars to veterans for home purchases. These factors created the perfect opportunity for developers, who purchased large swaths of undeveloped land along and near new highways and established residential subdivisions for white families in the outlying areas of cities. The design of postwar suburbs generally incorporated many of the principles advocated by the FHA, such as curvilinear streets and standards for minimum lot sizes, setbacks, and street widths. Lots were typically uniform and included both a front and back yard. Builders embraced popular architectural trends and filled subdivisions with a cohesive collection of like-sized and styled houses. Among the popular styles from the period include Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and the ubiquitous Ranch house.

Refer to the Suburbanization section on page 160 in Chapter 3 for more information on FHA loans.

This trend toward suburbanization was no different in Fort Worth, where the city’s population more than doubled between the end of the war and 1970. During this period of outward expansion, Fort Worth grew in every direction, and new residential developments filled in many of the areas annexed by the city (see fig. 2-1 in Chapter 2 and fig. 4-29). Between 1946 and 1955, the City added nearly 45,000 new houses. Some new construction infilled existing neighborhoods, including the Morningside Historic District, where Minimal Traditional houses went up on undeveloped lots, though most of the construction occurred in the suburbs (fig. 4-30).
The City annexed subdivisions as they developed, adding over 1,400 subdivisions between 1946 and 1958 and another 126 between 1959 and 1975 (see fig. 2-1). Early in the period, new subdivisions filled in undeveloped areas just outside city limits. Hi-Crest (1948) developed in North Fort Worth, Glen Crest West (1946) developed in southeast Fort Worth, Meadowbrook Terrace Addition opened to the east in the 1950s, and near Texas Christian University (TCU) in the southwest, J. E. Foster and Son developed Westcliff, South Hills, Kellis Park, and the Wilshire additions in the late 1940s and 1950s (fig. 4-31).53 Near TCU, these new additions sprung up around one of the few remaining agricultural properties in Fort Worth: the nineteenth-century Edwards Ranch, described by the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as “a rural island surrounded by suburban development.”54 Cass Edwards II, whose grandfather settled the land in the 1840s, owned the 4,020-acre ranch on which cattle still grazed. In 1955, Edwards formed Cassco Land Company to develop the ranch into “exclusive residential” neighborhoods.55 From the ranch, Edwards carved Tanglewood, Overton Park, Overton Crest, and Overton Woods. Cassco Land Company, like most developers of the period, advertised the beauty, seclusion, and modern homes of his subdivision in the local newspaper (fig. 4-32).
Through the 1960s and 1970s, despite a slowing of the frenzied development that took place in the 1950s, developers continued building new communities farther from the central business district. In the 1960s, Ridgmar, on the city’s west side, filled in with a variety of Ranch houses, and in the 1970s, Ranch houses filled Camelot and Foster Village, while Tudor Revival style houses characterized Cooke’s Meadow in far east Fort Worth (fig. 4-33).

Figure 4-32. Cassco Land Company advertisement for Overton Park and Tanglewood additions from 1956, “the finest, newest and most exclusive residential area in Fort Worth.” Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, May 27, 1956, 57.

Figure 4-33. Cassco Land Company advertisement for Overton Park and Tanglewood additions from 1956, “the finest, newest and most exclusive residential area in Fort Worth.” Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, May 27, 1956, 57.

Figure 4-33. A Tudor Revival-style house in Cooke’s Meadow, a late-1970s subdivision in east Fort Worth. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 23, 1978, 110.
Though single-family houses represented the majority of residential development in the suburbs, developers also built apartment complexes there (fig. 4-34). In fact, in 1977, Fort Worth added 9,500 apartment units, the most of any major American city.\(^{56}\) Unlike single-family neighborhoods which were usually located away from main commercial corridors, apartments typically opened on and near major commercial highway corridors. Early in the period, FHA loans aided the construction on apartments, but by the 1960s and 1970s developers relied less heavily on the FHA program, allowing for a diversification in style and design of apartment complexes (figs. 4-35, 4-36).\(^{57}\) Developers also built club-like apartments geared for singles, with amenities including pools, clubhouses, and staff for social activities.\(^{58}\) One example of this type of apartment in Fort Worth is Ridgmar Manor at 2200 Taxco Road. Opened in 1969 for single adults between 21 and 39 years old, it advertised itself as “a swinging new singles-only apartment community” that offered social and recreational amenities (fig. 4-37).\(^{59}\) Advertisements from the 1960s and 1970s highlight the vast number and variety of apartments available in the suburbs (fig. 4-38).

See the next page for a sample statement of significance for resources associated with the theme: Suburbanization, subtheme: Auto-Based Residential Growth.
**Statement of Significance***

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>Mid-Century Modern Ranch house at 6840 Brants Lane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Mid-Century Modern Ranch house in Ridglea Hills is an architect-designed 1950s Ranch house. Its low mass, flat roof, emphasized eaves, and horizontality keep with the popular architectural influences of the day. Built in 1956, the house is an intact example of a Mid-century Modern single-family house in Fort Worth. Local architect J. B. Johnson, who studied under Harwell Hamilton Harris at the UT Austin, designed the house. The house may be eligible as a local landmark and is potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. It may also be eligible under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with residential suburbanization in the postwar period. It would also contribute to a postwar residential historic district that may be eligible under Architecture and Community Planning and Development. |


*This sample provides a framework for the identification of resources associated with significant themes in Fort Worth’s history. Resources significant under one theme/subtheme may also be significant under one, or several other themes. Period of Significance dates are also just a guide, and resources may have periods of significance that start earlier or end later. Each resource needs to be evaluated individually for historical significance.*

Figure 4-37. Advertisement for Ridgmar Manor at 2200 Taxco Road (extant), a singles-only apartment complex for those aged 21–39. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 15, 1969, 39.

Figure 4-38. Page in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram full of advertisements for a variety of apartments in 1970. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, March 22, 1970, 49.
Impact on Black and Latino Fort Worthians

Despite the Supreme Court’s ruling in 1948 against the racial covenants commonly attached to prewar suburbs, the majority of residents in Fort Worth’s new outlying suburbs were white middle-class and professional families. Despite the court ruling, racial covenants were not made illegal until 1968, and prewar racist practices of the FHA loan program continued into the postwar period. Not only did the FHA program continue to favor single-family suburban development over home improvements for extant houses, it also continued to overwhelmingly extend loans to white families over non-white families; less than two percent of FHA loans issued between 1947 and 1959 went to African Americans.60

In Fort Worth, as the population of African Americans and Latinos grew, these communities experienced severe housing shortages in the face of discriminatory housing practices. Historically African American neighborhoods, including the Near East Side, Near Southside, and Como, had little room to grow and offered few options for new residents. Additionally, areas within these neighborhoods became subject to “slum clearance” after the passage of the 1949 Housing Act aimed at eliminating substandard housing. The City demolished at least 380 “dilapidated” buildings in the Near East- and Near Southsides in the early 1950s.61 This was particularly devastating as sections of these neighborhoods had already been impacted by the construction of highways. To relieve the housing shortage and relocate displaced low-income families, the City authorized the construction of an all-Black public housing complex. J. A. Cavile Place, located off the 4900 block of East Rosedale, opened in late 1953 with 300 units (fig. 4-39, demolished in 2019).62

The city’s barrios also suffered during this period. The flood of 1949 wiped out the north side barrio, La Corte, while the construction of IH 30 and the Vickery-Rosedale connection in the 1950s and 1960s displaced hundreds in the city’s Southside barrios, including El TP Barrio. The expansion of the medical district on Pennsylvania Avenue in the 1950s also contributed to the displacement of working-class Latino families and the clearing of Southside barrios (it also contributed to the disintegration of Quality Hill as a residential neighborhood).63 As a result of the loss of the barrios, the Latin American population dispersed throughout the city.
Housing options for the racial minority middle class were equally limited. One developer, though, Howard Patterson, saw the opportunity for an African American residential development. Modeled after white neighborhoods, with single-family houses, schools, and churches, Carver Heights was the first private residential housing development in Fort Worth for African Americans. Located in East Fort Worth on land recently annexed by the City, Carver Heights opened in 1952. The subdivision’s nearly 900 Ranch-style residences housed a state representative, city council members, teachers, lawyers, and businessmen (fig. 4-40). Several years later, another African American subdivision, the Jean Capers Addition, developed southeast of Carver Heights with modest brick and frame Ranch-style houses (fig. 4-41).
As was happening across the country, Black Americans and Latinos in Fort Worth also began moving into historically all-white neighborhoods in search of housing. This shifting demographic played out in neighborhoods including Morningside, Van Zandt, Terrell Heights, and Riverside, where Black families moved, as well as in Diamond Hill, where Latino families relocated. The integration prompted some white families to leave these neighborhoods and move to new outlying, predominantly white suburbs. Other white families remained, and in some cases the integration resulted in racial tensions and violence. In Van Zandt and Morningside, white residents staged demonstrations, and at least one dynamite bomb was placed on the porch of a Black-owned house. The worst case of racial violence, though, occurred in Riverside, where protests, house burnings, and bombings occurred for several years in the late 1950s (fig. 4-42). Though tensions persisted, much of the violence ended in the 1960s as the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation efforts grew (see Civil Rights and Integration beginning on page 241).

Figure 4-42. Newspaper article on the bombing of Lawrence Peters’s car. Peters, an African American, moved into Riverside, at 109 North Judkins, in the 1950s. Riverside was a historically white neighborhood and upon Peters’s arrival, racial tensions and violence broke out. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, November 3, 1953, 7.
### Statement of Significance*

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<td>Example: Carver Heights Neighborhood</td>
<td>The Carver Heights Neighborhood in East Fort Worth is associated with the theme Postwar Suburbanization and subtheme Residential Suburbanization. While many of the new suburbs were predominantly white, Carver Heights is a rare example of an auto-oriented suburb built exclusively for African Americans. While the neighborhood is unique for its racial makeup, its built environment—house forms, styles, and layout—is representative of residential neighborhoods of the period. Opened in 1952, Carver Heights contains a collection of Minimal Traditional, Ranch style, and Contemporary houses, a school, and has curvilinear streets. The neighborhood is a local historic district and is potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture.</td>
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SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Early in the postwar period, the expansive residential construction also spurred commercial development on the city’s major commercial arterials near new subdivisions. Oftentimes developed at the same time as adjacent residential neighborhoods, the late 1940s and 1950s suburban commercial nodes of the period typically included shopping centers, restaurants, banks, and other businesses that catered largely to the new residents. Commonly anchored by a grocery store, these neighborhood shopping centers had a linear plan and provided ample parking. The early 1950s 40 Oaks Shopping Center on East Lancaster Street in the growing Meadowbrook neighborhood and the 1950s Berry Street Center (demolished) near TCU in the rapidly developing southwest part of the city reflect this trend (figs. 4-43, 4-44). Upon its opening in 1953, Fair East Shopping Center, also on East Lancaster Street, boasted 17 stores and the city’s largest suburban department store, The Fair (fig. 4-45). President of the development corporation behind the shopping center said Fair East was designed to:

... meet the modern trend in retailing to make it more convenient and easier for the shopper to buy, and to keep pace with the “rush to the suburbs” where residents may practice an easy shopping habit while dressed informally, satisfying all of their needs with one stop.70

By the 1960s and 1970s, as highways and freeways connected Fort Worth to outlying areas, new commercial developments opened farther from downtown to serve a growing regional population. Dwarfing the shopping centers of the 1940s and 1950s, large shopping malls went up along IH 20, IH 30, IH 820, and IH 35W in the 1960s and 1970s. Homart Development Company, a subsidiary of Sears, Roebuck and Company, opened Fort Worth’s first mall, Seminary South Shopping Center, in 1962 (remodeled and rebranded over the years, now named La Gran Plaza de Fort Worth). Built on the
recently completed South Freeway (IH 35W), the mall occupied over 80 acres on the former site of Katy Lake, a storage lake built by the Katy Railroad in the early twentieth century (fig. 4-46). In the 1970s, Fort Worth’s suburbs added four more shopping malls: Northeast Mall (1971) on IH 820, Ridgmar Mall (1976) on IH 30, Hulen Mall (1977) on IH 20, and North Hills Mall (1979, demolished 2007) on IH 820.

In addition to shopping centers and malls, the new highways promoted construction of other commercial enterprises. Many of these businesses catered to the growing number of travelers passing through Fort Worth on the improved highway system. Several new “motor inns” opened near Seminary South Shopping Center in the 1960s, including a Ramada Roadside Motel and the current Days Inn at 4213 South Freeway (figs. 4-47, 4-48). Far different from earlier lodging styles such as downtown vertical-block hotels, this period’s freestanding motels typically included a row of rooms in a one- or two-story building. The rooms often overlooked a swimming pool and restaurant and motel office buildings. Developers also built drive-through restaurants and gas stations along the highways and frontage roads.
Figure 4-47. Newspaper article on the opening of the new Ramada Inn at 4201 South Freeway (IH 35W) near Seminary South Shopping Center in 1961 (extant). Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 1, 1961, 34.

Figure 4-48. A typical motel that opened along the city’s new freeways in the 1960s and 1970s. This extant motel opened in the 1960s at 4213 South Freeway (IH 35W). Source: HHM, 2015.

See the next page for a sample statement of significance for resources associated with the theme: Suburbanization, subtheme: Suburban Commercial Development.
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**Example:** Ridgmar Mall, 1888 Green Oaks Road

Ridgmar Mall is located in west Fort Worth, just off IH 30. Built in 1976, the enclosed mall is associated with postwar suburban commercial development spawned by the period’s expansion of interstate and freeway construction. Ridgmar was one of several large regional shopping centers built along new roadways in Fort Worth in the 1960s and 1970s. A new property type, the shopping mall evolved from the linear shopping centers of the early postwar period. Unlike shopping centers, though, malls catered to a larger regional population and were anchored by national department stores and chains. These malls and commercial suburbanization in general contributed to the decline of commercial activity in downtown Fort Worth. Ridgmar, like some other shopping malls in Fort Worth, has not yet reached the 50-year threshold set by the National Park Service. Currently, it is not eligible for listing in the National Register based on evaluation precedent of shopping malls to date. Once it reaches the 50-year mark, however, its National Register eligibility should be reexamined in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development under Criterion A.

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DOWNTOWN DECLINE AND REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

Fort Worth’s urban core suffered the impact of suburbanization as shopping centers and malls drew businesses and customers away from downtown. Though people continued working downtown in the upper-level office spaces of buildings, many first-floor commercial spaces sat empty as businesses closed or moved to the suburbs. Retail institutions, including Cox’s, Stripling’s, Everybody’s, Meacham’s, Wally Williams, and Monning’s opened branch stores or completely left downtown for the suburbs. While some buildings remained vacant, others received new occupants. The Downtown Rescue Mission, a food pantry, which moved into the old Liberty Theater at 1100 Main Street in the 1950s, reflects the changing demographics of downtown (fig. 4-49). Businesses that remained downtown often sought to attract and retain customers by modernizing their stores. Owners updated storefronts and applied slipcovers over older buildings in an effort to present a modern appearance. Monning’s Department Store, which opened several suburban branches throughout the period, added two stories and modernized its downtown store on 500 Houston Street (demolished) in the 1950s (fig. 4-50). Leonard’s Department Store at 112 Throckmorton Street (demolished) also made improvements and also tackled the parking issue that many downtown businesses faced. In the early 1960s, Leonard’s opened an underground subway, the M & O, to move shoppers from its 5,000-car parking lot at Henderson Street by the Trinity River to the store’s basement (only remnants of the subway remain) (fig. 4-51). However, limited parking remained an issue for many downtown businesses.
In addition to the vacancies, the central business district also suffered from demolitions during this period. Among the buildings lost were several nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century landmarks: the 1928 Worth Theatre, the 1889 Metropolitan Hotel, and the 1910 Westbrook Hotel (figs. 4-52, 4-53). Just east of the central downtown corridor, the Jim Hotel, a 1920s jazz and blues venue on East 5th Street, gave way to an IH 35 W ramp. As buildings came down, few new buildings went up, and vacant lots and parking lots remained. The central business district only added about 20 new buildings between 1951 and 1971, a far cry from the building boom in downtown Dallas and in the Fort Worth suburbs. Among the new buildings constructed in this 20-year period were several government offices: the 1958 Civil Courts building (demolished in 2013), the 1962 Criminal Courts building north of the courthouse, and the 1971 Edward Durrell Stone–designed Fort Worth City Hall on Throckmorton Street (fig. 4-54). A new motel also opened downtown during this period. Unlike the vertical block hotels of previous periods, the Downtowner Motor Inn at 1010 Houston Street (renovated in 2017 and reopened as a Fairfield Inn) was modeled after a suburban motel (fig. 4-55). Another notable building constructed downtown was the Continental National Bank building at 200 West 7th Street (demolished 2006). Upon its completion in 1956, it was Fort Worth’s tallest building at 31 stories (fig. 4-56).
Figure 4-53. Article on the demolition of the 1910 Westbrook Hotel at 416 Main Street in 1978. The Westbrook Hotel was just one of the handful of landmark buildings downtown lost in the postwar period. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, January 30, 1978, 27.

Figure 4-54. The grand opening of the new Fort Worth City Hall at 1000 Throckmorton Street in 1971 (extant). The building, the city’s third city hall, was designed by Edward Durell Stone (NYC) with influences of the Brutalist and International styles. Source: “Overlooking the grand opening and formal dedication of Fort Worth City Hall at 1000 Throckmorton Street,” Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries Digital Gallery, 1971, accessed May 28, 2021, https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10010733.
Figure 4-55. The Downtowner Motor Inn at 1010 Houston Street (now a Fairfield Inn) was one of few motels constructed downtown in the postwar period. Opened in the mid-1960s, the Downtowner mimicked the design of suburban and highway motels. Source: “Downtowner Motor Inn Hotel at Throckmorton Street and 9th Street, Fort Worth, Texas” Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries Digital Gallery, 1964, accessed June 16, 2021, https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10009043.

Figure 4-56. Designed by Preston M. Geren and Associates, the Continental Bank Building on West 7th Street was the city’s tallest building upon completion in 1956. It also was the city’s first building to use an aluminum curtain wall in its construction. The building was struck by a tornado in 2000 and suffered significant damage and was eventually demolished in 2005. Source: “Continental National Bank building, Fort Worth, Texas,” W. D. Smith Commercial Photography, Inc. Collection, University of Texas at Arlington Libraries Digital Gallery, 1961, accessed May 28, 2021, https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/img/10011334.
In response to the city’s housing shortage, the first multi-family residential development was built downtown. In an effort to provide rental units to single men and women in “critical defense areas,” the FHA program financed the construction of the Fortune Arms Apartments at 601 West 1st Street (fig. 4-57). Completed in 1951, the new 10-story building provided commercial and office space on the ground floor, a pool and parking, and modern amenities including air conditioners and electric kitchens in its 234 units. Despite its offerings, the building only reached 50 to 60 percent occupancy throughout the 1950s and 1960. The Fort Worth Housing Authority, who assumed management of the building after a series of previous property owners, reopened the building as apartments for the elderly in 1973.

**URBAN RENEWAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

Despite this construction activity, downtown Fort Worth remained underutilized and desolate. One of the first attempts to address this issue occurred in 1953, when J. B. Thomas, president of the Texas Electric Service Company, commissioned architect Victor Gruen. Gruen, who, ironically, also pioneered the suburban shopping mall, created an ambitious urban renewal plan that sought to banish virtually all cars from downtown and proposed converting streets into outdoor pedestrian malls, parks, and plazas (fig. 4-58). Motorists would park at one of six large garages located along a new beltway constructed around downtown and walk no more than two and a half minutes to businesses and parks. Gruen submitted his plan, “A Great Fort Worth Tomorrow,” to City Council in 1956. Ultimately considered too radical, the Gruen Plan failed to garner funding and support from the City and was not implemented. In the early 1960s, a City Council-appointed municipal planning committee attempted to rework the Gruen Plan, but like the previous plan, it was never realized.

In 1963, through a series of town halls held at Will Rogers Auditorium, the City sought the public’s input on how best to reinvigorate downtown. Citizens proposed a variety of options including implementing the Gruen Plan, building more libraries, and hosting more cultural activities, but overwhelmingly the public supported building a downtown convention center. In 1964, Tarrant County voters easily approved the bond issue for funding the project. The City chose a 14-block site in the south end of downtown in the area historically known as Hell’s Half Acre for the new convention center. Through eminent domain, the City and County cleared the land of shops, warehouses, hotels, and theaters (fig. 4-59). A consortium of five Fort Worth architects, including Preston M. Geren, collaborated on the Modern design of the complex, which included a theater (demolished 2000), arena, exhibits hall, and meeting rooms (fig. 4-60). The Fort Worth Convention Center (originally named the Tarrant County Convention Center).

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1 Fort Worth was considered a “critical defense area” due to the number of defense-related firms established in the city.
Center) opened in 1968 and successfully brought conventions to Fort Worth, as well as some of music’s top performers from the 1970s, including Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Bob Marley, and Led Zeppelin.

Figure 4-58. Color-coded map from the Gruen Plan showing beltway (red) around downtown with parking garages (green). Source: Courtesy of the Genealogy, History and Archives Unit, Fort Worth Public Library, http://www.fortworthtexasarchives.org/digital/collection/p16084coll18/id/9.

Downtown was not immediately reinvigorated by the opening of the convention center. Despite the thousands of visitors the conventions and events brought to downtown, many of them stayed in hotels and ate in restaurants in the suburbs. As the convention center did little for downtown’s nightlife, businesses continued to shutter.83 Efforts to revitalize downtown continued throughout the 1970s, largely spearheaded by private investors including some of the city's most prominent names: Carter, Tandy, and Bass.

In 1974, the Amon G. Carter Foundation, established in 1945 by Amon G. and Nenetta Burton Carter (see Cultural and Social Context), gifted the City the four-and-a-half-acre Modern Water Garden at 1502 Commerce Street in what was then a blighted section of the city (fig. 4-61). Inspiration for the park stemmed from First Lady “Lady Bird” Johnson’s civic beautification movement and the hope that it would transform that section of town. Designed by architect Philip Johnson and John Burgee, the site features a series of pools, terraces, and walkways in sunken and raised spaces (fig. 4-62). At the garden’s opening ceremony, J. C. Pace Jr., former president of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, said the park would be “a big boost for downtown development.”84
In 1975, businessman Charles Tandy was the next to invest in downtown Fort Worth. Tandy purchased four blocks in the north end of downtown and demolished the existing buildings on site, including Leonard’s Department Store. In their place, Tandy Center, a mixed-used two-tower 20-story building, opened between 1976 and 1978 (fig. 4-63). Designed by Growald Architects of Fort Worth, the complex, meant to mimic a suburban shopping center, included a mall and indoor skating rink and served as corporate headquarters for Radio Shack.85

At the end of this period, Sundance Square, a 35-square-block area downtown transformed by Bass Brothers Enterprises in the 1980s and 1990s, began to take form. The Basses began plans for a larger redevelopment project following their involvement with the opening of the Americana Hotel (now the Worthington Hotel) on the former site of Stripling’s Department Store at 200 Main Street in 1979 (fig. 4-64). In 1979, Bass Brothers began acquiring property in what began as a two-block area downtown. Their plans included a pair of Paul Rudolph–designed high-rises at 201 Main Street (City Center (completed between 1982 and 1984) and a rehabilitated Plaza Hotel at 301 Main Street (fig. 4-65).86
Their restoration of the Plaza Hotel was “the first of a series of such efforts Bass Brothers has planned for Main Street.” As part of the redevelopment plan, the City would spend $3 million using Urban Development Action Grant money for a nine-block improvement program downtown. The Sundance Square project came to fruition over the subsequent decades, helping return vibrancy to downtown Fort Worth. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, the project rehabilitated 12 commercial buildings, including the Burk Burnett Building (500 Main Street) and Fire Station No. 1 (214 Commerce Street). For the project, Bass Brother Enterprises, Inc. earned the Ruth Lester Award for Historic Preservation, the state’s highest honor in preservation, from the Texas Historical Commission in 1982. To date, the project remains one of the largest private-sector preservation efforts undertaken in Fort Worth and serves as a national model.
### Statement of Significance*

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<tr>
<td>Area(s) of Significance:</td>
<td>Community Planning and Development, Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria:</td>
<td>National Register: A and C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Property Types:</td>
<td>Resources associated with this theme include hotels, motels, convention centers, parks, and mixed-use high-rise buildings and complexes. Building modifications from this period may also be significant as they reflect downtown businesses' attempts at modernizing to maintain and attract customers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Example: Fort Worth Convention Center, 1201 Houston Street

The Fort Worth Convention Center (originally the Tarrant County Convention Center) was a collaborative project between Tarrant County and the City of Fort Worth aimed to reinvigorate downtown. Approved by the city's voters, the convention center opened in 1968. The urban renewal project used eminent domain to clear the 14-block site of warehouses and one- and two-part commercial block buildings historically associated with Hell's Half Acre for the new complex. The convention center successfully brought in conventions to Fort Worth, as well as many musical performers, though it did not immediately reinvigorate downtown. Following its completion, other revitalization efforts—including the Water Garden, Tandy Center, and the Sundance Square project—attracted more people to downtown. Dependent on integrity (current renovation plans for the convention center call for the demolition of the arena), the Fort Worth Convention Center may be eligible as a local landmark and for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development. The Modern style building, designed by a consortium of five Fort Worth architects, including Preston M. Geren, may also be eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

*This sample provides a framework for the identification of resources associated with significant themes in Fort Worth's history. Resources significant under one theme/subtheme may also be significant under one, or several other themes. Period of Significance dates are also just a guide, and resources may have periods of significance that start earlier or end later. Each resource needs to be evaluated individually for historical significance.*


See the “Heritage and Cultural Preservation Movement” discussion on page 256 for more information on Fort Worth’s historic preservation movement.