

[Home](#)[About RHDC](#)[Certificates Of Appropriateness](#)[Preservation Services](#)[Historic Resources](#)[Incentives](#)

## Our Mission

The mission of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission is to identify, preserve, protect, and promote Raleigh's historic resources.

## Quick Links

• [Certificate of Appropriateness \(COA\)](#)

• [Design Review and Guidelines](#)

Next COA Major Work  
Deadline:  
**4:00 pm on August 8**

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SEARCH

## Mordecai Place Historic District

Developed from 1916 through 1950s around the early nineteenth century Mordecai House

*The most architecturally varied of Raleigh's early-twentieth-century suburbs for the white middle-class*

Mordecai Place, like Raleigh's other early twentieth-century suburbs, occupies land that had been part of an antebellum plantation. The original plantation house, built in the eighteenth century and heavily altered in the Greek Revival style around 1824, survives and is open to the public as a house museum at Mordecai Historic Park. The early suburb that developed on sold and subdivided plantation land features a rich variety of the architectural styles popular in the first decades of the twentieth century, including the prolific Colonial Revival houses and Craftsman bungalows as well as the romantic revival styles like Tudor Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Spanish Mission Revival, and Italian Renaissance Revival. There are also a few examples of a more typically rural vernacular style, the two-story, side-gabled dwelling known as an I-house. Towards the middle of the twentieth century, smaller Cape Cods and Minimal Traditional houses were built.

The neighborhood's most impressive houses, naturally, stand on large parcels nearest the grand Mordecai House. These are large Colonial Revival and Georgian houses with brick exteriors and were likely architect-designed. Bungalows are the most common house type in the neighborhood, and many feature the Craftsman detailing so strongly associated with the house type.

### History

Joel Lane built the Mordecai House 1785 for his son Henry; the house takes its name from Moses Mordecai, who married into the Lane family and initiated the ca. 1824 addition and alterations that yielded the Greek Revival dwelling that survives today. Beginning in 1916, land south of the house was sold and subdivided for residential development. Brick houses, often in the Colonial Revival style, filled these early parcels.

When Martha Mordecai sold a larger parcel north of the house to real estate developers Dan and Frank Allen in 1922, she made multiple stipulations that shaped the residential development. She directed that the neighborhood be named in honor of the plantation, suggesting the name Mordecai Place. She mandated that whites only live on most of the land, but reserved about eighteen acres near the railroad that could either be sold for residences for African Americans or used for factories. Deed restrictions prohibiting African Americans from living on the land were common in this period and created the segregated housing patterns that persist today.

Dan Allen, one of Raleigh's most prolific real estate developers of the period, created a neighborhood on a modified grid plan that followed the topography of the Mordecai land. Streets in the platted area took their names from Mordecai family members and from trees on the plantation. The neighborhood developed quickly and became a stable middle-class enclave.

A quirky building type also exists in Mordecai Place, reflecting the rise in automobile ownership in the 1920s. The Gables Motor Lodge, established around 1925 by William and Ella Johnson, is a Tudor Revival motel that capitalized on the increasing tourist traffic on Old Wake Forest Road, also designated as U.S. Route 1. The main lodge building has a residential appearance, blending with the residential neighborhood.

[Map](#)

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## Raleigh Historic Landmarks (RHLs)

On May 3, Raleigh City Council designated the Anna Riddick House and Horton-Beckham-Bretsch House as Raleigh Historic Landmarks. [READ MORE](#)

## Historic Overlay Districts (HODs)

The Glenwood-Brooklyn National Register District has become the 1st HOD-Streetside. [READ MORE](#)

## DejaNews

Read our latest [newsletter](#)

## Certificates Of Appropriateness (COAs)

Starting in April 2016, COA meetings will be held on the 4th Thursday of the month, except as noted. The updated calendar is available on the City's website [here](#).



Mordecai Place in the 21st Century



Photo courtesy of  
Michael Zirkle  
Photography

#### Links

[City of Raleigh Mordecai Historic Park](#) -#

[Mordecai Place National Register Nomination](#) -#

[Mordecai Place National Register Nomination Boundary Increase](#) -#

[Under Construction: Capital Improvements – Mordecai Historic Park, Raleigh Television](#)

[Network](#) -#

At the January 19, 2016 meeting the RHDC approved the draft of the *Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts*. The approved draft is being formatted prior to forwarding to City Council for adoption. [READ MORE](#)