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A Bit about the five Highland Park Properties for which demolition is requested

Marjorie White, with the research assistance of Gerry Waters and Randy Merritt, 12-15-2025.

Built between 1912 and 1929, these five garden court apartments and Craftsman style residences were listed in 2003 as contributing properties in the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Hanover Place Historic District and fall within the local historic district governed by the Highland Park Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. They are eligible for tax credits for renovations.

2310 Highland Avenue South, The Phares Apartments, built 1929, 23 units, U-shaped. Coleman Phares (1865-1933), a prominent lawyer from Montgomery moved his practice to Birmingham about 1912 and founded the firm that became Spain & Gillon, LLC. Phares was well known for representing insurance companies. In 1926, he purchased the Highland Avenue lot that held the 1903 residence of Mrs. Beatrice Caldwell Johnson (1860-1929), daughter of Henry M. Caldwell, President of the Elyton Land Company from 1875 to 1895 during the city's formative years and the Caldwell for whom Caldwell Park is named. The lot extended from Highland Avenue to 24th Street and originally bordered 11th Avenue South (formerly Bay Avenue) that was vacated in 2008. By 1929, the Phares and Emilar Apartments at 2310 and 2312 Highland Avenue filled this lot, both developed by Barnett Randman with financing from Protective Insurance Company. Following sale of her residence, Mrs. Johnson moved to 1448 Milner Crescent where she died in 1929.

Current Owner: Sterling Capital LLC, acquired 2007.

2312 Highland Avenue South, Emilar Apartments, built 1926, 12 units, U-shaped. When they opened in October 1926, a *Birmingham Post Herald* reporter noted the apartment building offered "four units, consisting of bedroom, living room with Murphy bed, dining room and kitchen, furnished with frigidaire, steam heat, incinerator, hot and cold water, gas range, shades, screens, janitor service" and an optional garage.

Current Owner: Southside Investors II, LLC, acquired 2006.

1051 24th Street South. Craftsman two-story residence, built c. 1912.

Current Owner: Sterling Capital LLC, acquired 2019.

1055 24th Street South. Craftsman style, one-one half story residence, built. c. 1912.

Current Owner: Sterling Capital, acquired 2016.

1054 24th Street South (listed as 1024?), Bay Court Apartments, eight units built c. 1929.

Current Owner: Sterling Capital, acquired 2008.

Benny LaRussa is the principal partner in Sterling Capital and Southside Investors owners of the properties for which demolition is requested and also a partner in Stone River Company LLC, est. 2007. **Robert Brown is vice president of Asset Management for the Stone River Company** of which there are other affiliated companies that together offer design/build/ and property management services. Brown is the presenter of the request for demolition.