



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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Judith Johnson
J. Johnson & Associates

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you very much for submitting information on Orange Mound in Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee. I am pleased to inform you that we feel Orange Mound is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historical significance. The neighborhood was originally established in 1890 when E.E. Meacham platted a residential neighborhood on land formerly part of the Deaderick Plantation. Meacham sold the lots to African Americans who built their own homes and developed the neighborhood into an area that essentially existed like its own town. Over time, adjacent areas were developed into residential neighborhoods, and the area was annexed by the City of Memphis in the early twentieth century. The neighborhood quickly developed into an important African American community in Memphis, including several important community buildings, such as the Melrose School and Mt. Pisgah CME church, among many others.

Today, the area recognized as Orange Mound encompasses several twentieth century subdivisions. While there are several definitions of neighborhood boundaries today, most definitions appear to agree on an area roughly bounded by Semmes Street, Kimball Ave, Lamar Avenue, the CN Railroad, and the Southern Railroad. Additional research by our staff indicates this appears to have been the neighborhood boundary by the end of the historic era in the late 1970s. Additional research may justify slight revisions to this boundary.

Listing in the National Register is an honorary designation and does not place restrictions on the property owner. Potential benefits of listing include access to competitive, matching rehabilitation grants (for publicly used or publicly owned buildings only), access to the Historic Tax Credit (for rehabilitation of income-producing properties only), and consideration during the federal planning process.

Members of the Orange Mound community have previously reached out to us for assistance with listing Orange Mound in the National Register. Given the district's importance and community interest, our office is moving forward with drafting a National Register nomination. We hope to have a draft ready in the next year or so, but we of course welcome any help from the community with providing historic documentation or photos.

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Schmitt, Ph.D.
National Register of Historic Places Program Co-Coordinator