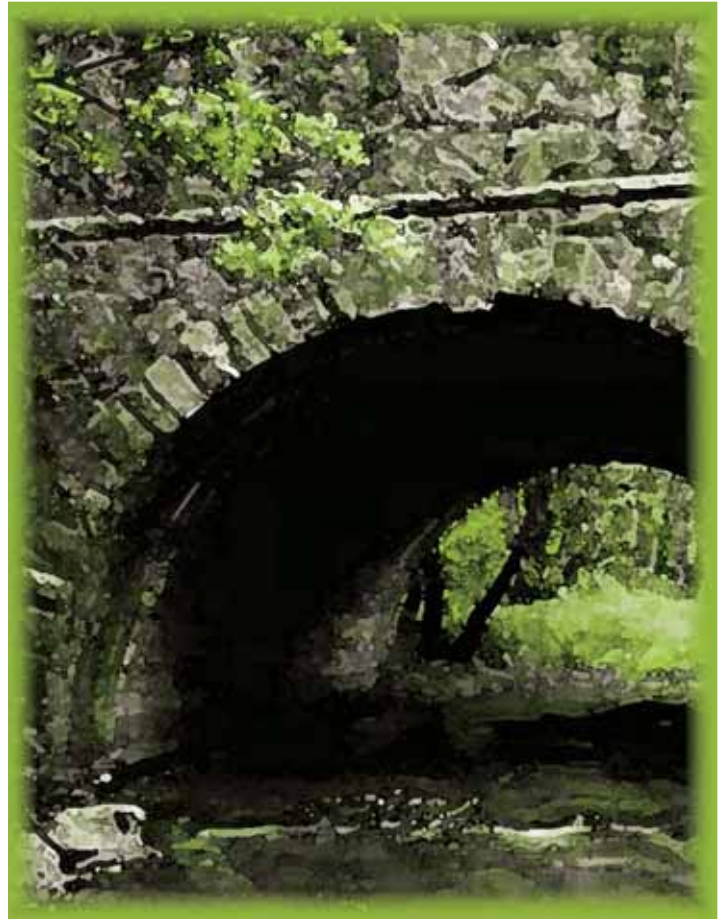


## CHAPTER 2

# Historic Context



- *Historic District and Map*
- *Historic Subdistricts and Maps*
- *Architectural Styles*



## Chapter 2: Historical Context

This section describes the historical context of Manitou Springs as reflected in its historic structures. A community history can be documented in a collection of names and dates carefully recorded in history books seldom read, or it can be seen everyday in the architecture of the past. Protecting and preserving that architectural heritage is one way we can celebrate the people and events that shaped our community and enhance the foundation for our future growth and development.

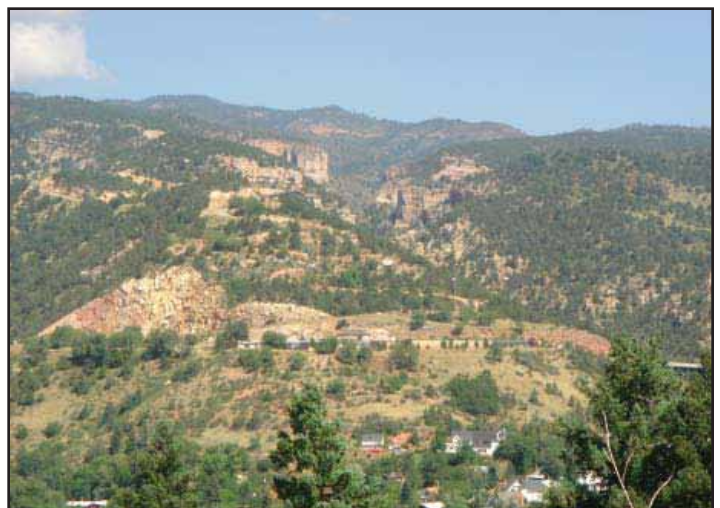
### Background

Large Queen Anne Victorian hotels such as the Barker House and the Cliff House are visible reminders of Manitou's heyday as a health resort. These grand buildings, although altered significantly through early renovations, date back to the 1870s when Manitou Springs was founded by Dr. William Bell, an English physician and business partner of General William Palmer, the founder of Colorado Springs and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Dr. Bell envisioned a European-style health resort built around the natural mineral springs with public parks, gardens, villas and elegant hotels. With this plan in mind, Manitou Springs' first hotel, the Manitou House, was constructed in 1872. Development during the 1870s -1880s was rapid and consisted primarily of frame construction. Although Manitou's growth did not faithfully adhere to Dr. Bell's vision, public parks were sited next to rustic pavilions that housed the mineral springs, and hotels were built along the boundaries of these parks. Residential development consisted initially of tents followed by more permanent structures. Grand Avenue became the favored area for the town's wealthiest citizens, while others built more modest homes on the hillsides south of Manitou Avenue. Dr. Bell constructed his villa, Briarhurst along Fountain Creek east of downtown.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the wooden frame structures of the original commercial district were replaced by more substantial brick and stone structures that are still evident today. Native stone became an important material used in homes, retaining walls and bridges. Tourists continued to flock to Manitou during the summer months and many important buildings were constructed to attract visitors to the "Saratoga of the West." Among these structures were the Manitou Bath House (1883), Soda Springs

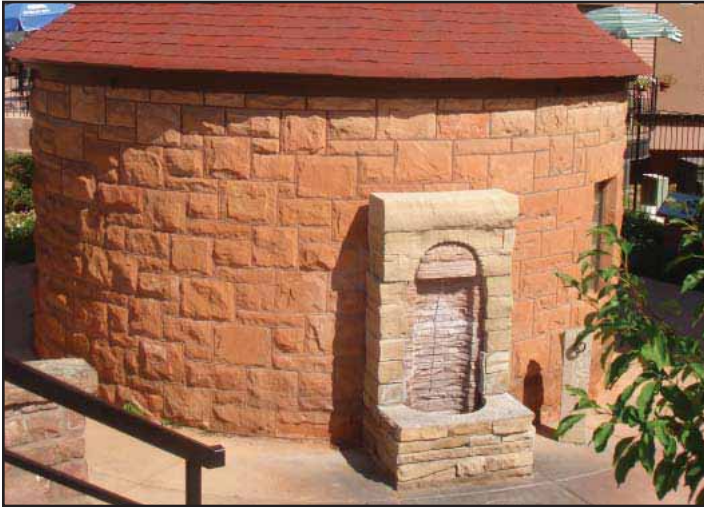


*Manitou Avenue  
Manitou Springs, CO*



*Views across the valley are valued by the local community.  
Manitou Springs, CO*

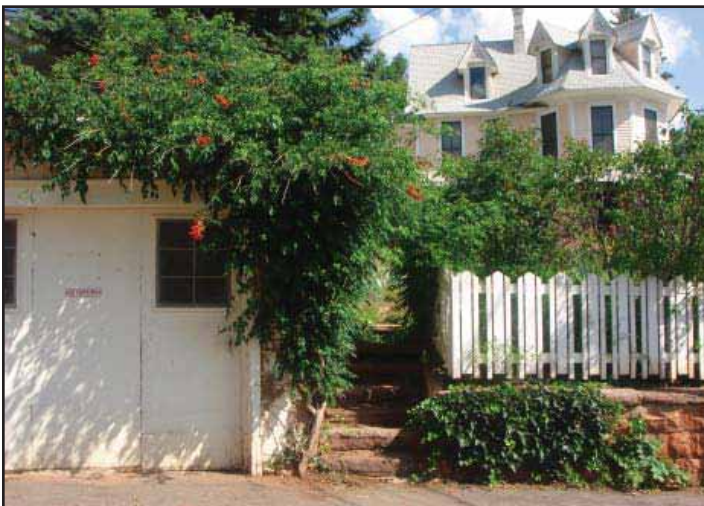




*Shoshone Spring, Manitou Avenue  
Manitou Springs, CO*



*Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church  
Ruxton, Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*



*Corner of Spencer and Cave Avenues  
Manitou Springs, CO*

Pavilion (1885), Manitou Mineral Water Bottling Works (1890), the Wheeler Block (1883), the Leddy Block (1891) and Miramont Castle (1897). Of these structures, only the Wheeler and Leddy Blocks and Miramont Castle still exist. Additional development provided residences for Manitou's business owners, shopkeepers and doctors. Year-round residents favored large homes with extra rooms that were rented to tourists during the summer. To keep the tourists entertained, attractions such as the Cave of the Winds and the Cog Railroad were developed. Although it was still a seasonal town during this period, citizens were proud of their community and constructed a sandstone public school and several churches to provide local services for year-round residents and visitors.

At the turn of the century, Manitou Springs was still a thriving resort; however, the high Victorian period had passed and building styles became simpler. The influence of the automobile was also felt and touring cars for visiting outlying areas were a popular attraction, though tourists still arrived on the train and stayed for several weeks or the entire season. Summer cottages that were constructed to accommodate these visitors are evident today - most notably along Ruxton, Pilot Knob and Waltham Avenues, although cottages are also located on side and back lots throughout the Historic District. World War I ended the era of the health spa and season-long visitors. Tourists continued to be attracted to Manitou Springs, but these visitors arrived in their own automobiles and stayed for shorter periods. Development focused on the east end of town where tourist courts sprang up. Originally constructed as detached cottages, these were subsequently attached to each other with garages or carports. Examples of auto-tourist development include the El Colorado Lodge and Green Willow Motel. Other automobile-related development included gas stations and roadside restaurants. Civic leaders, anxious to lure tourists, developed the present day Spa Building and private businessmen developed the neighboring Arcade and the 900 block of Manitou Avenue in the popular Pueblo Revival, Spanish Colonial and Craftsman styles.



The Great Depression and changes in the tourist trade brought about the gradual decline of many of Manitou's older, more important buildings. Victorian structures were not prized during this period nor were they considered financially supportable, and many fell victim to fire, demolition and neglect. World War II brought in a new era of change as Manitou Springs became a bedroom community for the burgeoning City of Colorado Springs and its new military installations. Grand hotels and summer cottages were converted into apartments and homes for new, year-round residents. The downtown district had grocery stores, clothing shops, hardware stores and drugstores to meet the needs of these residents.



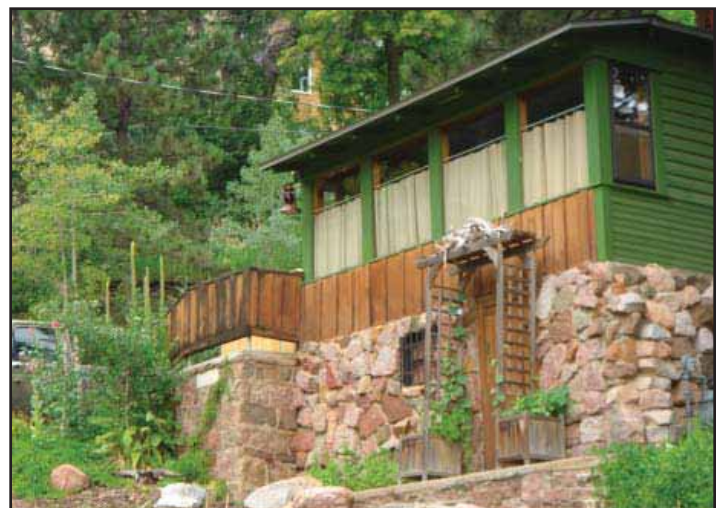
*Heart of Manitou  
Pawnee Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*

During the 1950s and 1960s, family vacations were the norm, and historic motels in Manitou Springs' east end flourished as did curio shops and local attractions including the Mt. Manitou Incline and the Cliff Dwellings. Throughout this period, it was common to modernize store fronts with aluminum and plastic and many of Manitou's historic commercial buildings followed this trend. Residential building also continued along the perimeters of town and Crystal Hills was developed. The 1960s brought an era of unrest to Manitou as well as the rest of the country, and the City became a mecca for counter culture and alternative lifestyles.



*Manitou Springs Public Library  
Manitou Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*

The 1980s ushered in a new understanding of our past with the formation of a National Historic District. This renewed appreciation for history resulted in the restoration of many of our commercial and residential buildings. The Mineral Springs Foundation restored long abandoned mineral springs to public use, and a hillside density ordinance was adopted to protect the delicate, natural setting of the community. An art colony began to prosper with the founding of Commonwheel Artists Co-op and the Business of Art Center. Tourists continued to come to Manitou Springs, and while they enjoyed the traditional attractions, a new emphasis on "Green Tourism," outdoor activities, and hiking trails emerged. Historic motels continued to offer small-town hospitality, but were joined by a growing number of Bed and Breakfast-type lodging. Along with increased tourism, the



*Summer Cottage  
Ruxton Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*

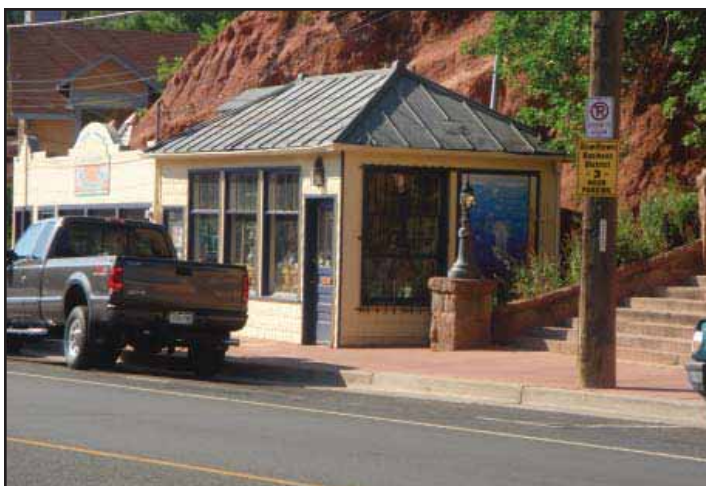




*Manitou Avenue  
Manitou Springs, CO*



*Smaller scaled buildings contribute to the established development pattern of the Historic District. Spencer Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*



*Some commercial buildings have been designed to meet small building parcels that flank Manitou Avenue. Manitou Springs, CO*

1980s and 1990s brought increased growth, as new residents were attracted to Manitou Springs by its visual beauty and quality of life.

As Manitou Springs enters the twenty-first century, long-time residents and newcomers have gained a new appreciation of Manitou's unique small-town atmosphere. A sense of community draws residents together and provides a source of civic identity and pride. This pride is reflected in the continuing restoration and rehabilitation of private homes and businesses, as well as a strong spirit of volunteerism and community involvement. Examples are the restoration of The Cliff House, The Spa Building and the Downtown Streetscape Revitalization Project.

The topography combined with historic architectural styles and development patterns result in cohesive, welcoming neighborhoods. The proximity of houses to the street and the prevalence of large, accessible front porches generate a small-town spirit that is also evident in the pedestrian-oriented commercial district where residents, business owners and tourists meet and mingle against a backdrop of historic storefronts.

As the region enjoys a long-awaited economic revival, the demand for property in the limited Manitou Springs market has increased. Development pressures are increasing, and if not carefully managed, will threaten the natural and built environments that consistently draw residents and visitors to Manitou Springs. Providing new growth and development that is sensitive to our natural setting and our historical heritage will be the primary challenge of this new century.

### **City of Manitou Springs Historic District**

In 1978, the City generated "A Design Plan" for the Downtown. The Historic Preservation Commission was formed in 1979 to delineate historic district boundaries and to create design guidelines for the District. The local Historic Preservation District was created in 1980 and the first Design Guidelines Handbook for both the residential and commercial areas within the newly created District was adopted



in 1981. In 1983, the City was honored by the designation of three National Register Districts by the National Parks Service: Crystal Valley Cemetery, Keithley Log Cabin and the Multiple Resource District (which comprises the majority of the “core” of Manitou Springs). In 1987, the Historic Preservation Ordinance was updated. Since their initial adoption, the Guidelines have been revised from time-to-time by the City to make them more inclusive and to provide more clarity. They were comprehensively updated and the initial subdistricts were created in 1993. In 1996, new Local Historic Preservation District boundaries were adopted that reduced its size to be more consistent with lines of the National Register Districts. A major update and reorganization to the Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted in 2002. The current 2009 revisions to the Guidelines feature an updated format, more illustrations and photographs, inclusion of sustainable techniques (“Green Building”) and consolidation of both the residential and commercial design guideline documents into one set of Guidelines in a web-friendly format.



*Example of Manitou Springs motel architecture popular in the 50s and 60s. Manitou Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*



*This false front building is one of several commercial style storefronts. Manitou Avenue, Manitou Springs CO*



*This historic residence has been converted to a commercial business in the Commercial Core. Avenue Hotel Bed & Breakfast Manitou Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*



*The architectural detailing and ongoing maintenance of this historic residence contributes to the overall character of the Historic District. 602 Upper Ruxton Avenue Manitou Springs, CO*







SUBDISTRICTS

# Historic Subdistricts Map

## Subdistrict Introduction

Manitou Springs' Local Historic Preservation District is comprised of 16 subdistricts. All these sub-areas are detailed in the following maps and descriptions, except for the Crystal Valley Cemetery Subdistrict, for which the City intends to develop use and maintenance Guidelines in the future.

These subdistricts were created in an effort to define neighborhoods and help both the Commission and property owners to focus on important features and characteristics within each area. Every subdistrict has a variety of infill and building types – both historic and contemporary – and this mixture has had varying effects on the historic qualities and character of these areas. Some subdistricts, or even smaller areas within those neighborhoods, are quite cohesive in building styles and dates of construction. Other neighborhoods are more eclectic. However, patterns of siting, materials and design features among the historic buildings can be found even in subdistricts with diverse eras of development. These are generally the characteristics that will inspire the most successful projects.

## General Features

The steep topography exhibited throughout the Historic District resulted in narrow streets that meander up the hillsides and provide stunning views across the valley. The primary entrance to many structures is oriented toward the street and connects directly to sidewalks and / or secondary pedestrian walkways that link residential neighborhoods to the Commercial Core, local schools and City services.

Stone foundations, retaining walls and historic stone bridges are found throughout the City's Historic District. The character of these features may vary from subdistrict to subdistrict. The areas of the community that developed earlier in the City's history often display more cut stone and formal detailing. Manitou Greenstone was locally quarried from approximately 1890 to 1940 and is found only in this area, but is no longer commercially available. The use of Greenstone is a defining feature within the Historic District. Stonework associated with "later" development, generally post-1900, may be more random and natural, such as the use of found "rubble" stone.

Except for some historic chimneys and many of the buildings within the Commercial Core Subdistrict, brick is not a common material used within Manitou Springs' Historic District. Although there are a limited number of buildings with ornate decoration within the Historic District, overall the use of simple architectural detailing and materials is most prevalent.



*Areas of the community that developed earlier display cut stone and formal detailing similar to this commercial structure on Canon Avenue. Canon Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*



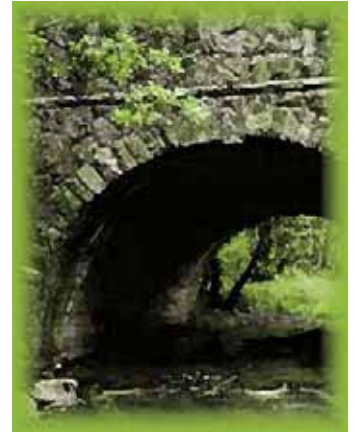
*The WPA insignia on a retaining wall in the Upper Washington Subdistrict. Lafayette Avenue, Manitou Springs, CO*



Insert 11 X 17  
Historic Districts  
and Subdistricts Map  
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SUBDISTRICTS

**El Paso Cottages**  
**High Road**  
**Lower Washington**  
**Minnehaha/Pilot Knob**  
**Peakview**

## **El Paso Cottages Subdistrict, High Road Subdistrict, Lower Washington Subdistrict, Minnehaha/Pilot Knob Subdistrict and Peakview Subdistrict**

The descriptions of these Subdistricts have been grouped together due to their similarities. They exhibit a wider variety of building sizes and scales. Much of these areas were developed post 1900.

The **El Paso Cottages Subdistrict** is a small area on the north side of El Paso Blvd., between 448 and 480, which extends to the south side of Pinon Lane adjacent to these properties. The name of this subdistrict reflects the dominant architectural style in the area. Some of the notable structures within this subdistrict are:

- Spanish Colonial Revival Residences at 454 and 460 El Paso Blvd.
- Uneda Rest Cottage (466 El Paso Blvd.)

The **High Road Subdistrict** is found along the southern border of the Historic District roughly between Pawnee Avenue and Uinta Road. This subdistrict contains parts of Midland Avenue, Shoshone Place, Chipeta Road, Fairmont, Garnet and Mica Avenues, and Edgewood Pathway. One of the notable structures within this subdistrict is:

- Kanagy House and WPA Wall (901 Midland Avenue)

The **Lower Washington Subdistrict** is found between 215 and 425 Washington Avenue and also contains Sunshine Trail, Burn and Cliff Roads. Some of the notable structures within this subdistrict are:

- The Alabama House (425 Washington Avenue)
- Historic Cabin (413 Washington Avenue)

The **Minnehaha/Pilot Knob Subdistrict** is located in the western part of the City. In addition to the streets for which it is named, it also contains areas of Pine Ridge, Michigan, Duncan, and Illinois Avenues, Ute Trail, Rock Hill and Iron Roads.

The **Peakview Subdistrict** is located along the eastern boundary of the Historic District, south of Manitou Avenue. This subdistrict contains South Path, Fountain Place, part of Elk Path, Peakview and Delaware Roads.

These Subdistricts represent a less consistent mixture of historic and non-historic residences characterized by the following features:

1. A mixture of building ages and scales
2. Siting on some of the most severe topography in the Historic District
3. Irregular setbacks
4. Cottages and vernacular style
5. Wood frame construction
6. Roof gables parallel to the street (side gables)
7. Retaining walls made from found stone (rubble) and dry-laid stone

The topography tends to be steeper, hence building siting may be irregular and buildings are fit to the varied topography. Some buildings are set immediately against the roadbed or sidewalks and many have a strong relationship to the street or the view. One of the most critical considerations for this area is to respect the natural topography and fit new construction into the topography, rather than using modern methods and equipment to alter it.

Although contemporary styles are generally more compatible in these subdistricts than in others, scale, massing and orientation, which echo the historic residences are recommended. Low, horizontal ranch-style houses are least appropriate. Blocky, vertical, steep-roofed residences, which have clearly-defined front entries, view orientations and down-played garage entries are more likely to complement the historic buildings that are present.

In keeping with the more informal characteristics of this neighborhood, stone walls, although common, are generally built from rubble and are frequently curvilinear.



