# ALLEN PARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES: A 7.21 acre parcel of land east of 1300 East containing Allen Park Drive (1865 South) which runs east into the parcel. Bordered on the east by the site of Garfield School and lying between Downington Avenue on the north and the northern boundary of the Westminister Conservation District on the south.

MAP:

The proposed Allen Park Conservation District is an unusual and visually distinctive park-like area consisting of a group of stone piers, fences and bridges, rustic log dwellings and simple frame duplexes set in a heavily wooded gulch. This site is historically noteworthy for its association with its owner and developer, Dr. George Albert Allen, a Salt Lake City surgeon, naturalist, amatuer ornithologist and civic leader in the Sugar House area of Salt Lake City.

Isolated from the more typical suburban areas which surround it, Allen Park is located in the gulch of Emigration Creek east of 1300 East, not far from Westminister College. The wooded banks of Emigration Creek separate it from Downington (on the north) and Westminster (on the south) Avenues. Entry to the park is off 1300 East via Allen Park Drive (1865 South), a semi-circular drive framed by a gateway of square masonry piers. Access to the residences is provided by a narrow winding roadway following the course of the creek back from the entry, terminating at the rear of the property on its eastern boundary. Residences, all rental units, are strung along the stream banks in somewhat random fashion, facing inward onto the roadway and creek. The western portion of the tract is characterized by multi-family log homes having the rustic character of wilderness lodges. The eastern section is composed of rectangular one story frame duplex apartments with clapboard siding, presumably built after the log dwellings. Some of the homes are accessible only by narrow wooden footbridges spanning the creek, and one residence is precariously sited over the creek bed, supported on wooden pilings.

Derelict bird cages and wire pens are found throughout the park, reminders of Dr. Allen's avid interest in collecting exotic and ornamental birds. Today quail and other small wildlife run freely through the natural riparian habitat. Allen was evidently a philosopher as well, having erected a number of stone and concrete walls and monuments inscribed by poetry and prose. Since Dr. Allen's death the grounds have gradually fallen into disrepair; however this has accentuated the rustic and natural ambience which has characterized Allen Park since its establishment.

The first dwelling built in Allen Park was George Allen's own residence, a large log home of six major rooms and a two story central space built c. 1932 at 1865 South 1300 East. Formerly a resident at 2605 Highland Drive, Allen resided in his Allen Park home until his death in 1961. In 1934 Allen purchased a 7.21 acre tract from Julius A. Rockwood and proceeded to develop the complex of rental units - principally erected during the late 1930s and 1940s - that came to comprise Allen Park. Rockwood, a member of a prominent family which pioneered the Sugar House area, was himself closely involved with the development of Sugar House as owner and operator of a number

of business firms including Granite Furniture and Rockwood Furniture Company.

George Albert Allen, a well established Salt Lake physician, was born in Canada and reared in Illinois, where he graduated from medical school in 1920. Upon coming to Utah later that year, Allen was first employed as a physician for the Standard Coal Company in Carbon County. In 1921 he established a general practice in Salt Lake City and served on the staff of St. Mark's Hospital and was also employed as a surgeon for the Utah Radio Company, Salt Lake Pressed Brick Company and other industrial concerns. He was involved with serval insurance companies as a medical claims examiner, and for four years was the physician for the Utah State Prison at Sugar House during the administration of Governor Mabey.

Active in Salt Lake City and Sugar House civic affairs, Dr. Allen was very involved with the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, serving as chairman of it's civic improvement committee and vice chairman of the recreation committee. He was active in Republican party politics at one time being a candidate for the state legislature. Allen was at one time president of the Highland Park Improvement League, and as president of the Sugar House Business Men's League was credited as being responsible for the erection of the town monument commerating the founding of Utah's sugar industry.

Dr. Allen also distinguished himself by his intense interest as a naturalist and collector of rare birds. His extensive Allen Park aviary with it many species including 29 varieties of pheasant was considered the largest and finest collection in the state. He was instrumental in organizing the Salt Lake City Zoological Society and as president and chairman of the Zoological Park Board developed in the city "one of the largest and most complete zoos in the west." Allen also served as director of the Salt Lake County Game Association and president of the Salt Lake Chapter of the National Plant and Flower Guild. After retiring from active medical practice he founded the Allen Publishing Company, a family enterprise which published "The Game Breeders", "Pheasant Fanciers" and "Aviculturist's Gazette".

It is fitting given Allen's character and interests that he should develop Allen Park as a rustic and natural area in the midst of Salt Lake City.

With its numerous rental units, Allen Park generally catered to a more transient, working class clientele compared to the more affluent east bench subdivisions with their fashionable single family houses, restrictive covenants and advertisements aimed at middle and upper middle class people. City directory research shows Allen Park to be typified by such residents as Burl A. Applegarth, "machinist"; Bernice S. McGovney, "typist";

Francis Welsh, clerk for the Utah Liquor Control Commission; Paul F. Kreft, driver for Wasatch Plumbing Company; Ellis J. Fitzgerald, "weather stripper" and Norman C. Hammer, "racker", Fisher Baking Company. Some government and corporate employees were also represented, however, including Jay S. Gashwiler, assistant researcher with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serice; Charles E. Gordon, administrative officer for the U.S. Department of Disbursement; and J. William Haws, United Air Lines co-pilot.

With its unique ambience in architecture and rustic landscape, and its close association with one of the most distinguished personages of the east bench, Allen Park strongly merits consideration for designation as a Salt Lake City Conservation District.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

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