



UPTOWN SQUARE FACT SHEET (formerly Lauderdale Courts)

About: **Uptown Square** is the new name for the historic renovation of Lauderdale Courts. The \$36 million dollar project was done through a public/private partnership with The City of Memphis and downtown developers, Jack Belz and Henry Turley. The development has been beautifully transformed into a chic, garden apartment community in the heart of the city.

Location: **Uptown Square**, part of the \$150 million, 100-block, 1,000-home Uptown Memphis development, is located just east of Harbor Town, in and on the north side of the Memphis' downtown area. The Uptown Memphis stretches from I-40 north to Poplar Avenue south, and from Third Street east to Danny Thomas Boulevard west.

Property: The 347 unit apartment community occupies 66 buildings on a 22 acre plot in the heart of downtown. It boasts of mature landscape, free gated-parking, pool, fitness center, media and billiard room and coffee room. Memphis' first wireless community, Uptown Square has a business center complete with computers and business equipment for its residents. It has 26 different floor plans from studios, two bedroom lofts and 1, 2, 3 bedroom apartments.

History On the National Historic Register, Uptown Square was built in 1938. It was among the first housing projects built in the Memphis. Leading architects of the day such as J. Frazer Smith, Walk C. Jones, Sr., George Awsumb, Edwin B. Phillips and others designed Uptown Square to maximize community development and interaction. The complex is a colonial revival design built under the auspices of the Roosevelt Works Progress Administration program.

Elvis Many prominent Memphis citizens came from this development, but none more famous than Elvis Aaron Presley.

In September of 1949, the Presleys moved into 185 Winchester #328 at Lauderdale Courts. Since moving from Tupelo, MS, they had lived in a series of rooming house apartments in the Uptown area until they were accepted by the Memphis Housing Authority. The public housing project accepted families making less than \$3,000 a year. They paid \$35 dollars a month rent.

Eventually a shy Elvis would make friends. He would practice his guitar alone in the basement laundry room and eventually worked up the courage to entertain the neighbors in the complex's communal courtyards and the Market Mall. These would become the first stages from which he would perform.

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Location and environment were influences on his music and style.

- He could walk to Beale Street to listen to black blues artists of the day.
- He would attend gospel concerts at the Ellis Auditorium just a block away.
- He would meet other musicians in the development and would play with them in the wonderfully designed courtyards.
- He could walk to some of his first jobs from here such as Crown Electric.
- Sun Studio was about a mile from his home.
- Across the street was Poplar Tunes record store where he would listen to records all day.
- He had the opportunity to play with other resident and area musicians.

Because of an increase in income, the Presleys had to leave The Courts and moved on to Saffarans Street in Uptown in January of 1953. They would later move on Alabama Street across the street from Lauderdale Courts to be near friends.

Elvis attended Humes High School (located in Uptown) during his time in Lauderdale Courts and would perform in the variety shows the school would have. Back then Elvis had already begun to develop his own individual style, sometimes wearing black satin pants with a pink stripe, pop up shirt collars and greased DA with a curl in the front. Conversely, he also liked wearing his ROTC uniform.

**185 Winchester, #328
Apartment Details**

The apartment is a 689 square foot, two bedroom apartment. At the time they moved in, there was no air-conditioning. Among their belongings were two table fans, a small radio, a trunk and some paperwork. Elvis got the larger room with a view of Third Street. He could be seen sitting many an afternoon in his window playing his guitar. He had his own set of dishes and silverware that he did not want anyone else to use.

The floors were parquet Memphis hardwood by the Bruce Hardwood Co. The kitchen has linoleum and the bathroom floor was 1" white mosaic tile with black accents. Strict maintenance rules were enforced at Lauderdale Courts with inspections by coordinator Ms. June Richardson.

- | Master_Developer: The Uptown Partnership: A Belz-Turley Community Development Company
- Architects: Looney Ricks Kiss, Self Tucker
- Interior Design: Carkuff Interior Designs (Leasing Office, Model Apartment & Elvis Apartment)
- Prime Contractor: Flintco Inc.
- Program Administrator: City of Memphis/Memphis Housing Authority
- Program Manager: Abt Associates
- Leasing Company: LEDIC Management Group

Program Funding:	UPTOWN SQUARE
\$17,000,000	First Mortgage –Berkshire Mortgage Finance
14,000,000	City/ MHA Capital Funds
5,400,000	Historic Tax Credit Equity – Bank of America
\$36,400,000	Total

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