

Home Builder/Developer: Ensor, Kenton C.
Birth/Death Dates: 1907-1976
Practice Dates: 1932-ca. 1975
Firms: Ensor, K.C., Construction Company
Turnpike Land Company
K.C. Realty Company

Biographical Information

Kenton C. Ensor was born December 15, 1907 in Paris, Missouri. At the age of fifteen, he moved to Denver with his family. He graduated from North High School and went into the construction business with his father. In 1932, Ensor built his first home for sale and established, with his father, K.C. Ensor Construction Company. In 1933 he married the former Eddy Roberts, and built three more homes (*Post*, 06/07/76).

During the 1940s, Ensor was involved in war-related construction projects in such places as Pando, Colorado, and White Horse, Yukon Territory, where he built officers' clubs and quarters for the military (*Post*, 06/07/76). After World War II, Ensor recognized the need for affordable housing and began looking for opportunities. He built many homes that conformed to FHA and VA funding specifications in several Park Hill subdivisions including Clayton Park. He also built the Spruce Knob Resort and Homes in the Estes Park area.

In 1950, Ensor began construction of 200 homes in Mar Lee Manor and developed College View Shopping Center. In 1954, along with developers Franklin Burns and Ted Hutchinson, Ensor developed Harvey Park, an area in southwest Denver bounded on the west by Sheridan Boulevard, West Jewell on the north, South Lowell Boulevard on the east, and US Hwy. 285 on the south. The development would grow to 4,200 homes.

In 1955, KC Ensor partnered with Carl Norgren, Bud Knight, Balmore Swalm, and John Sullivan to purchase the old Zang Ranch and initiated his most ambitious project Broomfield Heights, "a 6000-home city he envisioned with its own water system, fire department, shopping center, parks, church and school system. The subdivision, then, was to contain 1,080 acres of land and a population of 20,000" (*Post*, 06/07/76). Recognizing that there was no near-by source for sod to supply his home buyers, Ensor initiated the first large-scale sod-growing effort in the Denver area. He developed the old Wild Acres Estates property into Green Valley Turf Farm, which today encompasses more than 850 acres of land in sod farming at three sites (<http://www.gvt.net/html/history.html>).

Ensor did not confine his work to affordable single-family housing developments. In 1963 he developed and built 30 homes in Ponderosa Hills, East of Parker (*News*, 06/30/63). He later developed the Leawood Subdivision in Littleton, and Dillon Valley and Dillon Valley East in the mountains. He served as president and principal organizer of Dillon Valley Metropolitan District in Dillon, as well as similar roles with Southwest Metropolitan Water and Sanitation District.

K.C. Ensor owned ranches in Colorado and Wyoming. He died unexpectedly at the age of 68 in 1976, while on vacation in Las Vegas, Nevada (*Post* 06/07/76).

(Biography by Paul Malkoski)

Credited Projects (partial list)

Project or Development	Location*	Building Types	Date**	Status
Mar Lee Manor	Denver		1950-54?	
Harvey Park	Show houses at 1902, 1922, 1932, 1942, 1962 S. Wolcott (1954); 2547, 2567 S. Zenobia (1955), Denver	Ranch and tri-level	1954-1963	
Broomfield Heights	Broomfield show houses at 101 W. 4 th Ave. Dr. (1955); 650 Beryl St. (1959), Broomfield	Ranch	Ca. 1955-59	
Leawood	Show house at 5932 S. Otis (1963); 6656 W. Leawood Dr. and 6619, 6578 S. Newland Circle (1965); 6333, 6334 W. Burgandy Dr. (1966) Englewood; unincorporated Jefferson County	Ranch, tri-level, bi-level	Ca. 1963-1978	
Dillon Valley East	Dillon	Condominiums	Ca. 1971	

*Model home addresses are given when known.

**Completion date or construction span is stated if known. Plan, building permit, or assessor dates are used if completion date or period is unknown.

Reference Material

“Articles of Incorporation of Dillon Valley East Condominium Association,” signed by incorporators (including K.C. Ensor) on February 1, 1971.

“Construction of 30 Homes At Ponderosa Hills Okayed,” the *Rocky Mountain News*, June 30, 1963.

“Council Orders Building Probe,” the *Rocky Mountain News*, April 25, 1950.

Green Valley Turf Company website, <http://www.gvt.net/html/hisstory.html>. Accessed November 6, 2005.

"Home Builders in Denver Parade of Homes: 1953-1963," database, National Register and State Register Programs, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

"K.C. Ensor Dies at 68; Area Home Builder," the *Denver Post*, June 7, 1976.

Leawood Parks website, <http://leawoodca.com/parks.html>. Part of Leawood Civic Association website. Accessed November 6, 2005.

Marmor, Jason. *Historic Preservation Feasibility Study: Broomfield Heights First Filing and Original Broomfield*. Draft – June 7, 2001. RNL Design and Ballorret-Entranco.

"Parade of Homes Plan Book," Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Denver, 1959.

"Rites Tuesday for K.C. Ensor Sr." the *Rocky Mountain News*, June 8, 1976.

Site Files Database, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Research Notes:

The Internet yielded few valuable sites that contained biographical information, and none that made specific reference to Ensor's activities as a builder of affordable single-family homes in the Denver area.

The two obituaries are the main source of biographical data on E. C. Ensor. Other articles cited provided additional details of his real estate and development activities, but did not add any personal details.

Revised: August 20, 2006