CENTER FOR HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Development of Residential Subdivisions along the Route 9/New Castle Avenue Corridor, 1945-1970 +/-: A Historic and Architectural Context

DelDOT

Center for Historic Architecture + Design

Development of Residential Subdivisions along the Route 9/New Castle Avenue Corridor, 1945-1970 +/-: A Historic and Architectural Context

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Preface

In January 2021, as part of an annual grant project, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD) at the University of Delaware partnered with the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) to undertake a historic context on residential subdivisions along the Route 9 (New Castle Avenue) corridor. The project, which was multi-phased, was designed to help understand the history related to settlement patterns in the area, specifically race-related settlement patterns and environmental justice concerns. Each neighborhood in the study area received a background history, architectural analysis, and national and local context for suburbanization, specifically related to inequitable housing policies and options for Black Americans. For Phase 1 of the project, the historic context focused on seven post-World War II subdivisions constructed south of the City of Wilmington and north of Interstate 295. For Phase 2 of the project, five post-World War II neighborhoods south of Interstate 295 and north of the City of New Castle were researched. Additionally, during Phase 2 of the project, the background histories of four pre-World War II neighborhoods (Eden Park, Hamilton Park, Holloway Terrace, and Buttonwood) were researched and discussed in the "Background History of the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 Corridor" section.

This area of New Castle County has been overlooked by historic preservationists and has been the focus of little architectural survey and historical research and few National Register nominations or even determinations of eligibility studies (see map below). Previous work undertaken in this area has focused on archaeology and recordation of threatened (and now demolished) eighteenth and nineteenth century dwellings associated with wealthier white people. Phases 1 and 2 of this project were designed to tell a more robust and inclusive story of the settlement of this portion of New Castle County. In order to tell a more inclusive story, a large component of Phase 2 of the project was to record oral histories with long-time residents from various communities along the Route 9 corridor. Eleven oral histories were recorded with 15 different community members between January and June 2022. Oral history informants came from the communities of Rosegate, Rose Hill Gardens, Castle Hills, Dunleith, Oakmont, Rizzo Avenue, and Buttonwood. Recollections from these 15 community members have been incorporated into this report.

The report, research, oral histories, and any other material produced for this project can be found at the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design.

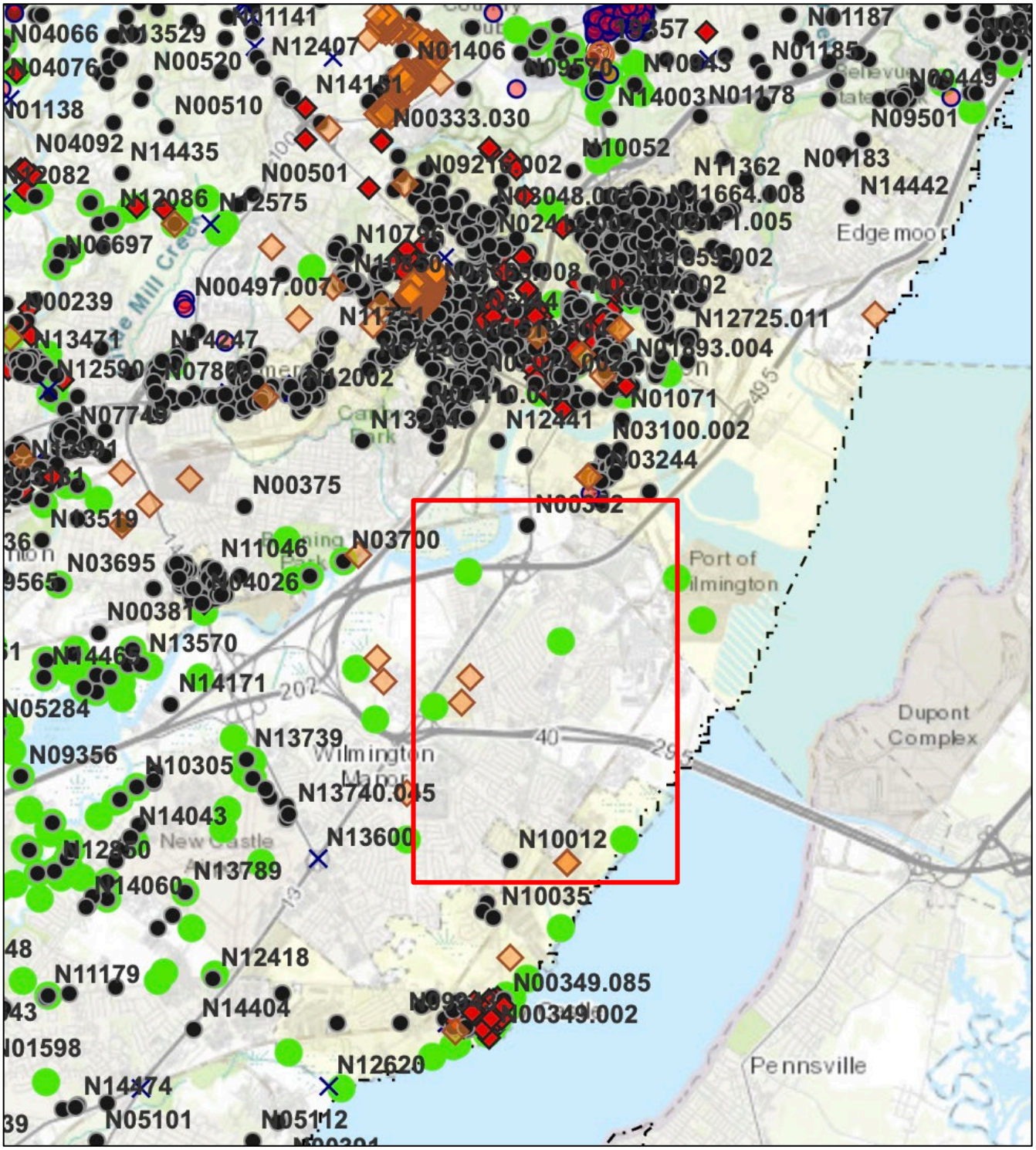

Figure 1. Map from the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs online mapping system. The project study area is demarcated in the red box. Note the lack of any GIS points contained in this box. The various colors and shapes are coded to reflect previous architectural or archaeological investigations. Compare the scarcity of GIS points in the red box to the density of any other area on the map.

1. Statement of Context

This project identifies, contextualizes, and evaluates historic resources that are a product of post-World War II suburbanization south of the City of Wilmington along New Castle Avenue/Route 9. Relevant historic **themes** include settlement patterns, geographic trends, and architecture, while the secondary themes of manufacturing and transportation are also discussed. Specific topics within those themes include post-World War II suburbanization, federal housing policy, real estate development, midcentury architecture, African American history, racial conflict, urban renewal, early zoning policy, transportation systems, and commerce/industry. The **period** examined spans from 1945, beginning with housing constructed during World War II, to 1970.

Elements of a Historic Context

A historic context is an organizational framework for nominating to the National Register of Historic Places properties that all share a common cultural theme, with the same geographic and chronological limits. Historic contexts describe significant patterns of development in an area that are represented by historic properties. The defining elements of this context are twofold—the historic theme of suburbanization outside of the City of Wilmington, Delaware, limited by the geographic boundary of the Route 9 corridor, south of Interstate 495 and north of the City of New Castle.

Contained in this document are all of the necessary components of a historic context as defined by the National Park Service: statement of context, definition of the context—including the theme, geographic parameters, and the temporal limits—as well as background history of the study area.[1] Additionally, this historic context contains a discussion of significance in both local and national contexts. Lastly, property types related to suburbanization (subdivisions and dwelling units) are discussed.

Historic Themes

Suburbs, and the process of suburbanization, as the historic theme in this context is defined as a residential community located near a core city but outside of its jurisdictional boundaries and usually distant from the urban center (not easily walkable), but often linked to the city by employment, social networks, and social institutions and/or transportation networks.

[1] Barbara Wyatt, "The Components of a Historic Context: A National Register White Paper," Department of Interior, National Park Service, April 2009, 1-4.

Utilizing the historic themes as identified in the "Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan" (Herman, Siders, et al., 1989), the primary subthemes in this context are **Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes** and **Architecture, Engineering and Decorative Arts.** The first subtheme, Settlement Patterns and Demographic Changes, represents the tremendous expansion of housing opportunities into rural areas, which had previously been out of practical reach for most people. As a result, the population in New Castle County shifted from largely urban to suburban. Additionally, under this historic subtheme, segregation, and integration in housing opportunities in New Castle County will be explored.

This context explores the physical investigation of both residential subdivisions and dwellings, and as such, this exploration is directly related to the subtheme of **Architecture, Engineering, and Decorative Arts.** Set against trends occurring nationally, the architecture of each residential subdivision is described and evaluated in sections 4 and 5 of this context.

There are two secondary subthemes explored in this context: **Manufacturing** and **Transportation and Communication**. **Manufacturing** and industry impacted the shape and formation of the Route 9 corridor. Historically, as well as today, the residents have been negatively impacted by their proximity to a variety of industries. Manufacturing and industry were present in the context study area from the beginning of the nineteenth century. As early as 1801, a gun powder mill was erected on the Christina River by Peter Bauduy. Around 1844, the Lobdell Car Wheel Co. was constructed near the foot of present-day Christiana Avenue. Lastly, by the turn of the twentieth century, the C. and J. Pyle Co. Patent Leather Factory and the Wilmington Glass Co. were located to the west of Route 9. In 1917, the Pyrites Company opened on the Christina River. In 1923, the Wilmington Marine Terminal (now Port of Wilmington) was opened at the junction of the Christina and Delaware Rivers. During the twentieth century, industry continued to infill to the east of Route 9 along present-day Route 9A (Christina Avenue), along the shorelines of both the Christina and Delaware Rivers. This area south of the City of Wilmington has been typified by a mixture of industrial enterprises co-mingled with residential developments for the entirety of the twentieth century.

Transportation is a key subtheme to the process of suburbanization. Without improved transportation methods, suburbanization was impossible. Streetcars and trolley lines facilitated late-nineteenth and early-twentieth residential development outside of the City of Wilmington. As automobiles were invented and later supplanted other modes of transportation, the placement, location, and design of subdivisions were constructed in response to the car. Notably, automobile-centric subdivisions had wider streets to accommodate more traffic circulation

and safety as well as on street parking. The designs for suburban dwellings included driveways and, in some cases, detached or attached garages. In short, subdivisions could not exist without improved methods of transportation, and post-World War II subdivisions could not exist without the car.

Property Types

This historic context discusses the developer platted and designed residential subdivision as the primary historic property type. Additionally, the context recognizes an associated subtype: the suburban dwellings that comprise these subdivisions. When evaluating subdivisions in the northern Route 9/New Castle Avenue corridor, this context considers at least six physical characteristics of each, including **size, circulation, access, housing type, architectural diversity,** and **community amenities**. For the property subtype (suburban dwellings), this context explores two primary types of dwellings—attached and detached homes. Furthermore, form, style, and construction materials are also discussed in relation to suburban dwellings.

Geographic Zone

This historic context has a narrowly defined geographic zone—specifically spanning Route 9 (New Castle Avenue), south of the City of Wilmington municipal boundary (Norfolk Southern railroad) and ending at the municipal boundary with the City of New Castle. All of the subdivisions are located in unincorporated New Castle County and within New Castle Hundred.[2]

The subdivisions along Route 9 are located primarily in the Coastal Zone, as identified in the "Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan." The landscape of this zone is mostly flat and marshy. Prior to the onset of suburban development, the study area was characterized by agricultural usages, with some industry developing along the Christina River in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Early subdivision in New Castle Hundred occurred on both New Castle Avenue (Route 9) and the somewhat parallel DuPont Highway (Route 13). Early subdivisions along New Castle Avenue include Hamilton Park, Eden Park Gardens, and Holloway Terrace.

None of the residential subdivisions in this context are located in the Urban Zone as defined in the "Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan," which only includes the City of Wilmington. While the study

[2] Hundreds in Delaware are geopolitical divisions that are roughly equivalent to townships in other states. Hundred boundaries were used as the divisions by which census data were recorded through the early-twentieth century.

properties are located in close proximity to the city, the Urban Zone is considered essential to the development of this context because of the intertwined relationship of outmigration from Wilmington to surrounding areas between the 1940s and 1970s.

Figure 2. Geographic boundaries of the entire study area in red. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Chronological Period

The decades from 1940 to 1960 are identified in the "Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan" as the period of Suburbanization and Early Ex-Urbanization, but due to the age of the plan (written in 1989), it fails to identify chronological periods of development after 1960. However, based on extensive literature published about suburbanization in the United States coupled with field observation, this historic context recognizes the development patterns from 1960 to 1970 as part of the same chronological time period (suburbanization and ex-urbanization).

The chronological period for this context begins in 1945 with the end of War World II—when suburbanization and new housing starts were dramatically increased nationally—and ends in 1970. The end date of 1970 was selected for two reasons. On April 11, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Contained within this larger act is Title VIII, also known as the Fair Housing Act, which prohibited the discrimination of the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, and national origin. This act explicitly prohibited housing discrimination practices common during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, including redlining, blockbusting, and racial steering. The context extends the period of significance two years after the Fair Housing Act was passed due to the fact that de facto discrimination in housing continued well after 1968.

Research Design

Developing an historic context is a research project and must be carried out in a systematic fashion, under a specific research design, to assure that all the important aspects of the context have been identified. This context was developed with a research design that includes identification of subdivisions in the New Castle Avenue corridor, fieldwork (windshield survey), and extensive documentary research.

Identification of Subdivisions

No complete list of subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor existed prior to this study. The initial task was to establish a list of subdivisions within the geographic extent of the study area. The identification of these resources was accomplished by examining New Castle County's *Explore New Castle County* Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map. This online GIS map contains information for all land parcels in New Castle County; most importantly for this study, the map also contains the names and boundaries of all residential subdivisions. A total of 12 subdivisions were identified that met the parameters of this context.

Field Work

After compiling a list of historic resources that are located in the geographic zone and meet the temporal limits of the identified chronological period for this context, fieldwork was undertaken to identify the properties within the study area. Reconnaissance-level survey was performed in each subdivision. Each street in each subdivision was driven, and photos were taken of representative architectural styles and floor plans. One of the primary goals for this survey was to identify the physical characteristics of each suburb as well as the physical characteristics of the dwellings composing the individual neighborhoods. This was integral to the process of understanding and assessing the age of the neighborhoods and changes that have occurred since initial construction as well as the integrity of the buildings for integrity evaluations.

Documentary Research

The compilation of this context relied on various primary and secondary sources. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many archives and research institutions were closed throughout the duration of the project. Documentary research was limited to remote research repositories and a few research institutions that reopened during the pandemic, namely the University of Delaware's Morris Library. Many traditional primary and secondary materials are digitized and now available online. Newspaper advertisements and articles were found at Newspapers.com; aerial photography and research materials related to the industrial operations on the Christina River were found through Hagley Museum and Library's Digital Archives; deed research was performed through Ancestry.com; any previous architectural survey or archaeological investigation information was found on the Division of Historical and Cultural Affair's *Cultural and Historical Resources Information System* (CHRIS); historic maps were accessed through the Library of Congress's website as well as the University of Delaware's ProQuest Collection of Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970; and lastly, the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) online collection was also consulted.

Several secondary sources provided information related to the national and local context narratives of the region. Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States,* Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,* and Andrew Wiese's *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* provided relevant background history for suburbanization in the United States, biased governmental policies against Black Americans, as well as suburbanization patterns of Blacks. The National Register Bulletin entitled "Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places" provided a valuable

framework for the organization of this context as well as a methodology for research and evaluation of residential suburbs. Carol Hoffecker's *Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century* was an important resource for understanding Wilmington's residential landscapes during the mid-twentieth century, as she addresses both urban renewal projects in Wilmington and the development of various suburbs in relation to developments in local politics and economics.

Lastly, two local historic contexts, "Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1880-1950+/-," and "Southbridge: An Historic Context for a Neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, 1870-1996," were immensely helpful in the preparation of this context. In the context "Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1880-1950+/-," Susan Mulchahey Chase, et al., identified early suburbanization patterns around the City of Wilmington, identifying 182 subdivisions, their physical characteristics, the architectural trends of these neighborhoods, and the settlement patterns and demographic changes occurring. While this work mostly contextualized pre-World War II subdivisions, the research and recommendations provided important foundational materials for this work. The context on Southbridge also provided helpful background information. Southbridge is located within the boundaries of the City of Wilmington and is geographically adjacent to the study area of this context. Southbridge and the Route 9 corridor share many historical trends and inherited environmental issues due to their proximity to industrial operations on both the Christina and Delaware Rivers.

Method for Involving the General Public

DelDOT, based on feedback from the Route 9 Monitoring Committee that there was not an adequate understanding of the historical developments that led to environmental and social justice issues along Route 9, proposed the idea of this historic context report to explore the historic residential development patterns along the corridor. Route 9 Monitoring committee participants were then updated periodically about the project at committee meetings, where they had the opportunity to ask questions and offer input and guidance about the study.

During Phases 1 and 2 of the project, including work on both the written context and the oral history project, contact was made with several civic association presidents and other community leaders for the neighborhoods along the Route 9 corridor, specifically in Oakmont, Simonds Gardens, Rosegate, Rose Hill Gardens, Dunleith, and Collins Park. Longtime residents were also contacted for neighborhoods such as Rizzo Avenue, Holloway Terrace, Southbridge, Castle Hills, and Buttonwood. These early conversations helped establish contacts in these

communities and provided background history for each individual neighborhood—and later facilitated connections with potential participants for the oral history project. Relationships were also established with helpful staff at the Route 9 Library and Innovation Center, which offered its facilities for oral history interviews or other study-related meetings. The library also offered to be a repository for the materials produced by this project.

Between January and June of 2022, with the help of civic association presidents and other long-time residents, CHAD staff established contacts with dozens of potential interviewees for the oral history project. News of this project was spread by word-of-mouth, email blasts, neighborhood newsletters, and social media postings. Several dozen names were gathered, prioritizing residents who lived in the neighborhoods during their earliest decades, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s. Dozens of phone calls were made to establish contact with the most promising candidates for the oral histories, though many prospects ultimately did not participate due to COVID safety concerns and protocols, challenges with utilizing online software for "virtual" interviews, scheduling conflicts, health problems, privacy concerns, and other unknown reasons. Some potential interviewees reported that they had lived in the subject neighborhoods after the "historical" period most under study for this project and could thus not shed light on their early decades. Ultimately, 15 community members participated in formal, recorded oral histories, hailing primarily from seven neighborhoods—including Oakmont, Dunleith, Rosegate, Rose Hill Gardens, Castle Hills, Rizzo Avenue, and Buttonwood. However, some interviewees had lived in multiple neighborhoods, and nearly all of them shared memories and perspectives about many neighborhoods in the corridor, and thus provided valuable information about developments beyond their own "home" neighborhoods.

CHAD staff also sought community input about future public outreach activities, to identify events or programs that might be the most meaningful or valued by area residents. The general goal is to share the findings of the historical context report, including the oral history project, and to facilitate additional discussions, recollections, and documentation for the history of the Route 9 neighborhoods. Preliminary ideas shared by community members included an event to present the documented history, to allow residents to share memories, to distribute any printed products resulting from this study, and to discuss possible commemoration or historic preservation efforts that might further recognize the history of communities along Route 9/New Castle Avenue. Additional input and ideas are currently being solicited from participants in the oral history project and from other community leaders.

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INTERNSHIP

WANT TO INTERN WITH A LOCAL NONPROFIT?

Need some volunteer hours or want to get more involved in your community, apply to become an intern with NCPC.

NCPC is a local nonprofit working to revitalize our community through partnerships and addressing social determinants of health.

Application link here.
https://forms.gle/ACmkW48kMVgu6uq38

MLK DAY AWARD

CELEBRATE OUR VERY OWN RECEIVE THE HUMANITARIAN AWARD

On January 15th, the American Clergy Leadership Conference of Pennsylvania. awarded Route 9's very own James Parker for the Humanitarian and True Family Values Award. James works everyday at the Rose Hill Community Center providing free food to people within the community and supporting other groups in the community. At the award ceremony they had Dr. Herbert H. Lusk, II, the former Eagles running back and pastor of the Greater Exodus Baptist Church, speak.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

REMEMBERING ROUTE 9

During the next couple of months, Michael Emmons, at the University of Delaware, is seeking to speak to people who have early memories of living in the neighborhoods in the Route 9 corridor. This project seeks to better understand people's experience growing up in or living in the corridor and will focus on memories of the community, racial dynamics of neighborhoods, quality of life, and the homes in the area. Participation will only require an hour, conducted COVID safely over zoom. If you are willing to participate, or know of someone who is, Please reach out to Michael at **mjej@udel.edu** or **419-630-8895.**

FREE COVID TESTS
Starting January 19th, you can order free rapid COVID-19 test kits through the government at the following website, www.covidtests.gov

DONATE TO NCPC TODAY! SCAN QR CODE.

This Newsletter was created and maintained by the New Castle Prevention Coalition, http://www.ncpcdel.org/index.html.
If you would like to include anything about your business or community events, please contact Emily Rodden at erodden16@gmail.com

Figure 3. Page 2 of the Route 9 Newsletter which announced the oral history project as well as sought prospective informants. (New Castle Prevention Coalition, *Route 9 Newsletter*, January 2022)

2. Historical & Architectural Contexts: National & Local

The National Context of Suburbanization, 1935-1970

The primary conditions that led to the post-World War II boom in suburbanization arguably began during the crisis of the Great Depression, when home foreclosures reached catastrophic levels, new house construction almost completely ground to a halt, and there was a severe decline in the repair and upkeep of existing houses.[3] Two government agencies established during the New Deal, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), would have a major impact on suburban development patterns in the United States during the coming decades. HOLC and the FHA (and similar programs administered by the Veterans Administration) instituted policies that standardized the mortgage industry, facilitated widespread lending on terms accessible to many, and stimulated the construction of thousands of subdivisions full of affordable new houses—accelerating suburbanization throughout the United States.

Established in 1933, HOLC was critical to the development of modern housing finance programs, having "introduced, perfected, and proved in practice the feasibility of the long-term, self-amortizing mortgage with uniform payments spread over the whole life of the debt."[4] Before HOLC programs, mortgages were offered by either traditional banks or savings and loans societies. Banks offered buyers three- to six-year mortgages, while savings and loans societies offered slightly more favorable mortgage loans of 10 to 12 years. Additionally, these non-HOLC loans were limited to one-half to two-thirds appraised value of the property. Prospective homebuyers often needed a down payment of at least 30 percent to purchase a home.[5] HOLC also established universal appraisal practices, creating a system that involved grading neighborhoods to measure risk for lenders—which was good for creating confidence in the markets but bad in the sense that the system had major racial and socioeconomic dimensions that led to the now notorious practice known as "redlining" (see below).

The influence of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) on both the residential landscape and day-to-day lifestyles of Americans would be difficult to overstate. As one historian reflected in 1985, "No agency of the United States government has had a more pervasive and powerful impact on the American people over the past half-century."[6] Established in 1934 by the National Housing Act, the FHA was intended to stimulate building

[3] Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 195.
[4] Jackson, 196.
[5] Jackson, 204.
[6] Jackson, 203.

activity and alleviate unemployment during the Great Depression. In 1934, about one-quarter of the total work force in the United States was unemployed, and the construction industry was hit particularly hard by the crisis. The FHA would satisfy President Roosevelt's goal of reviving the struggling construction industry through a government program that did not require government spending—relying instead on private enterprise. To achieve this, the FHA established three interrelated goals, aiming "to encourage improvement in housing standards and conditions, to facilitate sound home financing on reasonable terms, and to exert a stabilizing influence on the mortgage market."[7] A decade later, in 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (also known as the GI Bill) created a Veterans Administration (VA) to assist the 16 million veterans who were returning to civilian life after World War II. One of the VA's major programs was home loans, essentially **modeled on** the FHA program—to such a degree that "the two programs can be considered as a single effort."[8]

The FHA and VA lending programs revolutionized the purchase of homes for millions of prospective homeowners after the Great Depression. The federal government's insurance of home mortgages under these programs generated confidence among private banks, who could now enthusiastically lend money on terms that previously would have been far too risky. Down payments for FHA loans were greatly reduced, removing a major barrier for home ownership. The VA, in fact, required **zero down payment**—granting 100 percent financing for veterans and their families. The FHA, like the Home Owners Loan Corporation before it, also established lengthy repayment periods—25 or 30 years—and required that all loans be fully amortized, resulting in greatly reduced (and highly affordable) monthly payments for most home purchasers. With these lending terms, there were many instances where it was actually less expensive to purchase a new house in the suburbs than it was to rent a small apartment in the city. This, in turn, resulted in far more house purchases and far fewer foreclosures as the country climbed out of the Great Depression.[9]

The influence of the FHA and VA went far beyond lending, however, as their programs also transformed the construction industry. To reduce risk in their mortgage guarantees, the FHA established minimum standards for house construction to avoid major structural or mechanical problems that might lead to financial hardships and loan defaults by buyers. Rather than just taking builders at their word, the FHA instituted a system of on-site inspections by appraisers during the construction process, ensuring that FHA construction standards had been met before approving insurance on each house mortgage. In effect, these FHA requirements created de facto

[7] Jackson, 203.
[8] Jackson, 204.
[9] Jackson, 204.

construction industry standards after World War II, since most developers and construction companies, who sought the largest possible pool of buyers, wanted their subdivisions to qualify for FHA and VA financing.[10]

Developers and construction companies began mass-producing new houses that met these standards and at a scale and efficiency rarely witnessed previously. Developers implemented a widespread system of "tract" housing—subdividing large tracts of rural land into small house lots, routinizing construction techniques to achieve cost efficiency and economy of scale, building standardized house models on standard lots, and opening model houses, often furnished, to entice prospective buyers.[11] The FHA also attempted to standardize ideal homes and ideal subdivisions by establishing requirements for minimum lot sizes, setbacks (distance from street), envelopes (distance from neighboring houses), and even width of the house, leading to airy, bright, and uncrowded neighborhoods that did not resemble cities.[12] Compared to older housing stock in cities, new suburban homes also contained the latest in home appliances, utilities, lighting fixtures, and more fashionable styles—especially apparent in kitchens and bathrooms. Americans seemed to increasingly desire new construction over old homes, which were "more likely to have coal-burning furnaces, exposed wiring, large awkward bathtubs set on porcelain lions' claws, and gas ranges that required a match to light."[13]

The lending system promoted by the FHA and VA combined with several other factors to stimulate a residential building boom that moved outward to the suburbs—fueled by the baby boom, white flight from inner cities, pent-up housing demand from the Great Depression and World War II, and relatedly, a booming industrial economy after the war. During the doldrums of the Depression, in 1933, the entire country had witnessed only 93,000 new housing starts, but by 1941, government programs had helped to increase that annual number to 619,000 new houses. Within a few decades, by the end of 1972, the FHA alone had assisted almost 11 million families in purchasing new houses—and between 1934 and 1972, the percentage of American families owning their own home jumped from 44 percent to 63 percent.[14]

The post-war period in the United States "produced the greatest transformation in American history in the relationship between cities and their suburbs," and "the key ingredient in this enormous shift was the almost

[10] Jackson, 204-205.
[11] Jackson 205.
[12] Jackson, 208.
[13] Carol E. Hoffecker, *Corporate Capital: Wilmington in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 119-120.
[14] Jackson, 205.

universal ownership of automobiles."[15] Before the war, suburbs had mostly functioned as satellites of cities, strongly tied to the jobs, entertainment, shopping, education, and services still located in the urban cores. Yet after World War II, as suburbanization acquired a new momentum and scale, "suburbs ceased to be mere satellite bedroom communities and became instead competitors with the cities that spawned them."[16] The explosion in new suburban housing created demand for new commercial enterprises to conveniently serve the growing (and mobile) suburban populations.[17] As people migrated from the city to the suburbs, new businesses and institutions sprung up to serve the needs of suburban residents—including churches, schools, civic buildings, and all manner of stores, eateries, and automobile service stations.[18] In short, not only had huge amounts of city people abandoned urban spaces, but many city functions and institutions had followed, being reconstituted in the suburbs. It was during these decades, argues historian Kenneth Jackson, that "the middle-class suburban family with the new house and the long-term, fixed-rate, FHA-insured mortgage became a symbol, and perhaps a stereotype, of the American way of life."[19] Yet the federal lending programs that stimulated this expansive house building and home owning also helped to amplify racial prejudices in the private sector and further encode racial division in American's metropolitan landscapes.

The Local Context of Suburbanization: The Wilmington Region, 1935-1970

Prelude: Wilmington Suburbanization Before World War II

As the Wilmington region fought through the Great Depression during the 1930s, construction activity was limited. However, the second half of the decade witnessed the financial recovery of some of the region's major companies (and employers), including DuPont, Hercules, and Atlas—leading to new housing demand for especially white-collar professionals in the chemical industry. The city's building trades were thus revived, producing mostly upper- and middle-class housing for executives, researchers, and managers. Within the city limits, the last large area of undeveloped land was located around P.S. du Pont High School, which was an especially appealing neighborhood for white-collar workers, who soon purchased six-room duplexes priced in the $5,000 to $6,000 range. Yet suburban areas just north of the city proved to be the most desirable, as small developments of houses priced from $12,000 and higher were developed to the northeast, north, and northwest of

[15] Hoffecker, 116.
[16] Hoffecker, 116.
[17] Susan Mulchahey Chase, David L. Ames, and Rebecca J. Siders, "Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1880-1950+/-: A Historic Context," Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1992, 81.
[18] Chase, Ames, and Siders, 2.
[19] Jackson, 206.

the city—often near new parkways and improved roads. These included Bellevue Manor, Edgewood Hills, and Lindamere (all built between Philadelphia Pike and Governor Printz Boulevard), as well as Alapocas (on Augustine Cut-Off) and Brandywine Hills (north of Lea Boulevard, within city limits), all of which proved to be more affluent neighborhoods.[20] However, middle-class and even working-class suburbs were in the works.

In 1939, the development of Edgemoor Terrace, just northeast of Wilmington, ushered in the era of "tract" housing development and a new era of suburbanization in New Castle County—a movement fueled by government-insured loans, pent-up demand, a baby boom, and nearly universal automobile ownership. As the smothering effects of the Great Depression gave way during the late 1930s, and especially after World War II when restrictions on the use of building materials were lifted, the Wilmington region—like other urban areas throughout the United States—experienced several decades of rapid landscape transformation.

The creation of Edgemoor Terrace in 1939 was revolutionary in Delaware, and it was among the first subdivisions of its type in the United States. For builders in the region, it demonstrated just how transformative federal mortgage insurance (through the FHA's programs, and soon, the VA system) could be for Wilmington's residential landscape. Backed by FHA financing, the Wilmington Construction Company planned Edgemoor Terrace to include no fewer than 400 detached, single-family houses, located on former farmland just north of Governor Printz Boulevard. In Edgemoor Terrace, rather than the buyers choosing a lot and constructing a house in the style of their choice, as had been the case in previous new subdivisions in nearby Bellefonte and Elsmere, prospective buyers purchased finished houses or selected from a couple of models of pre-designed, fully-integrated, aesthetically cohesive houses. These tidy, attractive homes, most with six rooms, were designed with brick veneers and traditional architectural elements, and each sat on a standardized quarter-acre lot. With so much of the subdivision's layout and architecture pre-planned, the builders could mass-produce the houses on a large scale and with a previously unachievable efficiency. In essence, the mass-production techniques of the automobile industry were being applied to housing creation. Edgemoor Terrace was thus "the first suburban development in Delaware to use the tract techniques that were to become so common following World War II—a limited number of styles, furnished models, standardized lot sizes and materials, builders' promises of a community park and swimming pool (which never materialized), and a package-deal mortgage backed by the FHA."[21] Priced at $5,150, a house in Edgemoor Terrace cost less than many houses, duplexes, or apartments of similar size in the city, while offering a new home (and a new lifestyle) in the suburbs, with an expansive front yard, attached garage,

[20] Hoffecker, 110.
[21] Hoffecker, 110-111.

and a full basement. All that was required, due to the magic of FHA loan guarantees to lenders, was a down payment of $550—followed by a low monthly payment of just $29.61. As the houses in Edgemoor Terrace sold rapidly, the new community clearly signaled the future of suburbanization in northern New Castle County.[22]

Figure 4. Edgemoor Terrace housing development in Wilmington, 1940. (Dallin Aerial Surveys, Hagley Museum and Library, 1940)

[22] Hoffecker, 110-111.

After World War II: The Dramatic Growth of Wilmington's Suburbs

Two statistics highlight the rapid growth of Wilmington's suburbs during the 1940s. While the actual City of Wilmington lost about two percent of its population during that decade, the Wilmington metropolitan region swelled by 21 percent. During just five years after World War II, between 1945 and 1950, while the City of Wilmington witnessed fewer than 700 new houses built within its limits, the greater metropolitan areas experienced a construction boom of 8,500 new suburban homes.[23] In the course of one decade, between 1950 and 1960, the population of suburban New Castle County nearly doubled, with an increase of more than 100,000 residents.[24] The suburbanization of New Castle County was dramatically altering the landscape of northern Delaware.

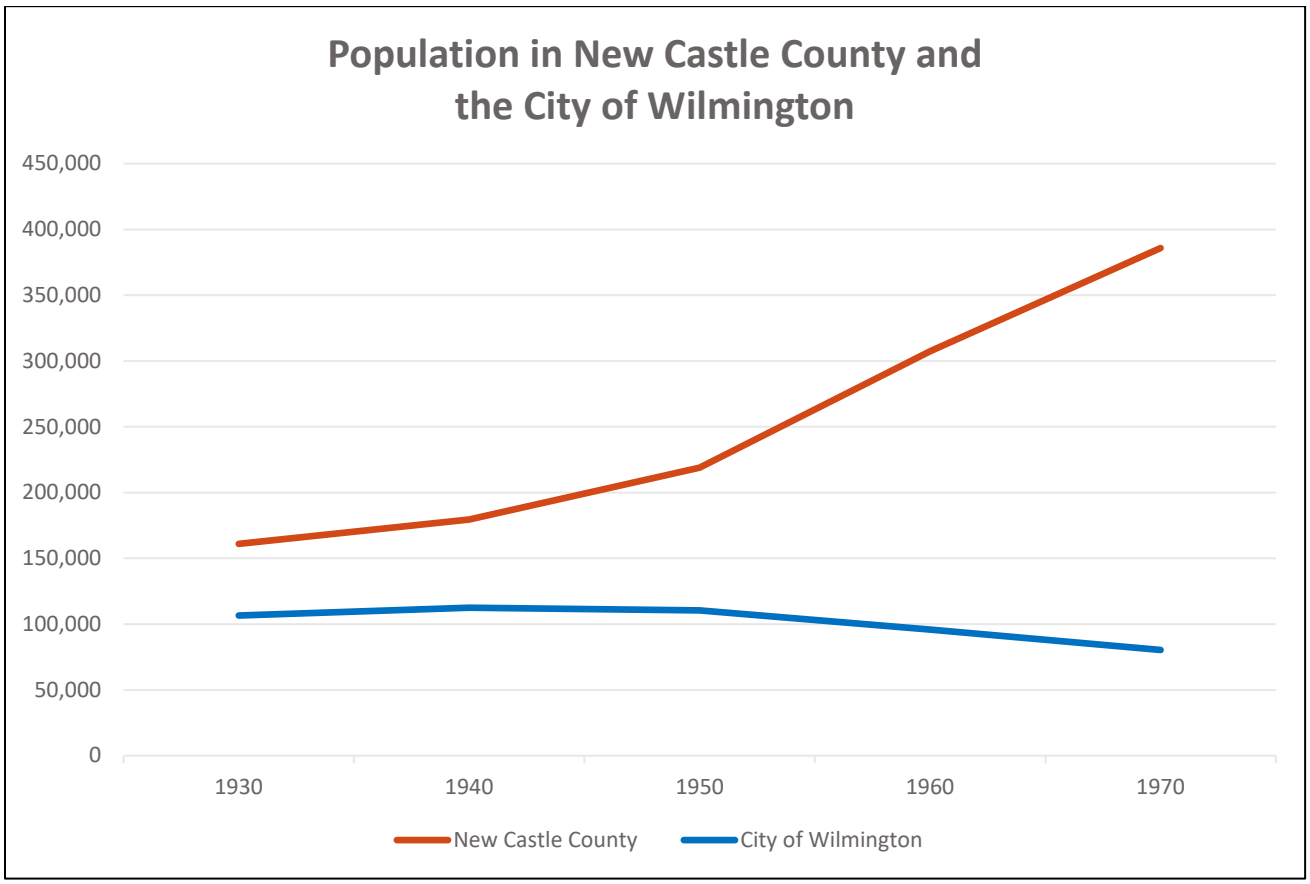

Figure 5. Population in New Castle County and the City of Wilmington. Population data from the United States Federal Census. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

There were many reasons for this transformative residential trend around Wilmington, in addition to those covered above. Economic growth in the region was very strong between 1948 and 1960, as the chemical and automobile

[23] Hoffecker, 118.
[24] "City's Population Drops to 94,262 as County's Soars," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), May 23, 1960.

industries helped "produce the greatest building boom in the history of New Castle County."[25] Many people found new employment with not only the region's chemical companies but also at new automobile plants like Chrysler and General Motors. Relatedly, automobile ownership was rapidly expanding. Between 1940 (just prior to the U.S. entering World War II) and 1957, automobile ownership in the United States had doubled, jumping from about 27 million to 54 million vehicles owned.[26] While Wilmington's suburbs in the early-twentieth century had been mostly limited to streetcar suburbs sited along a few trolley lines extending from the City of Wilmington, the mobility of post-World War II home buyers meant subdivisions could be built almost anywhere.

During the 1950s, developers increasingly purchased farms close to the city to convert them into housing developments. For farmers, continuing to farm made little financial sense when a developer was willing to pay more for their land than they might earn in a decade of hard agricultural work. Clear spatial patterns began to emerge in the Wilmington area, like in so many metropolitan regions across the United States. Suburbs grew outward from the city's limits, as developments emerged first along the major transportation arteries, then followed secondary roads and streets, and then finally made their way into the most rural areas and backroads. Architecturally, styles shifted during the 1950s, beginning to represent more "modernist" or Contemporary design with forms like Ranches and Split-Levels, in addition to the traditional two-story Colonials, Cape Cod forms, and Minimal Traditional houses.[27]

North of Wilmington, along Concord Pike/Route 202 in Brandywine Hundred, the Fairfax development "both started and epitomized the home-building trends that were to characterize the 1950s" in the Wilmington area.[28] Developed in 1950, a full decade after Edgemoor Terrace, the Fairfax development revived its mass-production techniques and expanded on them—planning a 700-unit development that would include apartments and a shopping center in addition to suburban homes. With little or no down payment and FHA-backed mortgages, many middle-class buyers could afford the two-story, six-room Colonial-style houses—which offered little variation in available models to keep construction efficient and prices at $15,000. Fairfax was innovative in its inclusion of a Colonial-style shopping center on its western edge, which fronted Route 202 and its traffic, offering a supermarket and other stores for Fairfax residents as well as other suburbanites and farmers in the region. The developers provided a buffer of sorts between the shopping center and new two-story houses by adding several

[25] Hoffecker, 119.
[26] Based on statistics from the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.
[27] Hoffecker, 121.
[28] Hoffecker, 121.

low-rise apartment buildings, in a matching architectural style, between the houses and less-sightly commercial activity. This emerged as a trend during the coming decades, as developers found that renters in apartments were much less concerned about views of parking lots or loading docks behind shopping plazas—while purchasers of houses were less concerned about the presence of apartment buildings than they were commercial or industrial structures. Apartment complexes and other attached dwelling units thus served as transitionary zones between commercial activity and the ideal suburban streetscape full of leafy, detached, single-family homes.

Racial Dimensions of Post-War Suburbanization in the United States, 1935-1970

Race and socioeconomic status were powerful factors in how the American suburbs were shaped during the mid-twentieth century. During and after the Great Depression, federal programs aimed at stimulating the economy, eliminating slums, encouraging homeownership, and improving cities and transportation networks also contained provisions and policies that sanctioned and encouraged segregated suburban landscapes.

The FHA and VA loan programs were highly influential in accelerating a racialized city and suburbs. The FHA and VA mortgage insurance programs sought to minimize their risk and encourage lender confidence by promoting stable neighborhoods and steady real estate prices—and thus sanctioned housing segregation to avoid race-mixing and perceptions of neighborhood decline. Beginning during the Great Depression, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) developed a systematized and universal appraisal system that divided cities (and their environs) into neighborhood zones, each of which was assigned a grade, or tier, based on residential desirability and stability. Studying the age of buildings, the type of construction, price ranges, sales demand, and general condition—but also the race, ethnicity, occupation, and income of its residents—appraisers assigned every zone a grade or ranking on a four-tiered system. The first tier ("A," colored green on maps) was most desirable, typically featuring new houses, homogeneous demographics (with "American business and professional men"), and strong sales prices, since they were "in demand as residential locations in good times and bad."[29] The second tier ("B" or blue on maps) was also perceived as stable and safe for lending. These top categories of neighborhoods almost invariably contained all white residents. Neighborhoods assigned a grade in the lower two tiers indicated perceived problems that might negatively affect future real estate values and thus risky zones for bank lending and government insuring. The third tier (grade "C," marked yellow on maps) signaled a declining area with one or several problems that might lead to further deterioration, including dense or crowded housing, aging building stock, some deteriorating buildings, and/or mixed racial composition of residents. Black neighborhoods "were

[29] Jackson, 197.

invariably rated as Fourth grade," the lowest rated neighborhoods, which were marked with a grade of "D" and were colored red on maps—the origin of the term "redlining." Any neighborhood with high levels of vandalism, deteriorating buildings, or the presence of a strong "undesirable element" would also be assigned the lowest grade.[30]

Ironically, HOLC, which created this appraising system, does not seem to have acted much on its own rankings, since it sponsored loans evenly across all four neighborhood tiers—but the damage came when its systems were adopted and acted upon by other institutions, including banks, savings and loans, and the FHA and VA programs.[31] The FHA "allowed personal and agency bias in favor of all-white subdivisions in the suburbs to affect the kinds of loans it guaranteed—or, equally important, refused to guarantee."[32] The agency was "extraordinarily concerned" about the future investment value (and insurance risk) within neighborhoods that might mix what it called "inharmonious racial or nationality groups," especially with Blacks and whites. Until 1948, the FHA's *Underwriting Manual* warned that "racial intermingling in housing is undesirable per se and leads to a lowering of value" and declared, "If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes."[33]

The FHA's published guidelines also went so far as to openly recommend "subdivision regulations and suitable restrictive covenants" that would be "superior to any mortgage"—meaning deed restrictions or legal covenants that prevented developers or homeowners from selling their houses to restricted groups, especially Blacks. The agency's manual even provided easy-to-copy samples in the appendix of each volume.[34] These legal provisions in property deeds were common among private developers in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, but this was the federal government urging such racial restrictions as official policy. The U.S. Supreme Court finally declared such deed covenants "unenforceable as law and contrary to public policy" in 1948, but the FHA did not stop systematically insuring loans in neighborhoods with such racial prohibitions until February 15, 1950. Even then, the executive board of the FHA noted that violations of the new rules "would not invalidate insurance," and without strong legislative prohibitions, discriminatory policies apparently continued until President Kennedy issued an executive order in 1962 that declared federal assistance for housing that excluded

[30] Jackson, 197-198.
[31] Jackson, 203.
[32] Jackson, 207.
[33] Jackson, 208; Andrew Wiese, Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 101.
[34] Wiese, 101.

minorities against the public policy of the United States.[35] The agency also continued to create detailed reports and maps to track the current and future projected movement of Black families in cities.[36] Available data suggests that the FHA's neighborhood appraisals and "Residential Security Maps" were highly influential in determining which neighborhoods were "reasonably safe to insure mortgages" and which would be "segregate[d] for rejection" for being "not suitable for amortized mortgages."[37] Fifteen years after World War II, only about two percent of the houses built with FHA financing following the war were occupied by African Americans or other minorities.[38]

During the first four decades of the FHA's programs, it issued $119 billion worth of mortgage insurance—and the primary beneficiary was American suburbia, where almost half of all housing utilized FHA or VA financing during the 1950s and 1960s.[39] The 1939 *Underwriting Manual* had warned that "crowded neighborhoods lessen desirability" and that "older properties" tended to "accelerate the transition to lower class occupancy," painting negative two consistent features of urban housing.[40] These policies favoring suburbs over cities also had significant racial implications. The FHA, by placing the weight of the federal government and the U.S. Treasury behind its policies, subsidized a mass American exodus from inner cities to outlying suburbs, while also sorting city neighborhoods and new suburban developments by race and ethnicity—and leaving much of deteriorated inner cities to Blacks and other minorities. The FHA had "helped to turn the building industry against the minority and inner-city housing market."[41] While racial prejudices in housing had previously been the domain of the private sector and market forces, the FHA "exhorted segregation and enshrined it as public policy."[42]

Black Suburbanization

Other federal policies, including wartime emergency housing during the 1940s and urban renewal programs during the 1950s and 1960s, actually accelerated the movement of Blacks to the outer fringes of cities, sometimes establishing residential patterns that would be further extended in the coming decades. Blacks slowly migrated into the suburban areas outside American cities during the mid-twentieth century—though typically in limited fashion and following several recognizable patterns. During World War II, the federal government constructed

[35] LaDavia S. Hatcher, "A Case for Reparations: The Plight of the African-American World War II Veteran Concerning Federal Discriminatory Housing Practices," *The Modern American* (Vol. 2, Issue 2), Summer 2006, 18-19.
[36] Jackson, 208; Wiese, 100-101.
[37] Jackson, 209.
[38] Wiese, 101.
[39] Jackson, 215.
[40] Jackson, 207.
[41] Jackson, 213.
[42] Jackson, 213.

thousands of emergency housing units, often temporary and situated on the outskirts of cities, to provide homes for wartime workers—including thousands of Blacks. Though often resisted by whites in these areas, such housing provided a suburban foothold for many Black families to live in suburban areas after the war.[43] During the 1940s and 1950s, around three million Blacks left the rural South, often seeking industrial jobs and new lives in the North and West. "With the promise of better jobs beckoning," notes one historian, "millions of young black southerners cut loose from the past, trading jobs in depressed southern agriculture for blue-collar occupations in urban areas where wages were higher."[44] Though Black workers still often earned less than whites and their overall economic positions were often weaker, their average incomes tripled during the 1940s wartime industrial boom and continued to grow during the prosperous 1950s. At midcentury, the number of non-farm Black households with incomes over $3,000—technically the minimum down payment for a new contractor-built home using FHA financing—had jumped to almost 20 percent from just four percent in 1940, and in urban Northern areas, nearly one-third of Black families met this mark.[45] Though these families often could not obtain such a loan or find a suburban home where they were allowed to live, these statistics demonstrate the financial ability of many Black families to pursue the American Dream—and, in fact, during the 1940s and 1950s, the number of Black residents in suburban areas increased by almost one million.[46]

During the 1950s and early 1960s, urban renewal funding from the federal government encouraged politicians in American cities to eliminate residential "slums" in their urban cores to make way for new development and, theoretically, urban rejuvenation—usually displacing thousands of Black families in the process. As early as 1949, a housing act in the U.S. Congress offered federal funding for up to two-thirds of the cost to acquire and demolish large tracts of blighted city neighborhoods, clearing the way for private redevelopment efforts—in hopes of creating vibrant, new buildings where slums had previously existed. Subsequent efforts resulting from these "slum clearance" programs and related efforts toward "urban renewal" often resulted in problematic situations for cities, even beyond the obvious racial and social injustices that often accompanied their execution. However, most relevant here is the fact that many cities that displaced inner city residents from condemned neighborhoods failed to provide adequate new housing options or successfully facilitate these families' transitions to new neighborhoods.[47] Uprooted and highly restricted in where they could move, Black families sometimes relocated to an entirely different region of the country. Those who stayed in their cities often migrated to rental units in

[43] Wiese, 113.
[44] Wiese, 124.
[45] Wiese, 124.
[46] Wiese, 5 and 114.
[47] Wiese, 106-108.

other working-class neighborhoods, sometimes hastening the transition of white or mixed neighborhoods to Black ones. Others relocated to public housing complexes, which were typically segregated and often placed on the fringes of cities.[48] Some Blacks successfully purchased homes in new suburban developments, though usually in subdivisions that were designated "open occupancy" and developed specifically for Black families. Some, however, bravely pressed into predominantly white neighborhoods, though they often faced heavy resistance and even violence (see below). Even by 1960, before the Civil Rights movement inspired more Blacks to claim their freedom to live where they wished, there were around 2.5 million Blacks living in American suburbs. These families created the "social and spatial inroads" that "served as a template for the urban exodus to come."[49]

Almost everywhere in the United States during the mid-twentieth century, Blacks who attempted to move into white neighborhoods—or developers who attempted to build housing for Blacks near white areas—met with strong opposition, open hostility, and even violence. Many white people "projected their deepest fears about crime, disorder, health, status, and sexuality" onto Black people, and it was an almost universal belief that property values would "experience a severe drop" if Black families moved into a neighborhood. This self-fulfilling idea was not only pushed by residents within individual neighborhoods but was also propagated by real estate agents, appraisers, bankers, and politicians—all of whom pointed to deteriorating inner cities, which had been largely abandoned by whites, as proof of the threat. White suburbanites, whose life savings were often at stake in their home equity and real estate values, were often not about to take any chances—and such economic fears "led millions of whites to view black neighbors as something like Visigoths at the gates of Rome."[50] This was perhaps most the case with first- and second-generation European immigrant families, who could take advantage of their light skin and established racial hierarchies to claim whiteness—and yet "to live in a neighborhood with blacks, by contrast, was to lose hard-won gains, to be associated with "blackness," and potentially to be trapped at the bottom rung of the American social ladder."[51]

The barriers set against Blacks moving into white suburbs is perhaps best illustrated by the struggle of baseball hero Jackie Robinson—who had broken the color barrier in baseball when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 but who could not break the suburban color barrier when he and his wife sought to purchase a house in the New York City suburbs. In 1956, even after nearly a decade of being a star in Major League Baseball—including

[48] Wiese, 113.
[49] Wiese, 5.
[50] Wiese, 98.
[51] Wiese, 98-99.

earning a Rookie of the Year Award in 1947 and winning the Most Valuable Player Award over the entire National League in 1947—Robinson was totally "unable to buy a satisfactory home in the suburbs of the city where he was most celebrated." He remembered being "put through the usual bag of tricks" with every attempt to buy a house in New York—including claims that the house was sold, removed from the market, or more honestly, that the sellers were "against selling to Negroes"—until Robinson and his wife gave up and purchased a house in Stamford, Connecticut (and, even there, he was successful only "due to the strong efforts" of several white families).[52] The struggle of the Robinsons, despite Jackie's celebrity and star power, is a powerful indication of the nearly insurmountable challenges that faced everyday working-class and middle-class Blacks who wished to purchase suburban homes.

White families, to "defend" their neighborhoods from "infiltration" or "invasion" by Blacks and other minorities, enlisted the help of their neighbors, government leaders, and other professionals to institute a wide range of discriminatory practices and strategies that limited Blacks' ability to purchase homes outside of "established Negro areas." Local banks would not lend money to Black families who wished to buy houses in white neighborhoods, protecting the security of their other loans in the area and pleasing their white customer bases. Builders chose not to sell to Blacks to protect the reputation and desirability of their developments and to avoid scorn from white purchasers. Homeowner associations worked cooperatively to keep their neighborhoods racially homogenous, even implementing race-restrictive deed covenants and other neighborhood bylaws to control future house sales.[53] Government officials implemented zoning in suburban areas to prohibit apartments, mobile homes, mixed-use structures, and even modest tract housing to protect property values and to keep undesirable residents away.[54] Where legal prohibitions were not successful, white suburbanites "routinely engaged in acts of terrorism to prevent the settlement of African Americans in their neighborhoods."[55] During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, an "era of hidden violence" was inflicted upon Black families by whites, who "met breaches in the color line with a guerrilla war of death threats, property destruction, and physical violence."[56] Through such terroristic tactics, whites worked to intimidate Blacks out of their neighborhoods—believing they belonged in areas already occupied by other Blacks.

[52] Wiese, 99-100.
[53] Wiese, 99.
[54] Wiese, 101-103.
[55] Wiese, 100.
[56] Wiese, 100.

Due to all of the above factors, clear geographical patterns emerged for Black suburbanization in most cities. Black residential expansion was the most palatable for whites when it seemed to follow the existing logic of segregated spaces and where it did not threaten the reputation of white communities. Thus, early Black suburban neighborhoods were essentially extensions of Black neighborhoods in central cities, and many subdivisions and suburbs that were home to Black families were directly adjacent to other Black neighborhoods. Early Black suburbanization was thus "geographically conservative" and a "cumulative process" that solidified and extended the geographic persistence of racialized cityscapes.[57] White resistance and formal government policies that restricted Blacks' residential options were a powerful factor in establishing these patterns. For example, "the vast majority" of federally-supported public housing developments were segregated—whether emergency workers' housing during World War II or later public housing complexes during the 1950s and 1960s—and "virtually all of them were built in the vicinity of existing black communities."[58] This geographic momentum was further reinforced by FHA lending policies, as discussed above, which essentially mandated segregated housing developments. In general, white prejudice and antagonism—whether personal or systemic—provided few geographic options for Blacks who wished to live outside of city centers. This was especially the case in the industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest, regions that did not contain as many pockets of rural Black settlement as the South and thus offered even "fewer areas of the urban fringe in which development for African Americans might proceed uncontested by whites."[59] As such, in northeastern cities, the earliest Black communities "served as the geographic and social foundation for the next," so that the first Black suburban neighborhoods emerged just outside Black neighborhoods within city limits, and then additional Black subdivisions were developed immediately adjacent to those first suburbs.[60] In fact, historian Andrew Wiese argues that most Blacks settled "within walking distance of extant [Black] communities," leading to clearly "segregated nodes of settlement"—corridors or zones around cities that were predominantly Black or at least contained high numbers of Black residents.[61] Further articulating the segregation, builders of white subdivisions tended to avoid locating too closely to Black neighborhoods, often leaving undeveloped land as a "buffer" between white and Black housing.[62] Even so, paranoid white homeowners in "boundary neighborhoods," situated in close proximity to Black residences, often created a self-fulfilling prophecy of racial transition. Homeowners in these neighborhoods sometimes found it difficult to sell to other whites, due to fears of eventual "invasion,"

[57] Wiese, 114.
[58] Wiese, 113.
[59] Wiese, 103.
[60] Wiese, 3-4.
[61] Wiese, 114.
[62] Wiese, 117.

prompting some to sell across the color line or to dump their properties for lower prices in a panic, and in the process, they further advanced the geographic momentum of Black suburbanization.[63]

Black suburban residences were fairly consistently located in areas that were, for various reasons, deemed less desirable or less attractive than other suburban areas. This both reflected and further perpetuated a wide range of economic, social, and environmental injustices. As historian Andrew Wiese points out, as Blacks were "excluded from metropolitan locations with the greatest advantages—for example, high-income neighbors, a robust tax base, strong public schools, rapidly climbing property values—and restricted to those with the fewest," they "faced persistent spatial inequalities" and a "materially unequal world."[64] As in many Black neighborhoods in the city, their suburban counterparts tended to enjoy less investment in infrastructure, their (segregated) schools, and in commercial establishments when compared to similar white neighborhoods. Black subdivisions were more likely to be situated close to industrial pollution, the noise and exhaust of busy roadways, and other unsightly or undesirable landscape elements. These inequitable spatial patterns for Black residential areas "reinforced the close link that African Americans experienced between race and class status for much of the century, contributing to a consolidation of their political interests around racially defined places."[65]

Black suburban zones, while in many ways the product of systemic racism, conversely provided Blacks attractive refuges from racial antagonism and served as important communities of mutual support. Through word of mouth, these Black suburban neighborhoods soon became "recognized landmarks in the mental geography of African Americans," beckoning as places that were "open" to Blacks—often leading to chain migrations. Not only could Blacks freely buy or sell houses in these neighborhoods, but they might also find supportive communities of worship, restaurants with favorite foods, businesses with familiar products, and social networks full of like-minded individuals who shared their work ethic or middle-class values. They might enjoy leisure activities, participate in community organizations, or engage in politics among other Black people, while "avoiding the threat of violence and social ostracism that awaited them in much of white suburbia."[66] Home ownership also provided a feeling of permanence and belonging, increased potential for financial well-being, and was a marker of social and professional achievement. Black suburbanites could enjoy, to varying degrees, increased social comfort, economic security, and cultural affirmation—as well as individual and racial pride—on a level they often

[63] Wiese, 117.
[64] Wiese 8.
[65] Wiese, 8.
[66] Wiese, 116-117.

had perhaps never experienced before.[67] Some Black suburbs expressed this pride through place names, with subdivisions, streets, and parks named after prominent Black figures or local community leaders.[68]

Throughout the twentieth century, however, some individual Black families refused to accept the limited housing options presented them. The late 1950s and especially the 1960s witnessed a "generation more willing than ever to challenge the racial status quo," and during those decades, thousands of Blacks transformed individual housing choices into "explicit acts of racial protest," which, collectively, created a movement.[69] As the Civil Rights movement gained steam in the United States, "African Americans across the country took up a contentious politics of housing, seeking shelter outside 'established Negro areas' and pressing their rights through direct action and the courts."[70] While victories were often small and incremental, 1968 was a landmark year for federal intervention against housing discrimination. In April of that year, one week after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lyndon B. Johnson successfully pushed for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII), since King had frequently marched for open housing policies. The Fair Housing Act prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex, and, later, handicap or family status. In June 1968, after a challenge originating in Texas, the U.S. Supreme Court—in a close five to four vote—upheld the Fair Housing Act's "disparate impact" clause, ruling that laws should be deemed discriminatory (or not) based strictly on their impact, regardless of explicit intent. This prevented workaround solutions for housing discrimination and helped accelerated the integration of America's suburban neighborhoods. Still, continuing established patterns, most of the suburban neighborhoods where Blacks had made inroads were located within a "short distance from existing black neighborhoods," rarely more than "a few minutes' drive of more mature black communities."[71] They typically continued to rely on their connections to Black communities and organizations for social networks and emotional support.[72] Ironically, notes historian Andrew Wiese, "increased racial integration after 1960 tended to strengthen social divisions on the basis of race as well as class," since Blacks who moved into mostly white suburbs, no matter their income or respectability, often reported feeling socially isolated and the target of white antagonism. They were thus more likely than other Blacks to encounter explicit racism and to be made more self-aware of their Blackness—often prompting them to seek even more connections to Black social circles and institutions.[73]

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[67] Wiese, 8 and 113.
[68] Wiese, 3.
[69] Wiese, 112-113.
[70] Wiese, 113
[71] Wiese, 2 and 113.
[72] Wiese, 113.
[73] Wiese, 9.

Black suburbanization during the three decades after World War II both signaled and accelerated the emergence of a new, expanded Black middle class in the United States, which enjoyed far more economic prosperity than the generations immediately preceding them. Even if new Black suburbanites faced higher-than-average property taxes, financially challenged schools, and slower rates of property appreciation than in white neighborhoods, they had established suburban lifestyles of their own and enjoyed vibrant and proud communities—and as the chokehold of racial discrimination loosened during the second half of the twentieth century, suburban segregation declined substantially.[74]

Race & Suburbanization in the Wilmington Region

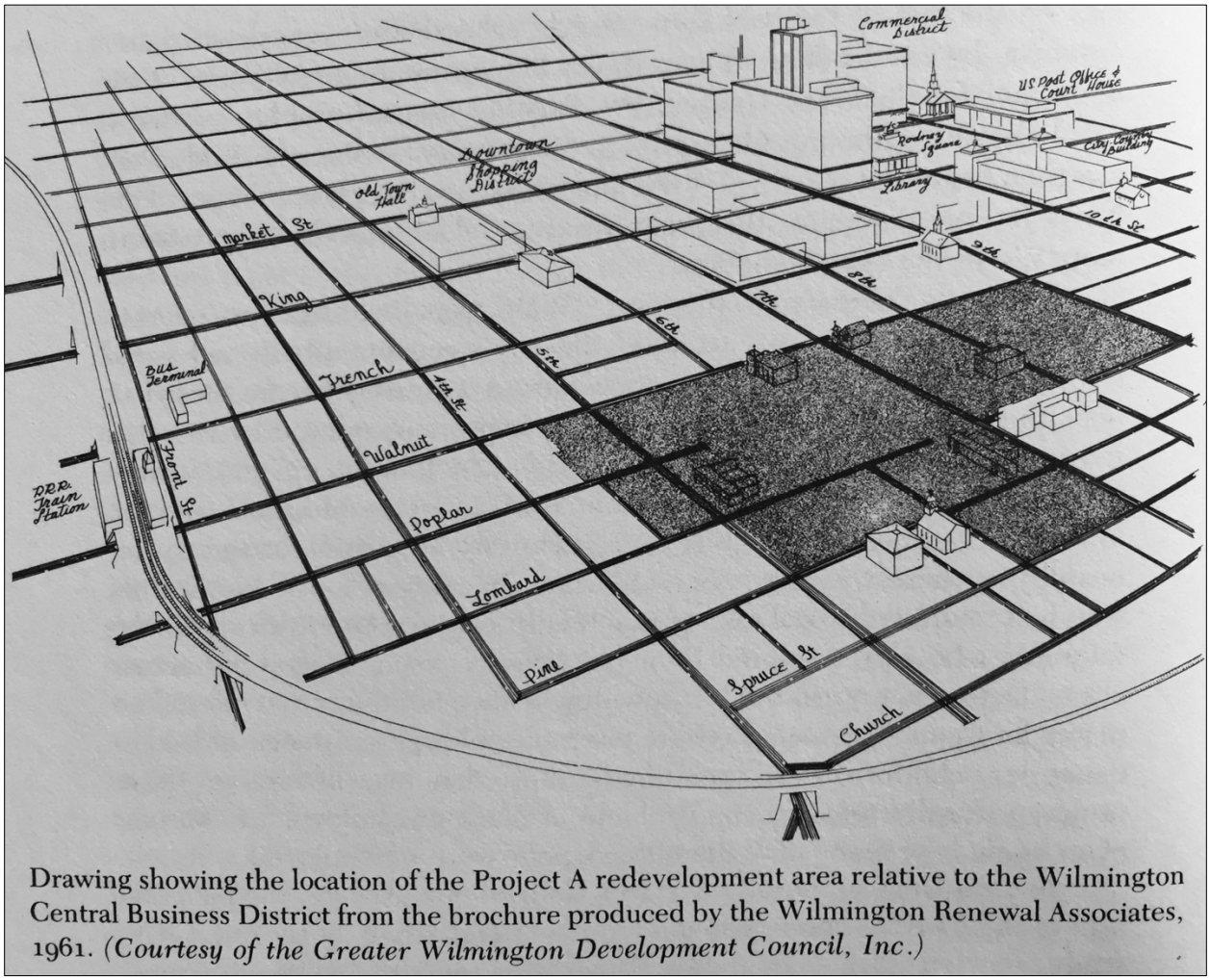
During the mid-twentieth century, the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor served as one of the only areas available providing housing options for Blacks outside of Wilmington's city limits. The migration of Black families into the New Castle Avenue corridor, though beginning in the 1940s, was accelerated by the dramatic urban upheavals in Wilmington after World War II. During the 1950s and 1960s, social and economic turmoil in Wilmington's core—resulting from pronounced white flight and failed urban renewal efforts—led to significant demographic shifts in many of the city's neighborhoods. Not only did much of Wilmington's white population—including fairly recent immigrant groups—seek a more modern and leafier lifestyle in the suburbs and city peripheries, remaining Black families were displaced by "slum clearance" and forced to scatter to only a few places they might live in a segregated housing system. Even those Blacks who remained on the edges of demolished areas eventually elected to escape the decimated and deteriorating communities that remained. These former Wilmington residents were also joined by Blacks from outside the area, who moved to northern Delaware to take advantage of the widely available industrial jobs there during the decades after World War II.

The "Push" Factor in the 1960s—Wilmington's Urban Renewal & Inner-City Turmoil

Poplar Street Project A, which eventually led to the forced dispersion of large numbers of Black residents from their homes in downtown Wilmington, was an attempt to remedy deeply rooted problems that had accelerated after World War II—leaving many local leaders to fear that the very survival of Wilmington as a viable city was in jeopardy. During the 1950s, despite the population of Wilmington's broader metropolitan area surging by nearly 100,000, the population within the city actually declined by nearly 14,000.[75] This disinvestment in the city

[74] Wiese, 2.
[75] Hoffecker, 154-155.

led to rapid economic and social decline and to increased poverty and crime in core neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown.



Drawing showing the location of the Project A redevelopment area relative to the Wilmington Central Business District from the brochure produced by the Wilmington Renewal Associates, 1961. *(Courtesy of the Greater Wilmington Development Council, Inc.)*

Figure 6. Map of East Side neighborhood of Wilmington, showing Poplar Street Project A area (shaded). (Carol Hoffecker, *Corporate Capital*)

Urban Renewal in Wilmington: East Side 'Slum Clearance' and "Poplar Street Project A"

Wilmington's slum clearance and urban renewal efforts focused on the long-troubled East Side. Already identified as a blighted area in 1932 by a state housing commission, this large expanse of the city just a couple of blocks east of Wilmington's central business district "had become an overcrowded slum," with many of its rowhouses still owned by former white occupants who had moved to better parts of the city and rented their properties to mostly African American tenants—who were severely restricted in where they could live in a city that was still

highly segregated in its housing.[76] By 1945, the "sad signs of blight" were seemingly everywhere in the East Side, including "broken windows, unhinged doorways, collapsing plaster ceilings, and dilapidated, overused wooden privies."[77] In 1953, the Wilmington Housing Authority officially selected a 22-block area of the East Side for slum clearance and urban renewal—an area that would be designated "Poplar Street Project A." This doomed 22-block zone was reportedly 96 percent African American and contained 638 structures, mostly in the form of two- and three-story houses but peppered with a mix of 88 businesses of various kinds and a few community buildings (some of the latter would be retained). The rationale for renewal in this area seemed quite reasonable: it was located just a few blocks from Market Street, Wilmington's vibrant business and shopping thoroughfare, and "it contained a number of good-quality community service structures" that could be retained during the redevelopment, including "a brand-new elementary school, a well-built junior high school from the 1920s, four churches, and a settlement house."[78] Yet, besides these few bright spots, the neighborhood seemed hopelessly blighted and beyond repair to local leaders, who had determined that 97 percent of the houses were categorized as dilapidated and needed to be torn down. Student researchers in 1954 counted 364 outdoor toilets in the project area and discovered that 70 percent of houses had no central heating, while 45 percent lacked even hot water.[79] Conversions of single-family homes into apartments had increased the total number of dwelling units to 970, though fewer than 200 houses in the area were owner occupied. Wilmington's choice for the Project A site was validated in the spring of 1954, when James Follin, the director of slum clearance and redevelopment for the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, toured the area and "proclaimed himself to be very pleased with Wilmington's choice."[80] In April 1958, after a Delaware Supreme Court decision upholding the right of eminent domain for Poplar Street Project A, the housing reformers predicted that within three years, "the dismal east side would be transformed into a clean, healthy, modern residential environment," and "Wilmington would turn the corner from slow decay toward vibrant resuscitation." The project would benefit everyone, since residents were promised better housing, the city would generate more tax revenue, the construction trades would be stimulated, and "Wilmingtonians would no longer be embarrassed by a downtown slum."[81]

[76] Hoffecker, 126.
[77] Hoffecker, 127.
[78] Hoffecker, 131.
[79] Hoffecker, 131.
[80] Hoffecker, 131.
[81] Hoffecker, 135.

Morning News Photo

PLANNERS AT PROJECT A—Harold F. Wise, Philadelphia planning consultant, and J. H. Tyler McConnell, president of the Greater Wilmington Development Council, examine the demolished areas of Poplar Street Project A on Wilmington's east side. Wise addressed a GWDC luncheon forum here yesterday.

Figure 7. Planning officials surveying demolition sites at Poplar Street Project A. (*The Morning News,* February 6, 1962)

Failures and Delays of Wilmington's Renewal

Despite this optimism for the coming decade, the reality of the 1960s in downtown Wilmington, as one historian summed it up, "began with bulldozers and ended with National Guard jeep patrols."[82] In fact, by 1960, "in spite of the city's shiny new buildings, integrated schools, urban renewal, and highway plans, Wilmington had unmistakably entered a spiral of decline."[83] On the East Side, despite the demolitions that had dramatically eliminated most of 22 city blocks in 1961, Poplar Street Project A sat stagnant and mostly empty for many years. Certainly, larger economic and social forces were at play, but the long delays and lackluster execution of Poplar Street Project A was rooted in Wilmington's lack of strong political leadership and a lack of cooperation between city departments and other government agencies. Not only did Wilmington produce "no political leaders with the vision and capacity to make the most of the federal renewal laws," but the city's governmental structure was poor for executing successful urban renewal since its redevelopment agency had no designated authority to coordinate the activities and planning of other relevant city agencies and departments. One local reporter even warned that an unnamed national magazine had selected Wilmington "as a horrible example of what happens when there's no coordination in municipal planning." For the entire 1960s, "the sight of 22 acres of vacant, rubble-strewn land surrounding Poplar Street just two blocks from the downtown retail section" was "an embarrassing eyesore" for both Wilmington residents and downtown commuters, alike.[84]

The failures and delays of Poplar Street Project A were most devastating, however, to the Black communities that were displaced—and for those who remained in the East Side to witness their communities being disrupted and given false hope. On the outskirts of Project A's demolished blocks, a large number of African Americans—many of them middle-class, owner-occupants—stayed in their homes and remained attached to their businesses, social institutions, and community. These remaining East Side residents "were proud of their neighborhood and of their homes and were the leaders in their churches, lodges, schools, and in politics."[85]

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[82] Hoffecker, 158.
[83] Hoffecker, 159.
[84] Hoffecker, 129, 160, and 169. The Wilmington Housing Authority offered Project A for development bids in the fall of 1961. The winning proposal, submitted by Wilmington Renewal Associates and called the "Preston plan" (after the consortium's architect, W. Ellis Preston), was mostly residential in character—consisting of 550 rental units and 190 row houses surrounding a public park. Preston had recently completed plans for the adjacent Civic Center project, and "his firm announced that their proposal had been conceived in unity with the Civic Center and hinged upon the city's commitment to it" (Hoffecker, 176). "By selecting the plan that depended most upon the Civic Center project, the Housing Authority was forcing the city to engage in a more extensive renewal program than had been originally contemplated. The Poplar Street-Civic Center plan was contingent on the cooperation of the Federal Housing Administration, the General Services Administration, the state general assembly, New Castle County, and the city government. Delays by any of these agencies and governmental bodies could—and did—hold up the project not merely for months, but for years. The old houses were torn down but nothing new was going up, because the developer was waiting for progress on the civic center" (Hoffecker, 177).
[85] Hoffecker, 163.

The optimism and perseverance of African Americans on the East Side was due in part to the promises made by city leaders when Project A was first proposed and planned. Carolyn Weaver, a social worker hired to be the redevelopment authority's liaison with East Side residents and civic groups, had "proselytized for slum clearance, enthusiastically proclaiming that once the bad housing was torn down its former residents would be moved back into good new housing."[86] Many in the East Side community were able to accept the upheaval and devastation of Project A only because they believed there would be a rejuvenation in the neighborhood and that many residents would be able to return to newer housing when the redevelopment was completed. While the latter was technically correct—that displaced residents would have first option with the new houses and apartments—federal renewal laws and housing regulations stipulated that low-income project housing could not be constructed in urban renewal zones.[87] Furthermore, private developers for Project A realized they could only profit from developments with middle-income residences, and there was almost no demand for such housing, especially in an area with neighboring streets still containing dilapidated housing and retaining reputations as slums.[88]

Disillusionment, Unrest, & Continued Relocation

Years of "false promises made to east side residents" led to increasing "confusion and bitterness" in the African American community.[89] As early as January 1963, the local *News Journal* newspapers—strong supporters of renewal—admitted in a headline that "Bitterness, Suspicion Fester Around Project A Wasteland."[90] The paper reported that local storeowners "had given up on ever getting new customers," and long-time residents were "selling their houses to slum lords to escape from the sight of the rubble." A social worker in the renewal area told a reporter, "[t]he people are bitter; they're hurt; they're disappointed. They think they've been let down. . . The failure of the city to rebuild has deepened the bitterness. They say the city is trying to stall, to make the area into a big parking lot for suburbanites." Religious leaders joined in the growing pessimism, frustration, and distrust. The oldest black congregation in the city, Ezion Methodist Church, was forced to charter a bus to bring

[86] Hoffecker, 132.
[87] Hoffecker, 132.
[88] Hoffecker, 168. Because of such challenges, consultants hired to evaluate the best redevelopment plans for the now-empty Poplar Street area were frank in admitting that "capitalizing on this opportunity will not be easy." The real estate market in Wilmington had slowed, and new high-rise residential developments in peripheral areas in the northwest part of the city had mostly satisfied the existing housing demands of white renters. The solution posed by the consultants would require that "certain major and heroic steps" would need to be taken in the central business area, including a second major renewal effort for the blocks in between Poplar Street Project A and the business area on Market Street. As Hoffecker sums up the consultants' report, "Wilmington appeared to have a terminal disease, and the doctors had just advised that only another major operation could rescue the patient from an impending death that was partly the result of his first operation" (see pages 169-171).
[89] Hoffecker, 132.
[90] Hoffecker, 177.

its members to worship, since they "had scattered all over the city when their houses were torn down" and had not been able to return. A Black Episcopal priest pointed out that many in his community were frustrated and suspicious because the neighborhood's fate was being decided "in business offices outside the east side community."[91]

With such frustrations festering, racial tensions and social unrest only increased in downtown Wilmington in 1967 and 1968. Poverty, crime, and gang violence had increased throughout the decade in the city's central neighborhoods despite many interventions and efforts toward social reform. In the summer of 1967, a year in which frustrations over racial injustices led to 164 riots and "social disorders" across many American cities, several "sporadic" outbreaks of violence occurred in the west central neighborhoods of Wilmington.[92] Amid these tensions, the *News Journal* accused the Wilmington Housing Authority of a "time gap" on East Side renewal that was not unlike Lyndon B. Johnson's "credibility gap" with Vietnam—and indeed, as historian Carol Hoffecker points out, "most of the project did look like a battlefield, but officials had labeled it 'a learning experience' and were going ahead with several other, smaller, low- to moderate-income projects"—many in the increasingly problematic west central portion of downtown.[93] It was, in fact, the west central Wilmington neighborhoods, especially an area called "the Valley," that would explode into rioting and unrest the following year. On April 5, 1968, the News Journal carried a devastating news story—ironically, in an edition also reporting a major new development toward East Side renewal—announcing that Martin Luther King, Jr., the beloved Civil Rights leader, had been assassinated the day before.[94] On April 9, the day of his funeral, Wilmington erupted into mayhem as 30 fires were set in abandoned buildings in the west side, two police cars were firebombed, stores were looted, 40 people were injured, and 154 were arrested.[95] Governor Charles Terry responded to the Wilmington mayor's request for 1,000 National Guard troops by sending almost 3,000. In what is generally now considered an overreaction, especially since Wilmington's mayor requested the troops' withdraw just a week after the riots, Governor Terry left the National Guard to patrol Wilmington's streets for nine months. In December, in a story about Wilmington's situation in the *New Yorker*, a visiting journalist noted that "[a]s you ride through, it doesn't seem like they [Black residents] have a feeling of resentment, it's more like pure hate."[96]

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[91] Hoffecker, 177.
[92] Hoffecker, 187; Kelly Gonsalves, "The 'Long, Hot Summer of 1967," *The Week*, at https://theweek.com/captured/712838/long-hot-summer-1967 (accessed April 2020).
[93] Hoffecker, 193.
[94] Hoffecker, 194.
[95] Hoffecker, 198.
[96] Hoffecker, 199-200

The "Pull Factor": Black Settlement in South Wilmington & the New Castle Avenue Corridor

After 1961, with 22 city blocks of the most densely settled African American neighborhood in Wilmington destroyed, hundreds of former residents needed to find new homes. Since the state of Delaware had no open housing laws even in the latter part of the 1960s, Blacks faced severe limitations on where they might settle. In the Wilmington area, "black penetrations into the suburbs were rare," and even in the city proper, "prejudice and poverty kept blacks mostly in the 'inner city' . . . living in the oldest, most cramped, least modernized houses."[97] According to the recollections of urban renewal officials, perhaps one-third of displaced residents relocated to public housing projects (especially Riverside, in the northeast), another third settled into privately-owned rental housing in other central neighborhoods (primarily in west central Wilmington), while the last third seemed to "simply disappear."[98] Yet those recollections miss one of the primary outlets for Black settlement outside of Wilmington between 1940 and 1970: the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor just beyond South Wilmington. Following similar patterns of Black residential migration common in other cities, many Blacks had fled Wilmington's struggling East Side to move across the Christina River to South Wilmington/Southbridge, and still further south, outside the city limits into new subdivisions along New Castle Avenue.

Black migration into the corridor south of downtown Wilmington was not entirely organic, as it was steered by federal housing policies, discriminatory lending practices, white resistance in other suburban areas, and new housing developments that were approved to be "open occupancy" and available to Blacks. This momentum southward likely began fairly organically during the first half of the twentieth century, as Blacks moved from Wilmington's East Side into South Wilmington. South Wilmington, also called Southbridge, was (and remains) a small neighborhood, consisting of two main north-south thoroughfares and several short cross streets. From its establishment in the late 1800s, it was a relatively diverse, working-class neighborhood situated close to industrial areas—and originally developed mostly to house industrial workers. Featuring lots of attached rowhouses, as well as corner stores and churches, South Wilmington was home to several ethnic groups including Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans, Irish immigrants, and African Americans—who already constituted 22 percent of South Wilmington in 1920.[99] However, during the mid-twentieth century, the demographics shifted towards an increased Black presence, especially as a decline in adjacent industry led to fewer jobs, depleted the economic

[97] Hoffecker, 166.
[98] Hoffecker, 162.
[99] Julie Darise, Allyson Eubank, Cynthia Gamble, Iris Gestrom, Jill Haley, Kara Hein, Ann Kirchner, Deidre McCarthy, Dawn Melson, Kirk Ranzetta, Susan Taylor, and Amy Wilson, "Southbridge: An Historic Context for a Neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, 1870-1996," Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 1996, 4.

resources, and scattered existing communities, leading to slow, physical deterioration in the neighborhood's building stock and, in turn, even more affordable housing.[100]

Two public housing projects also contributed to the geographic momentum that led Blacks towards the New Castle Avenue corridor. In 1942, in South Wilmington, the Wilmington Housing Authority began construction on "Southbridge," which was announced as "this city's first public housing development for Negro occupancy." Officials promised that Southbridge—a name that soon (tellingly) eclipsed South Wilmington as the common name for the neighborhood—would "prove itself important and useful to Wilmington citizens both in the war production housing facilities, as well as the post-war peacetime period."[101] The same officials, many of whom were involved with slum clearance and developing renewal plans in downtown Wilmington, noted that the city's African Americans, many of whom lived in crowded inner city neighborhoods, had struggled with higher rates of health problems including tuberculosis, and that they would benefit significantly from the new housing: "By getting families out of unfit, ill-equipped, disease-breeding houses and into clean, healthful surroundings, Southbridge is going to bring that rate down lower and lower."[102] The Southbridge development included 180 new housing units on a sprawling, irregularly-shaped parcel, arranged between streets named A through E.[103] Yet the Southbridge complex could not nearly satisfy the demand for Black affordable housing during the 1940s, let alone the coming surge of demand prompted by the Poplar Street Project A demolitions downtown.

Millside, another public housing development for Black workers, was constructed in 1943 as temporary emergency housing during World War II. The community was constructed outside of Wilmington city limits, less than a mile south of Southbridge—at the intersection of Rogers Road and DuPont Highway (Route 13) and just north of New Castle Avenue/Route 9. As originally constructed, the complex was sprawling—with 588 units that were rented solely to Blacks, many of whom continued to live in the complex after the war when it was decommissioned.[104] In the early 1950s, many of the buildings were demolished, and the property was purchased

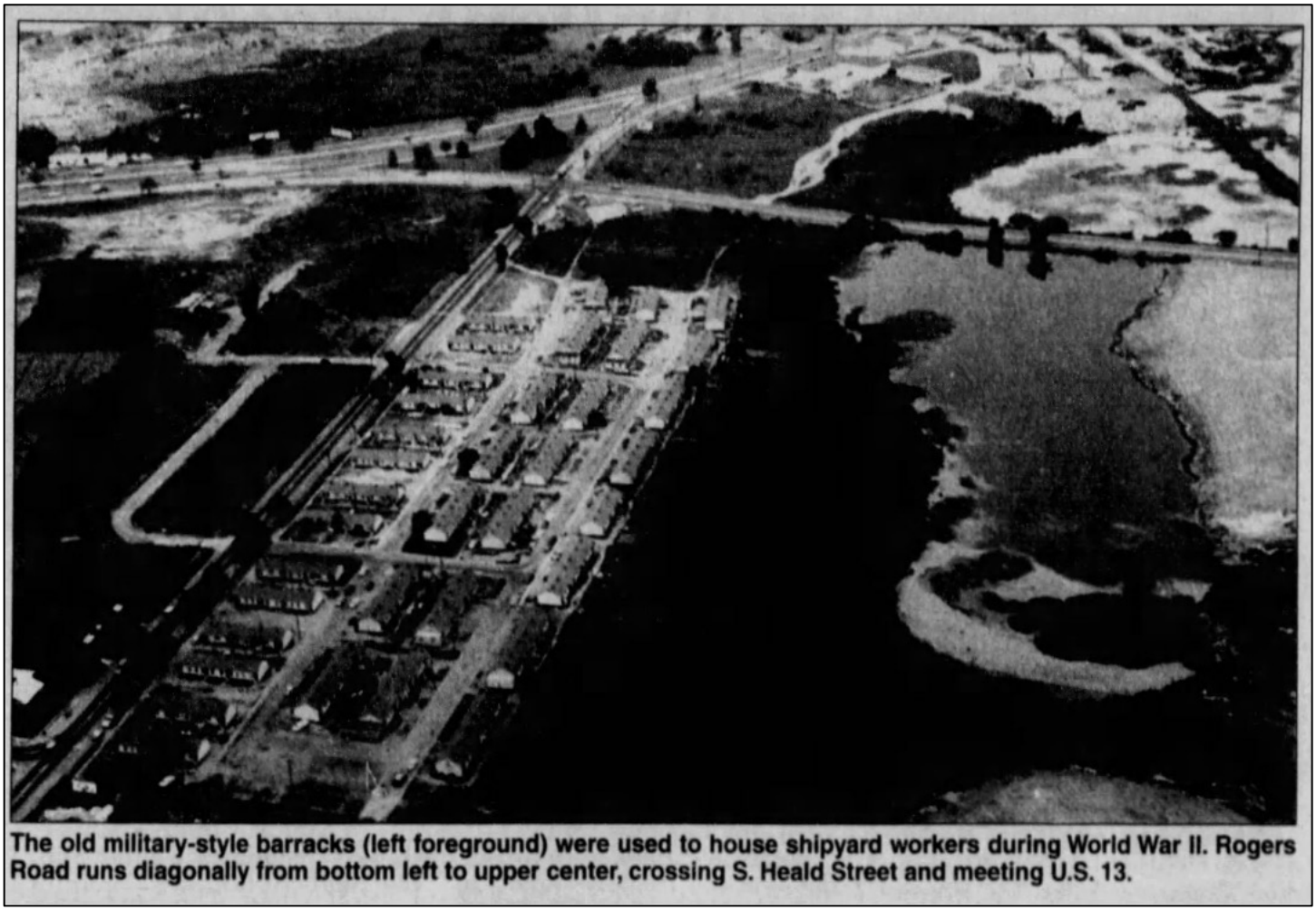
[100] MaryAnna Ralph, "An Architectural Management Plan for South Wilmington," Office of Planning City of Wilmington, Delaware, 1990, 3-4.
[101] "$77,000 Advanced on Housing Work; U.S. Authority Makes Initial Payment for Southbridge Development in Wilmington," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 9, 1942.
[102] "$77,000 Advanced on Housing Work," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 9, 1942.
[103] "$77,000 Advanced on Housing Work," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 9, 1942; and "Slum Clearance Project," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 2, 1943.
[104] "Homes for 588 Negro Workers to be Built," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 17, 1943; "Levy Court Plans Edict on Millside," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), February 16, 1960.

by several private owners, including J. Charley Lewis and developer Don Loftus.[105] The remaining units continued to operate as public housing, with the owners leasing the site to the Wilmington Housing Authority.[106]

Edythe Pridgen, an informant for the oral histories portion of this project, shared some of her recollections of life at Millside between 1948 and 1952, describing her family's quarters as "just three rooms," with a living room that doubled as a bedroom, a designated bedroom space, and an eat-in kitchen with a small table. The unit contained a "big pot-bellied stove that was both [for] heating and cooking." She explained that her mother "always bought a sleeper sofa" because she and her sister would sleep in the living room. There was also a small bathroom with a combined shower and laundry fixture so one could also "scrub in the tub" with clothing. She noted that some residents had laundry machines outside, since many were not electric, and "everyone had clothes lines for drying at that time." People had "gardens, and little, small fences—there wasn't much of a yard" with a "coal bin…outside, where you'd put into the pot-bellied stove; …one of our favorite playing places was in the coal bin." Their unit also had an ice box, "where the ice man would come around and give you ice." She remembers that Millside was a "*tight* community," though "people started moving out to Southbridge, East Side—all over. But I remember a family—the Freemans—bought a television, and we would all gather, people would be standing outside…looking at this television because a lot of people didn't have it at the time because you listened to the radio, to the soap operas or whatever." Later, after the family had moved to nearby Dunleith, she recalls that her "mother was talking about moving back [to Millside]. But it had deteriorated so bad. And I rode her past there and she changed her mind. She hadn't seen Millside in a long time."

Millside owner Don Loftus, who also developed the Dunleith subdivision for Blacks adjacent to Millside, initially planned to fully raze Millside in the 1950s and build Kent Castle, a large, 650-unit apartment complex for Black tenants; however, that project never came to fruition because Loftus could not secure financing.[107] Millside increasingly came under criticism from the late 1950s into 1960s for poor conditions. In 1967, leaders of the Wilmington branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) described it as one of "the worst slums in the state" and "an atrocity" and called for its condemnation.[108]

[105] "Homes for 588 Negro Workers to be Built," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 17, 1943; "Millside: a Ghetto that Generations Called Home," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 27, 2022.
[106] "Builder to Test FHA Need Denial," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 28, 1954.
[107] "Millside Homes Being Torn Down," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 17, 1954; "Builder to Test FHA Need Denial," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 28, 1954.
[108] "NAACP Aides Call it a Slum," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), February 17, 1967.



The old military-style barracks (left foreground) were used to house shipyard workers during World War II. Rogers Road runs diagonally from bottom left to upper center, crossing S. Heald Street and meeting U.S. 13.

Figure 8. Aerial view of Millside after its construction in 1943, built as war-workers housing for Black families. (*The News Journal*, March 12, 1997)

Roy L. Wagstaff, president of the local NAACP, emphasized that "lack of a fair-housing law makes it possible for slumlords to profit from the plight of these unfortunate people who are prevented from renting or owning better quarters [because of the color of their skin]."[109] While many residents were relocated in the late 1960s, some tenants remained at Millside into the early 1970s due to a shortage of suitable low-income housing options; the last buildings of the complex were ultimately razed during the construction of I-495.[110]

[109] "NAACP Aides Call it a Slum," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), February 17, 1967.
[110] "Millside: A Ghetto that Generations Called Home," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 27, 2022.

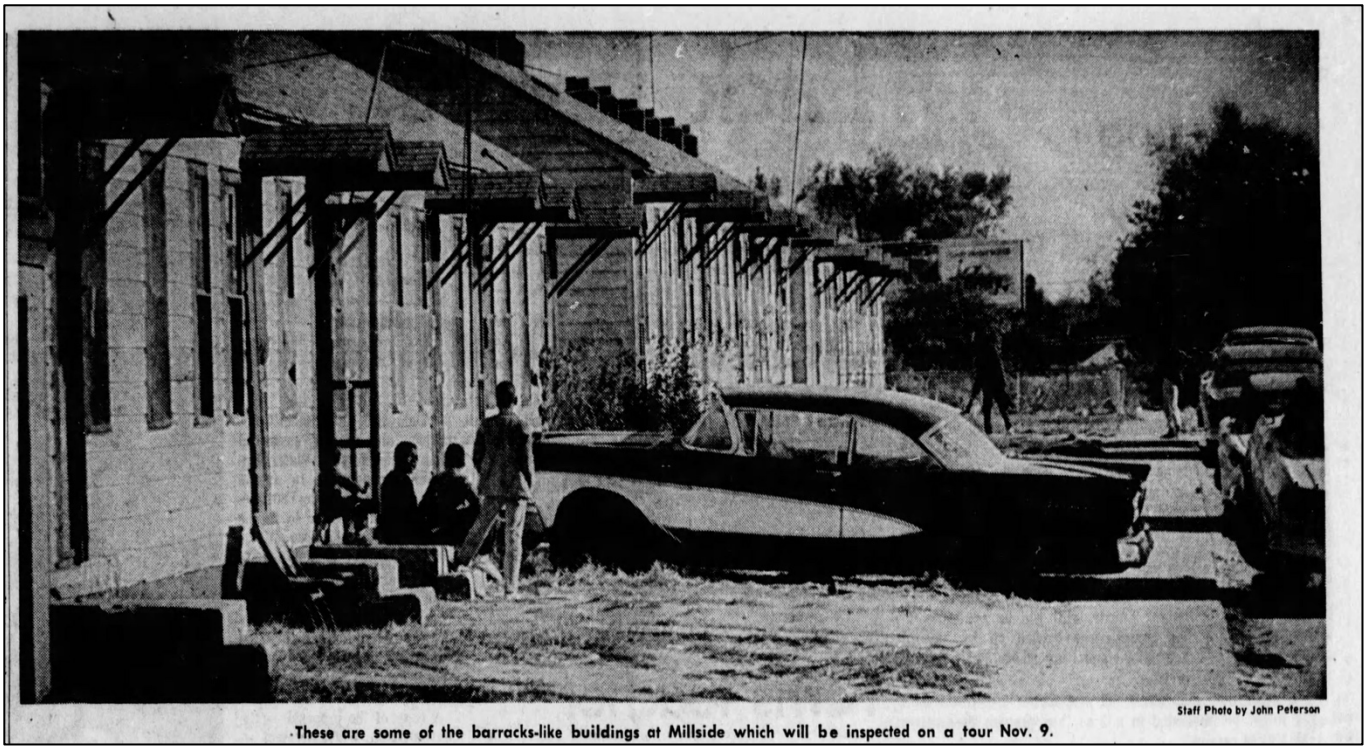


Figure 9. Photo of the "barracks-like buildings" accompanying an article documenting the poor conditions in Millside (*The Morning News,* October 30, 1965)

The Wilmington area continued to receive new African American settlers who migrated from farms and villages in downstate Delaware and Maryland. While Wilmington's white population declined by around 22,000 during the 1950s, the city actually gained nearly 8,000 Black residents in the same period. As such, demand for African American housing was quite high.[111] Still, any attempt to locate public housing anywhere outside the city was met with a "wall of opposition," leaving Wilmington's leaders almost no choice but to squeeze new public housing near existing complexes.[112] Ten years after the Southbridge project commenced, officials broke ground on another new "low cost public housing development for Negro families," called "Southbridge Extension," on August 13, 1952.[113] This development, which also contained 180 units, was located on the southern edge of South Wilmington, near the city limits, between South Heald Street and New Castle Avenue.[114] Just before this development commenced, some whites in South Wilmington joined counterparts near the similar Eastlake development in northwest Wilmington to protest what they felt was government policy steering their neighborhoods toward integration. On July 17, 1953, a headline in the *Wilmington Morning News* announced:

[111] Hoffecker, 160.
[112] Hoffecker, 128-129.
[113] "Groundbreaking Tomorrow for Southbridge Extension," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 12, 1952.
[114] "Housing Project Starts in 30 Days: Eastlake Addition Expected to be Ready in 10 Months; Southbridge Bid Date Set," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 15, 1952.

"Homes Reported Being Sold in Protest of Negro Housing; Some White Families in Southbridge, Eastlake Areas Placing 'For Sale' Signs in Fear of 'Wholesale Inroads."[115]

Despite such protests from remaining white residents, by the end of the 1940s, the die had been cast for the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor to be Wilmington's primary Black suburban area. On its northern end was South Wilmington, "an isolated part of the city whose residents complained that they lived in 'the city that council forgot.'"[116] By midcentury, as historian Carol Hoffecker has observed, "the city could offer few places worse than South Wilmington," where most houses still lacked running water or indoor plumbing, and a nearby, "rat-infested city dump was a reservoir of contagion and stench."[117] As such, few non-Blacks chose South Wilmington as their place of residence after World War II, while many Black families continued to settle there, as they found few other housing options and often faced systemic financial challenges. In New Castle County, in the absence of strong planning or government intervention into development, the market provided its own planning logic for the suburbs—which almost always served as "extensions of the status and the ethnicity of the urban residential areas nearest to them." As Hoffecker points out, Wilmington-area builders "needed no zoning ordinance to tell them that upper-middle-class families would not buy a house on the flats close by the Marine Terminal" near Route 9.[118] While some post-war subdivisions for whites were constructed off of New Castle Avenue, most tended to be further south in the corridor—and even many of those neighborhoods soon transitioned to mixed or predominantly Black.

During the 1950s and 1960s, several new housing developments extended the Black migration to the south of Wilmington—especially along the northern end of the New Castle Avenue (Route 9) corridor, which offered some of the only suburban housing developments that allowed Black owners or tenants. At Dunleith Estates, developer Don A. Loftus aimed to construct 1,500 single-family homes—humble in scale but in a fashionable midcentury style—to be available to "Colored Veterans."[119] A product of the Housing Act of 1949, Dunleith Estates was touted as a landmark development in the region. Reverend F.R. Baker, a commissioner on the

[115] "Homes Reported Being Sold in Protest of Negro Housing," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 17, 1953.
[116] Hoffecker, 111.
[117] Hoffecker, 111.
[118] Hoffecker, 120.
[119] Dunleith has been attributed, apparently falsely, in many sources as being a project of Leon Weiner. However, the many local newspaper stories about Dunleith in 1950 always attribute the development to another major developer, Don A. Loftus, and Weiner is never mentioned in the sources studied for this project. It is unclear if Weiner is simply confused for the developer of Dunleith because of his later work on neighboring Oakmont, or if he was somehow involved in Dunleith in a less prominent role than the primary developer. See *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE) articles "1,500 Homes, 400 Apartments to be Built Here for Negroes," January 30, 1950, "Houses of All-Steel Frames Planned at Dunleith Project," April 12, 1950, and "12 Families being Moved into Dunleith," November 22, 1950.

Wilmington Housing Authority, highlighted the importance of Dunleith in 1950 when he noted, "this is the first time in the long history of our city that a builder has ever constructed a new home for a Negro. Our colored friends have been expected to use houses when white people no longer wanted them or the neighborhood. The present advance is worthy of city-wide celebration."[120] In August 1959, developer Leon Weiner, who was later in life nationally recognized as the "conscience of the housing industry in America,"[121] broke ground on the Oakmont development—adjacent to Dunleith Estates but featuring attached townhouses—which received equal acclaim. Publicized as an "open occupancy" community, which in essence meant it was intended for African Americans, Oakmont opened in the summer of 1959. Oakmont was marketed to lower income families and featured narrow, 16-foot wide attached townhouses, for which county building code needed to be altered (and not without controversy). However, Oakmont was celebrated as a much-needed and well-executed development—especially in the face of the impending Poplar Street Project A. During its planning, the chairman of the Wilmington Housing Authority, I.B. Finkelstein, declared that it filled a "definite need" for displaced Black families who earned too much income to qualify for public housing projects. Weiner himself told a reporter that his firm "recognized the need for suitable housing for relocation of families displaced by urban renewal and freeway construction" as well as "the need for housing for minorities."[122] This need had been made dramatically clear just a few months earlier, when Black home buyers were terrorized in nearby Collins Park, a previously all-white subdivision further south on New Castle Avenue. Collins Park had been considered "ripe for integration" by some because it was working class and affordable. It was described as "not a preferred area" for whites by a real estate agent who encouraged a Black family to purchase there in 1957. That real estate agent's actions, however, resulted in a new Black owner being shot in the leg—a terroristic act that led them to immediately flee the neighborhood. In 1959, another Black family, the Rayfields, had their house in Collins Park blown up in two separate explosions. With no fair housing laws to protect Blacks, the message from whites was clear. Yet the Oakmont development, like neighboring Dunleith, had "posed little threat to established white suburbs" and was not controversial because it was closer to Southbridge and the housing projects there.[123] These developments—and several others that were soon built for Blacks, or transitioned to predominantly Black—further solidified the reputation of the New Castle Avenue corridor as a region safe for African American families to live.

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[120] "Razing of 2,500 Slum Homes in City is Urged by Pastor," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, Delaware), February 6, 1950.
[121] "His exemplary efforts to provide affordable housing for low-income families and the elderly brought him national acclaim, distinguished honors and appointments to three presidential commissions on housing and related issues, including the Kaiser Commission on Urban Housing, which led to the landmark Housing Act of 1968;" Kevin Kelly and Larry Nagengast, "Leon N. Weiner, Builder and Developer, Dies at 82," Builder Online, November 20, 2002, https://www.builderonline.com/design/projects/leon-n-weiner-builder-and-developer-dies-at-82_o.
[122] "Franklin Builders Gives Preview of Row Housing," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 20, 1959.
[123] Hoffecker, 166-167.

3. Background History of the New Castle Avenue / Route 9 Corridor

New Castle Avenue itself is present on maps by the middle of the eighteenth century, although the road likely existed even earlier. It was improved first as a turnpike under private maintenance in the early-nineteenth century, then developed as a county road by the beginning of the twentieth century and was further improved as a state highway by 1929. Emerging from a brief examination of the history of the area to 1940 is a picture of early agricultural settlements which gave rise to suburban housing subdivisions during the twentieth century. Near the mouth of the Christina River and south along the Delaware River, there was an increasing concentration of industrial production with roots in the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth centuries and a buildup of transportation infrastructure to support industry and, later, residents, such as a large port terminal, rail lines, streetcar lines, and roads.

The road between Wilmington and New Castle is depicted on mid- and late-eighteenth century maps and may have been present even earlier.[124] Settlement along the Route 9 corridor between Wilmington and New Castle is attested in the eighteenth century, perhaps as early as the late-seventeenth century. Around the time of the American Revolution, for example, George Haines owned Monckton Park, later called Eden Park, using it as his country home. Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, purchased the property in 1783 and resided there before selling it to Peter Bauduy in 1805, who changed the name to Eden Park and subsequently designed and built Swanwyck for his daughter.[125] The powder works on the site was established in 1801, owned by Bauduy's son-in-law, J. P. Garesche. The Buttonwoods, too, was a historic home northeast of New Castle along Buttonwood Avenue where the Buttonwood community is located. The brick mansion house on the property was built c. 1831, replacing a dwelling with sections dating to the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth centuries.[126]

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[124] See, for example, Thomas Kitchin, "Map of Maryland with the Delaware Counties," London Magazine, August 1957, https://library-artstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/public/SS33851_33851_1648027 (accessed May 24, 2021); "Map of the Country Round Philadelphia," *Gentleman's Magazine*, London, England, 46 (1776), 396, https://library-artstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/public/SS33851_33851_1648393 (accessed May 24, 2021); "Delaware From the Best Authorities," 1796, https://library-artstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/public/SS33851_33851_1648195 (accessed May 24, 2021).

[125] See "History of Eden Park," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 6, 1902. See also, https://archives.delaware.gov/historical-markers-map/eden-park-formerly-monckton-park (accessed May 24, 2021). See also Vincent Rogers, Rosemary Troy, and Edward Heite, "Swanwyck," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, New Castle County, DE, 1977.

[126] Historic American Buildings Survey, *The Buttonwoods, Forrester Avenue, New Castle, New Castle County, DE*, New Castle New Castle County Delaware, DE-71, 1937, https://www.loc.gov/item/de0080 (accessed May 24, 2021).

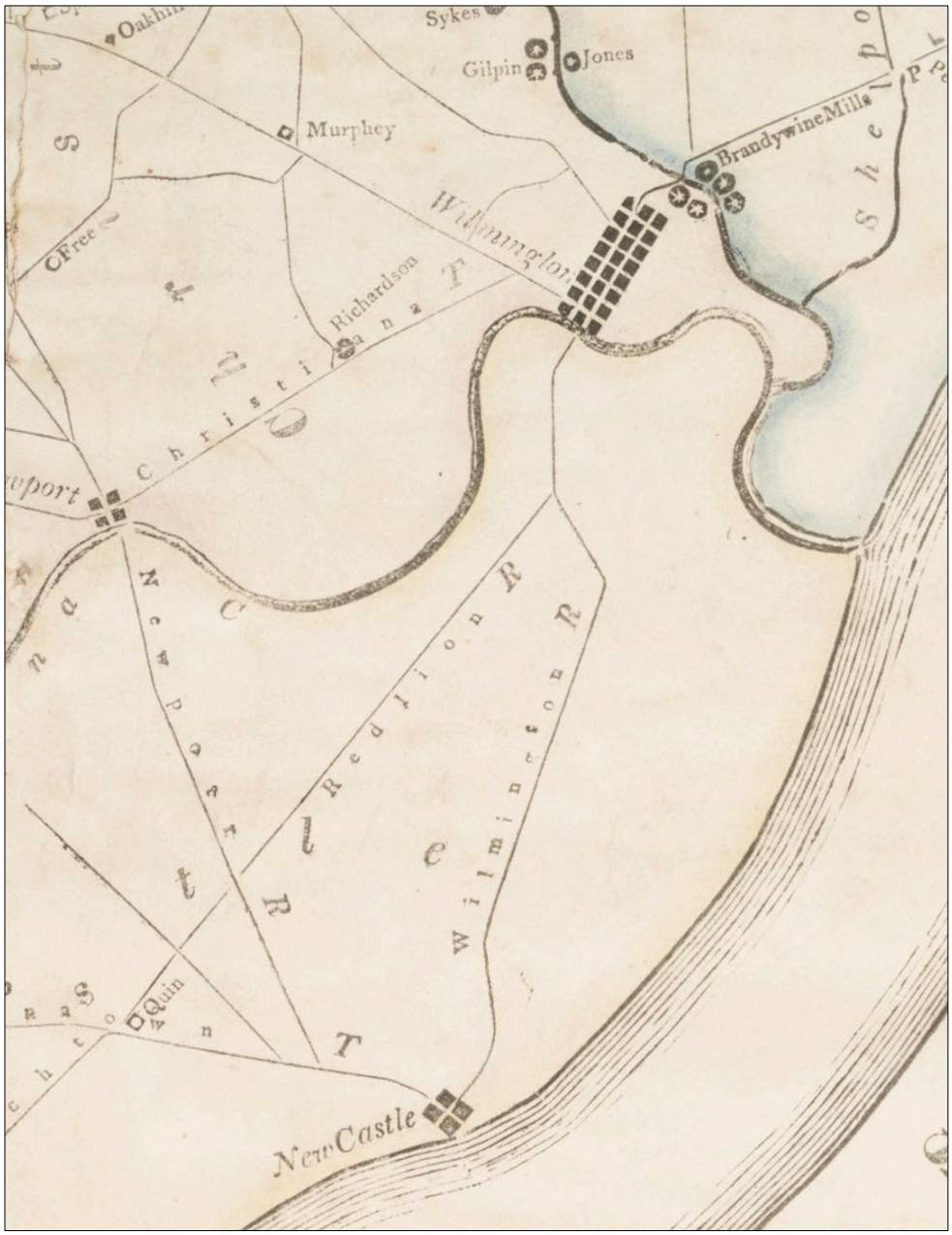


Figure 10. Detail of *Roads of Newcastle County*, showing the Route 9 corridor labeled "Wilmington R," surveyed by Henry Heald. (New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1820)

The nineteenth century saw increased development of the land along the corridor, in part attributable to private investment in the road to convert it into a turnpike. A push to develop roads in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in America had led to the development of the turnpike system.[127] Turnpike roads were chartered by the states but financed by the private companies who built them, with operating and maintenance

[127] Information on turnpikes in Delaware is from David Amott, Eric Gollannek, and David Ames, "A History of Delaware Roads and a Guide to Researching Them," Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, May 2006, 10-12.

costs funded by the collection of tolls paid by users along the route. Some were newly built roads and others greatly improved or expanded preexisting roads or paths, employing new surfacing technologies.[128] Delaware's state government recognized the value of these improved roads in facilitating both intra- and interstate commerce and moving goods between farms, cities, and ports. The first of these roads—the Newport-Gap Pike (now DE Route 41)—was completed in the state in 1808 and lengthened to Wilmington in 1811. In 1813, a private company improved what is now DE Route 9, naming it the New Castle and Wilmington Pike.

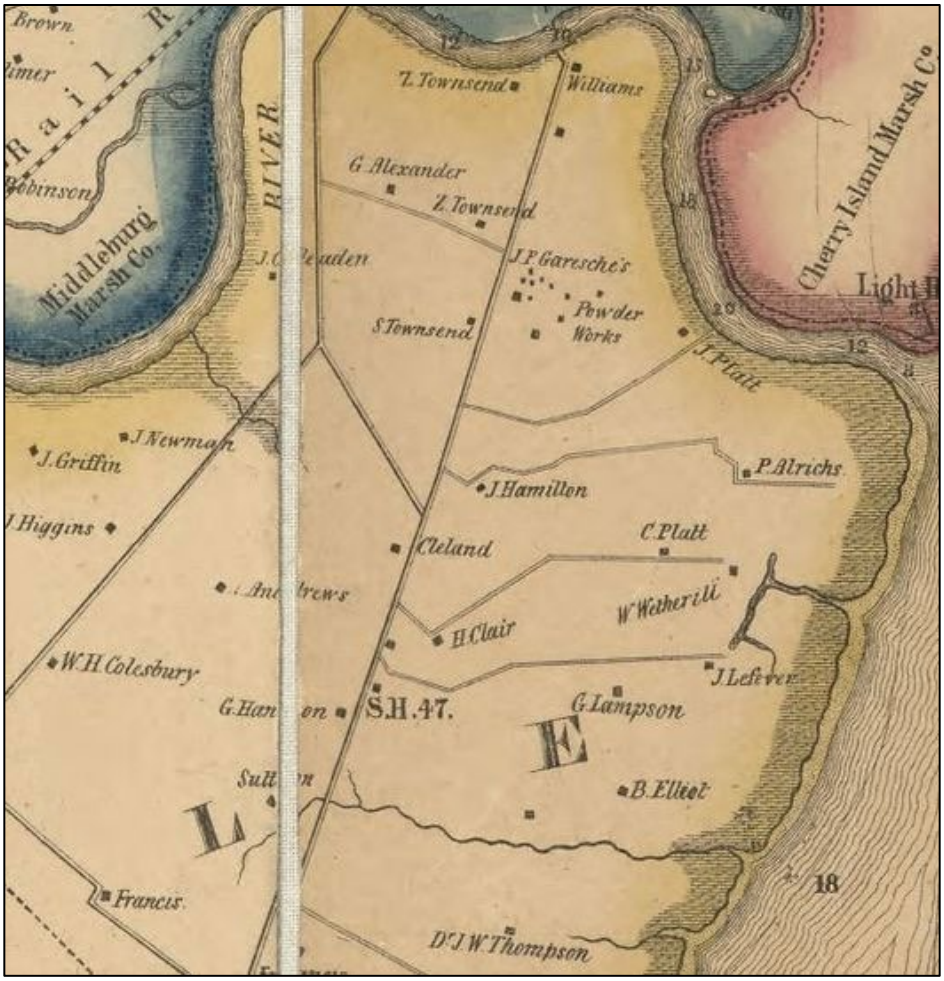


Figure 11. View of the Route 9 corridor showing agriculture and development in 1849. (Samuel M. Rea and Jacob Price, *Map of New Castle County, Delaware: From Original Surveys*, Philadelphia: Smith and Wistar, 1849)

Historic maps from the nineteenth century show farm tracts extending the length of the pike between Wilmington and New Castle with industrial establishments to the north and east of the road along the Christina and Delaware Rivers and their ports and docks, increasing in number as the century progressed. In 1849, for example, J. P.

[128] Macadam surfacing "used a heavy roller to press broken or crushed stone into the ground," making it durable, smooth, and wear-resistant. See Amott, Gollannek, and Ames, *Delaware Roads*, 10.

Garesche's Powder Works remained at Eden Park, although it was closed after a major explosion in 1855 that killed not only employees but also a passerby.[129] A fairground was later located near the site by 1893, likely tapping into the desire of city-dwellers to head to the countryside for diversion.[130] By the final decade of the nineteenth century, rail lines intersected east of New Castle Avenue facilitating and accommodating further industry, including Lobdell Car Wheel Co., C. and J. Pyle Co. Patent Leather Factory, and Wilmington Glass Co.[131]

The first part of the twentieth century saw further improvement of the road—from a turnpike to a county highway, then to a state highway by the 1920s—to keep up with an ever-increasing amount of automobile traffic. Highway construction in Delaware, as throughout the U.S., was facilitated by the 1916 Federal Road Act, followed by the Federal Highway Act in 1921, which centralized road planning and allocated funds to states to establish highway departments.[132] In a 1906 road map of the area, the route is classified as a "good road," suggesting ongoing upkeep.[133] Official State Highway Department maps illustrate the development of the road between Wilmington and New Castle in the 1920s: in 1920, it is marked as a county highway; by 1924, it is noted as a "proposed state highway;" and in 1929, the road is designated as a "Delaware State Highway completed."[134]

[129] "Powder Mill Explosion at Wilmington, Delaware, Six Persons Killed and Five Wounded," *New York Times*, August 4, 1855.
[130] Baist Atlas, 1893.
[131] See Baist Atlas 1893 and Sanborn maps from 1884 and 1901.
[132] See Amott, Gollannek, and Ames, *Delaware Roads*, 14-17. See also Chase, *Suburbanization*, 83-84.
[133] C. S. Mendenhall, "Mendenhall's Guide and Road Map of Maryland, Delaware, and District of Columbia, 1906, https://library-artstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/public/SS33851_33851_1648519 (accessed May 25, 2021).
[134] Delaware State Highway Department, "State of Delaware Official Road Map," 1920, https://deldot.gov/environmental/archaeology/historic_pres/historic_highway_maps/pdfs/cd_002.pdf?cache=1591596042582 (accessed May 25, 2021); Delaware State Highway Department, "State of Delaware Official Road Map," 1924, https://library-artstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/public/SS33851_33851_1648286 (accessed May 25, 2021); Delaware State Highway Department, "State of Delaware Official Road Map," 1929, https://library-artstor-org.udel.idm.oclc.org/public/SS33851_33851_1648738 (accessed May 25, 2021).

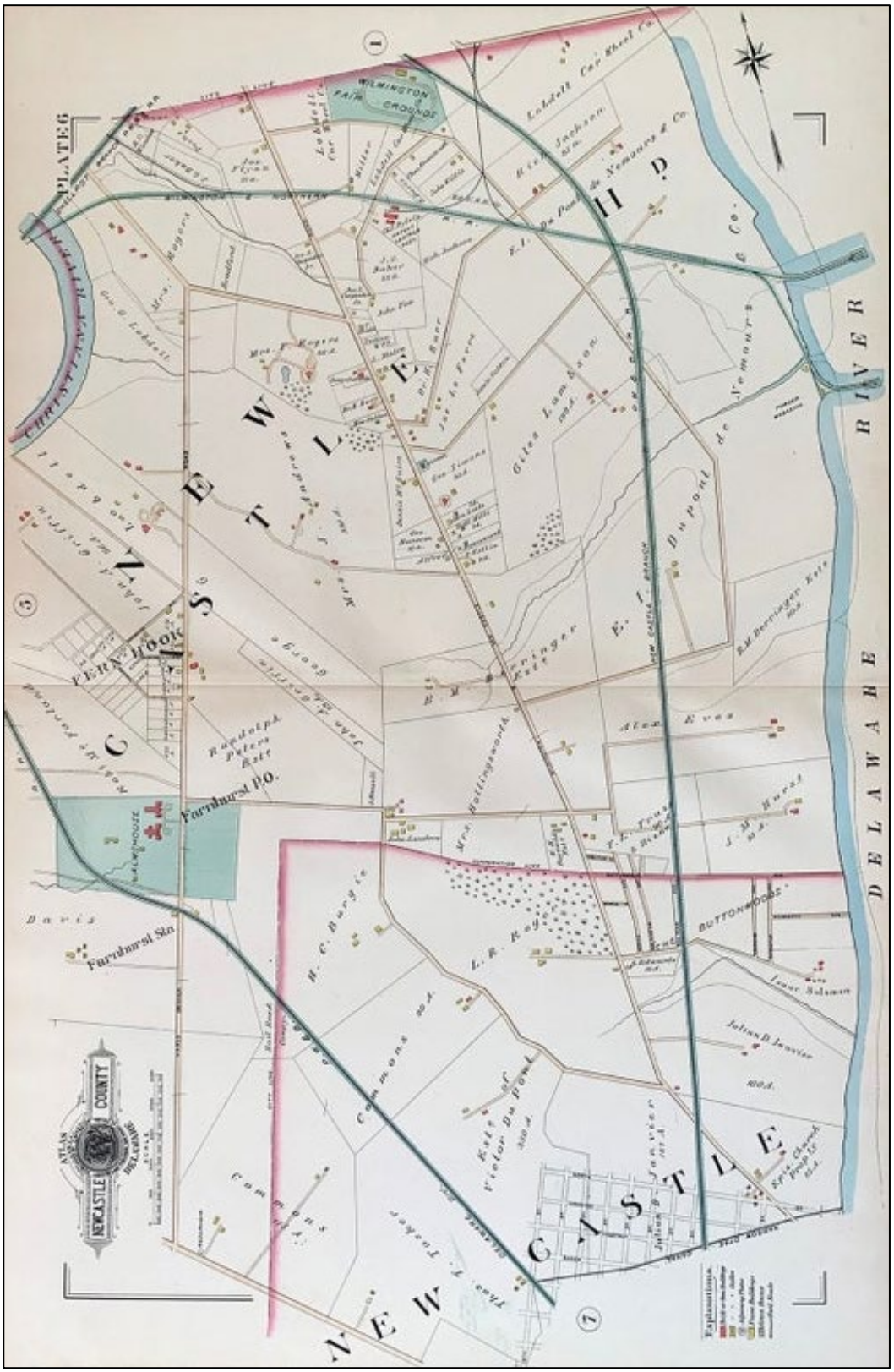


Figure 12. View of the Route 9 corridor showing agriculture and development in 1893. (G. William Baist, *Atlas of New Castle County, Delaware: From Actual Surveys, Official Records and Private Plans*, Philadelphia, 1893)

Figure 13. 1926 aerial image of the study area, showing New Castle Avenue (Route 9) and the DuPont Highway (Route 13) south of the Christina River. Note besides the Southbridge neighborhood directly south of the Christina, the study area is largely comprised of farms. (Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, 1926)

Aerial photos of the Route 9 corridor from the 1930s show an extensive patchwork of farms in the area as well as a handful of early housing subdivisions including Hamilton Park, Eden Park, and Holloway Terrace. The photos, along with maps, also document the further expansion of heavy industry along the Christina and Delaware Rivers, along the east side of the corridor. Lobdell Car and Wheel Co. remained and was joined by Artillery Fuse Company north of Eden Park, Eastern Malleable Iron Co., J. Frank Darling Floor Covering Plant, Triangle Agricultural Corporation (Fertilizer Works), and several lumber and building suppliers as well as many others.[135] The towers of the Pyrites Co. are visible in several aerial photos belching smoke into the air. Also attested in photos and maps is the Wilmington Marine Terminal (Port of Wilmington). Connected to the several railway lines converging in the area, the port was completed in 1923 to facilitate the transport of industrial goods out of and into the area.[136]

In the opening decades of the twentieth century, early housing developments had emerged in the corridor to support the new marine terminal and factories along the Delaware and Christina Rivers. The development of electric streetcars facilitated access to the suburbs from Wilmington and became a primary means of transportation for suburban dwellers: the New Castle Line provided access between Wilmington and the factories and subdivisions adjacent to Route 9.[137] Among the earliest of these were **Hamilton Park**, established in 1906, **Holloway Terrace**, established in 1916, and **Eden Park Gardens**, established in 1917. Advertisements for the subdivisions offer as a selling point their proximity to the trolley lines and to nearby industries.[138] *The Evening Journal* newspaper invested in the Holloway Terrace project, selling approximately 1,100 subdivided lots for house-building for $49.00 each. While the company boasted of a rush on sales during its early stages in the late 1910s, many of the homes in Holloway Terrace were not erected until the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.[139] The Eden Park Gardens subdivision was undertaken by the New York-Delaware Realty & Construction Company and pitched as a large-scale development to provide "a substantial share of the seven thousand homes the company claimed the city needed," although, similar to Holloway Terrace, only a handful of homes appear to have been built there before the 1930s, with most development occurring in the 1940s.[140] A 1917 advertisement for the

[135] Sanborn maps 1927 vol. 2.
[136] See Sanborn 1927 vol. 2, sheet 418. See also, for example, "Marine Terminal Gets Banquet," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 5, 1923; "Reports New Line May Use Marine Terminal," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 24, 1923.
[137] Chase, *Suburbanization*, 86-89.
[138] Chase, *Suburbanization*, 88-89.
[139] "Holloway Terrace," *The Evening Journal*. (Wilmington, DE), May 13, 1916; "And Now for Building Operations," *The Evening Journal (*Wilmington, DE), May 31, 1916.
[140] Susan Mulchahey Chase, "The Process of Suburbanization and the Use of Restrictive Deed Covenants as Private Zoning, Wilmington, Delaware, 1900-1941," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Delaware, 1995, 109.

development refers to it as the "Port Terminal Residential District" with all available utilities, no fewer than four trolleys, and walkable to factories.[141]

Figure 14. 1937 aerial image of the study area, showing New Castle Avenue (Route 9) and the DuPont Highway (Route 13) south of the Christina River. The study area is still largely comprised of agricultural land; however, several developments including Eden Park Gardens, Hamilton Park, Holloway Terrace, and Minquadale (left, north and south of the dual DuPont Highway) have been platted. (Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, 1937)

[141] "Eden Park Gardens," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 14, 1917.

While it was not until the 1940s that New Castle Avenue saw an explosion of residential growth, below is a short history of the preexisting (pre-war) residential neighborhoods along the corridor, including **Eden Park Gardens**, **Hamilton Park**, **Holloway Terrace**, and **Buttonwood**, as well as **Minquadale**.

Figure 15. Aerial photograph of New Castle Avenue in 1937, looking north towards Wilmington with view of farmlands, early housing developments along the east side of the road, and industrial establishments along river at northeast. (Hagley Museum and Library, 1937)

Eden Park Gardens

Originally established in 1917, Eden Park Gardens is located just outside of Wilmington city limits, nearby to the Port of Wilmington, and south of the city's Eden Park, in a triangular section bounded by New Castle Avenue/Route 9 to the southwest, Terminal Avenue/Route 9A to the north, and Interstate 495 to the southeast. Directly across New Castle Avenue is a concrete manufacturing plant and recycling facility. In addition to New Castle and Terminal Avenues, streets within the open-access subdivision include Albany, Harrisburg, Dover, and Wilmington Avenues, though Dover Avenue is almost entirely undeveloped. The neighborhood includes two churches: Boulden Union African Methodist Episcopal Church (established in 1975) at the eastern corner of Albany and Wilmington Avenues, in the northeast section the community; and Union African Methodist

Episcopal Zion Church (established in 1976) in its southern section, south of Dover Avenue.[142] Many lots are vacant or undeveloped. Lot sizes vary, with some houses set close together with minimal side yards. Most houses exhibit poured concrete or asphalt driveways to either side and in some instances take the space of a side yard.

WILMINGTON MORNING NEWS, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1917. 13

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN YOUR HEAD?

This ad is intended for working men with brains. It is a plain statement of facts and figures, an appeal to reason *and nothing else.*
We are here with the endorsement of your employers and your Chamber of Commerce to help solve Wilmington's housing problem. Wilmington needs 7000 homes. We can furnish about one-fourth of these in our new development, *the largest ever undertaken in the State of Delaware.*

EDEN PARK GARDENS

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF WILMINGTON AND VICINITY, SHOWING THE LOCATION OF EDEN PARK GARDENS. THE DOCKS AND FACTORY BUILDINGS ON THE RIGHT ARE THOSE LAID OUT BY ENGINEER MEIGS IN HIS PLANS FOR WILMINGTON'S PORT TERMINAL.

WE DO NOT URGE YOU TO INVEST—BUT TO INVESTIGATE

EDEN PARK GARDENS is in South Wilmington.

It surrounds Eden Park on three sides. Every foot of it is right at your door and in easy walking distance of factories already employing 6,400 men. There is every modern improvement on the property RIGHT NOW. The gas, water, telephone and electricity are there NOW. The New Castle pike and three trolley systems run along the entire western boundary. The Lobdell trolley runs directly across the property from east to west. A five cent fare takes you to any point in Wilmington in a few minutes.

John Meigs—the Celebrated Harbor Engineer

Located Greater Wilmington's Port Terminal, directly adjoining EDEN PARK GARDENS, and designated this very property as the Port Terminal Residential District. He made the main arterial through the Terminal a continuation of the main business street of EDEN PARK GARDENS. Mr. Meig's plans will make this the busiest section of one of the greatest seaports in the world. WORK MAY BE STARTED ON THESE PLANS ANY DAY.

Wilmington grows as her industries grow.

Values increase most in that section where the most new factories locate. Every acre of land on the river front from the Port Terminal to New Castle is in strong industrial hands, to be used for factory sites as soon as there are homes to shelter the necessary working men.

ASK YOURSELF THESE SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Why is Wilmington a splendid city to work in?
Were wages ever higher here?
Why is this a hard city to live in?
Were rents ever higher here?
What is the only cure for rent?
In which direction must Wilmington develop?
Will the Delaware river let it expand to the East?
Is there any land not owned by millionaires to the West?
Would they sell any to factories near their mansions?
What is the nature of the land to the North?
Is hilly land and steep river banks suitable for large factory sites?
What is the nature of the land to the South?
Is level land and smooth river banks suitable for factories?
Which direction puts them nearer the Port Terminal?
Which direction gives factories the best railroad facilities?
Which direction puts them nearer Chespeake Bay and the Ocean?
In which direction do they already own the land?
In which direction is Eden Park Gardens?
Should land values increase in that direction?
If the rent you pay will buy you a home do you want one?

It is good business for you to own a home.

It is good sense to own one near your work and in a locality where you can sell at a profit if you want to. Wages are higher than ever before—it is easier to save for a home than it ever has been. If you cannot afford a home yet, you should at least get the lot now while lots are cheap. We will furnish plans and specifications for the home you will build later absolutely free. Whether you want a house and lot or a lot only, our prices will guarantee you the utmost in value for every dollar you invest, and our terms will be easily within your reach.

We do business on the most saving scale.

We build our houses in units of one hundred. We buy materials in immense quantities direct from manufacturers and for cash only. We have our own architectural and construction departments, our own steam shovels and every labor-saving device useful on large operations. These savings, amounting to hundreds of dollars on each house, are yours absolutely. We will sell you a house on liberal terms for a great deal less than you can put one up yourself for spot cash.

Our building restrictions are entirely practical.

They are altogether to your own advantage. Our plans provide for a MODEL CITY complete in every way, with Churches, Schools, Amusements, Recreation Parks and an ample Business District. The resident of EDEN PARK GARDENS will be in a stone's throw of everything that Wilmington has to offer and yet entirely independent of Wilmington in every way.

If you DO want a home, fill out the attached coupon and mail to us at once. Your entire future may depend upon it.

New York-Delaware Realty & Construction Co.
Queen Building, Wilmington, Del.
5th and Market Streets

John E. Allen, Gen'l. Mgr.,

Please send me full details with prices and terms on houses and lots in EDEN PARK GARDENS. This request not to obligate me in any way.

Name .....
Street and Number .....
City .....

NEW YORK-DELAWARE REALTY & CONSTRUCTION CO.

Queen Building, 5th and Market Sts., Wilmington, Del.

Figure 16. Early sales advertisement for Eden Park Gardens. (*Wilmington Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, July 14, 1917)

[142] Religion Briefs section, *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), February 28, 1976; Religion Briefs section, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), December 4, 1976.

Eden Park Gardens was initially platted as a residential district adjoining the then proposed Wilmington Marine Terminal facility (now Port of Wilmington), intended to serve as working-class housing and alleviate wartime housing shortages in the City of Wilmington.[143] The development was spearheaded by New York-Delaware Realty & Construction Company and Eden Park Gardens Corporation, after purchasing 135 acres of land around Eden Park, the former site of a late-eighteenth and nineteenth century estate.[144] The company offered both developed and undeveloped lots, with "building plans, specifications and the expert services of our architectural department absolutely free."[145] Its location "within easy walking distance" of several large factories and access to transportation, being served by four trolley lines—"any point in Wilmington can be reached in a few minutes"—was highlighted prominently when the subdivision first opened.[146] Lots were initially offered in late 1917 for $175 to $300 with a 10 percent down payment.[147] The neighborhood was also restricted—with early advertisements indicating that residential and business areas would be separated and that "no land will be sold to objectionable classes or individuals nor for any purpose or business not universally recognized as desirable and legitimate."[148]

Despite promoting the district as a would-be model city, with plans to build 500 homes and provide sites for businesses, schools, and churches, relatively little development occurred during the initial phase. In November 1924, advertisements for a large, weekend sales event describe 1,000 lots still available and state that "the disposition of the different blocks or sections of the tract…will be so that a buyer in buying one lot may have the option of buying the entire block"—highlighting how few houses had been built by that time.[149] Dwellings built during the early-twentieth century phase of development mainly comprise frame bungalows and foursquares and are scattered throughout the subdivision, though the majority are situated along the main thoroughfares of New Castle Avenue/Route 9 and Terminal Avenue/Route 9A.

Beginning in 1940, Eden Park Gardens underwent a wave of development with a Federal Housing Authority-approved project to construct 50 low-income homes in the subdivision. Claymont-based contractor James A. Pearce completed the work. The frame-construction homes were to be detached, single-family residences

[143] "Opportunity of a Lifetime: Eden Park Gardens," *Newark Post* (Newark, DE), October 31, 1917.
[144] "Building Project Soon Will 'Boost' South Wilmington," *Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), June 22, 1917; "500 New Houses Will Go Up in South Wilmington," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 23, 1917; "Trustees Sale of Valuable Real Estate in New Castle County, Delaware," *Delaware State Journal* (Wilmington, DE), September 8, 1865.
[145] "What the Chamber of Commerce Thinks of Eden Park Gardens," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 18, 1917.
[146] "What the Chamber of Commerce Thinks of Eden Park Gardens," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 18, 1917.
[147] "Opportunity of a Lifetime: Eden Park Gardens," *Newark Post* (Newark, DE), October 31, 1917.
[148] "Realty Operations Opened by Mayor," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 21, 1917.
[149] "Eden Park Gardens Sale Begins Friday," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 6, 1924.

measuring 23 by 26 feet, with four rooms and a bathroom, hardwood floors and oil heating, and set on lots measuring 40 by 100 feet. Each home would have a front and back yard, and some options would offer porches. An article announcing the start of the project explains that 20 houses each would be built on Harrisburg and Albany Avenues, with 10 additional on Terminal Avenue.[150] Houses in the "New Park Homes" development, as it was called, initially sold for $2,650, with $150 down and monthly payments of $23.[151] Three different models were offered, with purchasers able to select the type of architecture.[152] However, it does not appear that all of the 50 planned homes were completed, and by 1946, hundreds of 20 by 100 foot lots were offered for sale—"Ripe for Development!"[153] Several styles of frame Minimal Traditional and Cape Cod-type homes built during the early 1940s building phase are represented in the subdivision, primarily along Harrisburg and Albany Avenues, and exhibit a variety of siding materials including brick or stone veneers, and asbestos shingle, aluminum, and vinyl siding. Marginal later infill primarily includes ranch-type homes.

Figure 17. Sales advertisement for 1940s-built homes in Eden Park Gardens. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, April 5, 1941.)

[150] "Houses Project to Start Today," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 31, 1940.
[151] Eden Park Gardens "Park Homes" advertisement, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 22, 1940; "Sample House Open Tomorrow, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 13, 1940.
[152] "Homes at Eden Park Popular," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[153] Eden Park Gardens advertisement, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), October 2, 1946.

Figure 18. Examples of early 1940s-built Minimal Traditional dwellings in Eden Park Gardens (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 19. Cape Cod form house in Eden Park Gardens (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Hamilton Park

Established in 1906, Hamilton Park Gardens is situated nearby to the Port of Wilmington and bounded by New Castle Avenue/Route 9 to the west, Interstate 495 to the northwest, and is otherwise surrounded by commercial properties related to automobile cargo, except for J. Caldwell (formerly Pyles) Lane to the southeast, partially comprising a stretch of several early-twentieth century, frame bungalows. In addition to New Castle Avenue, streets within the subdivision include North, Center, South, and Hamilton Streets. The neighborhood includes several churches: Mount Moriah Church, Solid Rock Baptist Church, Emmanuel Church of Jesus Christ, and Rehoboth Temple of Praise, all fronting New Castle Avenue/Route 9, and Peoples Baptist Church (established in 1931), at the southeastern corner of the neighborhood, at the junction of Hamilton and South Streets.[154] Many lots are vacant or undeveloped. Lot sizes vary, with some houses set close together with minimal side yards. Most houses exhibit poured concrete or asphalt driveways to either side and in some instances take the space of a side yard.

Hamilton Park Building Lots

New Castle Ave., Near Eden Park,

Are growing money rapidly. Why? Because they are conveniently located near the scene of Wilmington's great industrial activity.

Take East Fourth Street car line; one fare.

Some Choice and Quite a Number of Lots of Good Present Value and Great Growing Value Are Left.

Many of the lots have been sold, but we have made no effort to close out the entire proposition, for the reason that it is really more profitable to keep the bulk of the lots for building purposes, as we have a great many requests for small houses at from $12 to $14 per month—and no city taxes.

While we are not pushing sales, if you desire a home conveniently located or wish to make an investment that is sure to net you a large profit, we will sell you one or two of these lots at a low price and practically on your own terms.

If not convenient to call during business hours an appointment may be made by postal, for 8 o'clock any evening this week or next.

HAMILTON PARK COMPANY,

Offices of Artemus and Martin E. Smith, Attorneys, 836 Market Street.

Figure 20. Early sales advertisement for building lots in Hamilton Park. (*Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, DE, August 3, 1906)

[154] "Dedicate People's Bapt. Church Sunday," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 10, 1931.

In February 1906, Hamilton Park Company of Wilmington formally incorporated to "purchase lands and buildings and to improve the same" and soon after began selling lots advertised as "conveniently located to the scene of Wilmington's great industrial activity."[155] The developers of the tract hoped to sell newly-constructed homes to "steel workers who will be brought to New Castle by the big mills that are to locate there."[156] However, throughout 1908, advertisements appears in local newspapers announcing lots at Hamilton Park "for sale at a sacrifice" as well as homes for rent, suggesting that demand for housing fell short of initial projections.[157] In early 1910, several building lots owned by Hamilton Park Company were sold at sheriff's sale as a result of mortgage foreclosure. From the 1910s through the early-twentieth century, homes were constructed and sold individually by small-scale builders, one being W. E. Hendrix of Hamilton Park, whose advertisements appear often in period newspapers offering "bungalows built to order" and otherwise listing single homes for sale.[158]

Most of the housing stock in Hamilton Park dates to the early-twentieth century, with the majority of dwellings being small, frame bungalows with several foursquares (one-story "workingman's foursquares" and two-story forms), some two-story, vernacular front- and side-gabled dwellings, and several semi-attached or twin homes. A variety of siding materials are exhibited including asbestos shingle, aluminum, and vinyl siding; some bungalows retain their original wooden shingle cladding. Ranch forms mainly comprise the minimal later infill within the community.

[155] "Certificates of Incorporation," *Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), February 3, 1906; "Hamilton Park Building Lots," *Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1906.
[156] "Activity at New Suburb," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 13, 1907.
[157] "For Sale at a Sacrifice," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 27, 1908. The same advertisement appeared routinely in newspapers throughout 1908.
[158] "Bungalows Built to Order," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 27, 1920.

Figure 21. Example of an early-twentieth century bungalow in Hamilton Park; this dwelling retains many of its original exterior materials including wooden shingle cladding, eave brackets, exposed rafter tails, and porch columns. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Holloway Terrace

Established in 1916, Holloway Terrace is tucked away east off of New Castle Avenue/Route 9, accessed from Lambson Lane, Hillview Avenue (through Mayview Manor), and West Avenue. Lambson Lane serves as the northern boundary of the subdivision, with Simonds Gardens to its north side. West of the neighborhood, along New Castle Avenue, are several commercial establishments including a large bowling alley, Bowlerama (opened in 1959), on the west side of the road, as well as several restaurants and stores along the east side, along with two motel properties and the New Castle County Route 9 Library. The community is bordered to the northwest by Mayview Manor, south by Interstate 295, and east by a shipping distribution center and industrial properties. Further east is the Delaware Recycling Center, part of the Delaware Solid Waste Authority. In addition to the previously noted access roads, interior roads include Central and East Avenues, and Second through Eleventh Streets. Rose Hill School (built in 1929), now a community center, is located on the northwest side of the neighborhood; Holloway Terrace Fire Company (established in 1921) is centrally located on West Avenue; and

First Baptist Church of Holloway Terrace (established 1923) and R&C Deli are located in the northeast section of the community.[159]

Free Trolley To Holloway Terrace

Every man of family who has in mind building a home for himself or person who would like to make a real estate investment is invited to visit Holloway Terrace tomorrow, Sunday, May 14, to see this tract. A special trolley car on the New Castle Line will leave foot of Market Street at regular intervals between the hours of 10 o'clock in the morning and 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

VIEWS OF HOLLOWAY TERRACE

HOLLOWAY TERRACE

This tract of land is located along the line of the New Castle Trolley Road. Cars leaving foot of Market Street will take you right there. Ask the conductor to let you off at Holloway Terrace. It is near Rose Hill and not quite three miles from the heart of the city.

We give this description so that you will know just where the place is located and how to get there. We want you all to come out tomorrow and make reservation of the lots you want. They are not going to last long, so don't miss the opportunity to pay a visit to HOLLOWAY TERRACE tomorrow.

Where can you find better opportunities for real estate investment than in and around Wilmington? How many houses are there vacant in Wilmington? Have you tried to rent one? Think of the big possibilities offered you at Holloway Terrace. Land values will increase there while you sleep.

Protected by absolute security, wouldn't you be glad to invest under such ideal conditions? There are certain restrictions which will tend always to keep up the value of your holdings in this tract. Investigate them.

Building Lots
20x100 Feet
$49.00 Each
And One New Subscriber to The Evening Journal

Building Lots
20x100 Feet
$49.00 Each
And One New Subscriber to The Evening Journal

Why Are Lots At Holloway Terrace Valuable?
Why is THE EVENING JOURNAL Promoting This Project?

Because—These lots are located within close touch of Wilmington's big industries and within 12 minutes' ride from the heart of the city.

Because—The logical place for a riverfront for Wilmington is right adjoining the property of Holloway Terrace; good, dry land and at deep water point.

Because—Wilmington's manufacturing interests look to the south of the city, towards New Castle, for future industrial development.

Because—There never was an offer made the equal of this; building lots at $49 each, in a section around which land is worth $800 an acre.

Because—Land values are bound to increase in this locality, where thousands of workingmen, mechanics in the nearby mills, will make their homes.

Because—The Evening Journal is anxious to make 500 or more families home owners instead of paying rent and thereby performing an important function for the community; to increase the reputation of The Evening Journal as a promoter of things good for the public, and in doing so, to increase its circulation and influence of the paper.

REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT

The Evening Journal — *Wilmington Office,* — *315 Shipley Street*

Figure 22. Building lots announced at Holloway Terrace. (*The Evening Journal*, Wilmington, DE, May 13, 1916)

[159] "Laying Rose Hill School Stone," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), October 28, 1929; "History of the Holloway Terrace Volunteer Fire Company," https://www.ht20fc.com/history.cfm (accessed June 22, 2022); "Holloway Terrace," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 4, 1923.

In 1916, Wilmington's *Evening Journal* acquired an undeveloped portion of farmland, divided it into more than 1,000 building lots, each 20 by 100 feet, and offered them for sale at $49 each, along with a year's subscription to the newspaper.[160] This unusual arrangement, with a newspaper investing in a real estate development project, was the result of stakeholders' expressed interest in helping make "500 or more families home owners instead of paying rent and thereby performing an important function for the community" as well as increasing the newspaper's reputation "as a promoter of things good for the public" and, as a result, expanding its "circulation and influence."[161] The newspaper heavily marketed Holloway Terrace as "high and dry" with views of the Delaware River and in close proximity to Wilmington and its industries via the New Castle trolley line as well as to future projected industries including steel mills in the New Castle area.[162] Nearly all of the building lots sold by the end of May 1916.[163] The neighborhood was also advertised as restricted, with the *Evening Journal* stating: "There are certain restrictions which will tend always to keep up the value of your holdings in this tract. Investigate them."[164]

Figure 23. Early-twentieth century "workingman's" foursquare in Holloway Terrace. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

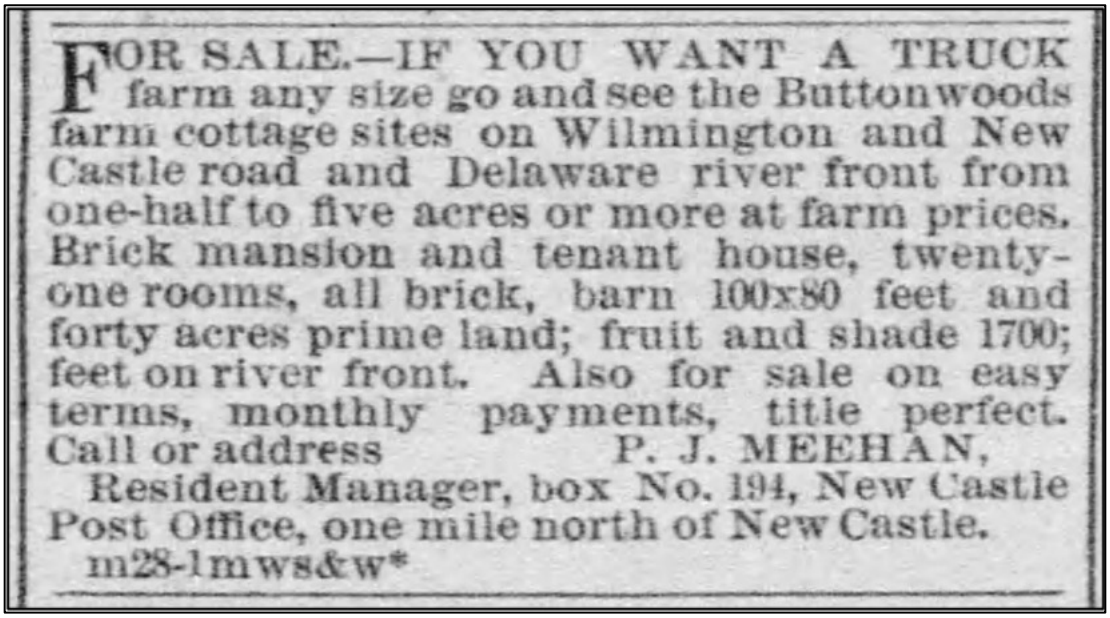
[160] "Holloway Terrace," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 13, 1916; "And Now for Building Operations," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 31, 1916.
[161] "Holloway Terrace," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 13, 1916.
[162] "Great Demand for Holloway Terrace Lots," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 9, 1916; "One of the Greatest Property Plans Ever Devised is Now Offered to You Here," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 5, 1916.
[163] "Forty Choice Lots Remain at Holloway Terrace," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 27, 1916.
[164] "Holloway Terrace," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 13, 1916.

By October 1921, there were about 50 dwellings constructed in the subdivision.[165] The community continued to grow through the early-twentieth century and was more fully developed by the mid-1950s, becoming the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor's largest early, pre-war platted subdivision, with much of the housing stock reflecting the early- to mid-twentieth century. Holloway Terrace exhibits a wide array of architectural forms and styles, including bungalows, foursquares, Minimal Traditionals, Cape Cods, and Colonials, as well as mid- to late-twentieth century infill of mainly ranches and modern "Neo Colonials." Most of the dwellings are detached, single-family homes, though there are also some semi-attached or twin homes present. Houses are predominantly of frame construction, with some brick examples throughout. Materials also vary widely, with houses clad in asbestos shingle, aluminum, and vinyl siding, while others exhibit stuccoed exteriors and brick or stone veneers. Because the subdivision's building lots were platted at the same time, parcel sizes are relatively consistent within a standard range, with lots measuring 100 feet deep and frontages typically 40, 60, or 80 feet wide, though a handful are smaller or larger. Most houses exhibit poured concrete or asphalt driveways to either side, and many one- or two-car garages are present.

Buttonwood

Initially forming around the turn of the twentieth century, Buttonwood (formally "Buttonwoods") is a historically Black community located within the city limits of New Castle, located at its northeastern extent.[166] The neighborhood's name derives from the adjacent historic Buttonwood estate and house, built c. 1830s by James Booth, Sr., a Delaware statesman and judge.[167] Though the precise origin of the settlement is unknown, to longtime residents of years past and present, the enclave likely sprung up around the Buttonwood farm as a community of agricultural workers.[168] A newspaper advertisement from the 1890s describes "Buttonwood farm cottage sites" for sale from one-half to five acres, ideal for truck farming.[169] Another later article confirms that the Buttonwood farm was "laid out into building lots and a number of them have been sold and built upon."[170]

[165] "Fire Equipment for Rose Hill," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), October 1, 1921.
[166] Bruce and Peter Dalleo, Heidi Harendza, and Catherine Hoffman Kaser, *Passing on the Story: African Americans in New Castle* (New Castle, DE: New Castle Historical Society, 2002), 35.
[167] Dalleo, Harendza, and Kaser, 36.
[168] Gilbert Pinkett, Joseph Pinkett, Jr. and Barbara (nee Pinkett) Hicks, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., and Catherine Morrissey, June 12, 2022. Interview notes archived at the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, Newark, Delaware.
[169] "For Sale," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), June 20, 1892.
[170] "He Sympathized—and His Way of Showing it Cost Brier Three Dollars," *The Sun* (Wilmington, DE), October 26, 1897.



FOR SALE.—IF YOU WANT A TRUCK farm any size go and see the Buttonwoods farm cottage sites on Wilmington and New Castle road and Delaware river front from one-half to five acres or more at farm prices. Brick mansion and tenant house, twenty-one rooms, all brick, barn 100x80 feet and forty acres prime land; fruit and shade 1700; feet on river front. Also for sale on easy terms, monthly payments, title perfect. Call or address P. J. MEEHAN, Resident Manager, box No. 194, New Castle Post Office, one mile north of New Castle. m28-1mws&w*

Figure 24. "Buttonwoods farm cottage sites" sales advertisement. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, June 20, 1892)

Buttonwood contains one main road, Buttonwood Avenue, which runs northwest-southeast from New Castle Avenue/Route 9, with several smaller side streets including Arbutus, Meehan, and Railroad Avenues as well as Lincoln Street. Buttonwood Avenue is bisected approximately halfway along its run by Penn Central railroad tracks. Historically bordered to the east by farmlands adjacent to the Delaware River, a large industrial park constructed during the mid- to late 1990s now occupies the eastern and southeastern portions of Buttonwood. The subdivision of Collins Park, developed during the 1940s, borders the community to the north, while the 1970s-built community of Jacquette Square is situated to the south. Buttonwood Park, operated by the City of New Castle and located at the southwest corner of Arbutus and Meehan Avenues, comprises a .16-acre parcel with playground equipment and some open space.

During the early-twentieth century, the Buttonwood area was rural, surrounded by large tracts of farmland. Some residents worked as truck farmers, hauling their produce by wagon to sell in the busy Wilmington markets.[171] Removed by approximately two miles from the core of New Castle, the community was self-sufficient, organizing Buttonwood African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1915 followed by Buttonwood School in 1919, to provide religious and educational centers close to home.[172] First established in part of the church building, a new purpose-built school was constructed in 1926 at 111 Buttonwood Avenue as part of the school rebuilding campaign

[171] "'A Nice Place' Eyes Change," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 30, 1992.
[172] Dalleo, Harendza, and Kaser, 43.

underway throughout the state, financed by industrialist and philanthropist Pierre S. du Pont through the Service Citizens of Delaware. In 1947, a new church building was also constructed at the southwest corner of Buttonwood and Meehan Avenues.[173] Additionally, at one time, there were two grocery stores in the neighborhood, one of which was called "George's," operated by George Pennington, at the corner of Arbutus and New Castle Avenues.[174] Established as a general store in the late 1920s, George's—a staple in the community—later became a self-service market and remained in business until the death of Mr. Pennington in the early 1970s.[175]

Figure 25. Buttonwood School, built in 1926 (and later expanded) as part of the Pierre S. du Pont-funded school rebuilding program through the Service Citizens of Delaware. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, December 2020)

[173] "Inventory of the Church Archives of Delaware," Works Progress Administration Historical Records Survey, (Wilmington, DE), 1940.
[174] "'A Nice Place' Eyes Change," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 30, 1992.
[175] "George Pennington Dies; Was Grocer," *Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 28, 1972.

Figure 26. Buttonwood African Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1947 at Buttonwood and Meehan Avenues. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Beginning in the 1940s with the construction of more than 700 single-family homes in Collins Park and intensifying into the 1950s with about 1,000 additional new homes in nearby Swanwyck and Castle Hills, severe storm-sewer flooding became a routine occurrence within Buttonwood, causing extensive damage to homes and streets—with residents reporting water at times as deep as two feet.[176] Buttonwood residents long fought for a resolution, seeking help from New Castle City Council, Levy Court, and local legislators.[177] The State Highway Department and associated engineers initially suggested that costs would be prohibitive to properly alleviate the issue, and that the flooded homes were worth less than the cost to fix the problem.[178] However, in the 1960s, the issue was remedied—though not entirely solved—with the repair, raising, and restoration of a dike through the area and addition of a sluice gate at the river to help address tidal flooding as well as a storm water drainage.[179]

[176] "Fund to Nip Floods Tops Homes' Cost," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 2, 1961.
[177] "Fund to Nip Floods" *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 2, 1961.
[178] "Floods No News to Buttonwood," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 14, 1962.
[179] "Legal: Bids-Proposals: Advertisements for Bids, *"The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), October 7, 1963.

During the 1970s, Buttonwood residents also successfully fought the City of New Castle when it proposed rezoning the area from *residential* to *open space and recreation* due to its situation in a low-lying, tidal area.[180]

Morning News Photo by Frank Payne

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE—Pooch in the foreground is dry compared with Buttonwood residents (in rear) forced to take to rowboats during flooding.

Floods No News To Buttonwood

Figure 27. Newspaper article clipping highlighting the extensive flooding in Buttonwood. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, March 14, 1962)

[180] "Buttonwood Residents Say Rezoning Stopped," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 6, 1976.

Buttonwood exhibits a wide array of architectural forms and styles, with houses built individually from its earliest settlement into the twenty-first century. Examples include early-twentieth century, one-and-a-half-story cottages and bungalows and two-story vernacular farmhouses, as well as multiple detached row house-type dwellings with narrow frontages, plus mid- and late-twentieth century Cape Cods, ranches, and two-story Colonials. The majority of homes in the community are located along Buttonwood Avenue. Most of the dwellings are also detached, single-family homes, though semi-attached homes are present. Several mid-to-late-twentieth century, two-story, frame double dwellings stand along the south side of Buttonwood Avenue, west of Railroad Avenue, as well as three one-story attached houses. At the western extent of Buttonwood Avenue, closest to New Castle Avenue, there are also eight pairs of two-story, semi-attached, frame dwellings (16 total), with one set built in 1990 and the others built between 2010 and 2015. Lot sizes vary greatly throughout the community and are irregularly platted, with some of the smallest lots measuring .11 acres while the largest total more than an acre. Street setbacks also vary, with the older housing stock tending to sit closer to the street with less yard space at the front elevation. Many lots are vacant. Poured concrete sidewalks run along the southern edge of Buttonwood Avenue. Most lots do not include garages, though some of the later-built houses incorporate a garage into the house plan.

Figure 28. Example of an early-twentieth century dwelling in Buttonwood. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 29. Example of early-twentieth century dwellings in Buttonwood. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 30. Example of an early-twentieth century dwelling in Buttonwood. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Minquadale

Minquadale, established in 1917, is bordered by the Christina River and I-495 to the north, U.S. Route 40/I-295 to the south, and accessed from and bisected by U.S. Route 13. While there is no direct entry to the community from Route 9, Minquadale is situated adjacent to the Route 9 corridor, neighbored to the southeast by Garfield Park, with McCullough Middle School situated at its southeastern extent. North of Route 13, "West Minquadale," further removed from Route 9, is accessed via W. Hazeldell Avenue and includes, from south to north: Irwin, Stanton, Cresson, Tyrone, Frazier, Altoona, Mifflin, Newport, and Erie Avenues, with Liberty Boulevard bisecting the avenues, and Maple Avenue running east of Liberty Boulevard between Stanton and Cresson Avenues. The northwestern section of Minquadale is set back from Route 13, with a large storage facility and New Castle County Police headquarters occupying land between the highway and the neighborhood. To its west are multiple industrial sites along Marsh Lane.

South of Route 13, "East Minquadale" exhibits three access roads, with entry from east to west via E. Hazeldell Avenue, Minquadale Boulevard, and Wildel Avenue. From north to south, its interior roads include Dover, Milford, Newark, Seaford, Lewes, Delmar, Harrington, Odessa, Camden, Felton, and Houston Streets. Additionally, Minquadale Village, a manufactured home community established c. 1958, is situated west of the southern section of the subdivision, with access solely via Delmar Street, and includes First through Eighth Streets running east-west. Minquadale Fire Company, founded in 1925, is located on E. Hazeldell Avenue and serves as a significant community hub.[181] To the west, extending to the junction of Routes 13 and 40, is Gracelawn Memorial Park, a large cemetery established in the 1930s. A small, Jewish burial ground, the Machzikey Hadas Cemetery, is also situated on a slice of land just north of Minquadale Village and accessed via Wildel Avenue. Several churches are also found within the community.

[181] "Company History," Minquadale Fire Company, https://mfc22.com/history (accessed April 5, 2023).

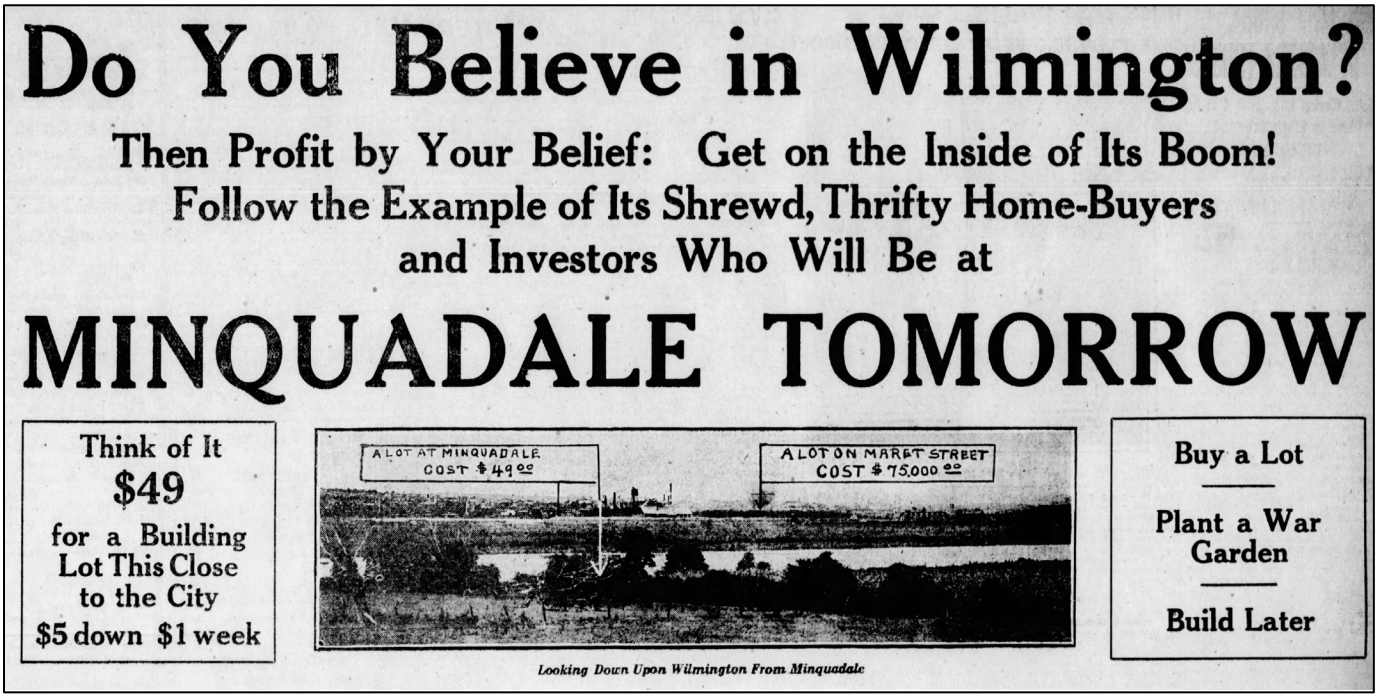


Figure 31. Early advertisement for building lots in Minquadale. (The Evening Journal, May 4, 1918)

In 1917, the J. W. Holloway Company acquired acreage located along the "State Road" (Route 13) from the former summer estate of Wilmington industrialist George G. Lobdell, inventor and manufacturer of railroad car parts and president of the Lobdell Car Wheel Company. Holloway Co. began platting building lots and opened the new subdivision for sale in August of that year, advertising "building lots and garden plots" for $49, with an easy payment plan "offering a unique chance to people who never owned real estate to secure it on small payments."[182] The development was described as "the highest point in the vicinity of Wilmington, healthy and dry," with "a very beautiful view of the city and the Delaware river" and in "easy reach of the trolleys."[183] A few dozen homes were constructed in Minquadale by 1926, with moderate development by 1937 and more fully built out by 1954, based on the earliest aerial imagery of the area. As a result, the housing stock in the subdivision reflects a variety of architectural forms and styles of the early- to mid-twentieth century, with a variety of mainly one-story, smaller cottages and bungalows, and Minimal Traditional and ranch forms, as well as significant later twentieth and early-twenty-first century infill and replacement. Lot sizes vary greatly throughout the community and are irregularly platted, with some of the smallest lots measuring .09 acres while the largest total more than a quarter-acre. Street setbacks also vary, with the older housing stock tending to sit closer to the street with less yard space at the front elevation.

[182] "Holloway Company Offers Attractive Building Lots at Low Prices," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 23, 1917.
[183] "Holloway Company Offers Attractive Building Lots at Low Prices," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 23, 1917.

Figure 32. Examples of early-twentieth century front-gable bungalows in Minquadale. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2023)

Figure 33. Example of an early-twentieth century, two-story, rusticated concrete block dwelling in Minquadale. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design)

Figure 34. Example of a mid-twentieth ranch dwelling in Minquadale. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2023)

During the early 1970s, amid growing environmental concerns, Minquadale residents successfully fought Allied Chemical corporation from converting a gravel pit in the neighborhood into a sludge dump. The community succeeded in another battle in 1980 against a commercial trucking company that was parking tanker trucks, which were transporting potentially toxic materials, within the residential zone. In 1989, residents were again victorious in a fight against Delaware Recyclable Products, adjacent to West Minquadale on Marsh Lane, when the company was mandated to stop draining leachate, a pollutant, into the sewer system.[184] During the same decades, the community also experienced growing racial tensions, as Minquadale saw the arrival of Black residents to the historically working-class, white community.[185]

[184] "Beating a Bad Rap," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 10, 1993.
[185] "Tolerance in Minquadale Improved, But Not Enough," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), September 4, 1989.

Zoning History of the Route 9 Corridor

Land use zoning was adopted slowly in northern New Castle County. The Delaware legislature had created the Regional Planning Commission of New Castle County in 1931 to develop a regional master plan for the development of land in the vicinity of Wilmington as well as create maps to identify roads, utilities, and parks.[186] In 1951, the Delaware General Assembly created the New Castle County Zoning Commission with an amendment to the state constitution.[187] Architect Samuel Homsey—a du Pont family member by marriage to Victorine du Pont—was appointed chair of the Zoning Commission.[188] After three years of preparing, the county officially adopted its zoning code—in effect in five hundreds, including New Castle Hundred—in September 1954, which "spelled out, for the first time, allowable uses for the ground of this northern end of the county suburban to Wilmington."[189] Prior to this, "there was no zoning to control or guide suburban development in New Castle County."[190] Instead, restrictive deed covenants enacted by private developers took the place of official public zoning. Among other restrictions, these governed the size and types of buildings allowed on a property, property setbacks, parcel size, use of land, and, not infrequently, the racial makeup of subdivisions.[191] Suburban growth, however, remained largely unregulated as the Regional Planning Commission and municipalities had little ability to enforce zoning recommendations until publication of the 1954 code.

During the New Castle County Zoning Commission's 1951 to 1954 planning process, organizations such as the Wilmington Real Estate Board, Inc., lobbied heavily against residential encroachment on industrial and commercial lands, hoping to maintain their access to vast money-making tracts, while representatives of residential developers argued for the opposite.[192] Homsey and the commissioners' sympathies lay with the industrialists: "Samuel Homsey, Chairman of the commission, said 'there has been too much encroachment on industrial property on the theory that the location of residential areas has some priority.'" He viewed this as outdated thinking and sought to preserve the value of industrial areas.[193] As enacted in 1954, preexisting land use was generally grandfathered in: "One thread running through it [the 1954 zoning code] all is 'present land use'—the zoning precept that gives first consideration to the character of an existing area whether agricultural or

[186] Chase, *Restrictive Deed Covenants*, 335-337.
[187] Chase, *Restrictive Deed Covenants*, 338; "New Castle County Wins Right to Form Zone Commission," *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, DE), June 6, 1951.
[188] "—And No Time to Lose!" *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, DE), September 20, 1951.
[189] "Zoning Here at Last," *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, DE), September 30, 1954; "Revised Zoning Code Published," *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, DE), November 21, 1956.
[190] Chase, *Suburbanization*, 7, 26-27.
[191] Chase, *Restrictive Deed Covenants*, 255; Chase, *Suburbanization*, 26-27.
[192] "Industrial Areas Retention Urged: Real Estate Board Fears Encroachment by Rapidly Growing Housing Projects," *The Morning News*, (Wilmington, DE), April 1, 1952.
[193] "Industrial Areas' Protection Among Zoning Board Aims," *The Morning News*, (Wilmington, DE), April 15, 1952.

residential, commercial or industrial."[194] This allowed for the continued presence of industrial and residential lands side by side.

Figure 35. 1954 aerial image of the study area, showing New Castle Avenue (Route 9) and the DuPont Highway (Route 13) south of the Christina River. Note that several of the subdivisions in the study area have been constructed / are under construction. (Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, 1954)

[194] "Zoning Here at Last," *The Morning News*, Wilmington, Delaware, Sept. 30, 1954; Chase, *Restrictive Deed Covenants*, 338-339.

By the time the Zoning Code of New Castle County was enacted in 1954, a great number of suburban developments had already been established along the Route 9 corridor adjacent to heavy industry. Earliest among these were Eden Park Gardens, Holloway Terrace, and Hamilton Park, established in 1906, 1916, and 1917, respectively, whose proximity to industrial land was intended to make worker housing convenient to nearby industry, much of which had been located where it was because of its nearness to Wilmington's port. On the east side of Route 9, Simonds Gardens, Mayview Manor, and Collins Park were also all initiated before the zoning ordinances and lie adjacent to industrial land.

Compounding preexisting problems, area master planning followed zoning: while the legislature had created New Castle County's Regional Planning Commission in 1931, the commission only completed its plan in 1958, well after zoning had been implemented. Ultimately, the plan called for land allocation that was similar to that already established in the zoning documents.[195] The unhealthy proximity of housing to industry was thus further codified.

As noted above, the development of land south of Wilmington along the Christina and Delaware Rivers for industrial and commercial use grew rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued during the first part of the twentieth century. In addition to the Wilmington Marine Terminal, some of the companies documented on a 1927 map were Eastern Malleable Iron Company, Pyrites Company (treating pyrite cinders), Lobdell Car Wheel Company, Triangle Agricultural Corporation (producing fertilizer), Bethlehem Chemical Company, and the J. Frank Darling Floor Covering Plant. Building materials companies were also located near the port.[196] Many companies remained in place alongside housing. Additionally, as companies came and went, the industrial zoning of the land persisted.

Pictured below and located on Christina Avenue, east of Eden Park Gardens and Hamilton Park and west of the Marine Terminal, the Pyrites Company was founded in 1916. As an iron ore refinery, the company released smoke into the air and arsenic into the soil until 1974, long after zoning precepts were implemented.[197]

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[195] Chase, *Restrictive Deed Covenants*, 335-339.
[196] See *Insurance Maps of Wilmington, Delaware*, Vol. 2 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1927), sheets 402, 416, 417, 418, 419.
[197] DNREC Project DE-1069, the Potts Property. See limited information on the site here: Ellen Dickey, Robin Tyler, and Terri Cole, "Watershed Approach to Toxics Assessment and Restoration (WATAR) Program: 2015 Progress Report, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)," 2015, 9, https://documents.dnrec.delaware.gov/dwhs/SIRB/Documents/WATAR_2015%20Progress%20Report.pdf (accessed June 30, 2021). On the founding of the Pyrites Company, see "Negotiations for Lobdell Land Closed: Thirty-five Acres on Christiana River Sold to A. D. Ledoux for $85,000, Plant May Be Built for Pyrites Company," *The Evening Journal*, (Wilmington, DE), March 6, 1916.

Figure 36. Aerial view of Pyrites Company in 1940, looking north toward Wilmington, located just west of the Wilmington Marine Terminal (now Port of Wilmington) along the Christina River, where Terminal Avenue meets Christina Avenue. (Hagley Museum and Library, 1940)

The Halby Superfund site sits nearby, occupying nine acres just west of the Port of Wilmington at Terminal Avenue and Pigeon Point Road. The southern three acres of the site was home to Halby Chemical Company from 1948 to 1980. During that time, the company released contaminated wastewater into an unlined holding area, from which it flowed into the Christina River, contaminating soil and groundwater in the area.[198] In addition to Halby, the entire nine-acre site was used for manufacturing and storage of chemicals from 1940 until 1995.[199]

[198] Environmental Protection Agency, "Halby Chemical Co. New Castle, DE, Cleanup Activities," United States Environmental Protection Agency (Environmental Protection Agency, October 20, 2017), https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Cleanup&id=0300125#bkground (accessed June 30, 2021).

[199] Environmental Protection Agency, "Superfund Sites in Reuse in Delaware," United States Environmental Protection Agency (Environmental Protection Agency), https://www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment/superfund-sites-reuse-delaware#halby (accessed June 30, 2021).

More than a dozen businesses currently operate on the site, which lies directly adjacent to both the Eden Park Gardens and Hamilton Park subdivisions.

The Pigeon Point Landfill, a 120-acre municipal waste dump, was located at the intersection of Lambson Lane and Pigeon Point Road, just to the east of Simonds Gardens, Rosegate, and Holloway Terrace. Until 1968, the Army Corps of Engineers deposited river dredge at the site. From 1968, it was operated by the City of Wilmington, then New Castle County, and then Delaware Solid Waste Authority until its closure in 1985. Until that time, the unlined landfill accepted hazardous wastes which seeped into ground water. It was evaluated for the Environmental Protection Agency's National Priority List in 1987 but fell short of superfund site designation.[200] After the site stopped accepting solid waste, it remained in use as a dump for power plant ash and sewer sludge.[201] As the Delaware Recycling Center, the DSWA maintains above-ground storage tanks on the site.

In 2004, over 250 Eden Park Gardens and Hamilton Park residents filed a lawsuit against approximately 30 area companies due to concerns over pollutants, including airborne dust and emissions. While the plaintiffs sought fair-market value for their properties, most "received a check for property damages, but a buyout did not occur because the neighborhoods did not achieve the required consensus."[202] Beginning in 2016, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) began closely investigating air quality in the area of Eden Park Gardens due to it being surrounded by multiple "industrial neighbors" and its residents noticing visible dust and questioning its source and content.[203] As a result of the study, air pollution levels were found to be "below state and federal air quality standards, with the exception of dust," with the three types of dust having the highest levels being related to concrete, soil, and vehicle tire/break wear.[204] Multiple control and mitigation measures have since been implemented to help combat the issues.

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[200] *NPL Site Narrative for Pigeon Point Landfill, New Castle, Delaware*, Federal Register Notice, January 22, 1987; status update October 4, 1989, https://semspub.epa.gov/work/HQ/183868.pdf (accessed June 30, 2021).
[201] "Delaware Solid Waste Authority Requests Permit Review for Pigeon Point Landfill," WHYY, May 23, 2011, https://whyy.org/articles/waste-authority-requests-permit-review-for-pigeon-point-landfill (accessed June 30, 2021).
[202] Sophia Schmidt, "Residents Living Among Industry Take County Survey on Environmental Perceptions, Relocation," *Delaware Public Media*, November 16, 2018.
[203] Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, "Eden Park Air Quality Monitoring Study: Monitoring Study Results and Dust Mitigation Recommendations," DNREC Division of Air Quality, June 2021, 2.
[204] "Eden Park Air Quality Monitoring Study," 4.

4. Evaluating Subdivisions for Historical Significance & Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places

Suburbs and Suburban Dwellings and the National Register of Historic Places

To some observers, post-World War II subdivisions are not easily recognized as "historic" properties or landscapes due to their comparatively young age, homogeneity, and, often, vast scale. However, residential subdivisions are cultural landscapes that embody historical trends, design movements, and social and cultural norms at the time of their creation. Due to the age of the majority of subdivisions nationally (built prior to 1972), they are considered potentially significant resources that are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The National Register program is the official list of the nation's properties worthy of historic preservation, first authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Register documents the importance of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and landscapes significant in our shared prehistory and history. These listed properties are intended to represent the major patterns in our local, state, and national experience. In an effort to help guide the selection of historic properties included in the National Register, the NPS has developed Criteria for Evaluation.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the historic resource(s)—districts, sites, buildings, structures, and landscapes—must be at least 50 years old (or older) and have significance to one (or more) of the following criteria:

A. Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.[205]

[205] National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," 1990, revised 1991, 1995, and 1997, 2.

The primary property type of this context is the self-contained, planned residential **subdivision** and would be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district. For a district to qualify for the National Register, it must meet at least one of the above four criteria for evaluation and also retain **historic integrity** of features necessary to convey its significance. Therefore, the physical layout of the subdivision as well as the physical fabric of the individual dwellings (their form, shape, fenestration, materials, etc.) as the neighborhood exists today must match the criteria, theme, and context selected to communicate the importance of the residential subdivision.

To be significant under this historic context, as laid out below, the self-contained, planned residential subdivision will be eligible for listing under Criterion A or C, or a combination of A and C, for embodying distinctive trends and architectural characteristics that are defined in this historic context. For instance, a subdivision might be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A because:

- It reflects the important trend in the development and growth outwards from the City of Wilmington to previously undeveloped farm tracts
- It is representative of racial segregation and/or integration in post-World War II housing
- It is associated with the heritage of social, racial, or ethnic groups

The suburban neighborhoods could also be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C:

- If the architecture in the residential suburb is of a distinctive method of construction
- If the architecture in the residential suburb is a of a distinctive form or style

It is unlikely that any subdivisions in the study area are eligible under Criterion B—as a neighborhood directly associated with the life and/or career of an individual who made importation contributions to the history of the area. It is important to note that a Criterion B argument is possible to argue for residential suburbs in the study area; however, this Criterion was not researched as part of this study.

Evaluation under Criterion Consideration G

Criterion Consideration G states that properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years may qualify for National Register listing if they are an integral part of a historic district that meets the criteria or if they have exceptional importance.[206] Due to the age of the residential suburbs contained within the geographic and temporal parameters of the context, it is unlikely that Criterion Consideration G would need to be applied. There are residential suburbs in the Route 9 corridor that are less than 50 years old (built after 1972); however, it is not recommended that these be evaluated under this context.

The Subdivision as Historic Resource

The most basic property type associated with this historic context is that of the residential subdivision itself. A subdivision as studied in this historic context is a residential community located near a core city but outside of its jurisdictional boundaries. It is usually distant from the urban center (not easily walkable) but often linked to the city by employment, social networks, and social institutions and/or transportation networks.[207]

During the period between 1945 and 1970, as was the case with earlier suburbanization trends, the development of residential subdivisions typically involved a series of steps, beginning with the acquisition of land—usually a sizable tract—for conversion to high-density residential use, usually converting it from a previous use, which was often agricultural. Whether an entire former farmstead or just a smaller strip of land, the parcel was subdivided into individual building lots intended for the construction of detached or semi-detached homes. Urban utilities and amenities were then planned and executed to varying degrees within the subdivision, including streets, curbing, sidewalks, parks, playgrounds, streetlights, and services like water, electricity, gas, and sewer.

With the division of building parcels complete and the subdivision's infrastructure in place, developers would either sell individual lots to prospective residents who would hire a contractor to build their own house (especially common during the first half of the twentieth century), or the developers would engage builder-contractors to construct many houses on speculation, in order to sell finished homes to prospective residents. The initial developer/subdivider was often not the builder-contractor who actually constructed the dwellings. After 1940, it was far less common for developers to sell lots to prospective builders who would construct their own houses, and instead, developers typically engaged in large-scale, mass-construction projects for which they controlled the

[206] National Park Service, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," 41.
[207] Susan Mulchahey Chase, David L. Ames, Rebecca J. Siders, *Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1880-1950+/-: A Historic Context* (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware, 1992), 16.

type and style of the new residences. For neighborhoods with detached, single-family residences, developers, in partnerships with architects and builder-contractors, would typically design a limited range of house styles from which perspective buyers could choose—sometimes from model houses constructed early in the process for potential customers to tour.

Evaluating Physical Characteristics of Subdivisions

Located along the Route 9 corridor are two primary types of subdivisions: *non-programmatic residential developments* and *developer platted and designed residential subdivisions*.

Non-Programmatic Residential Developments

Non-programmatic residential developments can be planned or unplanned neighborhoods—growing along developer subdivided streets or previously platted city or county streets. However, while the infrastructure of a neighborhood might be constructed by a developer, what is characteristic of these neighborhoods is the lack of developer-built dwellings and other structures. Essentially, individual owners purchased and improved lots (from a developer of municipal entity), often times over decades. This resulted in a mix of styles, forms, and plans in non-programmatic residential developments. Additionally, multiple lots could be purchased, resulting in non-standard parcel sizes, with varying building arrangements and setbacks. These types of developments can also have a mixture of uses contained within the development including small commercial, religious, or even educational buildings.

Along the Route 9 corridor, Hamilton Park, Eden Park Gardens, Holloway Terrace, and Buttonwood, as well as adjacent Minquadale, are all examples of non-programmatic residential subdivisions. These five subdivisions were initially developed before 1945 and are discussed briefly in the background history section of this context. Some of the individual dwellings in each of these neighborhoods were constructed during this context's timeframe; however, they are not included in this discussion due to the fact that the main property type in this context is subdivisions. There is one non-programmatic residential subdivision identified in this study area that met the temporal limits of this study, Rizzo Avenue.

Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivisions

Developer platted and designed residential subdivisions are of tracts of land subdivided by real estate speculators and developers that possess consistent architectural design features and generally harmonious building types. These initial developers were responsible for subdividing lots, constructing street networks, and providing utility arrangements, and they often established other programmatic aesthetic choices like setbacks, placement of

driveways, etc. These neighborhoods developed alongside the earlier non-programmatic subdivisions in the Route 9 corridor, in a patchwork pattern as developers bought different tracts of land and subdivided them.

All of the subdivisions (excluding Rizzo Avenue) in this historic context are considered developer platted and designed residential subdivisions. This includes Oakmont, Dunleith, Rose Hill Gardens, Garfield Park, Mayview Manor, Simonds Gardens, Rosegate, Collins Park, Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace, and Castle Hills. While these subdivisions differ architecturally from one another, they were all platted and designed by developers with a strong cohesion of architecture and building form.

Figure 37. Example of the homogeneity of architecture found in a developer platted and designed residential suburb (Mayview Manor). (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Characteristics of Subdivisions

Both types of residential subdivisions located along the Route 9 corridor should be evaluated using the same six physical characteristics, including size, circulation, access, housing type, architectural diversity, and community amenities. What follows is a discussion of these characteristics:

1) Size:
   Whether subdivisions are **small** (one to two streets) or **large** (three or more streets)

2) Circulation:
   Whether street patterns are **straight** (gridiron) or **curvilinear** (curving/sweeping), which greatly affects the visual character of the subdivision

3) Access:
   Whether the development is **closed/self-contained** (single entrance) or **open/circulating** (multiple entrances, from different public roadways)

4) Housing Type:
   Whether houses are **detached** (free-standing), **attached** (doubles/twins, row houses, etc.), or a **mixture** of multiple housing types

5) Architectural Diversity:
   Whether residences are **homogenous** in their general design (almost entirely standardized), **heterogeneous** (mixed styles), or **non-programmatic** (random or determined by individual builders)

6) Community Amenities:
   Whether the original neighborhood design included **residences only** or incorporated any **community amenities** such as parks, playgrounds, athletic fields/courts, or community buildings; and, further, if these amenities were available for residents only or allowed public access

Other physical characteristics of these subdivisions also influence their appearance and character and are addressed below in separate sections for each subdivision. These include factors such as the parcel size of individual properties, setback distance of dwellings from the primary roadway, and the distance between

residences. Parking infrastructure, whether including garages, driveways, off-street spaces, or on-street parking, also affects the circulation patterns and visual character of subdivisions. Their character is further defined by other neighborhood infrastructure such as sidewalks, curbing, and streetlights.

Significance Assessment: Non-Programmatic Residential Subdivisions

To be considered eligible for listing in the National Register as a non-programmatic residential subdivision, the development must have been platted during the time frame of this context (1945-1970) with most of the dwellings also constructed during this time. Under Criterion A, the neighborhood must convey an association with local, state, or national historic events outside of developer-lead suburbanization in New Castle County. Under Criterion A, these neighborhoods could be potentially eligible due to their associations with segregation and integration efforts in housing, or eligible for their association with industry along the Christina and Delaware Rivers. Due to the patchwork nature of development in these types of residential subdivisions, it is unlikely that any would be eligible for their association with an important developer or land speculator (Criterion B). Since these types of developments are unplanned architecturally, lacking distinctive and often repetitive architectural features strongly associated with suburban development, they are not eligible under Criterion C without collectively possessing high artistic value.

Significance Assessment: Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivisions

Developer platted and designed residential subdivisions are the most common representation of suburbanization along the Route 9 corridor and generally in New Castle County, Delaware. To be considered eligible for listing, these types of subdivisions, platted and designed during the time frame of this context (1945-1970), should retain streetscape design, setbacks, original building scale, and in general architectural design characteristics of the original construction period (form, materials, massing, fenestration, etc.). Developer platted and designed residential subdivisions considered under Criterion A must demonstrate strong associations with social and demographic changes in New Castle County, such as early examples of Blacks or other ethnic groups establishing themselves in suburbs, or even as an example of a residential development targeted to a specific demographic. Developer platted and designed residential subdivisions considered under Criterion C must embody a characteristic distinctive of a type or method of construction. Potential examples include unique construction methods or unique dwelling forms. Since single developers typically created the architectural program for entire neighborhoods, often prioritizing profits over artistic value, it is unlikely any subdivision will reflect examples of high-style architecture. Award-winning designed neighborhoods would also be eligible for listing under Criterion

C as an example of innovation in community planning. Eligible examples under Criterion C will demonstrate high integrity, with clear historical associations (Criterion A) conveyed by the buildings and larger site design elements.

The Suburban Dwelling as Historic Resource

Within the larger physical units of each residential subdivision, individual properties—especially residences—make up the smallest physical units for analysis. Even within subdivisions, the approach to constructing individual dwellings could vary widely. During the early-twentieth century, it was common for developers to lay out a street pattern, subdivide individual building lots, and sell those lots to individual builders or prospective homeowners who would construct whatever style of home they wished. During the post-World War II era, it was much more common for developers, or a partnering construction company, to determine the type and style (or styles) of houses for the entire subdivision. This might include a single, repeating architectural style, or include a range of alternating styles for visual variety. Buyers could sometimes choose the style of home they wished to purchase, whether already built based on the construction plans or, alternatively, on a lot personally selected by the buyers.

The types and styles of housing in suburban subdivisions tended to diverge from dwellings typically found in cities, especially in the sense that detached, single-family houses were much more common than in core urban environments, especially those on large parcels with expansive lawns. However, semi-attached and attached housing types also sometimes carried into suburban subdivisions, especially as apartments or townhouses.

Architectural styles during the period of this context (1945-1970) were moving strongly towards modern or Contemporary expressions, while still often retaining elements of traditional architecture. Contemporary trends such as the ranch and split-level were new housing forms that became increasingly popular during this period. Broad variations of these forms emerged in each region of the county. In Delaware, the architectural preference for Early American style houses (with Colonial-inspired elements) dominated subdivision construction throughout this period. While some Contemporary and modern subdivisions were constructed in Delaware, these styles were more commonly employed in commercial, industrial, office, and ecclesiastical spaces.

Construction methods also changed substantially after World War II, especially in subdivisions where housing was mass-produced. New materials (steel and wood panel construction) combined with balloon and platform framing utilizing pre-cut lumber fueled the rapid expansion of suburban growth. New siding materials like

aluminum, asbestos shingle, and vinyl were also utilized, along with simulated masonry products like Perma-Stone and Formstone on newly constructed houses. Windows were largely aluminum instead of wood. Metal was also used to produce doors. The rapid pace of construction, combined with new house forms and building materials, dramatically changed the look of residential houses constructed after World War II.

Evaluating Physical Characteristics of Dwellings

Along the Route 9 corridor are three primary types of dwellings: detached, single-family homes; semi-detached, two-family homes; and attached, multi-family homes. The last category has two subtypes: one-story ranch type houses and multi-story townhouses. The *type* of suburban dwelling is the organizing feature for dwellings in this context.

Many of the examples of houses found within suburban neighborhoods in the Route 9 corridor do not have strong architectural styles; however, there are identifiable architectural trends. Examples of the Contemporary and Early American styles exist in the study area as well as typical suburban house forms like Cape Cod, Minimal Traditional, ranch, and split-level. Contained here is a discussion of the *types* of dwellings as well as a brief discussion of the styles and forms of architecture found in the study area.

Types:

Detached, Single-Family Dwellings

Detached, single-family dwellings make up the overwhelming majority of residential suburban properties constructed in this period across the United States. Single-family dwellings as a property type feature one free-standing dwelling, located on a single parcel of land, often with yards (front, back, two sides) surrounding the dwelling. During the post-war period, these dwellings are oriented to the roadway. Additionally, these types of houses often have front-driveways, if not carports or garages. In some examples, these houses have no dedicated parking spaces, with only on-street parking. However, these examples are rare and usually constructed earlier during the chronological period. These detached, single-family dwellings, when situated in a larger suburban grouping, often possess a similar architectural character to neighboring properties.

Semi-Detached Dwellings

Semi-detached, two-family dwellings (doubles or twins) are a unit of two dwellings, located on two parcels of land, often with yards on three sides (front, rear, and one side yard), which share an interior party wall with one other unit. These dwellings have individual entrances from the outside, directly into the family spaces (i.e., no shared hallways like in apartment buildings). Like detached, single-family homes, these two-family dwellings are also oriented to the roadway—having front driveways, if not carports or garages. Like detached dwellings, when situated in a subdivision, they possess similar architectural characteristics to the neighboring properties.

Attached, Three- or More Family Dwellings

Attached, multi-family dwellings are a unit of three or more dwellings, clustered together on small individually owned lots. Except for end units, these dwellings only have small front and rear yards—end units have an additional side yard. These multi-family units typically share two attached walls and have individual entrances. Like other types of housing options, these multi-family dwellings are also oriented towards the road, with front driveways. These types of dwellings did not have incorporated garages during the study period. Multi-family units feature a variety of architectural treatments; sometimes the units appear homogenous, while other units have varying setbacks with a variety of façade treatments.

There are two subtypes to this category found in the study area: *one-story ranch-type houses* and *multi-story townhouses*. These dwelling subtypes share the above-described features; however, they differ in height.

Architectural Styles:

The Contemporary Style

Contemporary architecture flourished in the United States during the years following World War II, breaking ties with traditional precedents and aesthetics and especially eschewing unnecessary ornamentation in favor of a more universal approach to design. In an effort to transcend superficial styles and trends, the Modernist mode of architecture aimed to rise above temporary fashions and modes, seeking honest forms that reflected more natural arrangements of space. This often meant designing from the inside out, with form following function. Contemporary houses were typically asymmetrical in design and usually emphasized the horizontal—with low-pitched roofs, widely overhanging eaves, exposed beams or rafters, recessed or obscured doorways, and long, unbroken horizontal lines. Even in subdivisions with modest-sized lots, these houses were frequently sited to blend in with their surroundings, often set back from the road and positioned amid mature trees, rock outcroppings, and knolls.

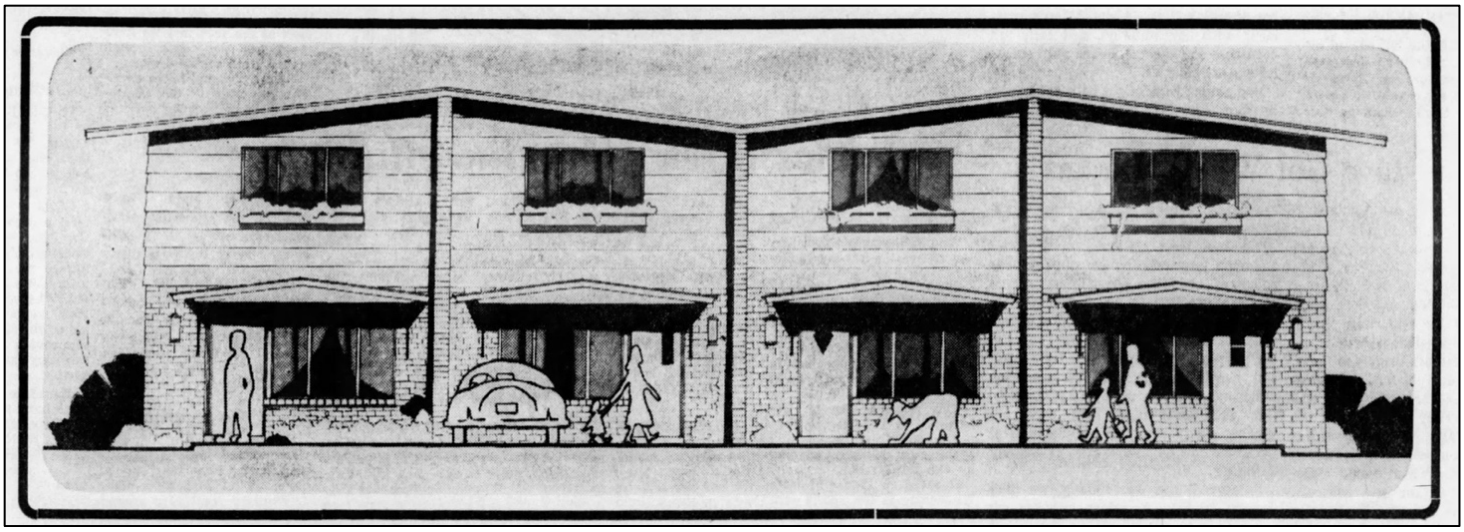

Figure 38. 1961 Advertisement for Rosegate featuring multi-family dwellings constructed in the Contemporary style. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, April 22, 1961)

The Early American Style[208]

Though most scholarship about the Colonial Revival movement has focused on the period between 1876 and 1940, the revival of early American themes in architecture and the decorative arts did not cease with World War II—and, in fact, it experienced a widespread resurgence and popularization during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. While many people associate post-World War II America with Modernist and Contemporary design movements, which consciously broke *away* from such earlier American traditions, the aesthetic fascination with early American history—and its designs and icons—never truly faded. Instead, it seems to have surged to new heights during the 1960s and 1970s as a more popular, and more widespread, movement among middle-class and even working-class Americans.

The Early American movement found one of its most widespread expressions in the new suburban developments exploding across the American landscape in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. As during the Colonial Revival of the early-twentieth century, developers and other house builders after World War II often selected "colonial" styles in their sprawling new suburban subdivisions. Characteristics of houses built in these post-war subdivisions vary widely, depending on the time, region, and price point—but there are several highly typical features of new "early American" houses. Many traditional or "Colonial" houses were two stories in height, clad in brick or wood veneers (or new materials meant to resemble wood siding), with symmetrical (or at least regular) fenestration, traditional looking sash windows, and shutters flanking those windows. Builders frequently turned to small and inexpensive decorative icons that would easily signal the "early American" style of their newly constructed houses. Two of the most common touches included the application of an aluminum American eagle sculpture above the garage door and/or entryways or installing storm doors featuring decorative silhouettes of an eagle or an old-fashioned horse and carriage.

[208] Adapted from a draft article on the Early American style by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., and Catherine Morrissey. A draft copy can be found at the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design.

Figure 39. A semi-detached, two-family home, constructed with Early American style detailing. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Architectural Forms:

Cape Cod

The Cape Cod house form dates to seventeenth century New England. These houses are generally low, broad, and a single story in height. Of frame construction, they historically featured a symmetrical façade with a central chimney and a moderately steep side-gabled roof. Capes traditionally featured little stylistic ornamentation. Cape Cods were re-popularized in the 1930s during the Colonial Revival period. Colonial Revival Capes were usually of frame construction, symmetrical, one-and-a-half stories in height, three bays in width, and often featured front-gabled dormers. During the 1950s, the Cape Cod form was revived again. These small, compact houses were ideal for developer platted and designed neighborhoods. The Cape Cod form is also associated and sometimes used interchangeably with the Minimal Traditional form during the study time period. Capes are often taller than their Minimal Traditional counterparts.

Figure 40. A Cape Cod house found in Mayview Manor. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Minimal Traditional

Minimal Traditional houses can be found throughout the United States, becoming popular during World War II (early 1940s). These houses are often associated with the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), as they complied to the size and design guidelines put forth by the agency. Some occurrences of Minimal Traditional houses were constructed adjacent to war-time production plants to alleviate the need for local housing for workers. After the war, private developers utilized the form to create large "instant communities" filled with these houses. Often, Minimal Traditional homes are located on large tracts of land (converted from farm fields) along new highways outside of American cities.

This form is typified by its small size (often less than 1,000 square feet) and scale. These houses are generally only one story in height, rectangular, or L-shape in plan, with minimal architectural detail. By the 1950s, this house form was supplanted in popularity by the ranch house.[209]

Figure 41. Example of a Minimal Traditional dwelling in Dunleith. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

[209] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), 586-595.

Ranch

The ranch form, which originated in southern California in the mid-1930s, became popular nationally directly following World War II.[210] This form was one of the popular small house types built under FHA guidelines.[211] Identifying features of the ranch include its broad one-story form and low-pitched roof (without dormers). Ranches are usually low to the ground and typically exhibit an off-centered front entry. Garages were often attached to the main façade of the dwelling, extending the dwelling's long, low shape. Other common features of the ranch house are picture windows and recessed entries.[212] Ranches were built in many popular styles in the post-war period, including contemporary and Early American. Additionally, the exterior facades of ranches were clad in a variety of materials including wood clapboard, vinyl siding, aluminum siding, asbestos shingle, and brick and stone veneers.

Figure 42. Example of a ranch house in Swanwyck. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

[210] McAlester, 602.
[211] McAlester, 602
[212] McAlester, 597-602.

Front-Gabled Ranches

The front-gabled ranch is a subtype of the ranch house form, also popular in the early- and mid-twentieth century. Typically, one or one-and-a-half-story in height and two to three bays in width, these dwellings often feature a medium-pitched roof oriented towards the road. Most commonly of clapboard-covered frame construction, these houses could also be of concrete masonry construction with stucco or brick veneers. Like typical ranches and other Minimal Traditional house forms, front-gabled ranches feature little architectural ornamentation—their key character-defining feature is the orientation of the roof ridge line to the road.

Figure 43. A front-gabled ranch located in Dunleith. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Split-Level Form

Split-level houses were popular nationally from 1950 to 1975. The defining characteristic of a split-level house is the floor plan: these houses have two or more separate interior levels that are staggered from one another by partial flights of stairs. The floor plan of split-levels segregated interior functions, often locating the private bedrooms on the highest level of the homes. There are two subtypes of split-levels: bi-level splits (with two interior split levels) and tri-level splits (with three interior split levels). The footprints of these houses were compact on building lots, especially compared to ranches, thus more total units could be constructed in residential suburbs. Split-levels were ideally suited for uneven terrain, as they could be sited into hillsides. Many split-levels have garages built into the lowest level of these compact forms.[213]

Figure 44. A tri-level split house located in Overview Gardens. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

[213] McAlester, 612-615.

Mobile Home / Trailer

The first mobile home parks were established in the United States in the 1950s, as an outgrowth of automobile camps or travel parks which were established for vacationers in the 1920s and 1930s.[214] Unlike vacation-oriented travel parks, housing-oriented parks offered an affordable housing option for many Americans. House purchasers bought a mobile home or trailer outright and rented a house lot and paid utilities to a mobile home park.[215] Mobile home parks often had one (sometimes gated) entrance, with trailers situated onto a system of interior roadways. Common mobile home park features would often include a recreation building, playground, swimming pool, manager's office, and perimeter fencing.[216]

Not much has been written about the architecture of trailers from the 1940s through 1960s. However, they were prefabricated, one-story in height, and "single-wide" (one room in width). Entry doors were typically placed along a longitudinal elevation, sometimes under porches or other overhangs. The short side of the trailers often featured a single window, which in some trailers was a bay window or a multi-light window, comprising much of the wall surface. Early trailers were movable (or semi-movable), featuring trailer hitches on one of the short ends of the building. These early trailers were also often clad in aluminum siding.

Figure 45. Example of a mobile home located in Mobile Home Village. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

[214] SurveyLA: Los Angeles Historic Resource Survey, "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1880-1980, Trailer Parks and Mobile Home Parks, 1920-1969," Prepared for the City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, January 2016, 2-6.
[215] SurveyLA, 13.
[216] SurveyLA, 13-14.

5. History, Development, and Physical Characteristics of Individual Subdivisions in New Castle Avenue / Route 9 Corridor

This chapter contains a discussion of the history, the development, and the physical characteristics of each of the seven neighborhoods that meet the criteria for inclusion in this context. Built between 1947 and 1961, the subdivisions along the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor exhibit a varied mix of detached, single-family dwellings; semi-detached, two-family dwellings; and attached, multi-family dwellings. Post-war suburbanization is often associated with single-family homes, but the study of New Castle Avenue displays a more complex and diverse range of housing options.

As initially planned and marketed, some of the subdivisions were exclusively white, while others were exclusively Black, and one subdivision (Rosegate) was marketed as "integrated." Overtime, many of the dwellings in these exclusively white neighborhoods were sold to Black families.

The individual suburban neighborhoods share many commonalities, both in design of the developments themselves as well as in the design of the dwellings. Ranches and townhouses are the dominant housing forms constructed in the subdivisions. Nearly all single-family homes are one story in height, and most semi-detached and attached houses are constructed with two stories. Most houses are constructed without basements, and few are built with garages or carports. The omission of basements and garages or carports likely reflects cost saving measures employed by the developers. When dwellings exhibit any architectural style, they are designed in either Contemporary or Early American styles.

Developments North of I-295, East of Route 9

Rizzo Avenue

Built 1950s

History

Rizzo Avenue, located on the eastern side of New Castle Avenue/Route 9, southwest of its intersection with Rogers Road, comprises a small, private subdivision established by the Rizzo family in the 1950s, generally

referred to as "the Compound" or "the Avenue" by the family.[217] Joseph (Giuseppe) Rizzo, Sr., emigrated from Italy in 1913 and soon after settled in Wilmington, eventually working as a mason, a trade in which he had apprenticed in his homeland. After moving his growing family to a farm property in the Rose Hill area in the 1930s, Rizzo founded his own construction firm in the early 1940s with his sons, forming Joseph Rizzo & Sons Construction Company. Having established the business at Rose Hill, in 1949, Rizzo also parceled portions of his land along what would come to be formally called Rizzo Avenue, to provide lots for his adult children to build their own family homes, in the spirit of recreating a sense of an Italian village.[218] Rizzo & Sons specialized in masonry work including stone, brick, and concrete, as well as terra cotta and tile, and the buildings within the small subdivision reflect the construction work of Rizzo & Sons. The company remains in operation today.

Physical Characteristics of Rizzo Avenue

Rizzo Avenue is a small subdivision—the smallest in the study area—comprising a single, linear street. Access to the residential community is closed, as it only has a single point of ingress and egress from New Castle Avenue/Route 9. Each dwelling is situated on its own lot, ranging in size from .17 to .23 acres. An apartment building, addressed as 3134 New Castle Avenue, is set on a lot of .67 acres, while the commercial property for Rizzo & Sons Co., addressed as 13 Rizzo Avenue, comprises two lots, one of .69 acres that is part of the original Rizzo subdivision and the other being 16.11 acres, which is a later addition to the commercial grounds of Joseph Rizzo & Sons Co. A mixed-material masonry wall extends along the southern perimeter of the subdivision, dividing it from its commercial neighbor to the south. The wall, built during the mid-twentieth century and extended further west during the 1980s, is comprised mainly of muted red brick set in running bond, with regularly spaced brick piers, each topped with a moulded concrete platform and concrete ball. Some portions of the wall also utilize tan and brown bricks. Three courses of rectangular concrete tiles are set vertically above the running bond brick, and above the tile are three courses of square concrete shadow blocks. The wall gradually steps up as the grade rises from east to west.

At the western extent of Rizzo Avenue, fronting New Castle Avenue/Route 9, is a large, two-and-a-half-story, red brick apartment building that originally served as the farmhouse for the agricultural lands that Joseph Rizzo, Sr., purchased in the 1930s. As his family grew, Rizzo continually expanded the original house and later converted

[217] Marc Rizzo, Anthony (Tony) Rizzo, and Ben Rizzo, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 3, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[218] "Joseph Rizzo Sr. Dies at 74; Stonemason Became Contractor," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 6, 1970.

it into apartment units, which were then rented to individuals outside of the Rizzo family.[219] Another two-story, two-unit, brick building, the core of which may possibly predate the Rizzos' tenure, stands to the rear (northeast) of the apartment building and is addressed as 3136 New Castle Avenue, adjacent to the dwelling at 3 Rizzo Avenue. A one-and-a-half-story, rusticated concrete block bungalow, built c. 1930 and addressed as 3138 New Castle Avenue, is also situated to the north of the apartment building. The three buildings are all on the same .67-acre parcel of land.

At the eastern extent of Rizzo Avenue, the company constructed a one-story masonry shop and office c. 1950 and greatly expanded it over the years, bringing it to two stories in height and appending multiple one-story, red brick additions.[220] The main building as well as another two-story building, addressed as 14 Rizzo Avenue, are stuccoed with ornamental brick corner quoining and brick-trimmed window bays. The basement of the shop includes a wine cellar, which was established in the 1950s but during the 1970s became more of a gathering place for both family and company foremen, who would visit after work.[221] Multiple other commercial buildings were added over the years, all concentrated at the eastern extent of Rizzo Avenue and forming a rough U-shape with a central courtyard, finished with pavers and a circular brick water fountain. A large storage yard extends north from the commercial buildings, with a private drive for work vehicles accessing Aldrich Lane and from there, New Castle Avenue/Route 9.

Six detached, single-family dwellings were constructed by the Rizzos during the 1950s along Rizzo Avenue, mainly on its northern side. Two of the houses have since been converted into multi-family homes. The architecture of the small subdivision is heterogenous: all of the houses are of masonry construction but exhibit different forms and styles that highlight the family trade. Each house is unique from the others, with various materials utilized not only between individual dwellings but within each building, including different colors of brick, stone, and ornamental concrete forms known as "shadow blocks," especially popular in the 1950s through 1970s. One commonality among the dwellings is the use of large picture or bow windows, also particularly popular during the mid-twentieth century.

[219] Marc Rizzo, Anthony (Tony) Rizzo, and Ben Rizzo, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 3, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[220] "School Addition Permit is Issued," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), March 30, 1950.
[221] Marc Rizzo, Anthony (Tony) Rizzo, and Ben Rizzo, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 3, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

A one-story, red brick ranch at 3 Rizzo Avenue is faced with tan and grey stone, while its one-and-a-half-story Cape Cod neighbor at 5 Rizzo Avenue is clad all around in angular grey stone. A two-story Colonial at 7 Rizzo Avenue features yellow and buff colored brick on its façade, with brick laid in an ornamental pattern in its front-facing cross-gable, vertical striping in brick on its enclosed front portico, and glass blocks serving as sidelights at its primary entry. A Minimal Traditional red brick dwelling stands at 9 Rizzo Avenue, faced in rounded stones colored in tans and browns, while a unique two-story Colonial, covered in ashlar-type grey stone on its façade, is situated at 11 Rizzo Avenue and exhibits a centrally placed arched parapet extending above the roofline, set over an arched window, with a one-story, Classically inspired portico below.

Standing on the southern side of the street, the two-and-a-half-story Colonial now addressed as 6-8 Rizzo Avenue was the home of Joe Rizzo, Sr. The brick building is faced in ashlar-type grey stone and exhibits three front-gabled dormers on the front roof slope, with a prominent one-story, stone portico at one of its two primary entries. While its western elevation is comprised of red brick, its eastern elevation exhibits yellow brick construction. A one-story section projects from the eastern elevation of the building and once served as the family "recreational room," a community gathering place for the Rizzos during the mid-twentieth century. This section stands adjacent to the family's in-ground swimming pool, further to the east, which is surrounded by low concrete walls faced with rounded stones in tans and browns, with a modern metal fence set atop the walls.

Rizzo Avenue is unique among the subdivisions studied in the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor, as is it was created as a private, family neighborhood. Like other post-war communities within this corridor, it exhibits several features of auto-dependent subdivisions. Each house as well as the apartment building has its own driveway, which comprise a variety of materials from one to another including asphalt, poured concrete, bricks, and pavers. Two of the dwellings incorporate into the main block a one-car garage, while a third exhibits a one-car garage connected via a breezeway. The houses likewise feature pathways from the front doors to Rizzo Avenue, constructed of mixed materials including bricks, poured concrete, flagstone, and pavers. Though there is not a sidewalk along Rizzo Avenue, which itself is covered in asphalt, there is standard poured concrete curbing. Each dwelling also has its own individual yard, surrounding it on four sides (except for 3 Rizzo Avenue, due to the large driveway for the apartment building on its eastern side.)

Figure 46. Example of a stone masonry house on Rizzo Avenue. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 47. Example of a stone masonry house on Rizzo Avenue. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 48. Example of a brick masonry house on Rizzo Avenue. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 49. Part of Rizzo & Sons Construction Company complex, Rizzo Avenue. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Rosegate

Built 1961

History

Rosegate was developed by Sidney Paul, head of Paul Built Homes, on the model of Oakmont. The first development in New Castle County to take advantage of government mortgage insurance to finance construction of modest-income housing, Paul explained in a 1961 editorial that his goal was to provide housing for those

displaced by urban renewal and highway projects. Buyers affected by the forced relocation were eligible for federal mortgage loans that required no down payment and had an extended 40-year term.[222]

Tentative plans for the 15-acre development were approved in November 1960, and the first homes were opened for viewing in April 1961.[223] An advertisement in May 1962 announced that the last section of the development was under construction.[224] Offered for around $10,000, these 16-foot homes were designed with two levels, as opposed to Oakmont's three, and had three bedrooms and a bathroom. Central air conditioning was a featured selling point.[225] They were built in rows containing between four and 12 units.[226] A total of 194 homes were planned around a ring road with a park located inside the central loop. Part of the outer ring bordered on industrial developments to the east. Explicitly integrated, the builder hoped to attract both Black and white buyers.[227]

Unlike the award-winning Oakmont row houses, Rosegate properties were not in high demand. Having met with limited open-market success, in 1963, Sidney Paul offered up for purchase 64 housing units in Rosegate to the Wilmington Housing Authority. At the time, the Housing Authority had been looking to increase its public housing stock and to provide public housing outside of the city.[228] The purchase was opposed by the Housing Authority's vice chairwoman, Inez Mercer, who feared the concentration of poverty in the neighborhood would create a "ghetto" and further hamper integration in the expressly integrated neighborhood, that the housing was not properly outfitted to serve as public housing, and that it was too far from the center of Wilmington for the Authority to administer effectively.[229] Ultimately, the Housing Authority opted not to buy housing in Rosegate.[230] Several ads as early as 1964 demonstrate that many new Rosegate homes were being offered as rentals.[231] As with Oakmont, the other expressly integrated, affordable, privately developed subdivision, "few, if any, whites" were living there in 1964.[232]

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[222] Sidney Paul, "Urban Renewal Important Part of Builders' Work," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), September 23, 1961.
[223] "Staff to Study Tentative Plats," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 9, 1960; "Integrated Community Opens Off Rogers Road," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 22, 1961.
[224] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 5, 1962.
[225] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 5, 1962.
[226] One exception is a corner lot with a building holding four units on Rose Lane.
[227] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 22, 1961; *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 19, 1964.
[228] "Rosegate Purchase Opposed: Housing Official Fears Ghetto," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 14, 1963; Boffey, "Only a Handful of Suburbs Have Integrated Housing," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 19, 1964.
[229] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 14, 1963.
[230] "WHA Won't Buy Rosegate Homes," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), September 26, 1963.
[231] See, among many others, ads in *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), on April 30, 1964, and May 21, 1964.
[232] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 19, 1964.

ROSE GATE

DON'T PAY A LANDLORD BE ONE!

AN INTEGRATED COMMUNITY OF FINE HOMES

THE ROSE OF ROSEGATE

AS LITTLE AS $14 A WEEK

AND IT'S ALL YOURS!!

$9850 TOTAL COST OF A BRAND NEW HOME IN ROSEGATE

NO DOWN PAYMENT NO SETTLEMENT CHARGES REQUIRED

Features of Rosegate...

THREE LARGE BEDROOMS • LIVING ROOM WITH PANORAMIC WINDOW • DINING ROOM BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE A FULL DINING ROOM SET • KITCHEN WITH BREAKFAST AREA AND RANGE AND BEAUTIFUL FRUITWOOD CABINETS AND FLORIDA GLASS SLIDING DOORS LEADING TO A PATIO • TILE BATH WITH BUILT IN VANITY • OFF THE KITCHEN IS YOUR UTILITY ROOM WITH LAUNDRY TRAY AND ENOUGH SPACE FOR WASHER AND DRYER AND STORAGE • GARDEN STORAGE OFF THE PATIO • 25/32 HARDWOOD FLOORS THRUOUT • FULLY INSULATED ROOFS • HEATED BY CHRYSLER AIR TEMP • A 30 GALLON HOT WATER HEATER • 100 AMP SERVICE • PAINTED WALLS THRUOUT • BRICK CONSTRUCTION FOR LOW MAINTENANCE • FHA INSPECTIONS • COUNTY APPROVED SEWERS • STATE MAINTAINED ROADS • SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS • PARK AND RECREATIONAL AREAS • FULLY LANDSCAPED.

Why Rosegate...

FREE ROSES TO THE LADIES

ROSEGATE WILL BE THE FIRST 221 FHA DEVELOPMENT IN NEW CASTLE COUNTY. THE 221 PROGRAM IS BASICALLY FOR THE FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN OR ARE GOING TO BE RELOCATED BECAUSE OF URBAN RENEWAL SUCH AS POPLAR STREET PROJECT "A" OR CONDEMNATION BY CITY OR COUNTY OR HIGHWAY CONDEMNATIONS OR OVER INCOMED PUBLIC HOUSING. THERE ARE ALSO PROVISIONS FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT APPLY TO THE ABOVE.

LOCATION...Drive Out New Castle Ave. to Sign on Left One Block Past Roger Road

Samples Open Monday Thru Saturday 1 to 5 P. M. Sunday 1 to 8 P. M.

HURST and WALTERS...Selling Agents

600 TATNALL STREET – OL 2-4053 OL 6-2595

THE FOLLOWING CRAFTSMEN HELPED BUILD ROSEGATE

CORRIDORI ROOFING
203 Ayre Ave., Newport, Del.
WY 4-2553
ROOFING & SIDING

CONSTRUCTION SERVICE
1501A N. Broom Street
OL 5-5904
INSULATION & WEATHERSTRIPPING

ARISTOCRAT KITCHENS
1120 Leggett Avenue
New York 59, New York
KITCHEN CABINETS

AUTOMATIC EQUIP. CO
1 "A" Street
OL 4-8874
HEATING

C. BURRIS & SONS
3408 Lancaster Pike
WY 4-6992
BRICK

CONTINENTAL CUSTOM FLOORS
1422 Du Pont Highway
EA 8-2728
RESILEN FLOORS

DOMINIC DIFEBO
2210 W. 9th St.
OL 6-9311
HARDWOOD FLOORS

RAMBO & SYMONDS
11 Oak Ave., Elsmere, Del.
WY 4-6985
DRYWALL

BEN LINCOLN
1003 Baltimore Ave., Elsmere Manor
WY 4-2370
SHRUBBERY

WASHAM ELECTRIC
Newark, Delaware
EN 8-4140
ELECTRICAL

CHARLES HILL
3007 Claymont St.
PO 4-7503
CARPENTRY

REAL TILE CO.
1415 Chestnut St.
OL 8-2680
CERAMIC TILE

COUNTY PLBG.
115 Valley Rd., Richardson Park
OL 4-4456
PLUMBING

VITALO BROS.
Rogers Road
OL 4-3109
STREETS & SEWER

PAINTER WATER CO.
Spring City, Pa.
WATER

WILMINGTON SASH AND DOOR
"A" and French Sts.
OL 6-3181
MILLWORK

ROBERT TRIVETTS
617 Main Street
Stanton, Delaware
PAINTING

HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF DELAWARE

Paul Built
QUALITY AND ORIGINALITY
BUILDERS BY BIRTH

Figure 50. Advertisement for the new Rosegate neighborhood. (*The News Journal,* Wilmington, DE, April 22, 1961)

DON'T PAY A LANDLORD
. . . BE ONE!

AN OPEN LETTER to families who have been relocated by code enforcement, urban renewal, highway enforcement or any other type of governmental action.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE IN A BRAND NEW HOME? . . . Located on New Castle Avenue . . . monthly payments approximately $64.00 (including taxes, insurance, and settlement charges).

NO DOWN PAYMENT . . . three bedrooms, bath, dining room, living room, kitchen, inside utility room, outside storage space, patio with glass sliding doors . . . kitchen has built-in range with complete kitchen equipment. Fully landscaped . . . all the standards of modern living.

Integrated Community of fine homes.

If you are interested please write "ROSEGATE," 2240 Grubb Road or call SY-8-9576 and talk to Casey.

DON'T PAY A LANDLORD...BE ONE!

Figure 51. Advertisement for the new Rosegate development referencing the displacement of Wilmington residents by the failed urban renewal project "Poplar Street Project A." *(The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, Nov. 7, 1960)

Oral History Recollections

Allee Watson, a longtime resident of Rosegate, purchased his home in 1963 at the age of 22. Watson's reason for moving to Rosegate was to be close to his parents, who purchased their own home in the community in late 1961 or early 1962, relocating from a rental home in the Kenton / Smyrna area of Delaware. His father worked at a local steel mill in New Castle and chose a house in Rosegate over some others he considered on Governor Printz Boulevard, ultimately because it was closer to his work.[233]

Regarding the demographics of his neighborhood in the 1960s, Watson recalled that many of Rosegate's residents had moved there from southern states like Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia because job opportunities were plentiful in the region. On the availability of jobs in Wilmington, Watson shared his dad's old saying: "If you couldn't find a job in Wilmington, Delaware, you couldn't find a job anywhere." As a result of the favorable job opportunities, many Rosegate residents did well financially and were employed as schoolteachers, steelworkers, or by companies like DuPont, General Motors, Chrysler, and West Virginia Pulp and Paper.[234] Watson also remembers that, early on, Rosegate was never really integrated, remaining almost entirely Black even through the 1980s. Watson and another longtime resident, Bobby Benjamin, who resided in Rosegate from 1965 to 1990, recalled that the early residents of Rosegate were a mix of ages—including young parents with young children as well as people in their 50s with adult children.[235] Unlike other neighborhoods along the Route 9 corridor, a large number of units in Rosegate remained unoccupied into the 1970s. Watson recalled, "A lot of people were interested [in buying], but then a lot of them backed out for one reason or another." He speculated it was potentially due to the lack of financing available to people and went on to point out that his own house sat vacant until he purchased it in 1963. Ultimately, many of these vacant units were rented, not sold.

Initially, Rosegate did not have its own community focal point. Instead, spaces for community and recreation were located outside of Rosegate at other places along the Route 9 corridor like Eden Park, Surratte Park in Dunleith, Rose Hill Community Center, Coleman Memorial United Methodist Church, and a nightclub near the entrance to the neighborhood (which burned in a fire at some point).[236] It wasn't until the 1990s that a small

[233] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[234] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[235] Bobby Benjamin, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, March 21, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[236] Bobby Benjamin, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, March 21, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

playground was built in Rosegate by the civic association, which allowed for a more localized community gathering place.[237]

Like many other neighborhoods along the Route 9 corridor, there was a strong sense of community in the 1960s and 1970s. Benjamin recalled that Rosegate was "as much about the neighbors" as anything else, that living there was all about the neighborliness and community.[238] Watson recalled that while sense of community pride was initially high, it waned for two reasons. First, those who could afford it purchased larger properties in Simonds Gardens, Garfield Park, and other neighborhoods as they opened to Black buyers.[239] Secondly, many of the original owners who stayed in Rosegate passed away in the 1980s.[240] After their passing, their homes were often converted into rental units, ultimately driving up the number of rental units to as high as three-fourths of the community.[241]

Two challenges about the design of the neighborhood were mentioned by Watson and Benjamin. Both noted that parking was a big problem for Rosegate. The short, shared driveways often only accommodated one car per unit, but most families had two and sometimes three cars.[242] Watson stated that the civic association helped get two designated parking lots for overflow cars through New Castle County.[243] Another design challenge for Rosegate was that the development was initially constructed without streetlights. Watson recalled the civic association petitioning New Castle County to install streetlights in the early 1960s, which were ultimately added in 1965.[244]

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[237] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[238] Bobby Benjamin, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, March 21, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[239] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 17, 2021, interview notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[240] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[241] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[242] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 17, 2021, interview notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware; Bobby Benjamin, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, March 21, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[243] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[244] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr. and Catherine Morrissey, January 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

Physical Characteristics of Rosegate

Rosegate is a small, developer platted and designed residential subdivision featuring attached, multi-family dwellings, located east of New Castle Avenue, south of Revis Avenue, north of Maple Avenue, and west of the Simonds Garden subdivision. The access to Rosegate is considered closed, as it is primarily accessed from New Castle Avenue. A short connector road attaches Rosegate to the non-programmatic single street subdivision along Revis Avenue, but this is not considered a main access point. There are two primary streets in Rosegate, Rose Lane and Thorn Lane, which form the main loop of the curvilinear subdivision, with one small cul-de-sac, Thorn Court, appended to Thorn Lane. Rosegate is comprised of 189 housing units, all located on their own individual parcels. On average, the lots are .03 to .04 acres; however, some corner lots are as large as .14 acres. The typical lot size is about 16 by 102 feet. Rosegate is without sidewalks, and the community was built without many amenities. Long-time resident Allee Watson recalled that there were no streetlights when the neighborhood was developed—but were later installed around 1965.[245] Additionally, the Civic Association was responsible for installing more parking spaces for residents as well as the development of Rosegate Park, both occurring in later decades.[246]

The houses of Rosegate are all examples of attached, multi-family dwellings, of the subtype multi-story townhouses. The architectural cohesion of Rosegate is homogenous, as only one house form exists, and all houses were constructed in the Contemporary style. All of the townhouses are two stories in height and two bays wide. The first floor features a stretcher bond brick veneer, while the second floor is clad in vinyl siding. The houses are of frame construction, and a brick firewall (visible on the exterior) separates each individual unit. Like many other subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor, these houses were constructed on a slab foundation and do not have basements. As built, the houses were without any front, side, or rear projections. Each home was built with a front-gabled porch overhang. While all of the housing units were constructed to be the same, the number of attached units varies. The smallest number of attached housing units is four, while the largest stretch of attached townhouses is 12.

Besides the strong unification of form and construction materials, the houses of Rosegate all share similar stylistic ornamentation reflective of the Contemporary style. Each individual townhouse has a single-pitched roof that

[245] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 17, 2021, interview notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[246] Allee Watson, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 17, 2021, interview notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

when combined in a row create shallow gable roofs with overhanging eaves. The front elevation of each unit features a large band of windows, instead of traditional double-hung sash windows. Additionally, each townhouse has its own low-pitched, front-gabled porch overhang supported by hairpin metal brackets. These porch rooflines imitate the shallow rooflines of the townhouses. None of the typical ornamental features associated with the Early American style are present in Rosegate, like shutters, house eagles, etc. Since the houses in Rosegate stand two stories in height, the interior square footage is greater than in some of the other subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor. Each housing unit as built featured 1,025 square feet and seven rooms: a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, three bedrooms, and a bathroom.

As designed and platted, Rosegate features some landscape features associated with the post-war automobile-oriented suburbs. Each house has its own poured concrete driveway immediately in front of the house and on average are large enough to accommodate just one vehicle. Additional parking was later created by the Rosegate Civic Association to accommodate more vehicles. As a result of the driveway dominating the front yard, most houses do not have any green space in front. Since a majority of these houses are attached on two sides, most homes have only a back yard.

Figure 52. Attached townhouses in Rosegate, showing many houses with their original fenestration and porches. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 53. Four attached townhouses in Rosegate, all with the original porch overhangs. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 54. Example of the attached, two-story townhouses in Rosegate, showing strong architectural cohesion and one house with an enclosed porch addition (fourth from left). (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Simonds Gardens

Built 1951-1952

History

Planning for the Simonds Gardens development was underway by 1949. The Regional Planning Commission for New Castle County gave final approval for the layout of the 30-acre subdivision in September 1949 and again in

May 1950.[247] Plans were for 150 lots to be developed into a total of 226 dwelling units by F. A. Collins of Collins Garden, Inc., builders. These were constructed as attached, one-story, ranch-style dwellings with brick fronts, platted in rows of two to eight with staggered facades, and were seemingly unique for the area.[248] Frontage for most was just under 34 feet, with more generous corner lots. The narrower lots provided for ample front and back yards.

The modest three-bedroom dwellings were offered for $8,200. Among the highlighted selling points were a large utility room, modern appliances, glass-front kitchen cabinets, and yards that were "fully planted and landscaped."[249] General Electric brand oil burners were also among the advertised features of the homes. Indeed, oil tanks still stand prominently at the front of many.[250] Marketed heavily to (white) veterans, "Korean war veterans quickly bought the development's 22 homes in 1951 and 1952."[251]

Sewer extension and heavy truck traffic through the subdivision during the construction of the Delaware Memorial Bridge south of Simonds Gardens and Holloway Terrace, a project that began in 1949, damaged roads through the neighborhoods. This necessitated major repairs, which the state agreed to pay for in 1952.[252] The construction traffic was likely a regular reminder to nearby residents of interstate building projects and the industrial use of the land to the east of Simonds Gardens.

As white Simonds Gardens residents experienced increased economic status, many moved out of the development and away from the nearby industrial activity. Construction of the neighboring Rosegate subdivision—integrated in name but overwhelmingly Black-owned—in the early 1960s accelerated the flight of white owners from Simonds Gardens during that decade. When the first Black family moved into Simonds Gardens in 1967, this only furthered white flight from the neighborhood.[253] Allee Watson, a longtime resident of Rosegate, recalled this mass exodus of white residents from Simonds Gardens as Black buyers began moving into homes there in the

[247] "Tentative Plat OK'd for Rosehill Gardens," The *Morning News* (Wilmington, Delaware), Sept. 16, 1949; "Home Association Urged," *The News Journal*, (Wilmington, DE), May 19, 1950.
[248] An article on the incorporation of the Simonds Garden Civic Corporation confirms that the planned 226 homes were built: "Simonds Garden to Secure Charter," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 9, 1952.
[249] See the Simonds Gardens advertisement in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 2, 1950.
[250] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 2, 1950.
[251] Murray Dubin, "Rebuilding to Begin in Simonds Gardens," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, PA), February 17, 1974.
[252] "State to Repair Terrace Streets," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 26, 1952; "Two Suburbs Protest Mire: Holloway Terrace, Mayview Manor Ask State and County to Fix Roads," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 30, 1952.
[253] Murray Dubin, "Rebuilding to Begin in Simonds Gardens," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, PA), February 17, 1974; Allison Mack, "Source of Pride: Simonds Gardens Residents Want Good Things for their Home—and Stick Together to Succeed," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 24, 1994.

late 1960s. He recounted the 1967 burning of a large cross in the front yard of his friends, some of the earliest Black buyers in Simonds Gardens.[254] Hate-filled, racist literature was also strewn around the cross. While the homes were marketed to white buyers initially, by 1974, 60 percent of the 847 Simonds Gardens residents were Black.[255]

Figure 55. Advertisement for new brick homes in Simonds Gardens. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, September 2, 1950)

[254] Oral history interview with Allee Watson, June 17, 2021, Michael Emmons, interviewer; "Cross Burned South of City," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 2, 1967.
[255] Dubin, "Rebuilding."

A New Castle County program initiated in 1973 and concluded in 1979 sought to rehabilitate dilapidated, abandoned, and boarded homes in Simonds Gardens and Rosegate and then offer them as affordable rentals with the option to buy after a year.[256] The program renovated or demolished 64 homes between the two subdivisions. At the time, residents complained about environmental conditions in the area and the nearby Pigeon Point Landfill.[257] More than two decades later, in 1998, concerned Simonds Gardens neighbors still reported deteriorating homes there.[258]

Special to The Inquirer / KEITH MEYERS

With the help of county funds for community improvement, a house in Simonds Garden is refurbished by a private contractor

Figure 56. Anita DiBartolomeo, "A Suburb Looks for a Renaissance." (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, PA, August 5, 1979)

[256] Dubin, "Rebuilding;"; Larry Nagengast, "Counting Housing Authority Fixes and Sells Eyesores," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 18, 1976; Anita DiBartolomeo, "A Suburb Looks for a Renaissance," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, PA), August 5, 1979.

[257] DiBartolomeo, "Renaissance." On the landfill, which accepted various hazardous wastes and was closed in 1985, see, https://semspub.epa.gov/work/HQ/183868.pdf.

[258] Edward L. Kenney, "Neighbors Want New Castle County to Take Action," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 11, 1998.

Physical Characteristics of Simonds Gardens

Simonds Gardens is a large, developer platted and designed residential subdivision featuring attached, multi-family dwellings, located west of New Castle Avenue, north of Lambson Lane and Mayview Manor, southeast of the Rosegate subdivision, and west of Harbor View Drive. The access into Simonds Gardens is considered closed—the subdivision can only be accessed from Lambson Lane. Simonds Drive is a one-directional ingress into the neighborhood, with Parker Place serving as the one-directional egress out of Simonds Gardens. The development is composed of eight slightly curving streets—Simonds Drive, Abbott Road, Bentley Road, Cahalan Road, Dallas Road, Sheridan Drive, Pilgrim Road, and Parker Place. Simonds Gardens is comprised of 218 houses, all located on individual parcels. On average, the parcels are .07 to .08 acres. However, the corner lots are larger, with the largest individual lot comprising .22 acres. The entire neighborhood of Simonds Gardens features poured concrete sidewalks, with poured concrete walkways up to most of the front entrances. Simonds Gardens was built without any additional amenities, but the proximity to Rose Hill School was advertised as a feature associated with the development. Simonds Gardens Park, comprising 5.94 acres, was developed during the late-twentieth century and is operated by New Castle County Parks and Recreation. It features a baseball diamond, basketball court, playground, open space, and parking.

The architecture is an example of attached, multi-family dwellings, constructed as one-story ranch type houses, a unique property type along the Route 9 corridor if not within New Castle County as a whole. In fact, in 2000, architectural historian Robin Krawitz noted the unusual form of dwelling "not found [elsewhere] in Delaware."[259] Overall, the architectural cohesion of Simonds Gardens is homogenous, as only one house form exists, and all the ranches display similar ornamentation, fenestration, and construction materials. To break up the even façade planes, houses are set forward or back from one another, creating a stepped façade. All of the houses are one story in height, and most of them feature four bays (W-W-Dbl W-D or D-Dbl W-W-W), though some front elevations are narrower and feature only three bays (W-W-D or D-W-W). The front facades are covered in stretcher bond brick veneers, while the side elevations of the end units are stucco covered, with brick quoining wrapping around from the front elevations. The houses are of masonry construction and like many other residential developments along the Route 9 corridor were constructed on slab foundations without basements.

The houses constructed in Simonds Gardens, like other Minimal Traditional houses associated with FHA/VA programs, were small, with most comprising 1,025 square feet of living space. The interior of the houses featured

[259] Robin Krawitz, "N10163 Simonds Gardens Subdivision," Environmental Review and Compliance Evaluation Form for National Register Eligibility: Architectural Resources, September 11, 2000.

seven rooms: a living room, a utility room, a kitchen, three bedrooms, and a bathroom. There appears to be no variation of the interior plans, as all were advertised as the same square footage and number and types of rooms. As constructed, the houses had minimal ornamentation besides the exterior brick veneer. Some of the interior units feature a shared pedimented front porch overhang, though many of the end units lack a similar architectural feature. Another ornamental feature of these houses are brick windowsills at the front façades. Outside of these few features, the houses had no architectural ornamentation as constructed.

As designed and platted, Simonds Gardens features few landscape features associated with automobile-oriented suburbs built during the post-World War II period. The subdivision does not feature accommodations for cars—there are no driveways, parking spaces, carports, or garages at any of the houses as originally constructed. The lack of these purpose-built features and structures was likely a cost saving measure by the developers. If any properties today exhibit the above features, they were added later by homeowners. Additionally, walkways span from the front door to the sidewalk; some interior units share a sidewalk, while each end unit has its own sidewalk. Lastly, while each house has its own individual yard, interior units have only front and back yards, while end units have front, back, and single side yards.

Figure 57. Example of a large stretch of one-story, attached ranch houses located in Simonds Gardens. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 58. Example of two interior units, without a porch overhang, and shared walkway to the two separate front doors. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 59. Example of two interior units, with the original porch overhang and shared walkway to the two separate front doors. Note the interior units are set back from the two units flanking either side. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 60. Example of two interior units, with the original porch overhang and shared walkway to the two separate front doors. Note the interior units are set forward from the two units flanking either side. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Mayview Manor

Built 1947

History

Plans to build 100 detached houses in the Mayview Manor subdivision received tentative approval in 1946, conditional on improved street connections and drainage plans. John (Jack) V. Ryan, Jr., who was later involved in construction of the Rose Hill Gardens development, was the project's contractor.[260] Permits for the first five

[260] "$483,158.44 Water Receipts Set Record," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), February 13, 1947.

bungalow-type homes were granted in March 1947, and they were advertised for sale in May of that year.[261] Houses were offered for sale as they became available and featured basements and large lots. These were one-story, Minimal Traditional "bungalows," which had between two and four bedrooms and were priced starting around $8,000. A brick market building with upstairs apartments in the neighborhood at Hillview Avenue and 6th Street was also offered for sale in 1949 and became the neighborhood grocery store by 1951.[262] The houses were marketed for their modernity, value, and proximity to Rose Hill School.[263] Financing for veterans is mentioned in sales ads and suggests that they were among the target buyers. There is no overt mention of race in advertisements or deeds, a signal that the development was intended for white buyers.

Streets in Mayview Manor were torn up by truck traffic during the building of the Delaware Memorial Bridge beginning in 1949 and by the extension of sewer lines into the area, jeopardizing neighborhood bus access.[264] Residents voted in favor of a bond to pave neighborhood roads in 1955, perhaps enacting repairs not covered by the state or county.[265] Industrial truck traffic along Lambson Lane remained a problem in 2019, when the state legislature enacted a law meant to curb it.[266]

[261] "Permits Issued for 17 Homes: Rolling Park Will Get Six Single Dwellings; Five at Mayview Manor," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware), March 22, 1947; *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 12, 1947.
[262] See advertisement in *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 7, 1949. As early as 1951, this was the home of Wilson's Fairlawn Grocery Store. See, "Auxiliary Plans Harvest Party," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 20, 1951; and an employment classified noting the address of the store in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 26, 1955.
[263] Now the Rose Hill Community Center. See, for example, advertisements in *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 30, 1947; June 11, 1947; May 12, 1947.
[264] "Two Suburbs Protest Mire: Holloway Terrace, Mayview Manor Ask State and County to Fix Roads," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 30, 1952. On the sewer project, see *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), February 13, 1947.
[265] "Paving Bonds Voted at Mayview Manor," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 10, 1955.
[266] Sophia Schmidt, "New Law Provides Tool for Crackdown on Illegal Truck Traffic," *Delaware Public Media*, August 16, 2019, https://www.delawarepublic.org/post/new-law-provides-tool-crackdown-illegal-truck-traffic (accessed June 23, 2021).

MAYVIEW MANOR

5

NEW BUNGALOWS

$7,950

Living room, large dinette, modern kitchen, 2 bedrooms, congo tile bathroom with shower, ample closets, h. a. oil heat, full high cellar, space for recreation room, laundry tubs. Large lot, city water, gas and electric.

Mayview Manor is a new development, adjoining New Castle Pike, adjacent to Rose Hill Grade School. Good transportation.

E. F. EDELBROCK, Broker

PHONE 91-4532.

MAYVIEW MANOR

AT ROSE HILL SCHOOL

$8,500.

3 new bungalows, 5 rooms and bath, full sized cellar, laundry trays, hardwood floors, linoleum in kitchen, dinette and bath, window shades. Immediate possession. GIs can buy with $500 down payment.

JOHN V. RYAN, JR.,

PHONE 3-0234

Five New Bungalows

5 rooms and bath, in Mayview Manor, beside Rose Hill School. Lot size 50x125. Possession two weeks. Small down payment for veterans.

JOHN V. RYAN, JR.—PH. 3-0234.

Figure 61. Advertisements for new "bungalows" in Mayview Manor. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, December 30, 1947; June 11, 1947; May 12, 1947)

Physical Characteristics of Mayview Manor

Mayview Manor was the first of the post-World War II developer platted and designed residential subdivisions constructed along this section of the Route 9 corridor. In total, 69 detached, single-family houses were constructed in Mayview Manor beginning in 1947. The small-scale subdivision is only located along three roads—Lambson Lane, Hillview Avenue, and West Hillview Avenue. The access to the subdivision is open, as it can be accessed from New Castle Avenue and Lambson Lane as well as 6th Street, which connects the development to neighboring Holloway Terrace. The two roads are slightly curved, with Hillview Avenue (the larger of the two streets) curving around the rear of the present-day Rose Hill Community Center. Besides its proximity to the former Rose Hill School (now community center), the subdivision features no community amenities of any kind. The single-family houses are all located on their own lots, which on average comprise about .14 to .15 acres. The corner lots are larger, ranging from .30 to .48 acres.

The architecture of the detached, single-family homes in Mayview Manor is heterogenous. Three house forms exist in Mayview Manor. The different housing forms in Mayview Manor are three- or four-bay ranches, three-bay gable-and-wing ranches, and three- or four-bay Cape Cod dwellings. Despite the variety of forms and fenestration patterns, all of the houses in Mayview Manor are rectangular in form, as originally constructed. Most

of the houses are one story in height and of frame construction. These houses feature full, continuous basements.[267] The exteriors are clad in a variety of materials including asbestos shingle, vinyl, and brick veneer. Many of the houses in Mayview Manor appear to have been resided since original construction.

The houses in Mayview Manor typified building traditions associated with the FHA/VA loan programs, namely that they were small, simple, rectangular dwellings. There are two dominant house sizes in Mayview Manor: a 672 square foot home and a 780 square foot home. The interiors featured five rooms and a full bath—advertisements from 1947 state that each house had a kitchen, "large" dinette, a living room, and two bedrooms. Typical of small FHA-backed homes, many of the Mayview Manor houses feature little stylistic ornamentation. While many of the houses feature front porches today, only the Cape Cod and the gable-and-wing ranches were constructed with a porch of any kind. The rest of the extant porches are likely additive features by the homeowners. Due to the small size of these homes as originally constructed, many now include additions, greatly increasing the amount of indoor living space.

Mayview Manor is an early example of a single-family, detached house subdivision and exhibits several features of auto-dependent subdivisions. Each house has its own poured concrete driveway located on either side of the dwelling. As originally constructed, the houses had no attached or freestanding carports or garages. The lack of these purpose-built car features was likely a cost saving measure executed the developers, as these houses were specifically designed to be low-cost. Any carports or garages were constructed after the suburb was originally developed. Additionally, each house has its own dedicated poured concrete walkway from the front door to the street, with sidewalks running along Hillview Avenue and Lambson Lane. Lastly, each house has its own individual yard, surrounding it on all four sides.

[267] "Mayview Manor," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 11, 1947.

Figure 62. An example of a four-bay, Minimal Traditional ranch house. This form and size of house was typical of designs that complied with early FHA guidelines. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 63. Above is a three-bay, Minimal Traditional ranch house. Instead of having four bays, two windows are combined into a single window feature. Both the three- and four-bay ranches have 780 square feet of living space. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 64. An example of the four-bay ranch with Early American detailing including brick veneer, louvered shutters, and scallop-edge screen door replete with horse and carriage silhouette. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 65. Only two gable-and-wing ranch houses were constructed in Mayview Manor, as seen above. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 66. Example of the Cape Cod form house in Mayview Manor. This house form is almost exclusively located on Lambson Lane and the only type to feature a second level. (Google Earth, 2012)

Figure 67. Above is an example of a dormer-less variety of the Cape Cod house form in Mayview Manor. Note the second story window visible on the gable end. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Developments North of I-295, West of Route 9

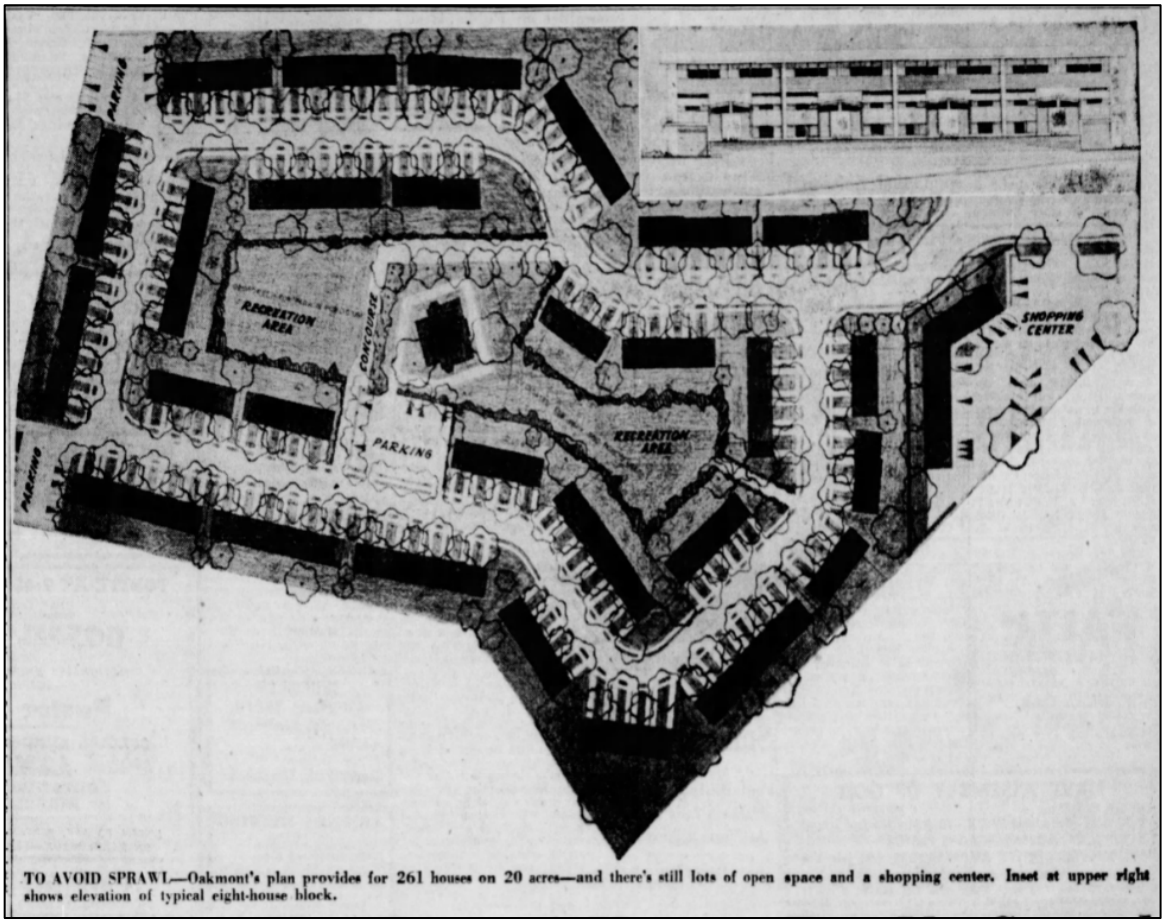
Oakmont

Built 1959

History

In 1959, Leon Weiner and his firm Franklin Associates announced their intention to build affordable, attached housing without racial restrictions, specifically for low-income buyers. Oakmont would be located on a 20-acre

plot of land adjacent to Dunleith on the west side of New Castle Avenue.[268] The first Oakmont models opened for public viewing in the summer of 1959, with a total of 261 units planned. Each building span held between five and 12 attached homes and came in 16- and 18-foot wide models, with individual units selling for $1,200 and up. The attached houses had between three and five bedrooms, and most had two bathrooms. The buildings were designed with three levels, including a walkout lower level. The subdivision was designed in a ring around a large open area to provide recreational space for the community and with a shopping center at the entrance to the subdivision.[269] Without any racial restrictions, the development was intended for lower-income buyers who were not eligible for public housing but who also lacked sufficient resources to buy detached, single-family dwellings with comparable spatial arrangements.[270]



TO AVOID SPRAWL—Oakmont's plan provides for 261 houses on 20 acres—and there's still lots of open space and a shopping center. Inset at upper right shows elevation of typical eight-house block.

Figure 68. Oakmont plans with recreation spaces at center and shopping at entrance. "Oakmont Has Lots of Houses but No Sprawl." (*The News Journal*, April 18, 1959)

[268] Hoffecker, 167; *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 9, 1959.
[269] "Builder Aims at Low Cost Row Houses: Oakmont, South of City, Has No Race Barriers; Construction Under Way," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 27, 1959; "Franklin Builders Gives Preview of Row Housing: 16-Footers at Oakmont Draw Praise from Area Experts, Including Samuel Homsey, Who Led the Fight Against Them," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 20, 1959.
[270] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 20, 1959.

Oakmont's row houses were designed in a Contemporary style by architect Theodore Brando, and Leon Weiner's firm built the homes, which were lauded for their design.[271] Weiner's plan to build 16-foot wide row houses stirred controversy when proposed to New Castle County's Zoning Commission, which vehemently opposed a change in code to make Weiner's plans possible. The code had allowed for a minimum width of 18 feet for attached homes. Noted Wilmington architect Samuel Homsey argued against the change, ultimately offering praise for Franklin Associates' slim designs when the code change was enacted in early 1959.[272]

Prize-Winning Row Houses

Oakmont, a row-housing community on Roger's Road off New Castle Avenue, was awarded Special Mention Honors for excellence from the American Institute of Architects at the institute's national convention. Although there was no special category for row-housing, the judges set a precedent by creating the special award—the only such award made. Oakmont homes were designed by Theodore Brandow, and built by Franklin Associates of 701 Brandywine Boulevard, Bellefonte. Leon N. Weiner, president of Franklin Associates, accepted the award, which represented the fourth major honor given to Oakmont in the past year and a half.

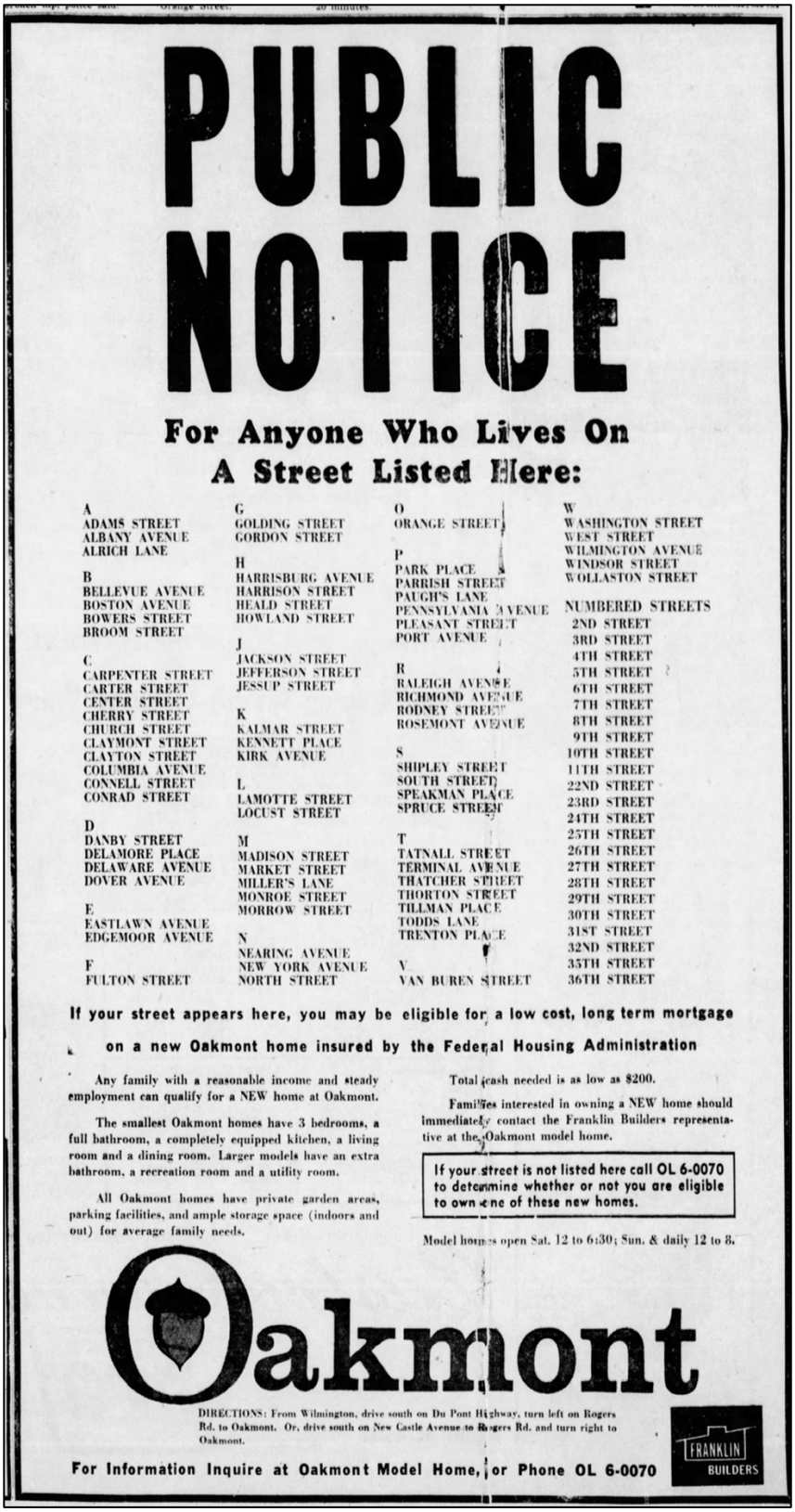
Figure 69. Announcement in *The News Journal* of Oakmont's receipt of an award from the American Institute of Architects for their rowhouse design. (*The News Journal*, May 2, 1961)

[271] "Prize-Winning Row Houses," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 2, 1961.
[272] *The News Journal*, Wilmington, Delaware, Jun 20, 1959; *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 27, 1959.

Leon Weiner was among the earlier private developers in the country to build dwellings for low-income buyers and the first in the Wilmington area.[273] He was motivated in the endeavor both by profit and a social conscience.[274] Weiner indicated his belief that "many of his buyers will be in the $3,000-a-year income bracket—many of whom now have to settle for rented housing on Wilmington's East Side and in other deteriorating areas."[275] Federal mortgage loans had also been made available to many whose houses were demolished to make way for freeways or for so-called slum clearance projects, such as downtown Wilmington's Poplar Street A Project. The loans for these potential buyers required no down payment and had a 40-year term. While Oakmont was heavily marketed as a neighborhood in which these displaced residents would have the opportunity to buy instead of renting, only five of the 510 families who were relocated as a result of Poplar Street Project A moved to Oakmont.[276] Oakmont was also the first development in Wilmington with an explicitly open-race policy. Although the developer did not institute occupancy quotas, he knew most of his buyers would be Black.[277] As Carol Hoffecker notes, "[I]n Wilmington's segregated real-estate market, 'open occupancy' meant all black."[278] Indeed, by 1964, there was "at most one white person in the development."[279]

[273] "Development Wins Praise: Oakmont Seen Meeting Need of Privately-Built Inexpensive Housing," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 27, 1959; *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 27, 1959.
[274] Hoffecker, *Corporate Capital*, 167.
[275] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 27, 1959.
[276] "Where did Poplar Families Relocate?" *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 14, 1961. See targeted advertisement.
[277] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 27, 1959.
[278] Hoffecker, *Corporate Capital*, 167.
[279] Philip M. Boffey, "Only a Handful of Suburbs Have Integrated Housing," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 19, 1964.

Figure 70. Advertisement for the newly opened Oakmont neighborhood. (*The Morning News*, June 27, 1959)



PUBLIC NOTICE

For Anyone Who Lives On A Street Listed Here:

A
ADAMS STREET
ALBANY AVENUE
ALRICH LANE

B
BELLEVUE AVENUE
BOSTON AVENUE
BOWERS STREET
BROOM STREET

C
CARPENTER STREET
CARTER STREET
CENTER STREET
CHERRY STREET
CHURCH STREET
CLAYMONT STREET
CLAYTON STREET
COLUMBIA AVENUE
CONNELL STREET
CONRAD STREET

D
DANBY STREET
DELAMORE PLACE
DELAWARE AVENUE
DOVER AVENUE

E
EASTLAWN AVENUE
EDGEMOOR AVENUE

F
FULTON STREET

G
GOLDING STREET
GORDON STREET

H
HARRISBURG AVENUE
HARRISON STREET
HEALD STREET
HOWLAND STREET

J
JACKSON STREET
JEFFERSON STREET
JESSUP STREET

K
KALMAR STREET
KENNETT PLACE
KIRK AVENUE

L
LAMOTTE STREET
LOCUST STREET

M
MADISON STREET
MARKET STREET
MILLER'S LANE
MONROE STREET
MORROW STREET

N
NEARING AVENUE
NEW YORK AVENUE
NORTH STREET

O
ORANGE STREET

P
PARK PLACE
PARRISH STREET
PAUGH'S LANE
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
PLEASANT STREET
PORT AVENUE

R
RALEIGH AVENUE
RICHMOND AVENUE
RODNEY STREET
ROSEMONT AVENUE

S
SHIPLEY STREET
SOUTH STREET
SPEAKMAN PLACE
SPRUCE STREET

T
TATNALL STREET
TERMINAL AVENUE
THATCHER STREET
THORTON STREET
TILLMAN PLACE
TODDS LANE
TRENTON PLACE

V
VAN BUREN STREET

W
WASHINGTON STREET
WEST STREET
WILMINGTON AVENUE
WINDSOR STREET
WOLLASTON STREET

NUMBERED STREETS
2ND STREET
3RD STREET
4TH STREET
5TH STREET
6TH STREET
7TH STREET
8TH STREET
9TH STREET
10TH STREET
11TH STREET
22ND STREET
23RD STREET
24TH STREET
25TH STREET
26TH STREET
27TH STREET
28TH STREET
29TH STREET
30TH STREET
31ST STREET
32ND STREET
35TH STREET
36TH STREET

If your street appears here, you may be eligible for a low cost, long term mortgage on a new Oakmont home insured by the Federal Housing Administration

Any family with a reasonable income and steady employment can qualify for a NEW home at Oakmont.

The smallest Oakmont homes have 3 bedrooms, a full bathroom, a completely equipped kitchen, a living room and a dining room. Larger models have an extra bathroom, a recreation room and a utility room.

All Oakmont homes have private garden areas, parking facilities, and ample storage space (indoors and out) for average family needs.

Total cash needed is as low as $200.

Families interested in owning a NEW home should immediately contact the Franklin Builders representative at the Oakmont model home.

If your street is not listed here call OL 6-0070 to determine whether or not you are eligible to own one of these new homes.

Model homes open Sat. 12 to 6:30; Sun. & daily 12 to 8.

Oakmont

DIRECTIONS: From Wilmington, drive south on Du Pont Highway, turn left on Rogers Rd. to Oakmont. Or, drive south on New Castle Avenue to Rogers Rd. and turn right to Oakmont.

For Information Inquire at Oakmont Model Home, or Phone OL 6-0070

FRANKLIN BUILDERS

Figure 71. Advertisement for the newly opened Oakmont development specifically advertising to Wilmingtonians displaced by urban renewal and highway projects. (*The Morning News*, August 30, 1960)

Responding to demand, in 1963, Weiner's firm introduced detached houses to the subdivision along Birkshire Road. In this section of the subdivision, 32 parcels were laid out for standalone houses, although seemingly not all of the parcels were developed. The model house—a three-bedroom, two-bathroom, one-story ranch—was named the "Belair" and sold for just under $16,000.[280] Most detached units were built between 1964 and 1966.

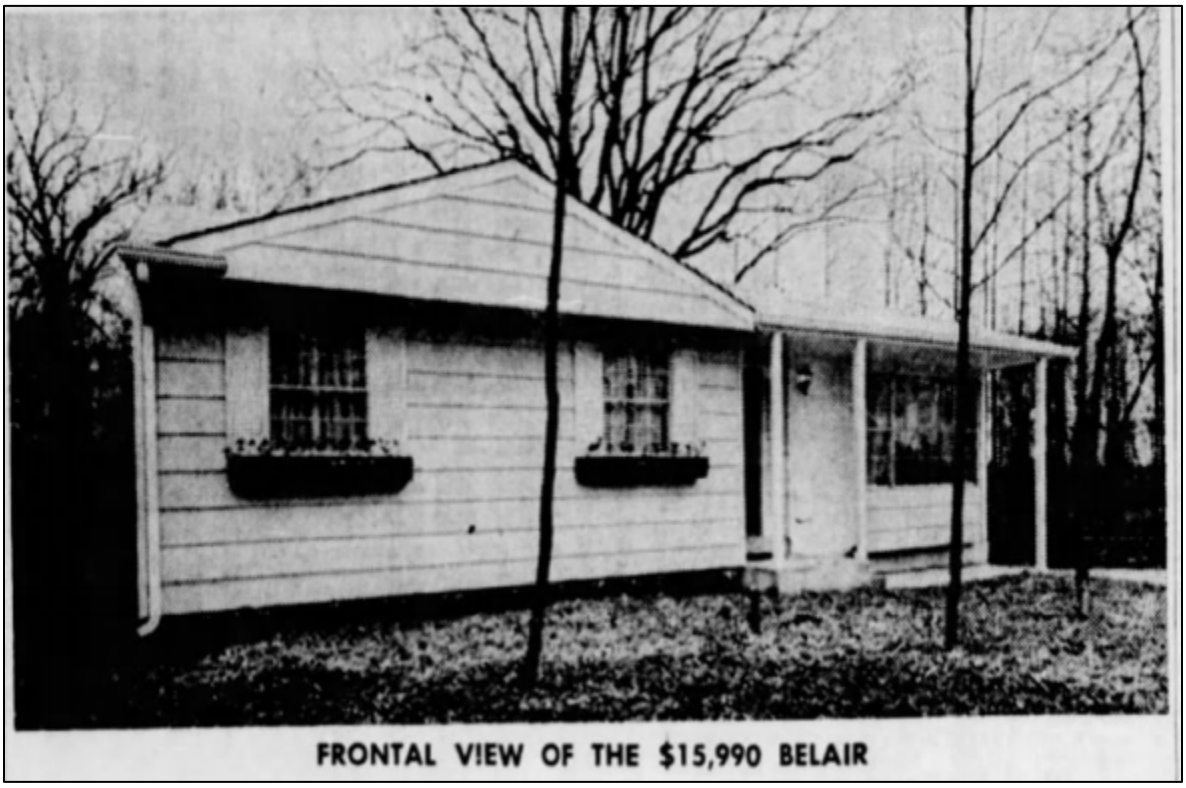


Figure 72. The detached, ranch-style model house at Oakmont. Eugene Knoblauch, "Oakmont Spotlights New Belair Rancher." (*The Morning News*, March 23, 1963)

In 1967, Weiner's firm announced plans to build apartments in the Oakmont development on land it owned at the junction of Birkshire and Kingston Roads, requesting a zoning change for a section of the proposed plot of land from business to apartment. The Oakmont Civic Association feared an influx of renters, along with a paucity of parking, would bring about what they termed "ghetto" conditions in the neighborhood.[281] The project was never realized.

[280] Eugene Knoblauch, "Oakmont Spotlights New Belair Rancher," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 23, 1963.
[281] Frances H. Beach, "Resident Fears Ghetto Likely: Oakmont Apt. Plan is Hit," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 6, 1967.

Oral History Recollections

Sodonia Parker, a long-time resident of Oakmont who first moved into the neighborhood in the summer of 1967, remembered purchasing a home in Oakmont as the best option for housing her large family during the late 1960s. Rentals were difficult to find for a family of six, and other homes they looked at in Wilmington and the New Castle Avenue corridor (including in Dunleith, Simonds Gardens, and Rosegate) did not offer the space, quality, parking, and overall value offered by Oakmont homes. She remembers being impressed even when looking through the window and seeing how spacious the rooms looked, and, with its multiple levels of living, double closets in the primary bedroom, as well as its unfinished basement, the row house generally seemed very roomy—especially when compared to the homes she grew up with in New Orleans, where you lived either upstairs or downstairs in smaller units. Furthermore, the Parkers purchased one of Oakmont's end units, allowing them to adopt the adjacent communal open space as a de facto side yard—so the home offered lots of space for the young couple and their four children. Her husband, James Parker, finished the basement space, which was quickly adopted by son Jimmy as his bedroom. Though some Oakmont units had laundry rooms on the main living level, the Parkers' basement was also the location of their laundry room—a feature that was fine when they were younger, but Parker recalls that it was very inconvenient to access, especially as the couple aged, prompting her to eventually install a stackable washer and dryer upstairs.[282]

Yet it was the neighbors and community that truly made Oakmont a special home for the Parkers. Residents would gather outside in the communal spaces, whether for long hours of conversation or for an impromptu barbecue. Parker remembers that they built a back porch behind their unit but rarely ended up using it because they were isolated and felt they "were just staring at the back of Dunleith houses," when they would much rather hang out near the front of the house where they could see cars and neighbors passing by. The community members all watched over each other's children as they played in the neighborhood, and kids frequently gathered at the Parkers' household, even staying for dinner sometimes. In general, it was a tight-knit community with close networks of friendship and mutual support, where Parker remembers, "We looked out for one another." The community felt so safe, in fact, that she recalls, "At one time, we didn't even know where a key was to our house because nobody locked their houses. We have gone to Louisiana, and we didn't lock the doors. We have opened the doors and the windows . . . or [we would] sleep with the screen doors open . . . and you felt safe. You never

[282] Sodonia Parker, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., May 25, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

gave a thought to nobody harming you or anything—[it] wasn't even a fleeting thought that any harm would come to you in that area."[283]

Physical Characteristics of Oakmont

Oakmont is a small, developer platted and designed residential subdivision featuring both attached, multi-family houses and detached, single-family houses, located southwest of Rogers Road, southeast and northeast of Dunleith, and northwest of New Castle Avenue. The access to Oakmont is considered closed as it is primarily accessed from Roger Roads. An interior road, Talladega Drive, connects Oakmont to the interior of the adjacent Dunleith subdivision. There are two streets in Oakmont, Oakmont Drive and Birkshire Road, which form the curvilinear ring road. Oakmont is comprised of 160 houses, of which 16 are detached, single-family houses, and the other 144 are attached, multi-family houses. On average, the lot sizes of the attached homes are .04 acres, but the end units feature larger lot sizes around .18 acres. The lots for the attached homes are about 16 to 18 feet in width and 100 feet in depth. The detached, single-family homes are located on larger lots ranging from .15 to .36 acres. The lots measure from 65 to 75 feet in width and 100 feet in depth. Oakmont has poured concrete sidewalks, with Oakmont Park in the center of the ring road. Historical aerial imagery suggests that the intended recreation area was further developed as a park after the subdivision was initially constructed. Oakmont Park, comprising about three acres, is operated by New Castle County Department of Parks and Recreation and features athletic fields and a playground.

Oakmont is the only subdivision within the study area to contain two housing types: detached, single-family houses and attached, multi-family townhouses. The single-family homes are all architecturally harmonious ranches, while the attached townhouses were constructed in two styles, Contemporary and Colonial. The ranches are all constructed in a gable-and-wing form, one story in height, and contain 970 square feet of interior space. The ranches, as advertised, featured exteriors clad in aluminum, brick, or asbestos siding.[284] On the interior, the ranches had six rooms including a combination living room and dining room, a family room, a kitchen, and three bedrooms, plus two full bathrooms, the latter being a unique feature for housing along the Route 9 corridor. Each single-family house also featured a full basement, another unusual feature for developments in this area.

[283] Sodonia Parker, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., May 25, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[284] Eugene Knoblach, "31 Ranchers Being Built at Oakmont," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 10, 1963.

The multi-story townhouses were constructed in different heights—some models stand two stories, while most are three stories in height. The townhouses are of frame construction and set on full basements, providing additional space. The exteriors are clad in a variety of materials, with first stories generally featuring red or yellow brick veneers, while the upper stories are covered in a variety of materials, mostly vinyl siding. Most of the units are demarcated by brick walls that span the full height of the buildings; however, some units lack this feature. These townhouses are built in two styles—Contemporary or Early American (marketed as "Colonial"). The Contemporary townhouses, built in both two- and three-story varieties, feature mostly flat facades, with bands of windows and enclosed front porches with single pitched roofs. The porches of two units create a full pitched, gently sloping, front-gabled feature. Each side of the porch also has a trapezoidal light under the porch roof, giving the houses a more Contemporary flair. This enclosed porch feature is only present on the three-story Contemporary townhouses, while the two-story Contemporary homes do not contain a porch but a single large square transom above the door which is even with the front façade plane. The Early American style townhouses were only constructed with three stories. These units also have projecting, enclosed front porches with a single pitch roof. Again, the porch roofs of two units create one front-gabled porch; however, the pitch of these roofs is sharper, creating a more "traditional" feeling. The doors in these porches are without transoms, contributing to a less "modern" design. Some of the Early American townhouses share a front porch with a front sloping roof, also achieving a more traditional feeling. These Early American townhouses have pent-type roofs located between the first and second floors, creating the illusion that the windows on the second floor are wall dormers, punched into a roofline. The window types on these units are individual double-hung sash (instead of the Contemporary bands of windows), and all have fixed shutters—again, more evocative of the Early American style.

Due to the varying heights of the townhouses, the interior space ranges between 1275 and 1575 square feet. As advertised, the houses were available with three, four, or five bedrooms. Additionally, all houses had a living room, a dining room, and one full bathroom, while the larger townhouses had two full bathrooms.

As designed and platted, Oakmont features some landscape features associated with the post-war automobile-oriented suburbs. Each house has its own poured concrete driveway immediately in front of the house, on average large enough to accommodate one vehicle, though the single-family ranches have slightly longer driveways and can accommodate more vehicles. None of the houses in Oakmont, as built, had carports or garages. As a result of the driveways dominating the front yards of the townhouses, most have little green space in front. Since the majority of these houses are attached on two sides, most only have a back yard, while the single-family ranch houses feature a yard on all four sides.

Figure 73. Example of a pair of two-story, Contemporary style attached townhouses. Note the flat façade and lack of porch features. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 74. Example span of eight three-story, Contemporary style attached townhouses. Note the Contemporary style front porches. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 75. Example of three-story, Early American style attached townhouses in Oakmont. Note the double-hung sash windows, fixed shutters, and the illusion of wall dormers. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Mobile Home Village

Established c. 1957

History

The earliest newspaper advertisements referencing Mobile Home Village appear in April 1957, in which the community is described as "Delaware's newest modern park, [with] city sewers & water."[285] The ads describe

[285] "Trailer Courts-Rent," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 12, 1957.

"large lots, 50 and 60 ft." with "underground electric and phone."[286] Single-wide mobile homes, with most appearing to date to the 1970s and 1980s, presently occupy the approximately 40 narrow lots within Mobile Home Village. A variety of single-wide models are present, with some homes bearing the manufacturer name "Liberty" on the exterior. Early newspaper advertisements suggest that, initially, the mobile homes were individually owned with lot rent paid to the landowner. An early sales advertisement published in October 1959 offers a 1959 model year, 33-foot trailer, "almost new," for $2,395, with the seller indicating that they had originally paid $3,495.[287]


126 Trailer Courts—Rent

NOW OPEN
Delaware's newest modern park, city sewers & water. Large lots, 50 & 60 ft. Mobiles Home Village, New Castle Ave. S. of Rogers Cor.

Figure 76. Early advertisement for Mobile Home Village. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, April 12, 1957)

Physical Characteristics of Mobile Home Village

Located at 3115 New Castle Avenue, Mobile Home Village, established c. 1957, is a mobile home and apartment community on 2.43 acres of land. Forming an L-shape along a shared drive (forming two unnamed streets), the community is located southwest of the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 and Rogers Road intersection, with Rose Hill Gardens situated to its immediate southwest and a small shopping center formally called Platform Plaza (built c. 2000) to its east and northeast. A stand of trees runs along the perimeter of Mobile Home Village, with a 1.49-acre parcel of open space to its north, owned by Delmarva Power & Light Co.[288]

The mobile homes are all oriented with their narrow ends—a side elevation—towards the shared drive and exhibit an assortment of fenestration patterns. Most of the units exhibit aluminum siding panels with metal louvered or double-hung windows, though some feature vinyl replacement windows. Many examples exhibit aluminum

[286] "Trailer Courts-Rent," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 12, 1957; "Trailer Courts-Rent," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), April 20, 1957.
[287] "Real Estate-Sale," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), October 23, 1959.
[288] New Castle County Parcel Search, "3115 New Castle Avenue," "3125 New Castle Avenue," and "3127 New Castle Avenue," https://www3.newcastlede.gov/parcel/search/default.aspx (accessed May 19, 2022).

skirting around the base, pressed to look like rusticated concrete block, while others have more modern vinyl skirting. The roofs of the mobile homes appear to be flat or have especially low-pitched gables.

Two buildings now utilized as apartments predate the establishment of the mobile home community and may have been previously affiliated with the Dutch Inn restaurant and lounge, formerly located to the northeast of the mobile home park at the present location of Platform Plaza.[289] A one-story, four-bay building with a flat roof and stuccoed exterior, built c. late 1930s, is situated near the center of the mobile home community. Presently, the building is divided into two rentable apartment units. Towards the eastern extent of the community, close to New Castle Avenue, a long and narrow, one-story, side-gabled building, built c. late 1930s, is divided into six efficiency apartments, with each unit exhibiting a single entry bay. It is clad in vinyl siding and appears to rest on a poured concrete foundation. The original uses of these buildings are unknown.

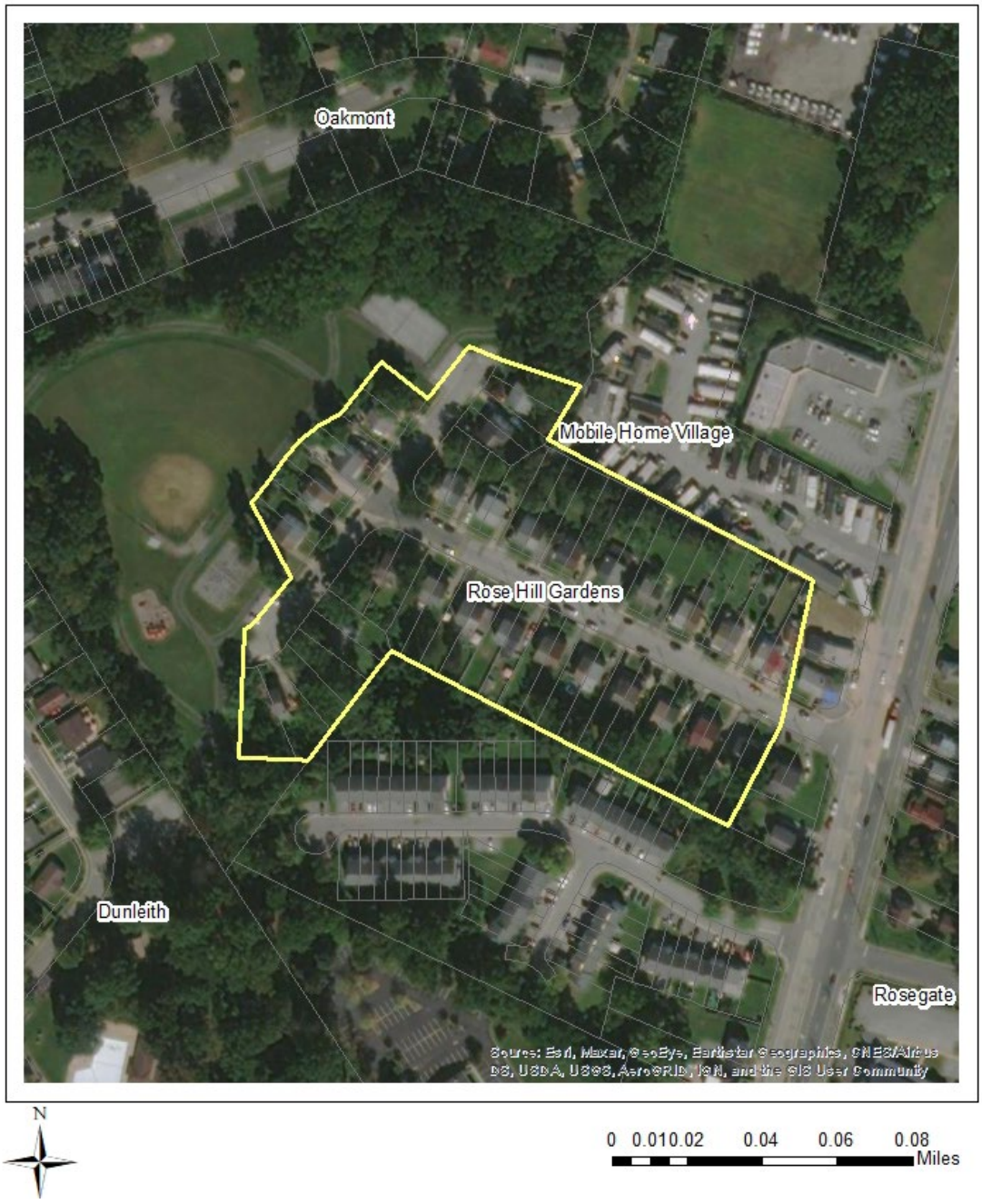
Figure 77. Several mobile homes within Mobile Home Village. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Mobile Home Village is the sole example of a mobile home community within the study area along the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor and exhibits one primary feature of auto-dependent subdivisions: each mobile home unit maintains its own asphalt driveway or parking spaces. Typically, the units are set directly at the shared drive, without a front yard area and with minimal yard spaces to one or both sides of the unit. The community does not feature any community amenities such as a common area or park, nor are there any sidewalks.

[289] Period newspaper advertisements for the Dutch Inn reference "live in" options for employees and otherwise advertise rooms for rent. These buildings appear in aerial imagery of the property during the time Dutch Inn was in operation and were likely affiliated with that business.

Rose Hill Gardens

Built 1952-1953



History

Plans for Rose Hill Gardens were underway by 1949 and resulted in a subdivision of identical duplexes. The initial proposal from landowner William H. Tibbitt called for 27 building parcels with 60 feet of frontage. However, in December 1950, tentative plans for the nearly 16-acre site featuring a layout of 62 parcels, with

approximately 31 to 32 feet of frontage, were approved by the New Castle County Planning Commission.[290] In 1951, approvals were granted for an extension of the water and sewer mains to the development.[291] S and S Builders, headed by Walter Sezna, was the developer, and John (Jack) V. Ryan, Jr.—after whom the subdivision's T-shaped street is named and who previously worked on Mayview Manor—is noted as a contractor.[292] While it is not clear why plans for the development changed, it is likely that the developer scrapped plans for detached dwellings in favor of the semi-detached, two family homes ultimately constructed here.

By the summer of 1953, the semi-detached, two-family homes in the first section of the development were selling for just under $11,000.[293] These were colonial-inspired, brick-front houses with side-by-side, Federal-style door surrounds and separate driveways on deep lots that created spacious back yards. The identical models held three bedrooms and one bathroom. Modern kitchens with brand-name appliances, spacious closets, oil-powered baseboard heat, and connection to city water and sewer lines were touted amenities.[294] The houses were marketed to veterans and were also approved for FHA mortgage loans for the general population. No race preferences or restrictions are noted in the marketing or deeds, but an idealized white family is depicted in a 1953 advertisement for the properties, suggesting that this may be the target buyer.[295] Resale ads for the homes to Black buyers in 1957 signal that the subdivision was not explicitly race-restricted.[296] In December 1953, S and S Builders had sold all of the homes in their first building section and continued with the second phase of construction. While the development might have originally been intended for white residents, by 1964 it was a predominantly Black neighborhood.[297]

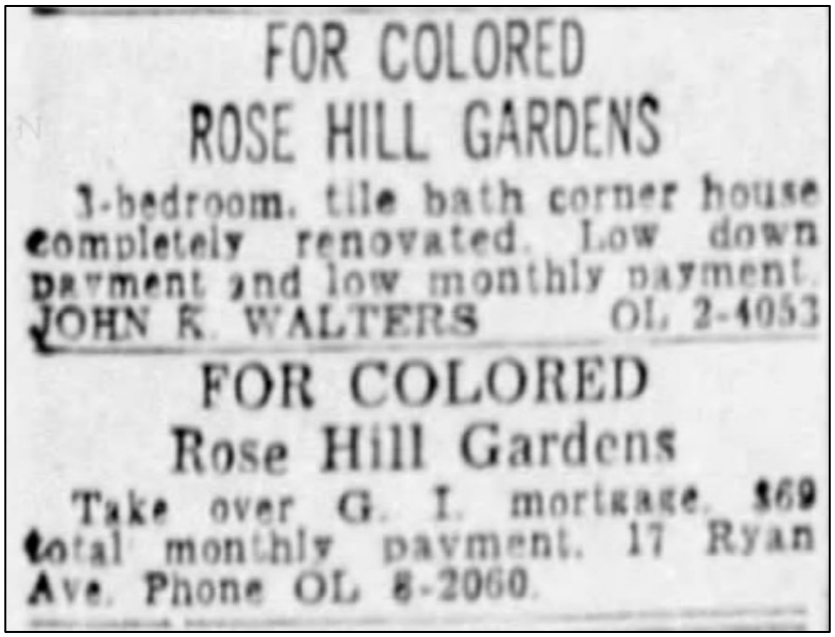
The small development terminates to its west at the eastern boundary of Rose Hill Park, a recreation space bordered along the west by Dunleith Estates and on the north by Oakmont. A 1954 proposal to include Rose Hill Gardens in the tax levy zone of a separate, non-contiguous park bordering on Millside/Dunleith and Overview

[290] "Four Home Projects Approved by Board," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 22, 1950.
[291] "Water Mains Extended," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 11, 1951.
[292] "Rose Hill Gardens Sells Out First Section, Starts on Second," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 19, 1953; "New Project of 276 Homes," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware), Sept. 10, 1955; *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 11, 1951.
[293] See advertisement for showings of model home in *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 7, 1953.
[294] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 7, 1953.
[295] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 19, 1953.
[296] See classified ads in *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 29, 1957.
[297] See, Philip M. Boffey, "Only a Handful of Suburbs Have Integrated Housing," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 19, 1964, where this is also noted as to be the case for the Eden Park development.

Gardens met with resistance from Rose Hill Gardens owners, who were opposed to an increase in their property taxes to fund the park which would see most use from residents of the closer neighborhoods.[298]

STREET FULL OF NEW HOMES—This first section of Rose Hill Gardens has been completed and sold by S and S Builders and work on a second section is under way.

Figure 78. New Rose Hill Gardens duplex homes along Ryan Avenue. "Rose Hill Gardens Sells Out First Section, Starts on Second." (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, December 19, 1953)



FOR COLORED
ROSE HILL GARDENS
3-bedroom, tile bath corner house completely renovated. Low down payment and low monthly payment.
JOHN K. WALTERS OL 2-4053

FOR COLORED
Rose Hill Gardens
Take over G. I. mortgage. $69 total monthly payment. 17 Ryan Ave. Phone OL 8-2060.

Figure 79. Resale advertisements targeting Black home buyers. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, April 29, 1957)

[298] "Rose Hill Gardens Objects to Recreation Area Plan," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 22, 1954.

Figure 80. Advertisement for homes in Rose Hill Gardens. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, Dec. 19, 1953)

Oral History Recollections

Oral history interviews with two residents of Rose Hill Gardens, both of whom grew up there during the 1960s and 1970s, shed light on the early decades of the development—including the strong sense of community and pride of homeownership, in a neighborhood that enjoyed a good reputation. Brenda Timmon-Gunter, who lived there between 1962 and 1976 (from ages 4 to 18), believes purchasing in Rose Hill Gardens was a significant move for her parents. While both of her parents' families in Louisiana had owned their own properties, for her parents in Delaware, "it was a really big deal because it was the first thing that they ever bought," and "I think it felt like they had really come a long way." She believes her parents, who had rented in the nearby Millside development before purchasing in Rose Hill Gardens, were glad to be "putting their family in a better environment."[299] Similarly, Crystal Taylor, whose parents purchased in Rose Hill Gardens a couple of years before she was born in 1962, believes their home there must have been a significant step up from their previous home. She recalls that her parents had previously lived in public housing at Southbridge or Millside, likely in a one-bedroom unit, so "to have a bigger house, with three bedrooms, it was much more conducive" to comfortably accommodating their growing family.[300]

Both Taylor and Timmon-Gunter remember the neighborhood with a lot of younger couples, many with children, and almost all owner-occupants. "I don't even remember knowing anybody who rented" in the early years, recalls Taylor, and Timmon-Gunter similarly recalls that "most of the people owned their homes." They characterize the families of that era as solidly "middle-class," with one or both parents working in a wide variety of job types. Between the two of them, they could recall people working in the automotive industry (especially at Chrysler), at tanning factories (east of Eden Park and Hamilton Park), as a school nurse (at P.S. du Pont Middle School), as surgical staff at a hospital (Memorial Hospital), as school employees, as a clerk at a bank, as steel workers (at a steel mill in Claymont), as DuPont Company workers, as a painter and a printer, as cleaners, another who was involved in politics, four different people who worked at the race track, and one person who clerked at a liquor store on New Castle Avenue. There were several stay-at-home mothers who also would watch children for extra income. To travel to work or shopping, neither Taylor nor Timmon-Gunter recalled many people relying much on public transportation, since most families owned a car.

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[299] Brenda Timmon-Gunter, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware. Timmon-Gunter returned in 2017 to care for her mother.
[300] Crystal Taylor, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., February 11, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware. Taylor has lived in Rose Hill Gardens for nearly her entire life, except a four-year period when she lived in North Carolina.

For young children, however, outside of school hours, their worlds were fairly contained inside the Rose Hill Gardens neighborhood—where there was a strong sense of community. Neighborly interaction was a major part of that dynamic. When asked to share their favorite things about Rose Hill Gardens while growing up, Taylor responded "my neighbors," while Timmon-Gunter responded that it "was how we all knew each other." Both remember the T-shaped neighborhood having social clusters, or even rivalries between kids, between the main stem of Ryan Avenue and those who lived at the top of the "T"—but even if childhood conflicts arose from time to time, "at the end of the day, we'd all go back to playing together."[301] They both recall Rose Hill Gardens residents spending significant time chatting in front of their homes, on porches or on the front steps. Taylor recalls spending the majority of time on the porch of her neighbor, hanging out with a childhood friend who had muscular dystrophy and was in a wheelchair: "Everyone who lived in Rose Hill Gardens knew we'd be up on that porch," where they would talk, sing, and play. Timmon-Gunter remembers, "When we were little, everybody knew everybody," and "during the evening time, you could find people on their steps," where many people would "walk up and talk in groups."[302] People's homes could also become focal points for more important, and more official, community gatherings. Taylor shares that, shortly after the Voting Rights Act of 1965, "when Blacks were allowed to vote, Mom had the first voting machine here"—at her house at the top of the "T"—because "my next door neighbor, Mr. Boyd, was in politics, and he [convinced her] to have it here. So people were in and out, in and out" as they exercised their newly protected right to vote.[303]

Beyond individual front stoops, another community focal point was the baseball field beyond the "T" part of Ryan Avenue, where the Little League games "were a really big deal."[304] Yet Timmon-Gunter remembers that "a lot happened on that baseball field, not just baseball," including informal pick-up games of various types, cookouts, and Halloween parties. The Halloween events are favorite memories for Timmon-Gunter, who remembers, "We'd go trick-or-treating, and then go to the park," where "they would have hot chocolate and hot dogs and things like that."[305] Taylor recalls bobbing for apples and other games at those Halloween parties and also remembers large annual cookouts at the same field around Labor Day. The baseball field/park area was

[301] Brenda Timmon-Gunter, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[302] Brenda Timmon-Gunter, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[303] Crystal Taylor, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., February 11, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[304] Brenda Timmon-Gunter, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[305] Brenda Timmon-Gunter, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 24, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

smaller in those days, with more trees and less open space, but the park has since been expanded and was rededicated in 2016 as "Tim Wilson Park," named after an NFL player from the area.[306] Of course, much of the fun and games for children in Rose Hill Gardens happened in people's yards or in the street. Taylor recalls, "We made our own fun in the driveway—Chinese jump rope, jacks, slinkies….you know, we didn't have the electronic stuff, so you had to use your hands and mind. We sometimes played board games, and Monopoly was the game of choice."[307]

The architecture of the homes in Rose Hill Gardens was not really something Taylor or Timmon-Gunter thought much about while growing up, but there were little things that they appreciated. For example, Timmon-Gunter liked that they had a back patio and remembers that "having a washing machine was a big deal," especially after living in Millside and having to hand-wash laundry (she also remembers the excitement of having a color television and gathering around to watch Hansel and Gretel, Captain Kangaroo, and Sally Starr with her whole family). Though the homes were nice, over time, Timmon-Gunter remembers feeling like the house was too small for their large family, especially when she was a teenager and had to share a bedroom with two siblings. The outside also felt constrained to her because the house was semi-attached, meaning she and the other kids could not run around the entire house (like she could at her grandmother's house), especially because of the chain link fences dividing many of the yards in Rose Hill Gardens. Some of these constraints were alleviated in later years, however, both at Timmon-Gunter's house and at others in the neighborhood. Many people expanded their houses—especially to the rear, with back porches and large additions for more living space. Timmon-Gunter's father enclosed their back patio to create a TV room, providing much-appreciated extra living space for the large family. Some families removed a wall between the kitchen and living room to create a more open, roomy appearance, while others expanded their kitchens. Some families eventually installed an additional bathroom downstairs. On the outside, some families stuccoed their brick exteriors. Many removed their oil tanks from the sides of their houses, after converting from oil heat to gas. Timmon-Gunter has also observed that many owners have removed their chain-link fences, which she feels were installed by early owners to protect their lawns and keep people from trespassing on their properties. Yet, it was not likely a feeling of insecurity that prompted those

[306] Timmon-Gunter notes that this investment "was about 50 years too late, because we were already grown, and there doesn't seem to be a lot of grandchildren around here."
[307] Crystal Taylor, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., February 11, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

fences—Crystal Taylor remembers a feeling of trust among Rose Hill Gardens neighbors and, while growing up, at least for the kids, there "was not a care in the world. We felt safe."[308]

Physical Characteristics of Rose Hill Gardens

Rose Hill Gardens is a small, developer platted and designed residential subdivision featuring semi-detached, two-family homes, located west of New Castle Avenue and east of Dunleith subdivision. Unlike many of the larger subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor, Rose Hill Gardens is a small-scale subdivision, with only two short straight streets of houses, both named Ryan Avenue. Additional development was planned to make Ryan Avenue a circular loop; however, that phase of the Rose Hill Gardens development never came to fruition. Today, there are 56 parcels of land associated with the Rose Hill Gardens subdivision, one of which is vacant.

Rose Hill Gardens can only be accessed via one road, New Castle Avenue, and is therefore considered to have a closed circulation network. The roads are laid in a straight/gridiron pattern; however, like Dunleith, the roads are canted about 25 or 30 degrees from perpendicular with Route 9. Since these houses were constructed as semi-detached, two-family homes, the physical building sits on two separate parcels, split down the middle of the building. The lots measure, on average, 31 x 155 feet and .11 acres. The houses are generally set back from the road about 25 feet. The entire neighborhood features poured concrete sidewalks, and each home has its own asphalt or poured concrete driveway. A small, poured concrete sidewalks lead from the driveway to the front door of each home. Rose Hill Gardens was constructed without any additional community amenities, but between 1980 and 1991, New Castle County formally developed Rose Hill Garden Park. The land on which the park was constructed was originally incorporated into the development as the intended loop road but was ultimately used as a ball field and community open space. Rose Hill Garden Park features basketball courts and baseball diamonds with a pedestrian-bicycle pathway that adjoins neighboring Surratte Park in Dunleith.

The architecture of the semi-attached, two-family homes in Rose Hill Gardens is homogenous, featuring only one standardized housing form. All of the duplexes are two stories in height and feature four bays, with two windows flanking two doors (one to either side of each entry), and all of the front elevations are clad in brick veneers. The side and rear elevations are covered in stucco, with brick quoining wrapping around each side elevation from the front elevation. As constructed, these dwellings featured no rear or side projections. Like most subdivisions built

[308] Crystal Taylor, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., February 11, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

along Route 9, the houses at Rose Hill Gardens are set on slab foundations. A period advertisement claims that the houses are all "solid masonry" construction; however, this is unconfirmed.

Besides the strong unification of form and construction materials, the houses of Rose Hill Gardens all share similar ornamentation reflective of the Early American style. In addition to the brick veneered facades, a popular stylistic treatment for Early American houses in New Castle County, these houses feature Early American wooden door surrounds with pilasters supporting either broken or triangular pediments. As built, the houses also featured louvered shutters, brick belt courses between the first and second floors, and projecting brick windowsills on the front façade. All of these ornamental features are associated with the Early American style.

Since the houses in Rose Hill Gardens are two stories in height, the interior square footage is greater than that found in many of the other subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor. Each housing unit as constructed contained 1,120 square feet of space and five rooms. A large 13 x 21 feet living room and a kitchen with dinette were located on the first floor. The second floor, accessed by an "open, solid oak stairway from the living room," featured three bedrooms and bathroom.[309]

The landscape features of Rose Hill Gardens reflect typical elements of automobile-dependent post-war suburbanization in the United States. Each house has its own asphalt or poured concrete driveway. As constructed, the houses featured no free-standing or attached carports or garages. The lack of these purpose-built structures was likely a cost saving measure by the developers. If any properties today feature a garage or carport, they were later added by homeowners. Each house has its own individual front, back, and one side yard (due to being semi-attached).

[309] "Rose Hill Gardens Sells Out First Section, Starts on Second," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 19, 1953.

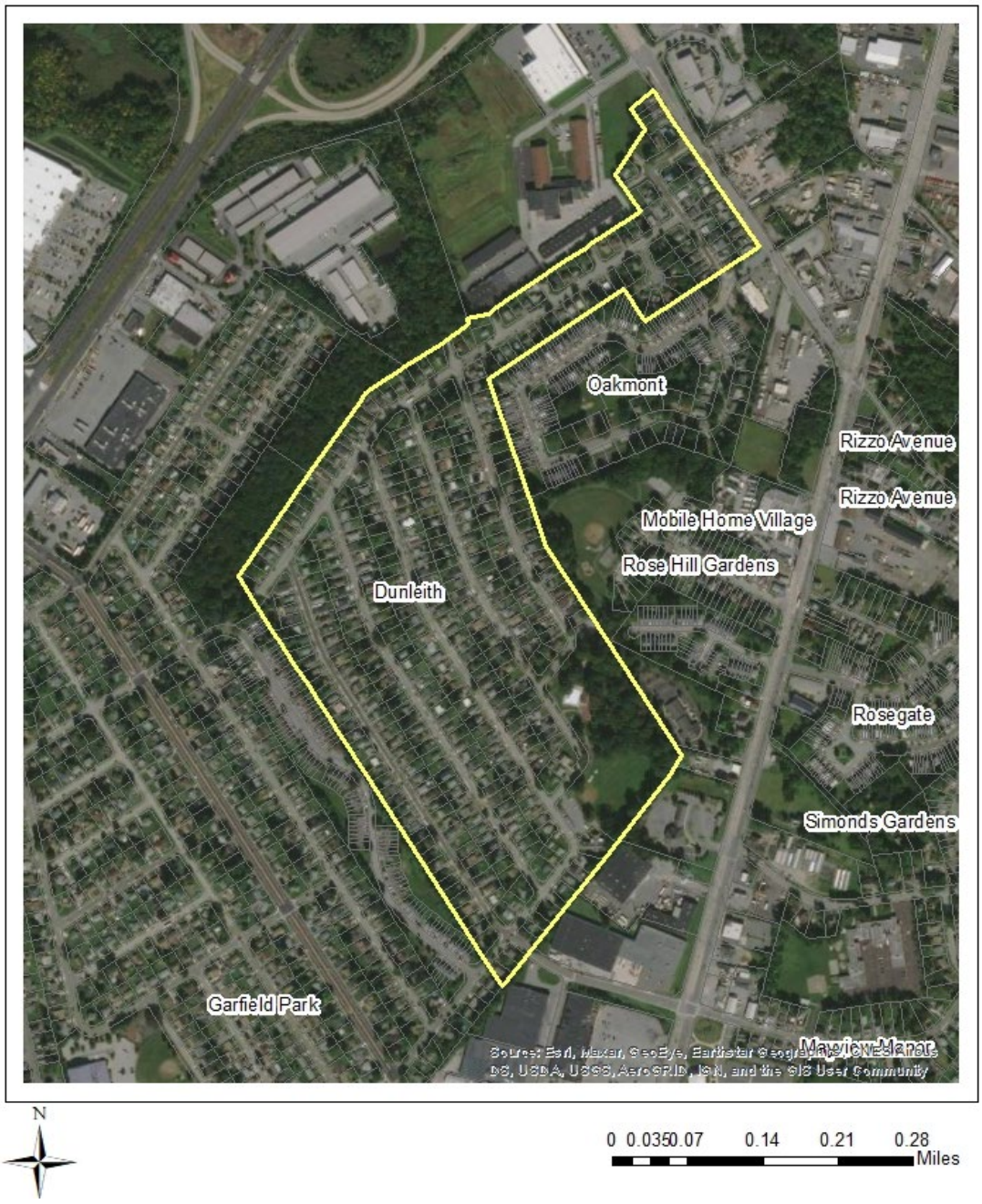
Figure 81. View of multiple semi-detached, two-family homes in Rose Hill Gardens. Note the strong architectural uniformity of the houses. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 82. View of a semi-detached, two-family home in Rose Hill Gardens showing the brick veneer siding, brick belt course, shutters, and triangular pedimented door surrounds. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 83. View of a semi-detached, two-family house in Rose Hill Gardens. This is one of the best examples of Early American style architecture in the neighborhood. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Dunleith

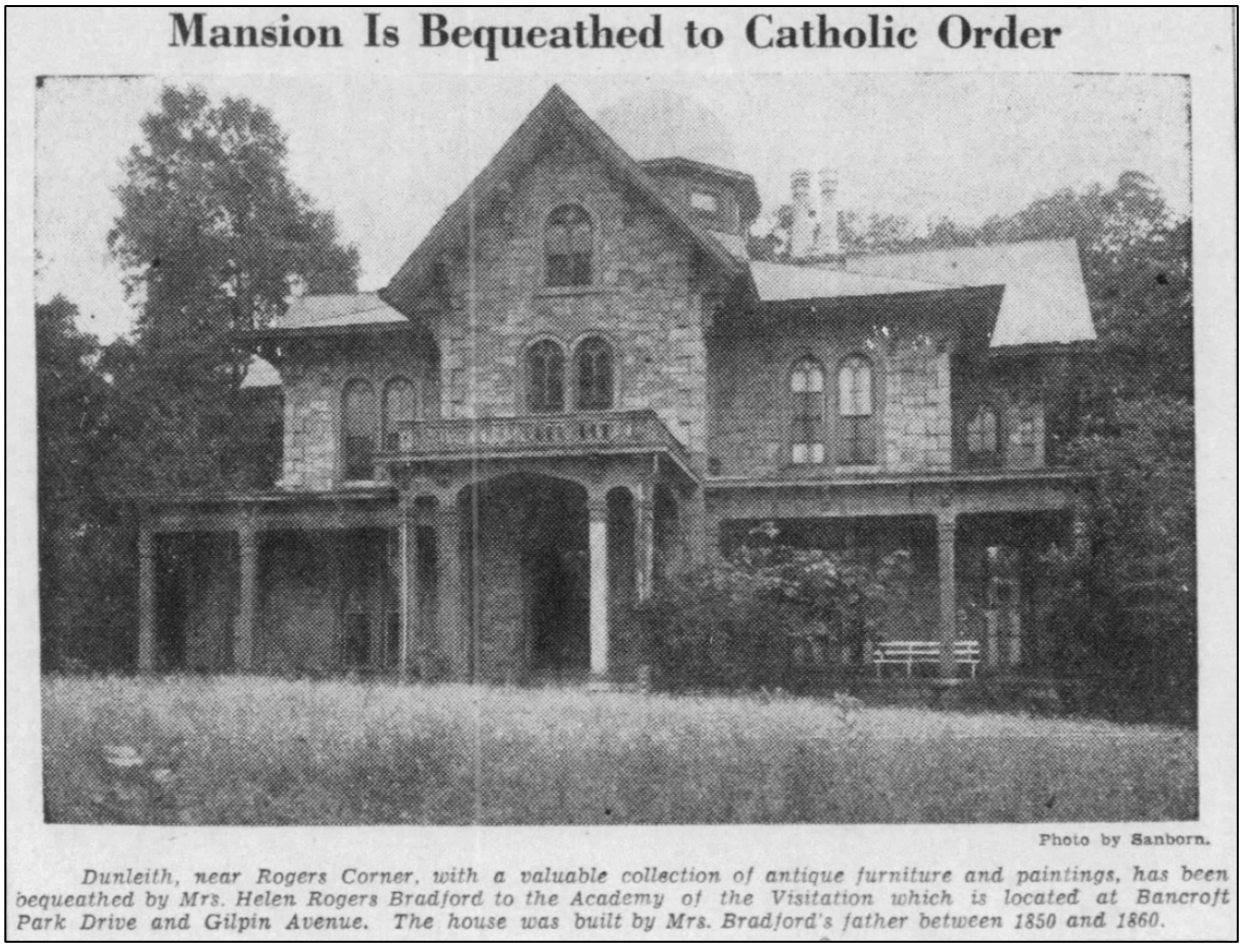
Built 1950



Development History

Dunleith Estates is named for the mansion and grounds of the nineteenth century, nearly 85-acre estate encompassed in the subdivision. Theodore Rogers, son of New Jersey locomotive tycoon Thomas Rogers, built a 27 room, hybrid Gothic-Italianate mansion between 1850 and 1860. Inherited by Theodore's daughter, Helen

Rogers Bradford, the mansion had fallen into disrepair by the time of her death in 1944.[310] The estate and the contents of the home were bequeathed to charitable organizations, but the stipulations of the will were the subject of legal disputes.[311]



Mansion Is Bequeathed to Catholic Order

Photo by Sanborn.

Dunleith, near Rogers Corner, with a valuable collection of antique furniture and paintings, has been bequeathed by Mrs. Helen Rogers Bradford to the Academy of the Visitation which is located at Bancroft Park Drive and Gilpin Avenue. The house was built by Mrs. Bradford's father between 1850 and 1860.

Figure 84. "Mansion is Bequeathed to Catholic Order." (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, July 11, 1944)

In 1949, the Wilmington Pipe Organ Company purchased the mansion. It was still standing in early 1950, by which time developer Don A. Loftus's real estate development company, Delaware Community Homes, Inc., was in possession of the Dunleith land and surrounding property totaling 464 acres. The subdivision he created on the land was to be the first in the Wilmington area to offer houses for sale to Black WWII veterans, who then had access—albeit not consistently throughout the country—to low-cost mortgages as part of the 1944 G.I. Bill of

[310] Roger Martin, "A Socialite's Tragic Life," *Delaware Today*, May 26, 2015, https://delawaretoday.com/life-style/a-socialites-tragic-life (accessed June 10, 2021).
[311] "Opinion Bars 'Dunleith' Gift: Chancellor Rules Against Mrs. H. R. Bradford's Will in her Bequest to Nuns," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), September 9, 1947.

Rights. Houses were also available to Black non-veterans.[312] Dunleith, the nineteenth century mansion on the property, was eventually demolished.[313]

In early 1950, Loftus—a Cleveland-based developer whose company built modest and moderately-priced houses and rental units in several cities in the eastern U.S.—planned 1,500 houses at Dunleith, most detached with two bedrooms and selling for $6,150. He also planned to include a number of semi-detached homes for $5,650, as well as three-bedroom houses for $6,775. The developer had also bought up the title to much of Millside, the Wilmington Housing Authority's wartime rental housing project for Blacks, with the intention of constructing 400 to 500 apartments as part of the development at Dunleith.[314]

Sample houses along Rogers Road were completed for viewing in January 1950. Interest in home ownership was high: between 3,000 and 4,000 people came to see the houses the first weekend they were open, and by March, Loftus had received more than 1,000 applications for the houses with preference given to Black veterans.[315] Construction began on the first section of homes at Dunleith in April 1950, and the first families moved into their new homes in November of that year.[316]

[312] "1,500 Homes, 440 Apartments to Be Built Here for Negroes: Houses to Sold Near Millside; Private Construction Company to Raze Millside Rental Project and Erect New One on Site," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 30, 1950.
[313] Martin, "Socialite."
[314] "Builder Scores Public Housing at Club Session: Slum Clearance Termed Local Responsibility by Donald Loftus," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 6, 1950; "1,500 Homes, 440 Apartments to Be Built Here for Negroes: Houses to Sold Near Millside; Private Construction Company to Raze Millside Rental Project and Erect New One on Site," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 30, 1950.
[315] "Land Donated for School Use: Part of Dunleith Estate, Millside Building Will be Given to District," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 18, 1950; "1,500 Homes, 440 Apartments to Be Built Here for Negroes: Houses to Sold Near Millside; Private Construction Company to Raze Millside Rental Project and Erect New One on Site," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 30, 1950.
[316] "12 Families Being Moved into Dunleith: Suburban Development for Negroes Welcomes its First Residents," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 22, 1950.

Sample Homes for Negroes

Morning News Photo

These are sample houses built by Delaware Community Homes, Inc., next to Millside, to show two of the three types of houses it proposes to built in a development of 1,500 homes for Negro occupancy. At the left are the semi-detached houses, while at the right is a detached home. Both types have two bedrooms in addition to living room, kitchen and bathroom. A third type, with three bedrooms, will also be offered. In the first few days the sample houses were open, several hundreds of orders for homes were taken, it was reported yesterday. Besides the 1,500 houses, the firm plans to build a 440-unit apartment development. The project, known as "Dunleith Estates" is on Rogers Road near the DuPont Parkway, and is the first such development ever built for Negroes in Delaware.

Figure 85. Sample Dunleith homes on Rogers Road, the only duplex built in the subdivision. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, Feb. 2, 1950)

World War II Vet Occupies New Home at Dunleith

Staff Photographer.

Eugene Harris (left), World War II veteran, stands at the entrance to his new home at 408 Rogers Road, Dunleith Estates, near Millside. Next to Harris is Thomas H. Stillwell, manager of the Veterans Administration regional office, and between Stillwell and James F. McDonough who is on the extreme right is Don Loftus, builder of Dunleith. McDonough is loan guaranty officer of the VA, who arranged for the financing of Harris' home.

Figure 86. Fanfare accompanies WWII veteran Eugene Harris's occupancy of his new home at Dunleith Estates in November 1950. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, Nov. 22, 1950)

By November 1950, wartime shortages prompted the developer to abandon the planned apartment complex on the site.[317] With the exception of one duplex show-home, only the detached houses were ever built at Dunleith owing to their high demand, and the three-bedroom models proved popular and were built in abundance.[318] A decade later, attached townhouses were offered for sale at the adjacent, separately-developed Oakmont subdivision, just west of the intersection of Rogers Road and New Castle Avenue. In all, approximately 470 single-family dwellings were built at Dunleith.[319]

[317] "12 Families Being Moved into Dunleith: Suburban Development for Negroes Welcomes its First Residents," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 22, 1950.
[318] The duplex is along Rogers Road and the northernmost section of the development. The builder received few applications for the duplex style. See "Dunleith Estates Sell 950 Houses: New Housing Development for Negroes Almost Two-Thirds Sold, Builder Says," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), February 18, 1950.
[319] This count is based on a New Castle County parcel search completed June 15, 2021.

Along with the development of housing plots, Loftus donated land within the subdivision for the construction of a school.[320] Dunleith Community School was completed between 1956 and 1957 and closed in 1970 when the community's children were bussed to other Wilmington-area schools.[321] Two churches were established in the community soon after residents began to take occupancy of their homes: Community Presbyterian Church, built in 1953 (now home to the Revival Fellowship Church) and Coleman Memorial United Methodist Church, built in 1955. Loftus's company donated the land for the first of these.[322] The churches are contiguous with Surratte Park, named for Dunleith resident John Surratte (d. 1971), which stands at the southeast corner of the development (the "athletic field" planned and laid out with the development[323]).[324] Rose Hill Park, between Oakmont to the north and Rose Hill Gardens to the east, also borders the Dunleith Estates houses along Carver Drive.

Oral History Recollections

Oral history interviews with several early residents of Dunleith, all of whom grew up in the neighborhood, shed light on the community there during its first decades. John Ridgeway, who lived in Dunleith between 1953 and 1978 (until age 25), believes that homes in Dunleith represented "a new promise" for his parents and other Black families, since it provided many of them a first "chance for homeownership."[325] Sandra Smithers, who lived in Dunleith from 1951 to 1962 (ages 6 to 18) and then returned during the late 1970s, recalls that her parents, who were original purchasers in Dunleith, used to go to the construction site on Sundays in 1951 to watch in anticipation as their house was being built on Robinson Drive. She recalls that while some Black families had owned property in the South and in more rural areas, in the North, "for African Americans, you were not buying anything new," especially in urbanized areas.[326] Yet Dunleith offered Blacks "new housing stock" for the first time—and, as Ridgeway adds, it was not only a "new development" but also the "first *suburban* neighborhood for people of color"—offering a particularly enticing opportunity to participate in the post-World War II

[320] "Dunleith Tract will be Donated for School Use: Survey Being Made of Number of Children in New Development," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 18, 1950.
[321] Marina Affo, "Will a Once-Vibrant Community Be Pushed Aside?" *Delaware News Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware), Jan. 2, 2020. See also "Community of Dunleith," Delaware Public Archives, 2008, https://archives.delaware.gov/historical-markers-map/the-community-of-dunleith (accessed June 15, 2021).
[322] "Site for Millside Church Building Offered by Firm," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 14, 1952.
[323] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 30, 1950.
[324] Edward L. Kenney, "Dunleith Thankful for Bond, Kinship: Reunion a Tradition for Historic Neighborhood," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 24, 1999.
[325] John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[326] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

suburbanization movement.[327] This was particularly appropriate for Black veterans, adds Smithers, who had proudly served their country during World War II, "even though they were discriminated against terribly," only to find that "nothing was available to them when they returned home."[328] Edythe Pridgen, who lived in Dunleith from 1952 to 1972 (ages 4 to 24), believes that homeownership "gave them self-confidence" and contributed to a widespread sense of pride, recalling, "People really had a lot of pride in their homes" and in their community.[329]

The strong community at Dunleith during its early decades is a major theme recalled by people who were raised there. The neighborhood consisted almost entirely of Black residents, almost all of whom were owner-occupants, and it remained fairly stable in that regard because of housing segregation. "People did not have an opportunity to move to other communities," even if they wanted to, remembers Smithers. She recalls that the typical family in Dunleith was a younger couple, with a husband who was a veteran, and multiple children—"there were lots of kids."[330] As far as employment, Pridgen points out that Dunleith included "all walks of life" because "there was nowhere else for them to go."[331] Interviewees remember a dentist, a doctor, teachers, domestic workers, executives, business owners, barbers, hairdressers, carpenters, plumbers, contractors, school employees, church employees, police officers, union representatives, factory workers, bricklayers, postal workers, lawyers, cleaners, laundresses, longshoremen, and many who worked in the automotive industry, including plant managers. Pridgen remembers, in general, that the people of Dunleith were "hard workers," and Ridgeway emphasizes that the neighborhood was "very diverse in talent" with lots of "successful people—people that had jobs of authority, jobs of substance, jobs of quality."[332] Several interviewees recall that most of the local teachers lived in Dunleith or close by, and Smithers remembers that "we walked to school as our teachers were walking to school." In short, "everybody lived in the community," and "it was very close-knit."[333]

[327] John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[328] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[329] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[330] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[331] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[332] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware; John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[333] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

The tight-knit nature of the community, a feeling of safety and security, a family-like atmosphere, and a culture of mutual support and connectedness are common interrelated themes shared by interviewees who grew up in Dunleith. Regarding the physical size of the neighborhood, Smithers points out that, "Yes, it was a big development, but the Black community was small—so people were connected."[334] Ridgeway also recalls a "definite sense of connection" in the neighborhood back then.[335] Pridgen and Smithers highlight the sense of security that pervaded the community, with Smithers calling Dunleith a "safe haven," since "whatever was going on outside in the world, you knew if you got to Dunleith you were safe…you had that sense of security."[336] Pridgen also recalls a feeling of freedom while growing up in Dunleith—including "freedom to grow, freedom to express yourself…. It was a good time and a great feeling because you really had community, and unity, out there." She adds that it "was nice to live among your own." The sense of security was strong enough that people did not worry about crime, says Smithers, who shares that "people slept with their doors open. You know, just the screen door because there was no air conditioning. Windows open, screen door…the key under the front door mat where any and everybody could find it" because there was "virtually no crime" at that time. She adds that Dunleith "was a great community to grow up in and to raise a kid in."[337] Neighbors watched out for each other's children, and children were taught to respect their elders in the neighborhood. Ridgeway especially emphasized this culture in Dunleith, describing the development as "a family" and remembering several important mentors to him in the neighborhood. "You had role models," he recalls, "and I can't emphasize that enough, you had a *lot* of role models. You had a lot of people there that wanted to make sure you did the right thing." Even after he went to college, he remembers neighbors encouraging him to finish strong and having pride in his future success: "There was a lot of people who used to say, 'You need to graduate,'" and "that type of encouragement kept you focused."[338] Yet it was the small gestures of mutual support that also made Dunleith a great place, recalls Pridgen. For example, "Neighbors borrowed from each other, too . . . [a] cup of sugar, that sort of thing," and people did

[334] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[335] John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[336] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware; Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[337] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[338] John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

not hesitate to ask a neighbor for a ride somewhere, if needed. “There was nothing shameful about borrowing from people,” recalls Pridgen, and, in fact, “it was the norm.”[339]

Important social focal points for the Dunleith community included a pair of local churches and the school. Most families either attended Coleman Memorial Methodist Church on Anderson Drive or Community Presbyterian Church on Rogers Road—both of which everyone walked to.[340] Besides spiritual fellowship and “booming Sunday schools,” both churches also hosted social activities.[341] Sandra Smithers remembers a dance being held at Community Presbyterian Church every Saturday night from 7-10 pm, and Edythe Pridgen recalled a girls club, the Boy Scouts, and bowling parties organized by the church. She also remembers Coleman Memorial Methodist Church organizing exciting trips to the skating rink off Governor Printz Boulevard. The local school also was a hub of the community—first Millside School and later Dunleith School—since they were open until 5 o’clock and hosted after-school programs.[342] The schools also had dances, and their playgrounds, courts, and baseball fields were areas for kids to congregate and play outside of school hours.[343] Little League games were especially popular events for many in the community to attend. Sports were a major recreational activity, whether formally organized or not, though it was not until later that Surratte Park and its ballfields were installed. Other organized recreational activities, recalls Ridgeway, included going to the Bowlerama, the Wilmington Swim Club on New Castle Avenue, the YMCA in Wilmington, and an occasional trip to a skating rink in Chester. However, as with kids in many neighborhoods during that era, play and recreation was often informal and inventive. Smithers remembers, “There were no fences at that time, so we would play softball in the backyards with a stick and a ball, and we would use two or three yards for the field, and we broke lots of windows.”[344] Softball games were also played in an informal ballfield between Dunleith and Garfield Park, according to Pridgen. There was also a homemade basketball court behind Morehouse Drive. Ridgeway recalls, “We were creative in our recreation. . .

[339] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[340] Pridgen and Smithers both shared that these churches were originally hosted in neighborhood homes, with Coleman starting with the Jenkins family at a house on Bethune Drive, and Community Presbyterian starting at Millside School and then 465 Morehouse Drive, where Reverend Moyer removed a bedroom in order to host his congregation. Pridgen recalls they broke ground on the new Community Presbyterian on Rogers Road in 1954 and laid the cornerstone in 1955.
[341] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[342] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware; Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[343] John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[344] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

We built our own skateboards, built our own go-karts, we would do our own sledding down the hills in Oakmont and Dunleith . . . we would slide down the hill on boxes," whether they had sleds or not. He also remembers playing in a heavily wooded area behind the Dunleith School, which had ponds where they would go fishing for minnows and see lots of wildlife. In the area where the Morehouse Drive extension now is, connecting the neighborhood to New Castle Avenue, Pridgen remembers picking blackberries, peaches, walnuts, and honeysuckle.[345]

As far as the architecture of Dunleith, most interviewees who grew up in Dunleith did not find themselves thinking about the houses or their amenities too much when they were young. Both Pridgen and Ridgeway mention that the most important aspect to them, as children, was not the house itself but the neighborhood full of other young kids to play with and the broader community they felt a part of. Yet Pridgen, whose family lived in a small, three-room unit in Millside before purchasing in Dunleith, remembers especially "the *room*" offered by their new home in Dunleith: "I just kept running around the house until my father came out and told me to stop running around. I was excited." Yet overall, she feels that it was the "sense of achievement" and pride of homeownership that was most important for her parents—especially the fact that it was a new house in a new community.[346] Smithers believes, in retrospect, that the construction of houses in Dunleith, despite its simplicity, was "pound for pound…probably better construction than some of the other places because it was not wood-framed—you know, it was brick, it was on a slab—so, in that regard, it was probably more sturdy than a lot of other construction." One reason people did not talk a lot about their houses was their similarity in design, says Smithers: "Essentially, there were four designs." Besides the two-bedroom houses that had similar designs, "there was the three-bedroom house with a kitchen in the back, [and] the three-bedroom house with the kitchen in the front."[347] On Bunche Boulevard, there were about four or five houses that had full basements, since they were built on a hill, but there were few others with a cellar. Most of the Dunleith houses were built on a concrete slab—and the masonry construction, along with the heating system, caused some issues over the years. Edythe Pridgen recalls that the heating system, "when it would turn off, and there was a cycle, [and] if you looked down in the vent, water was running through the houses. It never got up inside the house, but a lot of the houses got a lot of mildew or mold."[348]

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[345] John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[346] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[347] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[348] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

Smithers similarly recalls moisture and mildew issues, pointing out frequent "moisture on the floors because of condensation because the houses were [on] slab," and some houses were also built on formerly "marshy land." This was made worse by floors laid with tile, since "the floors were cold, and the heat came from the ceilings, and there was no way to heat the floors." She recalls people's shoes would sometimes develop mildew from sitting on these floors, and "there were a number of people who had to leave Dunleith because of the moisture."[349]

Renovations were common in Dunleith, as they were in all mid-twentieth century neighborhoods with modestly sized houses. The homes in Dunleith, however, might have faced structural challenges when expanding, due mostly to the construction type. Smithers remembers that the one-story houses could not be added to vertically—to create a second story—because "the footers were not deep enough to accommodate" the extra weight. As such, lateral additions to the side or to the rear were the most common.[350] People expanded their kitchens, added bedrooms or dens (especially to the rear), and a couple of families even added a basement. Porch additions were also common—on the front, back, or both. Additions were common and often necessary for growing families who could not—or did not want to—leave the neighborhood.[351] Still, despite these additions, and despite some houses in the neighborhood now being two stories high, the homes in Dunleith still generally tend to retain their similarity in design, form, and rhythm along the development's mostly-original street grid, with each still named after a prominent African American—a point of pride for Dunleith's original residents and for many residents still today.

Physical Characteristics of Dunleith

Dunleith is a large, developer platted and designed residential subdivision featuring detached, single-family homes, located west of New Castle Avenue, east of Route 13 (DuPont Highway), south of Rogers Road, and north of Memorial Drive. The open-access subdivision—accessed from both New Castle Avenue and Rogers Road—was constructed in two primary phases, "Section A" and "Section 1." Section A, the first section, consists of 78 houses along Talladega Drive, Rogers Road, Hastie Drive, Bunche Boulevard, and Opal Drive. Section 1,

[349] Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[350] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.
[351] Sandra Smithers, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., April 19, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware; Edythe Pridgen, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 9, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware; John Ridgeway, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., June 4, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

the second section, consists of 392 houses along Bunche Boulevard, Morehouse Drive, Robinson Drive, Anderson Drive, Bethune Drive, and Carver Drive. The streets in Dunleith were named after prominent Black leaders and Black educational institutions (Morehouse and Talladega Drives).[352] These streets, which primarily run from the northwest to the southeast, are laid out in a straight grid-iron pattern, with the edge roads having some curved corners. The neighborhood is comprised of 470 single-family homes located on individual parcels that measure 50 x 110 feet (.13 acres) or 55 x 110 feet (.14 acres) on average. The houses have varying setbacks of about 25 to 35 feet. The entire neighborhood features pedestrian sidewalks. Each home has its own poured concrete driveway as well as a poured concrete walkway to the front door. Dunleith was constructed without any additional community amenities, but in 1974, Surratte Park, encompassing 9.4 acres, was developed on Bethune Drive. [353] Owned by New Castle County, Surratte Park features an in-ground swimming pool with a maintenance building, basketball courts, baseball diamonds, playground equipment, and a pedestrian-bicycle pathway that leads to the adjacent Rose Hill Park.

The architecture of the detached, single-family homes in Dunleith is heterogenous, with four house forms and no dominant architectural style. The different housing forms present in Dunleith include ranch houses (constructed with three or four bays across the front façade), front-gabled ranches (always three bays in width), minimalist Contemporary houses (with a stepped gable roof, always four bays in width), and a flat roof ranch (always three bays in width). The flat roof form is the least prevalent house type found in Dunleith. While the housing stock in Dunleith is diverse in form, the houses share many other design commonalities. First, all the houses are of masonry construction and rectangular in form, with no projections as originally built. The dwellings were constructed with one story, without basements, and are set on poured concrete slab foundations. The exterior cladding of the dwellings, as originally built, was one of two materials—"beveled masonry" or brick veneer. The "beveled masonry" concrete siding was poured to mimic the more popular aluminum siding. The brick was manufactured locally at Brikete Company near Newport, Delaware.[354] Today, many of the homes that originally featured the beveled masonry cast concrete siding are now clad in vinyl or aluminum siding.

The houses constructed in Dunleith, like other Minimal Traditional houses associated with FHA/VA programs, were small and built with 775 to 950 square feet of living space. The interior of the houses featured between five

[352] "12 Families Being Moved Into Dunleith: Suburban Development For Negroes Welcomes Its First Residents," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 22, 1950.
[353] "2 new parks almost ready," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 21, 1974.
[354] "12 Families Being Moved Into Dunleith: Suburban Development For Negroes Welcomes Its First Residents," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 22, 1950.

and six rooms. The larger homes had three bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room, and a combination kitchen and dining room, while the smaller varieties (especially the three-bay ranch form) had only two bedrooms. As constructed, the houses featured very little ornamentation. However, some of the house forms originally featured slightly overhanging roofs above the entry bays, supported by metal brackets. Many of these original porch overhangs survive, especially on the three- and four-bay ranches. Since initial construction, many homeowners have added or enclosed porches, added exterior shutters, and have constructed additions to their homes.

Since Dunleith is representative of a single-family, detached house subdivision, it features many typical elements of landscape features associated with these subdivisions, including accommodations for automobiles. Each house has its own poured concrete driveway to one side or the other. As originally constructed, the houses had no attached or freestanding carports or garages. The lack of these purpose-built structures was likely a cost saving measure by the developers. If any properties today feature a garage or carport, they were later added by homeowners. Additionally, each house has its own dedicated walkway spanning from the sidewalk to the front door of the dwelling. Lastly, each house has its own individual yard, surrounding the dwelling on all four sides.

Figure 87. Example of a four-bay ranch form house in Dunleith, clad in brick veneer. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 88. Example of a three-bay ranch form house in Dunleith. This dwelling has been slightly modified with newer vinyl siding and porch supports. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 89. Example of the front-gabled ranch house form found throughout Dunleith. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 90. Example of the minimalist Contemporary house form with a stepped roofline found in Dunleith. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 91. Example of a flat-roof ranch in Dunleith. (Google Maps, 2012)

Garfield Park

Built 1951

History

In 1951, tentative approval was given to Don A. Loftus's company, Delaware Community Homes, Inc.—developers of nearby Dunleith and Clifton Park Manor—for the Garfield Park development, conditional on

alteration of road access and an increase in the space allotted for recreation from three acres to six.[355] The subdivision was planned with 650 lots measuring 55 x 110 feet.[356] By September 1951, Gaines Construction Company of Florida had purchased the land from Loftus and was listed as the developer with plans to build 736 three-bedroom homes; the regional VA office had "agreed to guarantee home loans for the project."[357] Gaines specialized in affordable homes for veterans and civilians in the Miami area, and this was the company's first project in Delaware.[358]

Construction of the first section of houses—236 one-story, three-bedroom, asbestos-shingled ranches on 53 acres—was begun in October 1951 and well underway by March 1952, when 60 percent were already sold. These were offered for around $9,000.[359] In June, the first residents of the subdivision, a Marine Corps veteran family, moved into their new home.[360] By July 1952, about 95 percent of the first 236 homes had been completed.[361] The company completed the last of the first section in August of that year and planned an additional 400 houses.[362] Gaines completed a total of 375 houses at Garfield Park.[363] The houses were heavily marketed to veterans, for whom sales preference was given, with only 10 percent of the first phase of homes set aside for non-veterans.[364] In the fall of 1952, the first VA home loan to a Korean War veteran was approved by the regional VA office, with which James F. McDonough bought a home in Garfield Park.[365] While deeds and advertisements for the neighborhood do not specify any racial restrictions, the way in which it was marketed and the lack of any mention of it as an "open occupancy" subdivision indicates that the homes were intended for white buyers.[366]

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[355] "Tentative OK Given Plans for Garfield Park Project," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 18, 1951; "Project Near Minquadale with 650 Home Sites Gets Board's Approval," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 18, 1951.
[356] The total acreage of the development is obscured by a large smudge in the newspaper scan available on newspapers.com.
[357] "Firm to Build 700 Houses: Site from Garfield Park to Wonder Mile Picked for New Development," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 10, 1954; "Home Development Near Span Planned," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 28, 1951. Action on tentative approval for this iteration of Garfield Park was deferred by the New Castle County Planning Commission in November 1951 but must refer to an additional section of the subdivision since construction was already underway on the first. See, "Regional Board Bars Blue Rock Manor Plat," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 16, 1951.
[358] "Erection Started of Homes for Vets," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), October 20, 1951.
[359] *The News Journal*, Wilmington, Delaware, Oct. 20, 1951; "Garfield Park Is New Suburb: 236 Homes on 53 Acres in New Castle Avenue Area is 60 Pct. Sold," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 15, 1952.
[360] "Garfield Park 'First Family' Will Get Neighbors Soon," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 7, 1952.
[361] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 15, 1952; "Catholic Diocese to Build Church in Collins Park Area: New Parish Will Be Located Just off New Castle Avenue Near Bridge; With Construction to Start Next Spring; Needed Lots Given for Work," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 23, 1952.
[362] "Group of 20 New Homes Completed at Garfield Park," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 16, 1952.
[363] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 10, 1954.
[364] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 23, 1952.
[365] "State VA Office Okays First Loan to Veteran of Korea," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 22, 1952,
[366] See, for example, the white couple pictured in the sales ad in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), February 23, 1952.

June Is Garfield Park's Target Date

Staff Photographer.

A view of Garfield Park, the latest addition to Wilmington's family of suburban communities, which is going up on New Castle Avenue south of the city. Already 60 per cent sold, the 236-home community is expected to be completed and fully occupied by summer.

Figure 92. Announcing the opening of Garfield Park in June of 1952. Note the placement of the two ranches, one facing the street, and the other rotated 90 degrees on the lot. "Garfield Park is New Suburb." (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, March 15, 1952)

Figure 93. Ad for the new Garfield Park neighborhood, marketing to white veterans. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, Feb. 23, 1952)

Garfield Park Is Officially Opened

Staff Photographer.

The first Garfield Park resident gets the keys to the house. James Herman Jones (at right with Mrs. Jones and Jimmy Jones) gets the key from D. M. Capps, vice president and general construction superintendent for Gaines Construction Company. George W. Cook, sales director, is at left.

Figure 94. "Garfield Park 'First Family' Will Get Neighbors Soon." (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, June 7, 1952)

Gaines Construction also dedicated just under six acres of recreation space for the subdivision: the development's park, Garfield Park, is laid out at the western edge of the neighborhood and bordered by Donhaven Drive, Onaway Place, and Karlyn Drive.[367] A baseball diamond was dedicated there by the local league in 1955.[368] The developers also donated two parcels of the subdivision to the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington in 1952 to provide road access to the Holy Spirit Catholic Church, then in planning stages.[369]

In 1954, another Florida-based builder, Southeastern Builders Corporation, purchased 125 acres adjacent to Garfield Park with plans to build 700 one-story ranch houses in a subdivision to be named Overview Gardens. An extension of Garfield Park's second section was also planned and taken on by Southeastern Builders, not

[367] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 15, 1952.
[368] "Garfield Park Cubs to Open New Field," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 22, 1955.
[369] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 23, 1952.

Gaines.[370] By 1954, Southeastern began offering a split-level ranch model, the Tri-Master, in the new section with plans to build more of the popular model in 1955.[371] An advertisement for the second section of Garfield Park was targeted to mothers and promised "a clean, healthy place" to raise a family, "free of railroad soot, chemical dust and obnoxious odors so prevalent in many parts of Wilmington."[372]

Mother

Do you want a clean healthy place to raise your family?

Garfield Park Section #2 is free of railroad soot, chemical dust and obnoxious odors so prevalent in many parts of Wilmington.

Even the grass is greener, the sun shines brighter, and the air is pleasant to breathe.

This new section of Garfield Park beckons to you and your family.

How about a visit to our model home located in Garfield Park just north of the entrance to the Delaware Memorial Bridge on New Castle Ave.

Open 1 to 5 p. m. and 6 to 9 p. m.

GEORGE RAY HAMILTON, Real Estate Broker

Representative of

Southeastern Builders, Inc.

Phone Wilm. 6-2583

NEW GARFIELD PARK HOME—This popular split-level model, which set sales records last fall for Jones Frederick & Associates and its subsidiary, Southeastern Builders, Inc., will be built in a new section of 155 homes. The Tri-Master is a three-bedroom, one-bath home with a finished recreation room, garage, and separate utility room. The $12,350 price includes all settlement costs.

GARFIELD PARK

A NEW SPLIT LEVEL

$12,250

Aquilla Ave.—Just off DuPont Parkway & Memorial Drive. 7 rooms, ceramic tile bath, garage, etc. Ready for occupancy. VA financing, 2% down plus $450 closing cost. Payments $68.50 per month. F. H. A. terms for non-veterans.

OL 6-0143 or OL 5-5154 for information or appointment.

Figure 95. Advertisements for homes in Garfield Park. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, April 14, 1956; "155 Split Levels to Be Built in New Garfield Park Section," *The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, May 7, 1955; *The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, November 14, 1956)

Garfield Park had a very active civic association and welfare association that organized neighborhood dances, block parties, sports teams, fund drives for various recreation installations and activities, the erection of a bus shelter, and other campaigns.[373] The civic association petitioned for street lighting in 1953 and worked toward lighting for the second section of Garfield Park in 1956.[374] Public schools were adjacent, and in 1955, the Holy Spirit Catholic Church began construction of its parochial school with the goal of serving 400 students.[375]

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[370] "Builder Plans 700 New Homes: Florida Firm Buys Tract Between Garfield Park, Wonder Mile for Project," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 11, 1954; "155 Split Levels to Be Built in New Garfield Park Section," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 7, 1955. See also the advertisement for homes in Section 2 of Garfield Park offered by Southeastern Builders, rather than Gaines.

[371] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 10, 1954.

[372] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 14, 1954.

[373] See, for example, "Garfield Park Unit Convenes," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 11, 1956; "Committee Set in Garfield Park," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Oct. 15, 1956; "Volunteers to Erect Shelter for Garfield Park Bus Riders," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 13, 1953.

[374] "Garfield Park Group Hopes for Light on Dark Subject," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 21, 1953; "Garfield Park Group Convenes," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), February 18, 1956.

[375] "Holy Spirit Church Starts $155,000 School Building," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), January 24, 1955. This is the current location of Serviam Girls Academy.

Physical Characteristics of Garfield Park

Garfield Park is a large developer platted and designed residential subdivision featuring detached, single-family homes, located along and southwest of Memorial Drive, west of New Castle Avenue, north of Interstate 295, and adjoining and southeast of Overview Gardens. The open-access subdivision—accessed from both New Castle Avenue and Memorial Drive—was constructed in two primary phases, "Section 1" and "Section 2." Section 1 consists of 245 houses along Halcyon Drive, Donhaven Drive, Onaway Place, Winder Road, and Chase Avenue. Section 2 consists of 143 houses along Lind Avenue, Chesterfield Avenue, Memorial Drive, and Karlyn Drive. Together, both sections comprise 388 houses. These streets, which primarily run from northwest to the southeast, are laid out in a mostly straight grid-iron pattern, except for Winder Road, which creates a loop on the extreme western edge of the development. The houses are all located on individual parcels, ranging from .13 to .20 acres. The width of the lots range from 52 to 68 feet, with the majority of the lots in Section 1 being 55 feet, and the majority of the lots in Section 2 being 68 feet. On average, most lots in both sections are 110 feet in length. Both sections of the neighborhood feature poured concrete sidewalks. Each home has its own poured concrete walkway, leading from the sidewalk to the front door. Garfield Park was constructed without any additional community amenities, but between 1970 and 1981, baseball fields were developed at the present-day site of the New Castle County-operated Garfield Park Recreation Center, a modern building set on a 5.75-acre parcel with a baseball diamond, basketball court, playground, open space, and parking.

The architecture of the detached, single-family homes in Garfield Park is homogenous in form, comprising one-story ranch houses with varied roof shapes, bays, and placements on lots to give the neighborhood the appearance of architectural variety. In Section 1 of Garfield Park, the only house form present is a four-bay ranch, with the front door located in the second bay from either the left or right. Above each door is a shed roof overhang that projects slightly above the door. The only difference among the Section 1 houses is roof type and placement on the lots. Most of the houses feature a traditional side-gabled roof, though some have hipped roofs. Some of the side-gabled ranches are turned 90 degrees on their lot, with the two-bay gable end facing the street. Interestingly, these turned ranches do not have a door on the street-facing façade; instead, the main entry remains located on the longer four-bay side elevation. Besides lot placement and roof type, all Section 1 houses were constructed identically in form and fenestration. Section 2 houses feature similar designs to those in Section 1—all are one-story variations on the ranch form. Most of the Section 2 houses feature five bays and exhibit larger porch overhangs spanning two bays (instead of one), with either a shed roof overhang configuration like Section 1 houses or a front-gabled overhang. Additionally, Section 2 also features some five-bay gable-and-wing ranches. This subtype of the form is largely identical to the side gable ranches in all respects except the front-gable. The

houses located on Memorial Drive, which are also part of Section 2, are slightly smaller than the interior Section 2 dwellings. These Memorial Drive houses are only four bays in width (like Section 1) and feature side-gable, hipped roof, and turned ranch subtypes. The only differentiation between the Memorial Drive Section 2 houses and the Section 1 houses are the two-bay porch overhangs, constructed in either the extended shed roof or front gable form. While split-level house forms were advertised, none were in the geographic boundaries of Garfield Park (as defined by New Castle County). However, several of these house forms are found in adjacent Overview Gardens Sections 1 and 2.

The houses in Garfield Park are all of frame construction and originally built as rectangular ranches with no rear or side projections. Like most subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor, the houses of Garfield Park were built on slab foundations without basements. The exterior cladding of the houses is a mixture of asbestos shingle, vinyl, and aluminum siding. As built, underneath the porch overhangs and surrounding the front doors was a brick veneer. In general, the houses reflect little stylistic ornamentation, except for the porch overhangs and shutters. Like other Minimal Traditional houses associated with FHA/VA programs, the houses constructed in Garfield Park were small, averaging 950 square feet of living space. Each house contained six rooms: three bedrooms, a full bathroom, a kitchen with dinette, and a living room.

As originally constructed, the houses in Garfield Park each had an individual driveway but no attached or freestanding carport or garage. The lack of these purpose-built structures was likely a cost saving measure by the developers. If any properties today feature a carport or garage, they were added later by homeowners. Additionally, each house has its own dedicated walkway spanning from the sidewalk to the front door. Lastly, each house has its own individual yard, surrounding the dwellings on all four sides.

Figure 96. A row of houses in Garfield Park, showing a variety of ranch forms. The second house from left is an example of a rotated ranch house. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 97. Example of a four-bay, side-gabled ranch house. This was the dominant form constructed in Section 1 of Garfield Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 98. Example of a four-bay, hipped-roof variation on the ranch form in Garfield Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Figure 99. Example of a four-bay, side-gabled ranch house. This was the dominant form constructed in Section 1 of Garfield Park. Note the original fenestration, as well as the brick veneer (now painted black) around the door. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2021)

Developments South of I-295, East of Route 9

Collins Park

Built 1943-1949

History

In June 1943, the New Castle County Planning Board approved plans for Collins Park—a new development to hold 131 modest "workers" homes—to be built by Collins Development Company of Chester, Pennsylvania; in

July of that year, the county granted permits for construction of the first thirty houses at Collins Park. The development was one of the first two subdivisions granted building permits under the new county building code.[376] The modest brick homes were to have "two bedrooms, a large living room, tile bath, modern kitchen, unfinished attic, full cellar and coal furnaces," on lots measuring 50 x 100 feet.[377] When initially approved, the houses were to be rented for $50 per month to accommodate "in-migratory" workers, with a planned sale price of $5,500.[378] Houses in Collins Park were offered for sale by the early fall of 1943, and construction of the 131 planned houses was completed by April 1944.[379] Just over half had already been sold by then.[380] Advertisements for rentals also appeared that year.[381]

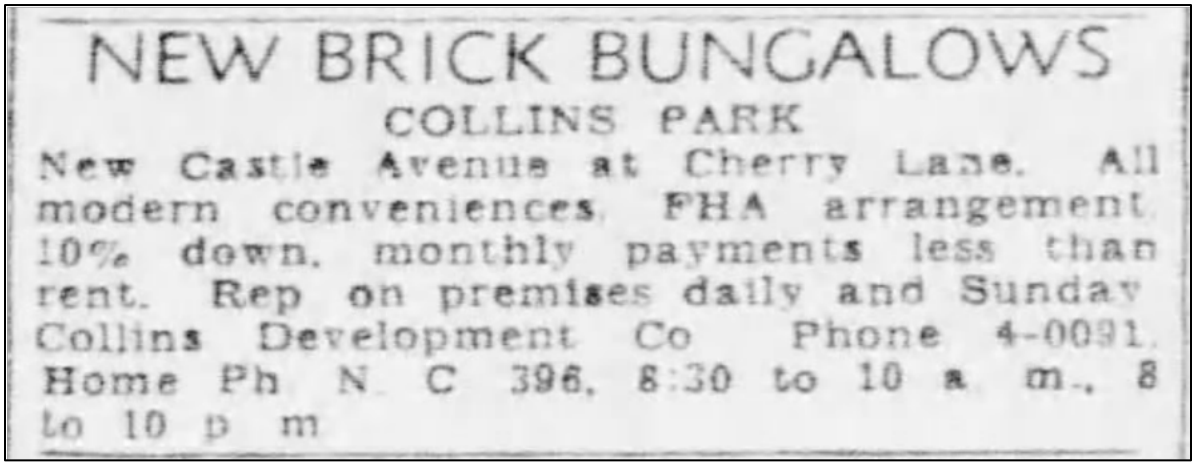
NEW BRICK BUNGALOWS
COLLINS PARK
New Castle Avenue at Cherry Lane. All modern conveniences. FHA arrangement. 10% down, monthly payments less than rent. Rep on premises daily and Sunday. Collins Development Co. Phone 4-0091. Home Ph. N. C. 396. 8:30 to 10 a. m., 8 to 10 p. m.

Figure 100. Early advertisement for Collins Park homes, October 30, 1943. (*The Morning News,* Wilmington, DE)

In 1944, the homes were marketed for their location, spaciousness, and the amenities of the subdivision. Serviced by two bus lines, the houses were, for example, located "on the highest point between Wilmington and New Castle [with] a superb view of the Delaware River."[382] The farmland on which they had been built was well-suited to the planting of victory gardens, and yards were generous. They had modern kitchens, large, well-lit basements, and good ventilation. Several different house styles were available, with and without porches.

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[376] "Planning Board Approves Plat: Collins Park Development of 131 Workers' Homes Will Be ready by Sept. 1," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 18, 1943; "County Issues House Permits: First Granted Under New Building Code Provide for Two Developments," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 21, 1943.
[377] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 18, 1943.
[378] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 18, 1943.
[379] Sales ads in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 29, October 11, and October 30, 1943, for example. See "131 Collins Park Homes Completed: Furnished Sample House At New Development Open For Inspection Tomorrow," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 1, 1944.
[380] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 1, 1944.
[381] See, for example, *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 5, 1944.
[382] In May 1944, residents of Holloway Terrace and Collins Park petitioned for additional buses citing overcrowding on current buses. See "Added Buses Sought By Holloway Terrace," The Morning News (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1944.

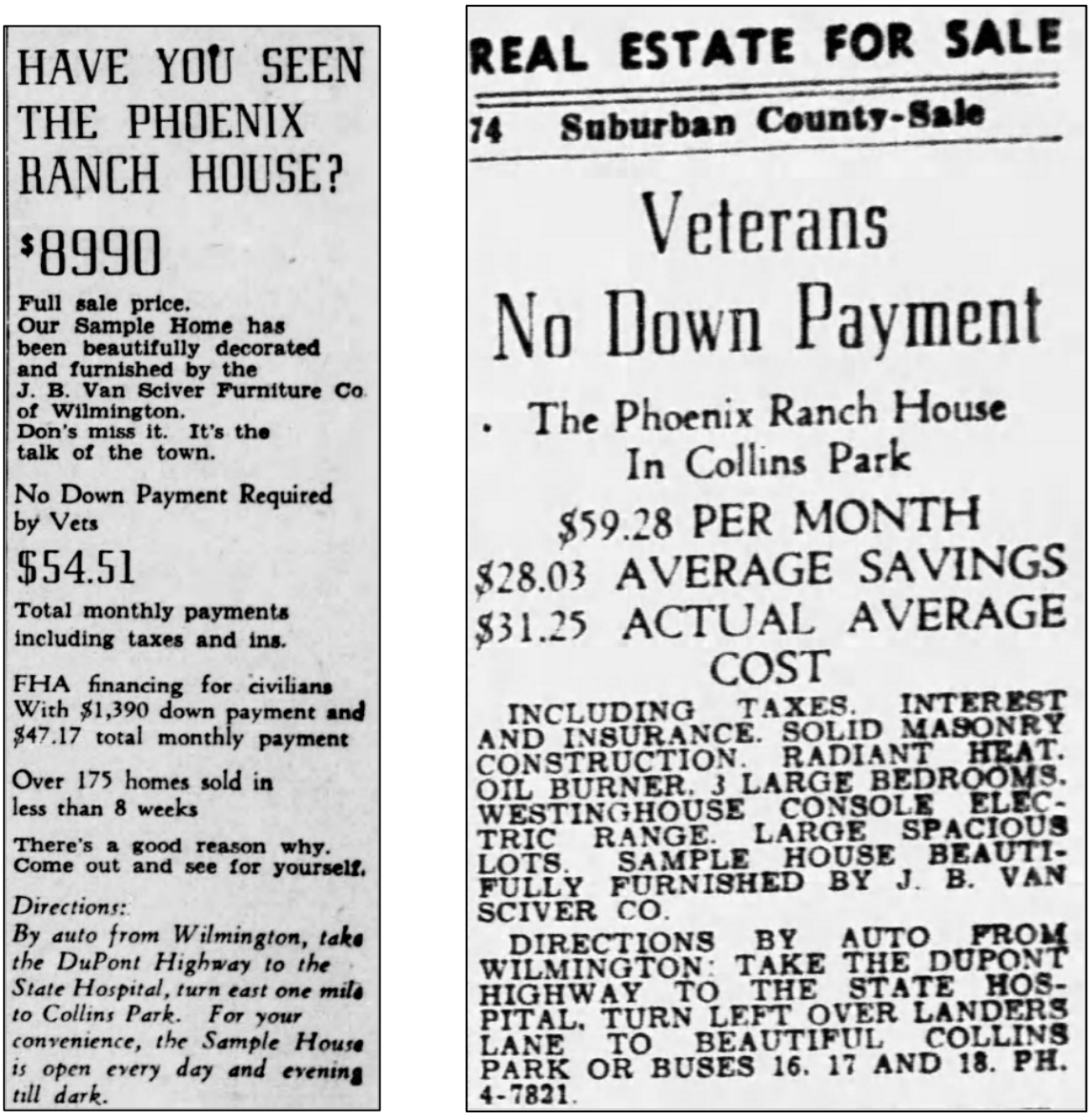
Featuring a park and playground, the houses and subdivision were "ideally situated for families [with] children."[383]

Figure 101. Sales advertisement for new two-story, brick homes in Collins Park. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, November 22, 1947)

In 1945, the county's planning commission gave tentative approval for an expansion of the development, by Collins Park Builders, Inc., with the addition of more than 200 houses.[384] These brick houses, termed "post-war homes," had two stories and the option for a garage.[385] Returning veterans were offered favorable financing, and

[383] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 1, 1944.
[384] "Plat for $1,000,000 Project At Collins Park Approved By Planning Commission," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), October 19, 1945.
[385] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 17, 1945.

the homes were sold at a price point of $10,800.[386] Collins Park was further expanded to the south and southeast during the late 1940s with the addition of several hundred modest ranch-type houses, many featuring carports.[387] Offered at $8,990, with no down payment for veterans, the Collins Park builders likely introduced these more modest "Phoenix Ranches" to attract buyers at a lower price point and to stimulate sales.[388]



HAVE YOU SEEN THE PHOENIX RANCH HOUSE?

$8990

Full sale price.
Our Sample Home has been beautifully decorated and furnished by the J. B. Van Sciver Furniture Co. of Wilmington.
Don's miss it. It's the talk of the town.

No Down Payment Required by Vets

$54.51

Total monthly payments including taxes and ins.

FHA financing for civilians With $1,390 down payment and $47.17 total monthly payment

Over 175 homes sold in less than 8 weeks

There's a good reason why. Come out and see for yourself.

Directions:
By auto from Wilmington, take the DuPont Highway to the State Hospital, turn east one mile to Collins Park. For your convenience, the Sample House is open every day and evening till dark.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

74 Suburban County-Sale

Veterans
No Down Payment

The Phoenix Ranch House
In Collins Park

$59.28 PER MONTH
$28.03 AVERAGE SAVINGS
$31.25 ACTUAL AVERAGE COST

INCLUDING TAXES, INTEREST AND INSURANCE. SOLID MASONRY CONSTRUCTION. RADIANT HEAT. OIL BURNER. 3 LARGE BEDROOMS. WESTINGHOUSE CONSOLE ELECTRIC RANGE. LARGE SPACIOUS LOTS. SAMPLE HOUSE BEAUTIFULLY FURNISHED BY J. B. VAN SCIVER CO.

DIRECTIONS BY AUTO FROM WILMINGTON: TAKE THE DUPONT HIGHWAY TO THE STATE HOSPITAL, TURN LEFT OVER LANDERS LANE TO BEAUTIFUL COLLINS PARK OR BUSES 16, 17 AND 18. PH. 4-7821.

Figure 102. Collins Park sales ads for the late 1940s "Phoenix Ranch" homes. (*Journal-Every Evening*, August 9, 1948, and April 21, 1949)

[386] Sales advertisement for Collins Park, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), October 16, 1945; sales advertisement for Collins Park, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 22, 1947.
[387] See, for example, advertisements in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), October 1, 1952, and January 15, 1954.
[388] Sales advertisement for Collins Park, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), August 9, 1948; Sales advertisement for Collins Park, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), April 21, 1949.

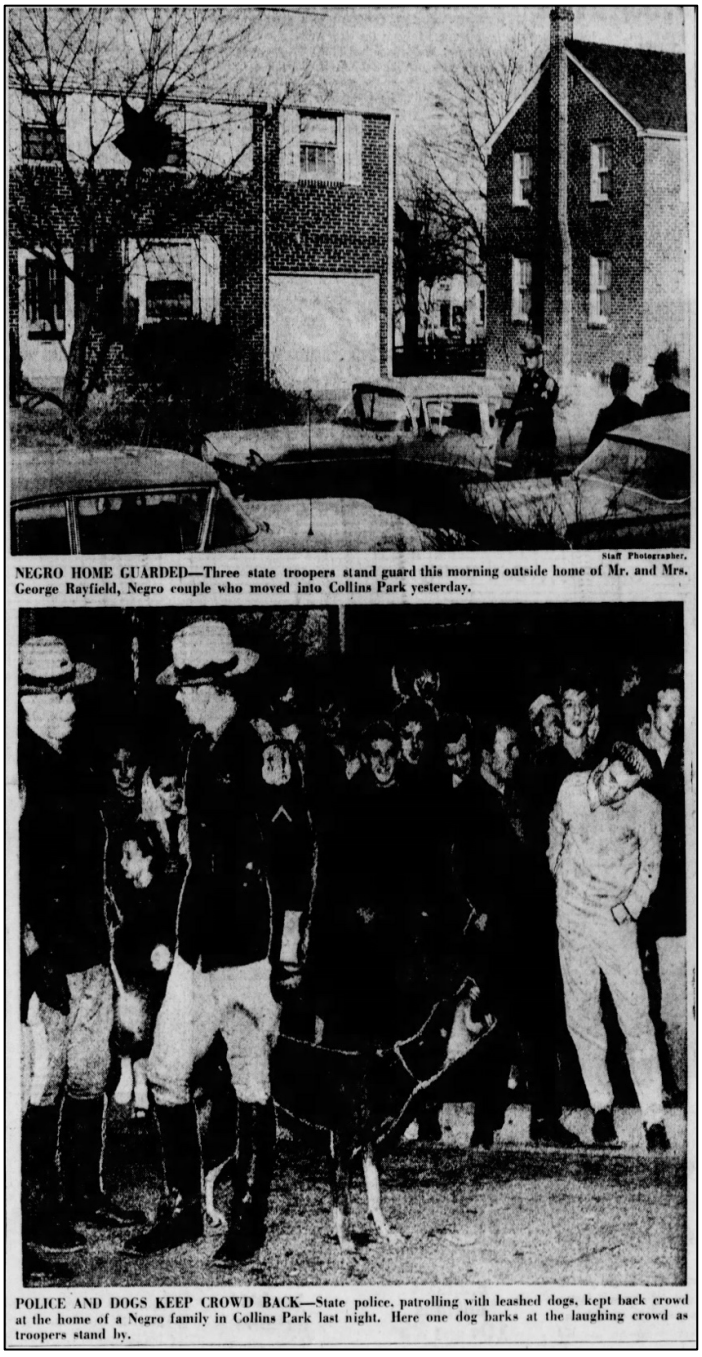
However, with this increased development, builders of Collins Park soon came under fire for surface water runoff that was flooding and polluting the historically Black neighborhood of Buttonwood, to its south. The City Council of New Castle sued in chancery court, arguing that "water draining from the Collins Park section east of the Pennsylvania Railroad line is polluting and contaminating water used for drinking and other purposes in Buttonwood" and asked for a temporary order preventing the sale or occupancy of dwellings in that section of Collins Park and for the defendants to abate the issue.[389] It was found that builders "had so altered the land contour in the Collins Park development to cause surface water to drain into the Buttonwood section, creating floods that did not exist prior to the development."[390] Ultimately, the Collins Park developers paid the City of New Castle $7,000 to engineer drainage ditches to address the issue.[391]

By the early 1950s, additional amenities of suburban living came to the neighborhood: developer Frank Collins built a suburban-style shopping center at Collins Park in 1950 that included a Hearn Bros. Super Food Market and ample parking.[392] The same year, the Collins Park Citizens Association built two new bus shelters in the development at Riverview Avenue and May Avenue.[393] The proximity of bus stops remained a selling point for the homes here.[394] Further, in 1950, J. Frank Darling of Castle Construction Company donated seven acres of land for the construction of a public school across Route 9 from Collins Park.[395] After disputes between neighborhoods at the beginning of the 1950s, some of them heated and pitting residents of Holloway Terrace, Rose Hill, Mayview Manor, Hamilton Park, and Minquadale against those from Collins Park, in 1952 a school to serve the Collins Park and Swanwyck communities was built across Route 9 in the Swanwyck neighborhood.[396]

In 1959, Collins Park was thrust into the spotlight for racially-motivated violence and protests. In late February of that year, George and Lucille Rayfield moved into their Collins Park home at 107 Bellanca Lane as the development's first Black homeowners. The days following their arrival saw crowds of up to 300 people gather outside the home to protest their presence in the community and express fears that this might depress property

[389] "New Castle Sues to End Nuisance," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 24, 1949.
[390] "$7,000 Banked for Flood Work," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 18, 1951.
[391] "$7,000 Banked for Flood Work," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 18, 1951.
[392] "Hearn Store Is Opening In Collins Park: Gala Program Tomorrow for Market that Will Be Part of New Center," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Oct. 24, 1950.
[393] "Citizens Erecting Two New Bus Shelters," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 6, 1950.
[394] See, for example, sales advertisement in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 25, 1952.
[395] "Collins Park Offered Land for New Public School Site," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Jan. 25, 1950.
[396] "Panel On Schools Meet Opposition: Five Communities to Ignore Meeting Called by Collins Park for Next Thursday," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 28, 1950; "6-Room School Plan Proposed: Collins Park-Swanwyck Area Residents Make Statement of Policies," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 1, 1950. See also, "Ground Broken for Swanwyck School," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Jan 15, 1952. This is the Harry O. Eisenberg Elementary School.

values.[397] Indeed, around 30 residents of the subdivision also demonstrated "outside the Marsh Road home of Francis A. Levering, the real estate man who sold the house to the Rayfields."[398]



Staff Photographer.

NEGRO HOME GUARDED—Three state troopers stand guard this morning outside home of Mr. and Mrs. George Rayfield, Negro couple who moved into Collins Park yesterday.

POLICE AND DOGS KEEP CROWD BACK—State police, patrolling with leashed dogs, kept back crowd at the home of a Negro family in Collins Park last night. Here one dog barks at the laughing crowd as troopers stand by.

Figure 103. Mobs outside of the Rayfields' new home. (The News Journal, Wilmington, DE, February 25, 1959)

[397] "Police Guard Negroes in Collins Park: Some of 'Mob' Had Fire Bombs, Chief Says," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 25, 1959; "In Collins Park, Fear," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 26, 1959; "Unions Urge Collins Park 'Fair Play:' Presidents of 7 Locals Of Auto Workers Call For Members to Shun Mob Demonstrations," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 27, 1959; "The Blast in Collins Park," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Wednesday, April 8, 1959.

[398] "Unions Urge Collins Park 'Fair Play': Presidents of 7 Locals Of Auto Workers Call For Members to Shun Mob Demonstrations," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 27, 1959.

Along with "rock-throwing, vandalism, anonymous telephone intimidation, racial abuse, and jeering at police officers performing their duty" to protect the Rayfields,[399] in the following weeks the family's windows were repeatedly broken, they received regular bomb threats, and gunshots were fired through their dining room window on March 20.[400] On March 21, they discovered a Molotov cocktail at their kitchen door, and a small fire was reported at the back of their house.[401]

When the Rayfields were away on the evening of April 7, 1959, an intentional blast from their stove severely damaged portions of the house.[402] Following the first blast in April 1959, the Rayfields repaired their home with the help of volunteers, and on June 12 they resumed residence.[403] A second blast ripped through the house on August 2. The home was sufficiently damaged at the time to be labeled a "total loss" and was ordered razed by the county.[404]

Between August 5 and 8, seven men were arrested for the bombings, six of them from Collins Park and the seventh from the Overview Gardens development.[405] They were all soon freed on bail.[406] Facing criticism for the pace and rigor of their investigative work, most ardently from an alliance of area clergymen, the state police lashed out at critics and at the Rayfields themselves.[407] Neighbors expressed shock that the bombers, described as "married men with families" and as "average people . . . not known for violence or lawlessness," lived among them.[408] Those Collins Park neighbors also "showed little sympathy for the Rayfields themselves" and "had

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[399] "In Collins Park, Fear," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 26, 1959; "Unions Urge Collins Park 'Fair Play:' Presidents of 7 Locals of Auto Workers Call For Members to Shun Mob Demonstrations," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 27, 1959.
[400] "In Collins Park, Fear," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 26, 1959; "Unions Urge Collins Park 'Fair Play:' Presidents of 7 Locals of Auto Workers Call For Members to Shun Mob Demonstrations," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Feb. 27, 1959. Several instances of harassment and violence are detailed in a petition to the Court of Chancery requesting an injunction against those responsible. See "Cause of Rayfield Stove Blast Sought by Police: Accident or Design Now Question; Nix Seeks Injunction; Union Offers Aid," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 9, 1959.
[401] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 9, 1959.
[402] Despite repeated bomb threats called into the Rayfields, the state police were initially skeptical that the blast had been intentional. See *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 9, 1959; "Some High Points of the Rayfield Story," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 8, 1959.
[403] A local union volunteered to help them rebuild: "Members of the Local 1694 International Longshoremen's Association, have volunteered their labor as skilled building tradesmen to aid the Rayfields in the rebuilding of their home." *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 9, 1959. See also *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 8, 1959.
[404] Jim Parks, "Police, FBI Probe Ruins, say 'High Explosive' Set Off Inside of Dwelling," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1959; "Rayfield Home Ordered Razed After Explosion Buckles Walls: Building Inspector Says Collins Park House Must Come Down As Public Safety Measure," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1959.
[405] "Rayfield Probe Still Open After 7 Arrests, Police Say: Suspects Allowed to Sign Bonds for Each Other But Not Own; Total Is $55,000; One Man Seized at Florida Motel," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE,) August 8, 1959.
[406] See inset on p. 3 of *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 8, 1959.
[407] William P. Frank, "'Our Men Have Been on the Job:' Colonel Ferguson Doesn't Hide Resentment of Critics as He Breaks Story of Arrests," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 8, 1959.
[408] "Neighbors of Arrested Men Generally Astonished at News," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), Aug. 8, 1959.

unkind words for the police, the newspapers, and the clergy," whom they believed were "against" them.[409] Many residents of the neighborhood doubled down in support of the bombers, funding their bail and holding bake sales to cover their legal fees.[410] From the outset of the protests, many local groups and residents had expressed outrage at the behavior of white Collins Park residents, condemning their actions and appealing to their sense of neighborliness and Christianity and their democratic spirit.[411] Four men were eventually convicted of the crime; the state supreme court reversed the conviction of one and allowed a second out on parole in 1963.[412]

Wilmington Morning News Photo

EXPLOSION'S RESULT at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Rayfield, 107 Bellanca Lane, is shown here. About all that's intact on the piano are the keys. In the upper left center is the telephone, blown to the ceiling.

Figure 104. Destruction caused by bombing at the Rayfields' home on August 2, 1959. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, August 3, 1959)

[409] "Neighbors of Arrested Men Generally Astonished at News," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 8, 1959.
[410] "Business Is Fairly Brisk at Collins Park Cake Tables: Sale Is Held to Raise Money for Defense of Seven Men and Youth Arrested in Connection with April 7 Rayfield Home Blast," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 15, 1959.
[411] "Religious Units Post Statement," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 2, 1959; "Clergyment Score Racial Disturbance in Collins Park," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 2, 1959; "Unions Urge Collins Park 'Fair Play': Presidents of 7 Locals of Auto Workers Call for Members to Shun Mob Demonstrations," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), February 27, 1959.
[412] Philip M. Boffey, "'Not Connected' to Plot: Therkildsen Cleared in Bomb Case," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 18, 1963; Frank Grant, "Downing Wins Parole from Bombing Term," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 26, 1963.

The violence and hostility the Rayfields endured at the hands of their neighbors, along with the lingering danger, led the family to relocate.[413] Today, the lot at 107 Bellanca Lane where their home stood remains vacant, having become an extended yard for the house next door to it. A state historical marker was erected near the entrance to the subdivision in 2017 to mark the turbulent history of the Collins Park subdivision.[414] Reportedly, the next Black family to buy in Collins Park was not until spring 1978, when Lavonne and Wilma Mathis purchased a home on Buck Lane. Despite the passage of nearly two decades, the Mathises experienced harassment almost immediately, with racial slurs spray-painted on their driveway, windows broken by rocks, and threatening phone calls. They, too, left Collins Park.[415] Later the same year, another Black family new to the neighborhood, the Purnells, also experienced harassment and violence, with a "Molotov cocktail" that failed to ignite as well as rocks and bottles thrown through their windows.[416] Neighborhood teenagers were charged in the firebombing incident.[417] The subdivision remains predominantly white.[418]

Physical Characteristics of Collins Park

Collins Park is the largest and one of the earliest developer platted and designed residential subdivisions constructed along the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor. In total, more than 700 detached, single-family houses were constructed in Collins Park during the 1940s. The first portion of the neighborhood was completed in 1944, comprising 131 homes offering "several different colonial styles," including "some with front porches."[419] An extensive, post-war expansion of Collins Park began in late 1945 and cumulated in the construction of more than 200 two-story, brick dwellings, many of which incorporated a garage into the plan.[420] In the late 1940s, Collins Park further expanded to the south and southeast with the addition of nearly 400 ranch-type homes. Parcel sizes are relatively consistent throughout the subdivision, with many interior lots measuring .11- or .12-acres, while corner lots are typically larger. Several unusually large parcels are found in the southeastern portion of the neighborhood, particularly adjacent to the Penn Central railroad tracks, with some lots measuring well-over a quarter-acre and a few approaching a half-acre in size.

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[413] Frank Levering, Jr., the Rayfields' real estate agent, provided them with a rental at 4th and N. Franklin Streets in Wilmington. See the front page inset in *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 8, 1959.
[414] Delaware Public Archives, State Historical Marker NC-230. See https://archives.delaware.gov/historical-markers-map/collins-park-bombings (accessed January 28, 2022).
[415] Ralph S. Moyed, "The Creeps Persist," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), July 5, 1978.
[416] M. Roy Adams, "First-Sized Rocks Hit Home," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), December 31, 1978.
[417] "Fire-Bomb Attack in Collins Park Blamed on 3 Teens," *The Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), October 10, 1978.
[418] In 2017, 74 percent of Collins Park residents were white. See demographics info in Wilmington Area Planning Council, "The Route 9 Corridor: Land Use and Transportation Plan," (Wilmington, DE), May 2017, 20.
[419] "131 Collins Park Homes Completed," *Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 1, 1944."
[420] "Collins Park," *News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 17, 1954.

Overall access to the subdivision is open, as it can be entered from multiple points, including via Killoran and Riverview Drives, Cherry Lane, and May Avenue. Interior streets within the subdivision are Bellanca, Buck, and Stanley Lanes, and Atlas and Delaware Drives on its northern side, with Adele, Elwood, Frazer, McGinn, and Keiser Places, Blue Hen Road, and Single Avenue on its southern side. A southeastern section of the neighborhood is separated from the rest of Collins Park by Penn Central railroad tracks and is entered via Daniel Lane, an interior street accessed via Single Avenue from May Avenue. Martin and Howell Drives are two additional interior streets within the southeastern section of Collins Park. While Howell Drive is connected to Buttonwood Avenue to the south, which is separate from the Collins Park subdivision, a concrete barrier blocks vehicular access between the two streets. Streets within the subdivision are generally linear with several gentle curves; Howell and Martin Drives, comprising the southeastern-most section, form a loop road. Additionally, two short stub roads, Klien and Neville Lanes, extend briefly southeast from Howell Drive and are original to the development of the subdivision. There are no houses facing into these lanes, which were seemingly intended to connect to additional sections of residential development that did not come to fruition.

The eastern edge of Collins Park, along Riverview Drive, backs up to an industrial area, while its western edge extends along New Castle Avenue/Route 9 and is adjacent to Collins Park Shopping Center, built in 1950. To the northeast of Collins Park, across Cherry Lane, is the Veterans Memorial Park, and to its southern border is the Buttonwood neighborhood as well as the boundary line for the City of New Castle. The subdivision features one park operated by New Castle County, also called Collins Park, situated southeast of the junction of Riverview Drive and South Place, backing onto industrial-zoned land. The park comprises nearly three-and-a-half acres and offers a basketball court, a baseball diamond, playground equipment, and open space.

The first section of Collins Park to be developed comprises the area along Cherry Lane, Delaware and Stanley Drives, the northern portions of Killoran and Riverview Drives, and the northwestern portion of Rodney Drive. Within the first section of the subdivision, the architecture is homogenous in form, comprising one-and-a half-story, brick, Minimal Traditional dwellings oriented with either the gable end facing the street or turned 90 degrees, with two to three bays depending on the street-facing elevation. Though the form is standard, the mixed orientation of the dwellings as well as variety of architectural treatments creates the appearance of architectural diversity. As constructed, dwellings exhibit either central or side entries, with some featuring a small front-gabled or shed overhang, or a cross-gabled roof, over the entry. Two-bay examples, as built, exhibit a front-gabled porch sheltering the entry. The dwellings are set on concrete block foundations and exhibit concrete lintels and brick sills.

The earliest post-war expansion to Collins Park introduced another architectural form, offering two-story, three-bay, brick dwellings with side-gabled roofs and the option for an incorporated one-car garage, with the latter form exhibiting a slightly-stepped, side-gabled roof. Each house also includes an exterior gable end brick chimney. The homes feature a variety of stylistic treatments, with some exhibiting full brick exteriors while others exhibit brick facades with stucco on the side elevations and ornamental brick quoining. Some examples exhibit pent roof overhangs between the first and second stories, faux dormers, belt courses, and brick quoining or various other types of Colonial-style surrounds at the entry; some even exhibit faux date stones centered at the second-story façade. Some homes maintain original picket-style, wooden shutters, while others feature replacement louvered or two-panel shutters. Two-story, brick dwellings without garages are located along Atlas Drive, Buck Lane, and the southern portions of Killoran, Riverview, and Rodney Drives. Models including a garage extend along the entirety of Bellanca Lane, with a few additional examples at the western extent of Riverview Drive, towards New Castle Avenue.

Collins Park was further expanded to the south and southeast between 1948 and 1949, with the addition of nearly 400 "Phoenix Ranch" houses.[421] The one-story, three-bay homes are architecturally homogenous in form and, as in the original section of the subdivision, are oriented with either the gable end facing the street or turned 90 degrees. Though the form is standard, the mixed orientation of the dwellings as well as variety of architectural treatments creates the appearance of architectural diversity. Newspaper advertisements from the late 1940s describe the ranch houses being of masonry construction. The houses possess central brick chimneys and generally exhibit either stuccoed exteriors with brick windowsills or are clad in aluminum or vinyl siding. Many stuccoed dwellings also feature ornamental brick quoining surrounds at the primary entry. Some exhibit front-gabled porches over the primary entry or additive features such as shed roof overhangs.

Collins Park is an early example of a single-family, detached housing development and exhibits several features of auto-dependent subdivisions. Each house has its own poured concrete or paved asphalt driveway located to either side of the dwelling. Some of the two-story models also feature a one-car garage incorporated into the main block of the dwelling. The houses built without a garage typically feature a walkway leading from the front entry to the poured concrete sidewalk, which extends throughout the neighborhood, while those built with a garage

[421] Advertisements appear consistently in period newspapers describing the new homes as "Phoenix" ranches, perhaps due to many being stuccoed on the exterior. This feature could have been intended as a southwestern-style aesthetic treatment, recalling adobe dwellings.

exhibit a walkway leading from the front entry to the driveway. Additionally, each house has its own individual yard, surrounding it on all four sides.

Figure 105. Example of the one-story, brick, Minimal Traditional dwellings constructed in the earliest developed section of Collins Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 106. Example of the side-gabled and front-gabled, one-story "Phoenix Ranch" dwellings built in the late 1940s expansion to Collins Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 107. Example of a two-story, brick veneered "Colonial" dwelling in Collins Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

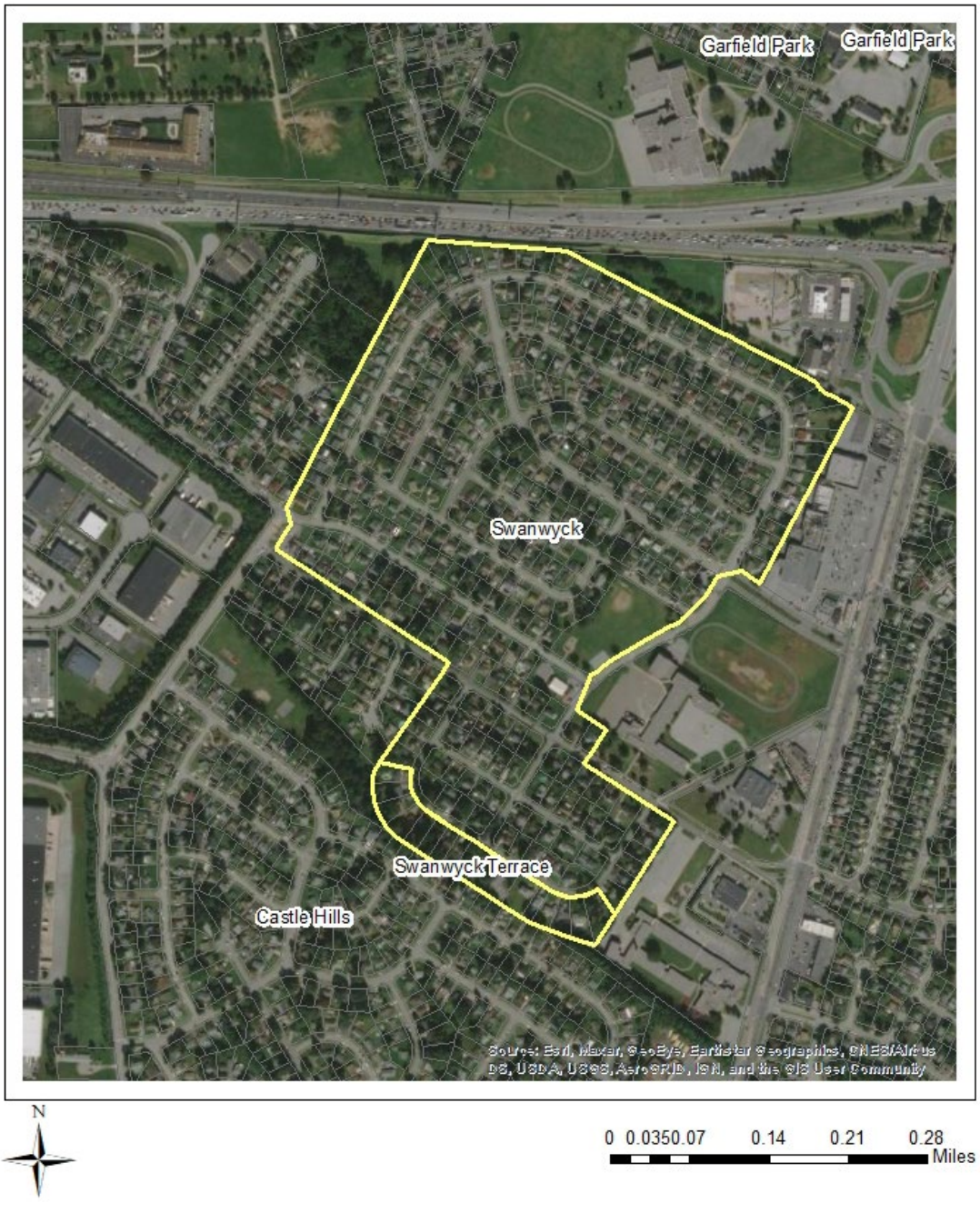
Figure 108. Example of a two-story, brick veneered "Colonial" dwelling with an incorporated garage in Collins Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 109. Example of a two-story, brick veneered "Colonial" dwelling in Collins Park. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Developments South of I-295, West of Route 9

Swanwyck

Built 1938-1940s, 1950s expansion



History

Swanwyck occupies a site just south of I-295 on the west side of Route 9 in greater New Castle. While established in the period just before World War II, a majority of the housing there was built in the 1950s. Construction of homes at Swanwyck began as early as 1938 with an initial one-house build on farmland that Swedish and Dutch

colonists had settled in the seventeenth century.[422] Early marketing of the development highlighted the historic nature of the site, which also included the early-nineteenth century Swanwyck House. The Regency-style home was designed and built by mill owner Peter Baudauy for his newly married daughter. Baudauy's Eden Park estate held the powder mill that was later owned by and named after his son-in-law, J.P. Garesche. Greatly altered from its original appearance, reoriented to face north towards the street, and fully incorporated into the development that surrounds it, the house still stands at 132 Linstone Avenue. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.[423]

Figure 110. Swanwyck House, c. 1938. (Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), DE-48, LOC call no.: DEL,2-NEWCA.V,1)

[422] "Swanwyck One Housing Area With History: Swedes First Settled In Section Near New Castle Almost 300 Years Ago," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), April 27, 1940; "Landers Lane Development Among Leaders: 'Swanwyck' Officers Choice Residential Property; 16 Homes Being Erected," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[423] Vincent Rogers, Rosemary Troy, and Edward F. Heite, "Swanwyck," *National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, Dover, DE, 1977.

Figure 111. Swanwyck House, looking at east and north elevations, 2019. (Google Maps Street View)

The Castle Construction Company, run by J. Frank Darling, began developing the Swanwyck tract in the late 1930s, and by 1940, home building on the site was in full swing.[424] The tract was subdivided to accommodate up to 650 homes.[425] In the pre-war period, the company offered buyers the option of buying a lot and constructing their own home or buying a home built by Castle Construction: "Buy a lot and build here or buy a home which we will build for you."[426] The houses at Swanwyck were built and offered for sale in small batches. In late 1940, the construction of six new houses was announced, adding to the 27 homes already standing at the development.[427] In May 1941, an additional 16 houses were announced.[428] They were priced between $6,000 and $8,250.[429] The 1940s homes were constructed of brick on quarter-acre plots averaging 75 feet by 125 feet and comprised Cape Cods and Colonials with differing exterior designs. In general, these were one-and-a-half to two stories and held six rooms. Each house featured "a large porch, a fireplace, extra lavatory, laundry adjoining the kitchen," and were insulated, heated with oil, and air conditioned.[430] Also highlighted in advertisements for the development

[424] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1940.
[425] "Swanwyck to Add Six More Houses: Homes Overlooking River to Be Completed in Six Weeks," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 23, 1940.
[426] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 16, 1941.
[427] "Swanwyck to Add Six More Houses: Homes Overlooking River to Be Completed in Six Weeks," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 23, 1940.
[428] "Landers Lane Development Among Leaders: 'Swanwyck' Offers Choice Residential Property; 16 Homes Being Erected," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[429] See advertisement in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[430] "Swanwyck Homes Selling Rapidly: New Houses, Each with Different Exterior Design, Have All Conveniences," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1940.

was direct bus service into Wilmington, a trip taking only seven minutes.[431] The development was "located on high ground" and repeatedly described as "overlooking the Delaware River," suggesting that an area not prone to flooding but also with a water view was considered desirable to pre-war suburban buyers.[432]


Four New Homes in Historic Swanwyck

These brand new homes are being built by the Castle Developm ent Co., J. Frank Darling, president, on the site of one of the earliest Swedish settlements, three miles from New Castle. The homes are on sizeable lots, and feature solid construction. They are conveniently located and in attractive territory.

Figure 112. Newspaper clipping showing variety of house designs available in Swanwyck. (*The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, April 27, 1940)


Swanwyck Building Development Shows Progress

Indicative of the fine types of homes that are being built in Swanwyck are these shown above. Modernity is featured in exterior appearance and in interior designing. Many new homes have been erected in this development recently and a number are now under construction. The development is a short distance from the center of Wilmington and is ideally situated. Swanwyck is just off the DuPont Boulevard beyond Lander's Lane, also known as Stoeckel's Lane.

Figure 113. Newspaper clipping showing variety of house designs available in Swanwyck. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, May 10, 1941)

[431] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[432] "Swanwyck to Add Six More Houses: Homes Overlooking River to Be Completed in Six Weeks," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 23, 1940.

Figure 114. Swanwyck sales advertisement showcasing various home styles. (*Wilmington Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, May 10, 1941)

Journal-Every Evening, Wilmington, Delaware, Tuesday, December 16, 1941 Nineteen

The Suburb Beautiful

SWANWYCK

The ideal place for your home located in the Real Garden Spot of Delaware—less than 5 miles from DuPont Building—turn left on the DuPont Highway opposite Farnhurst—bus service every few minutes.

For helping make the success of Swanwyck possible we are grateful to:

Nature for providing a beautiful high rolling site.

To T. B. O'Toole, Inc., for bringing the site to our attention.

To the Federal Housing Administration for having approved this site for insured Federal Housing mortgages.

To the law firm of J. Ernest Smith and Munroe Keith for helping make possible the acquisition of this site.

To the high-class building material firms in Wilmington who expressed confidence in this site by granting credit when the company started and had very little working capital, amongst which firms are the Deco Corp., C. L. Pierce & Co., J. T. & L. E. Eliason, Inc.,

Oberly Brick Co., Warner Co., James Cullen & Co., Hance Hardware Co., Bamberger & Robbins, Garrett Miller & Co., Ernest W. Samworth & Sons, Service Block & Supply Co., many others.

To the Home Building and Loan Association, Delaware Mortgage Co., First Federal Building and Loan Association, New York Life Insurance Co., Travelers Life Insurance Co., New Castle County National Bank of Odessa, St. Georges Trust Co., Union National Bank, Security Trust Co., Wilmington Savings Fund Society, for approving Swanwyck for either construction or permanent mortgages.

To the home owners named in this ad who had the pioneering foresight to see the possibilities of Swanwyck.

In short Swanwyck was made possible through the confidence and cooperation of many to whom it seemed that it should succeed, and their judgment has been proven right.

For Your Happy Christmas

Select the Home of Your Dreams

Eventually You Will Want to Live Here
Why Not Prepare Now

PLAN for that New Home to be ready in the Spring. Buy a lot and build here or buy a home which we will build for you. Now is the time to prepare for Spring building. These are actual photographs of only a few of the homes now occupied and others now under construction.

Among Home Owners and Purchasers of Properties At Swanwyck Are the Following:

- Jacob B. Salmon
- Wm. T. Bacon
- M. A. Dewey
- J. Winfield Dewees
- E. A. Campbell
- Earle F. Gifford
- Robt. A. G. Massey
- Palmer S. Mock
- Fred L. Gerhauser
- Jos. J. Heintz, Jr.
- Earle R. Stouffer
- Alfred J. McNiff
- James Taylor
- John B. Johnson
- Lily Barker
- Carl J. Berlin
- J. Ralph Lewis
- John Gibney
- James S. Wyatt
- Wm. Justus Eddy
- Frederick T. Rush
- John D. Bloodwell
- Luther R. Welch
- Anthony J. Van Veen, Jr.
- George H. Jester
- Martin P. Arndt
- Ross W. Gary
- Francis D. Buck
- Carlisle B. Carpenter
- A. Laurence Churchill
- Lee R. Mahan
- Newlin T. Booth, Jr.
- Wm. S. Holt
- Jasper Frazier
- H. Clifford Galvin
- Wm. N. Reinhart
- D. Mitchell Vandegrift
- Joseph H. Hunter

Let us tell you more about this ideal home site. Whether you buy for your home or for investment you owe it to yourself to see SWANWYCK first . . . don't wait—do it today.

WE PREDICT THAT SWANWYCK WILL BE THE FASTEST GROWING AND MOST BEAUTIFUL SUBURB IN THIS VICINITY. PRICES WITHIN REACH OF YOUR INCOME AND ON LIBERAL TERMS.

SWANWYCK
1941

Photos above and below show one of the most remarkable cases of public acceptance in real estate history. The picture above is an aerial photo of Swanwyck as a farm. Pictures on right and below show Swanwyck as it is today. One of Delaware's best developments.

Do not hesitate to send in the coupon with your name and address—you are under no obligation—we will send you FREE full information or we will arrange to have a representative take you out to the property.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, WE WILL HAVE TO HAVE THE TWO FUNDAMENTALS OF LIFE—FOOD AND SHELTER. HOUSES WILL CONTINUE TO BE BUILT.

CUT OUT AND MAIL TODAY!

Castle Construction Co.
P. O. Box 127
Wilmington, Delaware

Please send me full information (without obligation on my part) about Swanwyck and the Castle Construction Co.

NAME_____

STREET_____

CITY_____

Figure 115. Full-page advertisement showing farmland in 1939 before large-scale construction was initiated in Swanwyck, homes of varying design built between 1939 and 1941, potential buyers, and a list of current owners. (*Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, DE, December 16, 1941)

Marketing in the late 1940s and 1950s characterized the development as "suburban living at its best," "ideal for children," and touted that "the community is well established."[433] The houses included modern appliances—refrigerator, range, laundry machine, and even a television—meant to appeal to post-war consumers.[434] In 1949, houses were offered for $19,000 to $20,000.[435] In the 1950s, potential veteran buyers were encouraged to take advantage of GI Bill home loans and no down payment.[436]

During the 1950s, further amenities of suburbanization came to Swanwyck. Following three years of planning that included controversy about whether to build a new school or add space to the existing Minquadale and Rose Hill schools, as well as the size and location of a new school, in 1952, officials broke ground for a new elementary school to serve the Swanwyck and Collins Park neighborhoods. The 18-classroom building, what would be Colwyck Elementary School, was constructed on a plot of land that the builders had set aside for the purpose.[437] Once built, it was used as a marketing point for the sale of homes in the development.[438] Swanwyck's "convenience of location" was advertised prominently, with its proximity to the new Colwyck Elementary School and Junior High School noted: one newspaper advertisement emphasized that there were "no dangerous intersections for children to cross."[439] Its proximity to shopping and access to transportation was also noted.[440] Between 1959 and 1960, a large commercial plaza called Cross Roads Shopping Center was constructed just east of Swanwyck, north of Stamm Boulevard, and included an A&P supermarket, a W.T. Grant's department store, and a Hoy's 5 & 10 store, as well as a dozen other retailers.[441] Advertisements for the shopping center emphasized its "free parking facilities for up to 2,500 cars."[442]

Between 1954 and 1955, Swanwyck Estates, Inc., constructed more than 300 new ranch houses north of Landers Lane, opposite of the earliest-developed section of Swanwyck. Built by Boardman-Smith Corporation, these

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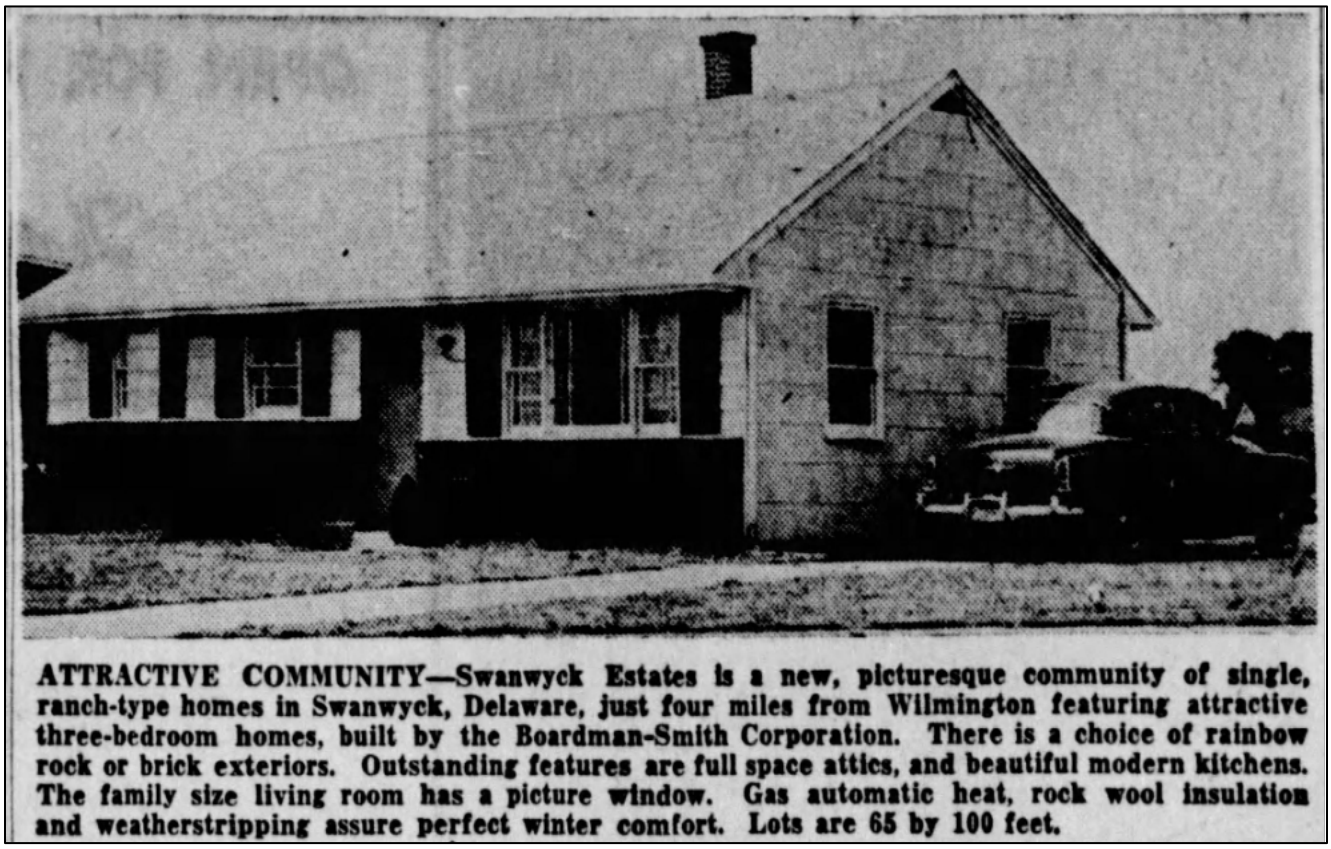
[433] *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1952.
[434] "Homes Shown At Swanwyck: Six New Houses Include TV, Refrigerator, Range, and Automatic Washer," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), November 5, 1949; see advertisement in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), October 29, 1949.
[435] *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), October 29, 1949.
[436] See advertisement in *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 13, 1955.
[437] "Ground Broken for Swanwyck School," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), Jan 15, 1952. This is the Harry O. Eisenberg Elementary School, named for the superintendent of District No. 47 at the time of its construction. On the planning controversy, see "Long Range Plan on School Asked: Swanwyck Residents Seek Delay in New Construction Until Dispute is Settled," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 2, 1950; "Group Opposing Board Chairman: J. B. Eggleston, Jr., Resignation advocated by Five Swanwyck Civic Directors," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), March 13, 1950; "Hearing South on School Site: Collins Park Unit Follows Swanwyck Plan for Parley Before Choice is Made," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), April 15, 1950.
[438] See advertisement for two new homes in Swanwyck, *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), March 10, 1952.
[439] Swanwyck Estates advertisement, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 13, 1955.
[440] Swanwyck Estates advertisement, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 13, 1955.
[441] Cross Roads Shopping Center advertisement, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1960.
[442] "Shopping Center Branch Planned by Grant," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), September 9, 1959.

homes, set on lots advertised as 65 feet by 100 feet, each offered three bedrooms, a tile bathroom, a "spacious modern kitchen with latest type natural birch cabinets and sink with Formica worktop," and "plenty of closet and storage space."[443] Sales advertisements highlighted "concrete walks and driveways" and "streets paved curb to curb" as well as the "convenience of location," noting the new homes' close proximity to schools, shopping, and transportation.[444] These "latest ranch type single homes" were offered at $9,990 with 100 percent GI financing and no down payment for veterans, with FHA and conventional mortgages also available.[445]



ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY—Swanwyck Estates is a new, picturesque community of single, ranch-type homes in Swanwyck, Delaware, just four miles from Wilmington featuring attractive three-bedroom homes, built by the Boardman-Smith Corporation. There is a choice of rainbow rock or brick exteriors. Outstanding features are full space attics, and beautiful modern kitchens. The family size living room has a picture window. Gas automatic heat, rock wool insulation and weatherstripping assure perfect winter comfort. Lots are 65 by 100 feet.

Figure 116. An example of the ranch houses built in Swanwyck Estates, the mid-1950s expansion to Swanwyck. (*Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, DE, August 27, 1955)

[443] "Swanwyck Estates advertisement, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 13, 1955; "Attractive Community," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), August 27, 1955; Swanwyck Estates advertisement, *Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 12, 1955.
[444] Swanwyck Estates ad, *Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 13, 1955.
[445] Swanwyck Estates advertisement, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 13, 1955.

Figure 117. Sales ad for Swanwyck Estates, the mid-1950s expansion to Swanwyck. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, August 13, 1955)

During the mid-to-late 1950s, Swanwyck homeowners sued to block Castle Construction Company from building "garden type apartments" there, in order to "maintain the character of Swanwyck as a community restricted to the erection of single family dwellings only."[446] The apartments were never built. Following that suit, Castle Construction sought permission to build row houses in the subdivision along Ridge Avenue, now Glen Avenue; that, too, was blocked and never came to fruition.[447] Instead, in late 1958, contractors Frank Tigani, Jr., and Joseph Tigani began construction of a dozen additional ranch homes between 24 and 46 N. Glen Avenue.[448]

Additionally, during the late 1950s through the 1960s, approximately two dozen new detached, single-family dwellings were constructed in Swanwyck Terrace, along the southern side of Queen Avenue, as well as on some undeveloped lots that were part of the original Swanwyck tract. Several of the houses were built individually and not part of a larger development plan; however, in 1969, Butler Construction Company obtained a permit to build 16 ranch and two-story homes within the section, utilizing several models. In 1955, Faith Lutheran Church was also built at 28 Queen Avenue, followed by a parsonage built in 1960 next door at 26 Queen Avenue. The parsonage as well as a few other homes in this section were constructed by Guido DeAscanis & Sons.[449]

Marketing materials for Swanwyck, which included images of white potential buyers, and the continued lack of mention of race in advertising makes clear that the homes in the development were intended for white buyers. Early on during its development, in 1941, a newspaper advertisement attributed the stability of the growing community and desirability of owning a home there to "the care exercised by the company in restricting sales 'to folks who will be desirable neighbors,'" according to J. Frank Darling, president of the Castle Construction Company, noting further that the "policy is of great value should it be necessary to re-sell the house."[450] This coded language refers to racial restrictions that were written into the lands deeds, which stated that no lots or any residences built thereon "shall at any time be used or occupied by any person other than a member of the Caucasian Race," with the exception of "servants or employees of the occupants of any dwelling house…while employed in or about the said dwelling house or premises."[451] Today, approximately 71 percent of the subdivision's residents are white.[452]

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[446] "Ruling Upholds Single Houses," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), January 31, 1958.
[447] "Court Gets Bid for Row Homes," Journal-Every Evening (Wilmington, DE), October 6, 1954.
[448] "Swanwyck Covenant Suit Fails to Block New Homes," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), January 20, 1959.
[449] "Three Firms Get Permits," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), June 9, 1956; "Swanwyck Church Parsonage Opened," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), June 27, 1960.
[450] "Landers Lane Development Among Leaders," *Wilmington Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[451] New Castle County Deed Record, Book N, Volume 44, 300-304.
[452] Wilmington Area Planning Council, "The Route 9 Corridor: Land Use and Transportation Plan" (Wilmington, DE), May 2017, 20. At the time of that study, 71 percent of the development's 1,202 people were white.

Physical Characteristics of Swanwyck

Established prior to World War II but more rapidly and extensively developed during the mid-1950s, Swanwyck is one of the largest developer platted and designed residential subdivisions constructed along the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor. In total, more than 400 detached, single-family homes were built from 1938, when the development was originally established, through the late 1960s. The earliest-developed section of Swanwyck comprises approximately 70 brick one-and-a-half-story Cape Cods and two-story Colonials developed by Castle Construction Company, while an extensive addition to the community, developed during the mid-1950s by Swanwyck Estates, Inc., comprises more than 300 ranch type homes all built in the same plan, with a dozen ranches built in an additional form during the late 1950s. During the late 1960s, approximately two dozen houses were infilled within the oldest section of the community.

Swanwyck is comprised of 11 linear and curvilinear streets, and access to the subdivision is open. From New Castle Avenue/Route 9, the neighborhood is accessed via Landers Lane and Stamm Boulevard. Interior streets within the earliest-developed section of Swanwyck to the south as well as in the Swanwyck Terrace addition include Glen, Queen, and Prince Avenues, with Glen Avenue crossing Landers Lane and connecting with the later mid-to-late 1950s constructed section of Swanwyck. In the latter section, Glen Avenue crosses Linstone, Dyer, Somers, Cross, and Edge Avenues as well as Stamm Boulevard, several of which connect to Festone Avenue. Swanwyck Estates Park, operated by New Castle County, is located on Glen Avenue, between Dyer and Linstone Avenues, in the northern section of the community and comprises nearly three acres. The park features a basketball court, a baseball diamond, playground equipment, open space, and parking. Swanwyck is bordered by Southgate Industrial Center to the west, Swanwyck Gardens to the northwest, Interstate-295 and a portion of commercial properties to the north, Crossroads Shopping Center and Eisenberg Elementary School (completed c. 1960) to the east, the former Colwyck Elementary School (completed in 1953) to the southeast, and the Castle Hills subdivision to the south.

The earliest-developed and original tract of Swanwyck is located along Landers Lane as well as south of it, with a portion at the south or rear of that section being a small addition, officially named Swanwyck Terrace but colloquially known as Swanwyck and part of the same neighborhood. An extensive, post-war expansion of Swanwyck, known as Swanwyck Estates, was developed in the mid-to-late 1950s, north of Landers Lane. In the oldest section, lots measure an average of about one-quarter acre in size, with some corner lots measuring one-third of an acre or more. The lots within the Swanwyck Terrace section are similar in acreage but tend to be somewhat more narrow and deeper, stretching along curvilinear Queen Avenue. In the Swanwyck Estates section,

lot sizes range from .15-acre for the smallest interior parcels to corner lots approaching or surpassing one-quarter acre.

In the earliest-developed section of Swanwyck, the architecture is heterogenous, with multiple different forms and exterior designs represented in a wide array of combinations, which was intended by the builder "to lend individual distinction to the homes."[453] Two general house forms were constructed: a one-and-a-half-story Cape Cod and a two-story Colonial. Newspaper articles from the early 1940s highlighting the developing community explained that "each house is built with the same basic room layout, but each differs entirely from its neighbors in outside elevation."[454] Homebuyers also had the option of selecting some custom specifications.[455] The homes were built with six rooms, three or four bays, and of all brick construction, with a shed roofed side porch. Each is constructed on a "waterproofed concrete block foundation."[456] Many of the side porches have since been enclosed. As built, many of the houses also incorporate a one-car garage into the plan.[457] Some garages have likewise been enclosed for additional living space or have been expanded with an additional garage bay. Each model exhibits either a side-gabled or hipped roof and an exterior gable end brick chimney, with the Cape Cod forms exhibiting front-gabled dormers. Colonial-type door surrounds ornament each home's primary entry, with a variety of styles utilized. Some models exhibit projecting bay windows, pent overhangs, and front-gabled porticos. One custom-designed house is located at 3 Prince Avenue; built in 1940, the cross-gabled brick dwelling is unique from the others built during the same period.

In the Swanwyck Estates section of the subdivision, the architecture is overwhelmingly homogenous, with nearly all of the dwellings built in the same form, being four-bay, central entry, side-gabled ranch houses of frame construction. Each house features a large, three-part picture window on its primary façade, lending a subtle Contemporary style. Though the form is standard, slightly different exterior treatments and materials are applied to create the appearance of some architectural diversity. The orientation of the bays also vary, so that the picture window is either placed at the far left or right of the dwelling. Each house is set on a poured concrete foundation and exhibits either brick or "rainbow rock" facing on the bottom half, or occasionally full height, of the primary elevation.[458] Some houses have since been fully resided in vinyl, but the majority retain the original ornamental brick or stone veneer cladding on the lower half. As built, this model offered a compact 912 square feet of interior

[453] "Swanwyck Homes Selling Rapidly," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1940.
[454] "Landers Lane Development Among Leaders," *Wilmington Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 10, 1941.
[455] "Building Work at Swanwyck Goes Forward," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), October 5, 1940.
[456] "Building Work at Swanwyck Goes Forward," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), October 5, 1940.
[457] "Swanwyck Homes Selling Rapidly," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), August 3, 1940.
[458] "Attractive Community," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), August 27, 1955.

living space with a full attic. Occasional additive features include carports, garages, and several examples have been expanded to two stories.

In late 1958 into 1959, a dozen larger model ranches were constructed along the even numbered side of N. Glen Avenue, along a stretch that was formerly known as Ridge Avenue and on which Castle Construction Company had originally intended to build garden-style apartments and then row houses; those plans were ultimately blocked.[459] Each of these ranches, like the earlier and smaller model found throughout every other portion of Swanwyck Estates, also exhibit four bays, a side-gabled roof, and a large, three-part picture window on its primary façade but alternatively feature an all brick exterior with a stepped or partially set back primary façade and a side versus central entry. As built, this model, set on a poured concrete foundation, offered 1,076 square feet of interior space plus a full attic and basement.

A small subsection of Swanwyck, formally identified as Swanwyck Terrace, comprises the even addresses between 14 and 44 Queen Avenue, south of Landers Lane and below the original section of Swanwyck. Even addresses 2-12 and 56-64 Queen Avenue as well as the odd addresses along Queen Avenue are formally part of the original Swanwyck tract. The houses in the Swanwyck Terrace section were built between 1955 and 1969, with the earliest two dwellings constructed at 14 and 16 Queen Avenue. The first newspaper ads for this section appear in late 1954 and describe two lots for sale—what would become 14 and 16 Queen Avenue—in an "exclusive section circled by beautiful woodland."[460] Several additional new homes appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s in a variety of forms, styles, and materials. A more unusual Contemporary-style brick ranch, U-shaped with hipped roofs, is situated at 20 Queen Avenue.

In 1969, more than a dozen homes were built on Queen Avenue by Butler Construction Company—including on some undeveloped lots that were part of the original Swanwyck tract.[461] A mix of one-story ranches and two-story Colonials fill out the section, with a few repeat plans, such as a brick and frame garrison Colonial found at 30, 34, and 36 Queen Avenue, along with a simple brick ranch found at 42 and 44 Queen Avenue. Several dwellings incorporate a garage into the main block.

[459] "Court Gets Bid for Row Homes," Journal-Every Evening (Wilmington, DE), October 6, 1954; "Swanwyck Covenant Suit Fails to Block New Homes," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), January 20, 1959.
[460] Swanwyck Terrace sales ad, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), November 23, 1945.
[461] "Financing Set Up for 3 Projects," *Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), June 14, 1969; "New Homes, Swanwyck Area" in Real Estate section, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), July 31, 1969.

Swanwyck is an example of a single-family, detached housing development that grew in stages, pre- and post-war, and exhibits several features of auto-dependent subdivisions. Each house, including those in the earliest-developed section of the community as well as the later sections of Swanwyck Estates and Swanwyck Terrace, has its own poured concrete or paved asphalt driveway located to either side of the dwelling. Many houses within the oldest section of Swanwyck, as well as some later dwellings within the Swanwyck Terrace addition, also feature a garage incorporated into the main block of the dwelling. In "old" Swanwyck and Swanwyck Terrace, there are no front walks from primary entries to the street, nor are there sidewalks; however, in the Swanwyck Estates section, concrete sidewalks interconnect throughout. Additionally, each house has its own individual yard, surrounding it on all four sides.

Figure 118. Example of a one-story, brick ranch in Swanwyck, one of a dozen of this model built in the late 1950s on N. Glen Avenue. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 119. Example of the ranches built throughout Swanwyck Estates, the mid-1950s expansion to Swanwyck. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 120. Example of a two-story, brick veneered "Colonial" constructed in Swanwyck during the 1940s. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 121. Example of a two-story, brick veneered "Colonial" constructed in Swanwyck during the 1940s. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Castle Hills

Built 1952-1956

History

Built during the early to mid-1950s, Castle Hills is a large subdivision of modest ranch houses, developed by the Delaware Construction Company initially for Alan Bee Homes, Inc., of Baltimore, Maryland.[462] Plans for a 500-

[462] "Faculty to Equal Old Enrollment," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 24, 1952; "First of Houses at Castle Hills," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), December 6, 1952.

house community were announced in 1952, and the neighborhood was completed in 1956 with a total of 480 detached, single-family homes built in six sections.[463] The subdivision was developed on part of an historical estate called Boothhurst, then the property of Laussat R. Rogers, who sold 125 acres near the rear of his estate for the residential development.[464]

Castle Hills' first completed homes were opened for public inspection on December 7, 1952.[465] Offered for sale at $9,900, the one-story, three-bedroom homes featured large living rooms with modern kitchens and tile baths. An early newspaper advertisement for Castle Hills announced "new ranch style homes" with "three bright spacious bedrooms," "large living room with panorama window," "modern kitchen and colorful bath," "scuffproof floors," and "low upkeep construction."[466] The homes offered "portrait type" metal windows, "with installation at eye level, to facilitate better furniture arrangement," as well as oil-fired source perimeter heating and kitchen access directly from the driveway."[467] An advertisement published December 13, 1952, notes popular features such as seven closets plus a linen closet, paved walks and driveways, and minimum lot sizes of 60 x 115 feet.[468] Basements, carports, and air conditioning were features offered at an extra cost to the homebuyer. Four basic ranch types were made available, all "situated on extra large lots to allow for expansion if and when the need for additional space may be needed by the home owners."[469] A May 1953 advertisement for the second section of homes shows four similar models—named the Wellington, the Squire, the Windsor, and the Crest.[470] The streets within the subdivision were highlighted as "wide and winding" to "set off the individuality of the homes."[471]

[463] "Faculty to Equal Old Enrollment," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 24, 1952; David G.W. Scott, "In Castle Hills, A Civic Leader Learns by Doing," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 4, 1997.
[464] "Faculty to Equal Old Enrollment," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), November 24, 1952; New Castle County Deed Record V, Volume 51, Page 366, Rogers et al to Alan Bee Homes, Inc., October 26, 1952.
[465] "First of Houses at Castle Hills," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), December 6, 1952.
[466] Castle Hills advertisement, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), December 6, 1952.
[467] "3,000 at Opening of Development," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), December 8, 1952; "First 200 Homes Completed in Castle Hills Development," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), October 17, 1953.
[468] Castle Hills advertisement, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), December 13, 1952.
[469] "3,000 at Opening of Development," *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), December 8, 1952.
[470] Castle Hills ad, *The Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 9, 1953.
[471] "Sample Home Opens Today, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), May 9, 1953.

Figure 122. Early sales advertisement for Castle Hills. (*Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, DE, December 6, 1952)

Figure 123. Early sales advertisement for Castle Hills. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, December 13, 1952)

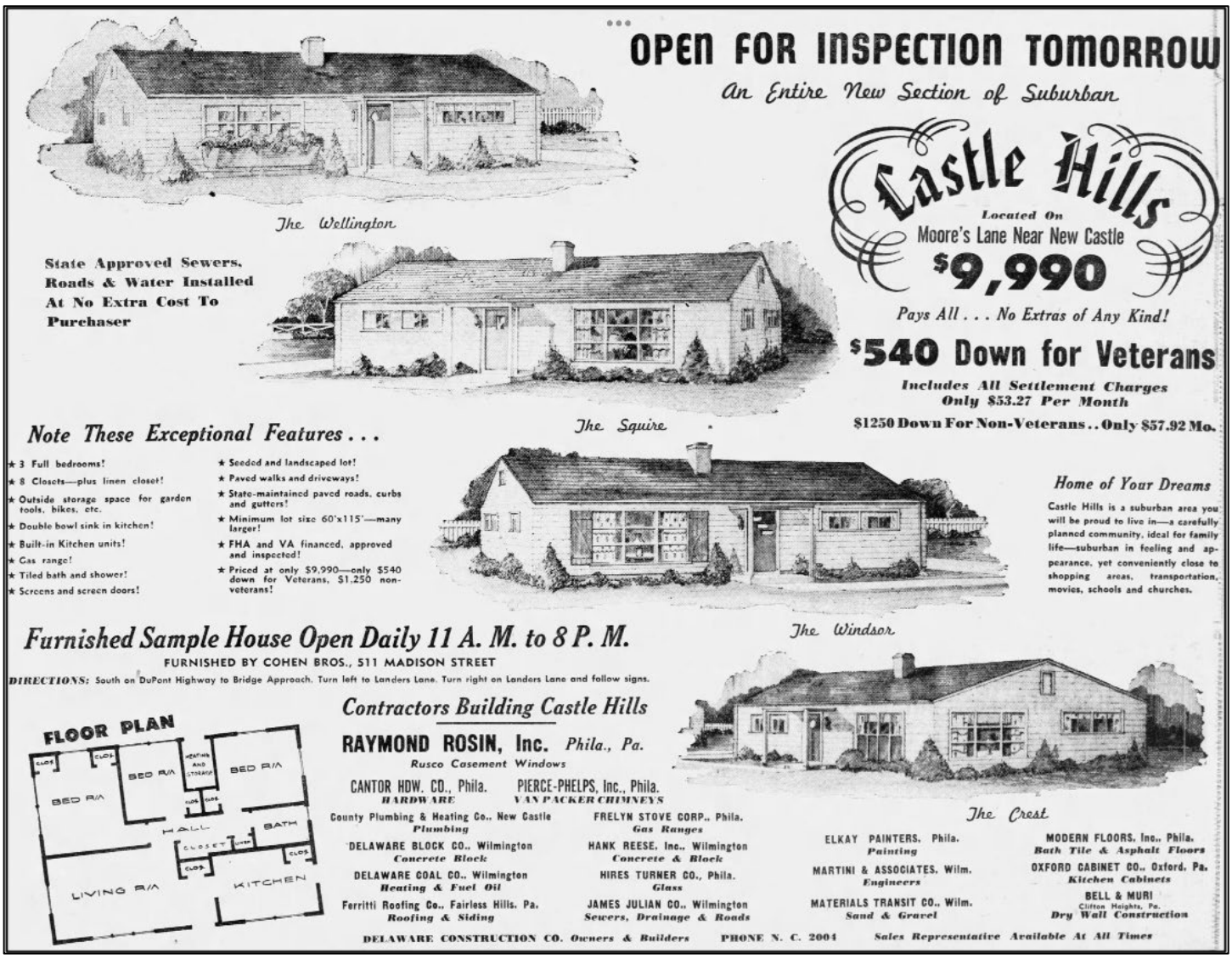


Figure 124. Castle Hills sales advertisement with four similar model homes. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, May 9, 1953)

On May 1, 1954, 23 "California ranch" style "New Look Homes" opened to the public for sale, all with three bedrooms but priced at $11,000; Castle Hills realtor Arnold Goldsborough explained that the houses are "California style ranch homes inspired by the Imperial Valley" and use "sunshine colors for exteriors [with] trim [matching] the tinted masonry and redwood facades" and "gate type shutters."[472] Each dwelling was to "have its own color harmony and basic design to promote individuality" with "a deep set-back from the sidewalk to provide a desirable foreground of green lawn" and lots sizes of at least 6,925 square feet.[473] The new model homes were larger than the earlier models, providing more living room space, an enlarged kitchen with a large dining area, a sliding door medicine cabinet in the bathroom, and parquet wood flooring throughout, "the most expensive floors

[472] "23 Ranch Homes to Open Today at Castle Hills," *Wilmington Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 1, 1954.
[473] "23 Ranch Homes to Open Today at Castle Hills," *Wilmington Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 1, 1954.

available for homes today," according to Goldsborough.[474] Carports with "monolith concrete floors and a concrete driveway to the street" were also added as standard to these homes, with the "door to the kitchen [accessed directly] from the car port for easy access in all weather."[475]

Figure 125. Castle Hills sales advertisement. (*Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, DE, August 15, 1953)

[474] "23 Ranch Homes to Open Today at Castle Hills," *Wilmington Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 1, 1954.
[475] "23 Ranch Homes to Open Today at Castle Hills," *Wilmington Morning News* (Wilmington, DE), May 1, 1954.

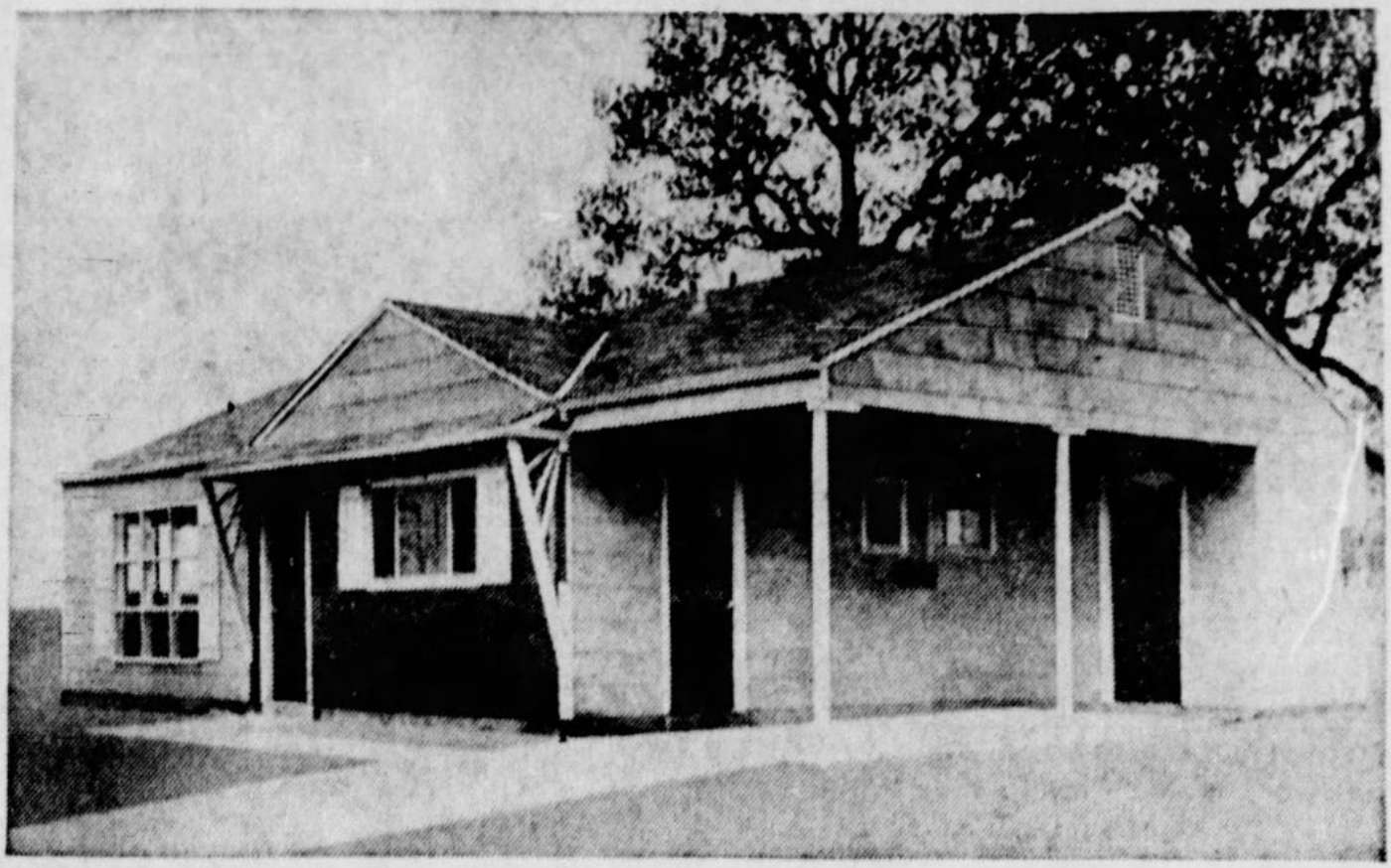
ONLY A FEW LEFT—A view of the owner-occupied homes at Castle Hills on Moores Lane near New Castle. Only a few of these homes are now available of the original 150 built on this large tract between Swanwyck and New Castle. State approved streets, curbing, sidewalks, and water have been installed by the Delaware Construction Company, developers and builders of the Castle Hills community. A sample home, furnished by Cohen Brothers, is open for inspection on Sunday.

Figure 126. Completed Castle Hills homes on Moores Lane. (*Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, DE, August 15, 1953)

In addition to the single-family homes, a new "Surprise Home" sample was introduced in September 1954 marketed as a house for two families.[476] These models offered four bedrooms and two full tile bathrooms, with privacy for each family, allowing for a landlord-tenant arrangement—"a desirable income feature" bringing "fine-home ownership within the reach of all."[477]

Though Castle Hills was heavily marketed to veterans, homes were also available to non-veteran buyers; initially, veterans could supply a down payment of just $549, while non-veterans were required to pay $1,250. Though racial restrictions were not explicitly noted in advertising for the subdivision, its lack of mention signals that it was not an "open occupancy" neighborhood; marketing materials further suggest that it was intended for white buyers, with only white people depicted in advertisements.[478]

[476] Castle Hills advertisement, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), September 18, 1954.
[477] Castle Hills advertisement, *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), September 18, 1954.
[478] "First of Houses at Castle Hills," *Journal-Every Evening* (Wilmington, DE), December 6, 1952.



A NEW CALIFORNIA RANCH TYPE HOME at Castle Hills, Moore's Lane, near New Castle, 23 of which will be open to the public today. The homes will sell in the $11,000 price classification, according to Arnold Goldsborough, realtor.

23 Ranch Homes to Open Today at Castle Hills

Arnold Goldsborough, realtor, 9 East Twelfth Street, announced today the formal opening of 23 California ranch homes at Castle Hills, on Moore's Lane near New Castle.

The new homes known as the "New Look Homes" are of the three bedroom type and will sell in the $11,000 price classification.

Veterans may purchase the new homes without down paymet at $68.32 per month including interest,

tions. The insulation will contribute to cooler interiors during warm months, the developer adds.

The enlarged kitchen is completely modern with ample built-in cabinets, cabinet sink and a large dining area. Here too the designers have provided large areas of window space that allow for useable wall space in the kitchen.

Basements are available at extra cost to the purchaser. These basements will be full size and include

Figure 127. Advertisement for "New Look Homes" at Castle Hills. (*The Morning News*, Wilmington, DE, May 1, 1954)

Oral History Recollections

Charles Watts, who lived in Castle Hills from 1958 to 1970 (from ages 4 to 16), remembers his home there feeling like a major improvement from where his family had previously lived in Southbridge. Having spent his first four years in a small, older row house with a tiny yard in South Wilmington, Castle Hills by comparison was a bit like "the Garden of Eden." It felt to him as though they "were elevated as far as the neighborhood, the education, [and] we had a back yard and a front yard. . . . it was like 'Leave It to Beaver,' with a white picket fence and all of that." He remembers most of the neighbors were appreciative of their newer homes, taking good care of their properties and tending to well-groomed lawns and gardens. There was also a strong "sense of community . . . where people took care of other people's kids [and] you didn't have to lock your doors." The physical and social focal points of the community were both located along Moores Lane—the baseball field at James Rogers Park and Castle Hills Elementary School.[479] The baseball field was not only the site of many baseball games, but it was also a general gathering place for kids and a venue for other community events, like organized Easter egg hunts sponsored by the civic association. Early on, the baseball field was "kind of rinky dink" and located behind a horse farm, but at some point it was revitalized with renovations and a new scoreboard and had several teams practicing and playing games there. The school had a small playground, but it also hosted dances on Saturdays (with live bands or someone "spinning records") and offered summer programs. Kids would also congregate in places where there were few adults, like "Rogers' woods," near the old Boothhurst mansion where Mrs. Rogers lived. She had a pond and would charge kids 10 cents—you had to "sign a book and give her a dime"—and you could swim or ice skate there, or play "Army" in the woods. They would also congregate at the old Moore farm, especially after the house was burned by the fire department. That farmland became an industrial park, and they called it "the sand pit," since it was where developers dug dirt to build new developments Jefferson Farms and Van Dyke Village. The kids would play in those sand pits, walk on the railroad tracks, and later, even ride dirt bikes back there. Even more adventurous trips would include a day-long bike ride or hike along the old railroad tracks (now the Markell Trail) to New Castle's Battery Park (he remembers Castle Hills being far more oriented to New Castle than to Wilmington), which might involve packing a lunch and stopping to catch snapping turtles or catfish.[480]

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[479] Almost all of the neighborhood children attended Castle Hills Elementary, and later, New Castle Middle School (on Route 9 at Ferry Cut-Off Street) and William Penn High School (or, in the case of Charles Watts and some other kids, they alternatively attended H. Fletcher Brown Vocational High School, now called Delcastle Technical High School).

[480] Charles Watts, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 29, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

The demographics of Castle Hills during the 1960s, remembers Watts, included almost entirely white residents, especially a lot of younger families, since Castle Hills houses were "starter homes" for many families. He remembers families that had moved from Wilmington and Maryland (especially the Elkton area) and several from West Virginia. Many of the latter, he recalls, lived in the northwest portion of the neighborhood, encircled by Midfield Road—and that area was referred to by many as the "Castle Hillbillies." That part of the neighborhood, beyond having residents who hailed from West Virginia or other rural areas, just seemed generally like "more country people" than the rest of the neighborhood, and they were also more likely to have yards that "were kept a little looser"—as opposed to the well-kept lawns in the southeast portions of the neighborhood. As far as employment, Watts remembers many people working at the GM plant on Boxwood Road in Newport, the Chrysler plant in Newark, at DuPont (both downtown Wilmington and the Experimental Station northwest of the city), and on the Delaware Memorial Bridge as the second span was completed. Before moving to Castle Hills, his father had worked at Gulf Oil along New Castle Avenue, until a serious accident left him disabled. His mother worked as a cleaner. Neither had finished high school, and his mother was of Italian descent—as were other residents in Castle Hills, who were joined by other immigrant families, including Polish and possibly Ukrainian. While most families had at least one car, there were some who depended on public transportation, taking the bus to work, socialize, or shop in downtown Wilmington (an all-day fare was about 10 cents at the time). While the racial make-up of Castle Hills "stayed white" while Watts lived there, he had Black friends in nearby Buttonwood (though one good friend was not allowed to go to Castle Hills: "I guess his parents told him, you know, stay on this side of New Castle Avenue"). There was a popular little grocery store at the entrance to Buttonwood, across the road from Castle Hills, which they called "George's store," where many Castle Hills residents would grab a few items—especially because George allowed purchases on credit. Kids would especially go for the "rack of penny candy" kept by George, who was "revered" and widely appreciated as a "good man."[481]

As far as the architecture in Castle Hills, Charles Watts recalls that the houses were fairly uniform throughout the entire development, with no major variations in the size or design of the houses. Almost all were built on concrete slab foundations, he recalls, though a small section of the neighborhood—on Roxeter Road and Chelwynne Road—had full basements. Watts' father built a large kitchen addition on their house, which helped accommodate their large family (with seven children), and Watts remembers that many other families seemed to build kitchen additions shortly afterwards. The neighborhood mostly had carports, with few people building garages, though his father extended the driveway more into the backyard to make more space—on which Watts and his brother

[481] Charles Watts, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 29, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

would play basketball. Watts' father also built a large patio with a large green awning, and he remembers his mother hanging out there, smoking cigarettes and gossiping with neighbors. The houses had sizable attics that most people utilized for storage, and at the Watts house, "that's where everything went. All your Christmas decorations. All your hand-me-down clothes you got from your uncles and cousins. Anything…you know, everything went up in the attic." The attic was accessed by a small ladder, and there was no plywood flooring, so they had to walk on joists until Watts' father put a bit of a walkway in the space. Most families in Castle Hills did not have air conditioning in the early days but would instead have "fans in every room" during hot spells. Most people hung their laundry out to dry, though most everybody had a washer and eventually a dryer. Charles Watts' favorite feature, he remembers, was "the big back yard and garden." Having come from a much more humble home in Southbridge, he remembers the house in Castle Hills as "a blessing to me."[482]

Physical Characteristics of Castle Hills

Castle Hills is bordered to the west by Moores Lane, with New Castle County's Castle Hills Park to the north, Swanwyck to the northeast, the former Colwyck Elementary School (completed in 1953) to the east, Rogers Manor and Boothhurst to the southeast, and New Castle County's Rogers Manor Park to the south. Castle Hills Elementary School (completed in 1958) stands on Moores Lane opposite of the Castle Hills subdivision. One of the largest subdivisions in the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor, Castle Hills is comprised of 14 curvilinear streets, and access to the subdivision is open. From New Castle Avenue/Route 9, the neighborhood is accessed via Castle Hill Drive, and from Moores Lane, an arterial road, the neighborhood is accessed via Arden Avenue, W. Burton Avenue, a short section of Pierson Place, and both ends of Midfield Road. Interior streets are Deborah Avenue, Maynard Drive, Chelwynne Road, Angola Road, Tavernier Drive, Wardor Avenue, Gene Avenue, and Roxeter Road.

Castle Hills was developed in six phases, with the earliest built houses comprising Section 1 occurring along the southern portion of Moores Lane and Burton Avenue. Development of the community proceeded loosely from west to east, with the final area, Section 6, developed along Castle Hill Drive. Lot sizes range from about .14 or .15 acres at the smallest, with most corner lots averaging around a quarter of an acre and some of the largest lots comprising over a third of an acre. New Castle County-operated Castle Hills Park, accessed via Moores Lane and

[482]Charles Watts, interview by Michael J. Emmons, Jr., March 29, 2022, interview recording and notes, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

comprising nearly five acres, is situated at the northern extent of the neighborhood and features a basketball court, a baseball diamond, playground equipment, open space, and parking.

The architecture of the detached, single-family homes in Castle Hills is heterogeneous, with four similar house models, all built in ranch forms. As constructed, the dwellings were all one-story, three- or four-bay, rectangular forms with side-gabled roofs. Each of the models exhibited a "panorama" picture window in its living room, lending the ranch houses a modest Contemporary appearance. Many houses exhibit their original front-entry roof overhangs, which varied in form and included flat, extended, and shed designs. This feature has been removed from some dwellings, and some homes exhibit other additive features like enclosed front porches. The "California-style ranches" exhibit front-gabled roofs at their front entries. Interior square footage of the houses ranged from 850 to 925 square feet and included a living room, a kitchen and dining area, three bedrooms, and one bathroom. Many of the houses in Castle Hills have been expanded with additions, with a few examples having been enlarged vertically to two stories. Most of the homes were built without basements and are set on poured concrete slab foundations. The exteriors are clad in a variety of materials including asbestos shingle, vinyl siding, vertical wood paneling, and brick or stone veneers. Only a small handful of attached, two-family dwellings were ever constructed.

Castle Hills is an early- to mid-1950s example of a single-family, detached housing suburb and exhibits several features of auto-dependent subdivisions. The development features wide, winding "state approved" streets designed with curbing and sidewalks.[483] Each house has its own poured concrete or paved asphalt driveway located to either side of the dwelling. While the first homes built within the subdivision did not include carports as a standard feature, they became standard with the later model homes, some examples of which have been enclosed for additional interior living space. Additionally, each house has its own dedicated poured concrete walkway leading from the front door to the sidewalk, which interconnects throughout the neighborhood. Each house also has its own individual yard, surrounding it on all four sides.

[483] "Some Homes Remain for Sale in New Castle Development," *The News Journal* (Wilmington, DE), August 15, 1953.

Figure 128. Example of a modified four-bay ranch house in Castle Hills. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 129. Example of a four-bay ranch house in Castle Hills. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 130. Example of a four-bay ranch house in Castle Hills. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

Figure 131. Example of a three-bay ranch house in Castle Hills. (Center for Historic Architecture and Design, 2022)

6. Physical Characteristics of Subdivisions and Suburban Dwellings in the New Castle Avenue / Route 9 Corridor

In total, 12 subdivisions or residential neighborhoods were studied as a part of this project. Contained in this section are a series of tables that describe the physical characteristics of subdivisions and suburban dwellings as defined in Section 4, "Evaluating Subdivisions for Historical Significance & Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places." There is also one table included related to a social characteristic, regarding the occupancy type for each neighborhood.

There are two primary types of subdivisions located along the Route 9 corridor: non-programmatic residential developments and developer platted and designed residential subdivisions. Non-programmatic residential developments can be planned or unplanned developments and often progress over time through the purchase of undeveloped building lots, resulting in a mixture of architectural styles. Rizzo Avenue is the only non-programmatic residential development along the corridor that meets the temporal limits of this study (Eden Park Gardens, Hamilton Park, Holloway Terrace, Buttonwood, and Minquadale are also examples of this type of development). Rizzo Avenue is also unique along the corridor as it was subdivided and built for a single family, the Rizzos. The other 11 subdivisions studied as part of this project are all examples of developer platted and designed residential subdivisions. This type of development is typically purchased by a real estate speculator or real estate firm, and large tracts of land are subdivided into house lots. New dwellings are erected by the developer. These dwellings have consistent architectural design features and harmonious building types.

Type of Subdivision:

Subdivision Name	Type of Subdivision
Rizzo Avenue	Non-Programmatic Residential Development
Rosegate	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Simonds Gardens	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Mayview Manor	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Mobile Home Village	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Oakmont	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Rose Hill Gardens	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Dunleith	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Garfield Park	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Collins Park	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision
Castle Hills	Developer Platted and Designed Residential Subdivision

Both types of residential subdivisions located along the Route 9 corridor should be evaluated using the same six physical characteristics, including size, circulation, access, housing type, architectural diversity, and community amenities. What follows is a summary of these characteristics.

The size of the subdivisions has been summarized in two ways—first, the number of total dwellings and, secondly, the number of streets contained in each community. Rizzo Avenue is the smallest neighborhood along the Route 9 corridor with six dwellings (two have since been subdivided into multiple units) and only one street. Collins Park is the largest development in terms of both number of dwellings (731) and number of streets (20).

Number of Dwellings:

Subdivision Name	Number of Dwellings
Rizzo Avenue	6
Rosegate	189
Simonds Gardens	218
Mayview Manor	69
Mobile Home Village	39
Oakmont	160
Rose Hill Gardens	55
Dunleith	470
Garfield Park	388
Collins Park	731
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	420
Castle Hills	501

Size of Subdivisions:

Subdivision Name	Number of Streets
Rizzo Avenue	Small; one
Rosegate	Small; two
Simonds Gardens	Large; seven
Mayview Manor	Small; two
Mobile Home Village	Small; two
Oakmont	Small; two
Rose Hill Gardens	Small; two
Dunleith	Large; eight
Garfield Park	Large; 10
Collins Park	Large; 20
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Large; 11
Castle Hills	Large; 14

Circulation:

Circulation refers to the layout and arrangement of the roads found within each subdivision—straight or curvilinear. Whether the roads are laid out in a straight or grid iron fashion, or as sweeping, curvilinear streets, this design choice affects the visual character of the subdivision. The majority of the subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor have a variation of curvilinear streets or curvilinear loops as the main circulation pattern. Three of the smallest subdivisions—Rizzo Avenue, Mobile Home Village, and Rose Hill Gardens—are the only neighborhoods with straight roads.

Subdivision Name	Circulation
Rizzo Avenue	Straight
Rosegate	Curvilinear Loop
Simonds Gardens	Curvilinear
Mayview Manor	Curvilinear
Mobile Home Village	Straight
Oakmont	Curvilinear Loop
Rose Hill Gardens	Straight
Dunleith	Curvilinear
Garfield Park	Curvilinear
Collins Park	Curvilinear
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Curvilinear
Castle Hills	Curvilinear

Access:

A summary of access into each neighborhood is also included. Closed (self-contained) subdivisions only have a single entrance into the neighborhood, while open subdivisions contained multiple different public entrances. Nine of the 12 subdivisions are open access. Three of the smallest subdivisions—Rizzo Avenue, Mobile Home Village, and Rose Hill Gardens—are the only neighborhoods with a single entry point. Coincidently, these are the same neighborhoods that have straight roadways.

Subdivision Name	Access
Rizzo Avenue	Closed
Rosegate	Open
Simonds Gardens	Open
Mayview Manor	Open
Mobile Home Village	Closed
Oakmont	Open
Rose Hill Gardens	Closed
Dunleith	Open
Garfield Park	Open
Collins Park	Open
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Open
Castle Hills	Open

Housing Type:

Housing type refers to whether dwellings are detached (free-standing), attached (duplexes, triplexes, etc.), or a mixture of both. A dominant design trend in the post-war period is free-standing dwellings, often accompanied by large grassy lawns. While the majority of subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor have detached housing (eight examples), there are four subdivisions that have attached, semi-attached, or a mixture of housing options.

Subdivision Name	Housing Type
Rizzo Avenue	Detached
Rosegate	Attached: Multi-Story: Townhouse
Simonds Gardens	Attached: One-Story: Ranch Type
Mayview Manor	Detached
Mobile Home Village	Detached
Oakmont	Mixture: Attached: Multi-Story: Townhouse & Detached
Rose Hill Gardens	Semi-Attached
Dunleith	Detached
Garfield Park	Detached
Collins Park	Detached
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Detached
Castle Hills	Mixed; predominately Detached, several Attached: One-Story

Occupancy Type:

Occupancy type refers to whether the subdivision was originally classified as “open occupancy,” a term that was used to signal that there were no racial restrictions for who could purchase homes—though in practice it generally meant that the neighborhood was intended for Black buyers—or “closed-occupancy,” which indicates that only whites could buy homes there.

Subdivision Name	Occupancy Type
Rizzo Avenue	Closed (private family subdivision)
Rosegate	Open
Simonds Gardens	Closed
Mayview Manor	Closed
Mobile Home Village	Closed
Oakmont	Open
Rose Hill Gardens	Closed
Dunleith	Open
Garfield Park	Closed
Collins Park	Closed
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Closed
Castle Hills	Closed

Architectural Diversity:

Architectural diversity refers to whether residences are **homogenous** in their general design (almost entirely standardized), **heterogeneous** (mixed styles), or **non-programmatic** (random or determined by individual builders). The Route 9 corridor has a mix of homogenous or heterogenous subdivisions, while one neighborhood (Rizzo Avenue) is non-programmatic.

Subdivision Name	Architectural Diversity
Rizzo Avenue	Non-programmatic
Rosegate	Homogenous
Simonds Gardens	Heterogenous
Mayview Manor	Heterogenous
Mobile Home Village	Heterogenous
Oakmont	Homogenous
Rose Hill Gardens	Homogenous
Dunleith	Heterogenous
Garfield Park	Heterogenous
Collins Park	Heterogenous
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Heterogenous
Castle Hills	Heterogenous

Community Amenities:

This refers to whether the original neighborhood design includes residences only or incorporates any community amenities such as a park, playground, community building, or athletic courts/fields; and, further, if these amenities were available to residents only or allowed public access. Most of the subdivisions included in this study were originally developed without community amenities. In the later twentieth century, New Castle County Department of Parks and Recreation developed and/or assumed responsibility for parks in Rosegate, Simonds Gardens, Oakmont, Rose Hill Gardens, Dunleith, Garfield Park, Collins Park, Swanywyck / Swanwyck Terrace, and Castle Hills.

Subdivision Name	Amenities
Rizzo Avenue	Swimming pool (private, accessible to residents only)
Rosegate	Historically: none Currently: Rosegate Park (basketball court, playground)
Simonds Gardens	Historically: none Currently: Simonds Gardens Park (athletic courts/fields, playground)
Mayview Manor	None
Mobile Home Village	None

Oakmont	Historically: Recreation area (designed with open space) Currently: Oakmont Park (athletic courts/fields, playground)
Rose Hill Gardens	Historically: none Currently: Rose Hill Gardens Park (athletic courts/fields, playground)
Dunleith	Historically: none Currently: Surratte Park (swimming pool, athletic courts/fields, playground)
Garfield Park	Historically: none Currently: Garfield Park Recreation Center (recreation building, athletic courts/fields, playground)
Collins Park	Historically: none Currently: Collins Park (athletic courts/fields, playground)
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Historically: none Currently: Swanwyck Estates Park (athletic courts/fields, playground)
Castle Hills	Historically: none Currently: Castle Hills Park (athletic courts/fields, playground)

Other Physical Characteristics:

Other physical characteristics of these subdivisions also influence their appearance and character. These include factors such as the parcel size of individual properties and setback distance of dwellings from the primary roadway. Parking infrastructure, whether including carports or garages, driveways, off-street spaces, or on-street parking, also affects the circulation patterns and visual character of subdivisions. Infrastructure such as sidewalks, curbing, and streetlights also further define the character of subdivisions. All of the subdivisions presently exhibit streetlights, and all except for Mobile Home Village exhibit curbing.

Parcel Size:

Parcel size ranged a great deal throughout the study area. Rosegate has the smallest parcels averaging .03 to .04 acres, while the smallest lots in neighborhoods like Swanwyck and Castle Hills were .15 acres, with corner lots being as large as .36 acres. Rosegate is not an outlier for small lot size—the other attached housing subdivisions along the Route 9 corridor, Oakmont (.04 acres) and Simonds Gardens (.07 to .08 acres), had the next smallest parcel sizes. The detached and semi-detached subdivisions all have individual parcels of .10 acres or greater. One anomaly for parcel size along the Route 9 corridor is Mobile Home Village. Traditionally, in mobile home communities, residents own their mobile home and lease the land it sits on. This is the case in Mobile Home Village, and as such, there are no individual parcels.

Subdivision Name	Parcel Size (Average Range)
Rizzo Avenue	.18 to .20 acres
Rosegate	.03 to .04 acres
Simonds Gardens	.07 to .08 acres
Mayview Manor	.14 to .15 acres
Mobile Home Village	No individual lots; overall lot is 2.43 acres
Oakmont	.04 acres
Rose Hill Gardens	.10 to .11 acres
Dunleith	.13 to .14 acres
Garfield Park	.13 to .20 acres
Collins Park	.11 to .12 acres
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	.15 to .20 acres
Castle Hills	.15 to .24 acres

Setback Distances:

Subdivision Name	Setback Distances (Average Range)
Rizzo Avenue	10 to 45 feet
Rosegate	35 to 40 feet
Simonds Gardens	35 to 45 feet
Mayview Manor	35 feet
Mobile Home Village	0 to 10 feet
Oakmont	35 to 40 feet
Rose Hill Gardens	25 to 35 feet
Dunleith	25 to 35 feet
Garfield Park	35 to 40 feet
Collins Park	25 to 45 feet
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	25 to 45 feet
Castle Hills	40 to 50 feet

Parking Infrastructure:

An interesting design trend found among the majority of neighborhoods along the Route 9 corridor is the lack of carports or garages. Only a portion of the houses in the neighborhoods of Rizzo Avenue, Collins Park, and Swanwyck have garages. For instance, some of the two-story, Colonial-inspired homes in Collins Park were constructed with garages, while none of the one-story ranches were built with garages. Additionally, one neighborhood—Castle Hills—offered carports with some homes; while they were initially an optional feature among the earliest houses built, they became a standard feature with later models. Two neighborhoods in the study area offer no accommodations for parking, beyond street parking: Simonds Gardens and Mobile Home Village. The houses in the remaining neighborhoods—Rosegate, Mayview Manor, Oakmont, Rose Hill Gardens, Dunleith, and Garfield Park—were originally built only with driveways. Additionally, large portions of Collins Park, Swanwyck and Castle Hills were also built with only driveways.

Subdivision Name	Parking Infrastructure (Original)
Rizzo Avenue	Driveways, some attached garages
Rosegate	Driveways
Simonds Gardens	On-street parking only
Mayview Manor	Driveways
Mobile Home Village	On-street parking only
Oakmont	Driveways
Rose Hill Gardens	Driveways
Dunleith	Driveways
Garfield Park	Driveways
Collins Park	Driveways, some attached garages
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Driveways, some attached garages (outside of "Swanwyck Estates" section of subdivision)
Castle Hills	Driveways, some attached carports

Community Infrastructure: Sidewalks:

Along the Route 9 corridor, the majority of neighborhoods were constructed with sidewalks. The only exceptions are the non-programmatic development Rizzo Avenue as well as Rosegate and Mobile Home village. The other nine subdivisions, which almost all feature detached or semi-detached housing (except for Oakmont), have sidewalks.

Subdivision Name	Community Infrastructure: Sidewalks
Rizzo Avenue	None
Rosegate	None
Simonds Gardens	Sidewalks
Mayview Manor	Sidewalks (Hillview Road and Lambson Lane)
Mobile Home Village	None
Oakmont	Sidewalks
Rose Hill Gardens	Sidewalks
Dunleith	Sidewalks
Garfield Park	Sidewalks
Collins Park	Sidewalks
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Sidewalks (only in "Swanwyck Estates" section of subdivision)
Castle Hills	Sidewalks

Physical Characteristics of Suburban Dwellings:

In addition to the physical characteristics of suburban neighborhoods, summaries of the characteristics of the individual "suburban dwellings" in each residential development are also included here. Post-World War II domestic architecture tended to depart from pre-war architectural styles, forms, plans, and materials. Nationally, during this time period (1945-1970), architectural styles were moving towards Modern or Contemporary expressions. New forms including the ranch and the split-level were increasingly popular during this period. In Delaware, the architectural preference of Colonial-inspired (Early American) design dominated in new

subdivisions. Dominant architectural styles found along the Route 9 corridor include Early American and Contemporary, while dominant building forms include ranches, Minimal Traditionals, and Cape Cods. The style or form chosen as the dominant architecture by the developer also impacted the height of the dwellings constructed. Many of the Contemporary style dwellings are two or three stories in height (Rosegate and Oakmont). The Early American style homes are also predominately two stories in height (Rose Hill Gardens, Collins Park, and Swanwyck). However, in the subdivisions where ranches, Cape Cods, and Minimal Traditional homes are the dominant design mode, the dwellings are one-story in height (Mayview Manor, Dunleith, and Castle Hills).

Architectural Style/Form:

Subdivision Name	Architectural Style / Form
Rizzo Avenue	Mixed; ranch and Early American
Rosegate	Contemporary
Simonds Gardens	Ranch
Mayview Manor	Minimal Traditional
Mobile Home Village	Mobile homes (single-wide)
Oakmont	Mixed; Contemporary and Early American
Rose Hill Gardens	Early American
Dunleith	Mixed; ranch and minimalist Contemporary
Garfield Park	Ranch
Collins Park	Mixed; Minimal Traditional, ranch, and Early American
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Mixed; Cape Cod, ranch, and Early American
Castle Hills	Ranch

Height of Dwellings:

Subdivision Name	Height of Dwellings
Rizzo Avenue	Mixed; one and two story
Rosegate	Two story
Simonds Gardens	One story
Mayview Manor	One story
Mobile Home Village	One story
Oakmont	Mixed; two story and three story
Rose Hill Gardens	Two story
Dunleith	One story
Garfield Park	One story
Collins Park	Mixed; one story and two story
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Mixed; one story and two story
Castle Hills	One story

Primary Façade Materials:

Construction methods also changed substantially after World War II, especially in subdivisions where housing was mass-produced. New materials (steel and wood panel construction) combined with balloon and platform framing utilizing pre-cut lumber fueled the rapid expansion of suburban growth. New siding materials like aluminum, asbestos shingle, and vinyl, along with simulated masonry products like Perma-Stone and Formstone, were utilized on newly constructed houses. The majority of the suburban dwellings constructed along the Route 9 corridor display new materials—mostly some type of horizontal siding, whether it is aluminum or vinyl. However, where the dominant architectural style in a neighborhood is the Early American style (Colonial-inspired), many of these dwellings feature brick or brick veneers.

Subdivision Name	Façade Materials
Rizzo Avenue	Masonry; brick and stone
Rosegate	Mixed; brick veneer and horizontal siding*
Simonds Gardens	Brick veneer
Mayview Manor	Horizontal siding*
Mobile Home Village	Horizontal* and vertical aluminum panel siding
Oakmont	Mixed; brick veneer and horizontal siding*
Rose Hill Gardens	Brick veneer
Dunleith	Mixed; brick veneer and cast concrete
Garfield Park	Mixed; brick veneer and horizontal siding*
Collins Park	Mixed; brick veneer, horizontal siding*, and stucco
Swanwyck / Swanwyck Terrace	Mixed; brick veneer and horizontal siding*
Castle Hills	Horizontal siding*

*Horizontal siding is both vinyl and aluminum siding

7. Recommendations

This section contains six historic preservation recommendations for further work in the New Castle Avenue/Route 9 corridor. The recommendations are mostly focused on the survey, recordation, and evaluation of resources along the corridor.

1. **Additional Public Engagement / Public Events**

   It is recommended that the findings of this project be disseminated to the residents of the Route 9 corridor. As part of this larger project, this report, an oral history report, a digital booklet, and an ArcGIS StoryMap were created. These various products are available online at the Delaware Department of Transportation's website, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design's website, and physical copies of these materials will be deposited for use at the Route 9 library. Additionally, videos of the oral history interviews are also available at the aforementioned places.

   As part of this project, CHAD staff sought community input about future public engagement activities, to identify events or programs that might be the most meaningful or valued by area residents to share the findings of this historical context report, the oral history project, and to facilitate additional discussions, recollections, and documentation for the history of the Route 9 neighborhoods. Preliminary ideas shared by community members included an event to present the history, while distributing any printed products from this study, allowing residents to share memories and discuss possible commemoration or historic preservation efforts that might further recognize the history of communities along the Route 9 corridor. An online public event is tentatively scheduled for August 2023 for DelDOT and CHAD to share the findings of this project. It is further recommended that additional in-person events be scheduled at either the Route 9 library or the Rose Hill Community Center to reach more residents of the community.

2. **Modified Reconnaissance Level Survey**

   Each of the 12 post-war neighborhoods contained in the study area should receive a modified version of a reconnaissance level survey using official State of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs Cultural Resource Survey (CRS) Forms. It is recommended that the modified reconnaissance surveys focus on photo-documentation—producing a CRS 1 (Property Identification Form), CRS 9

(Map Form), CRS 12 (Photographic Inventory Form), and CRS13 (Digital Photographs Form) for each dwelling in all neighborhoods within the study area. The combination of these forms would record baseline information about the location and year constructed for the buildings (CRS 1 and 9) with current photography. This modified type of reconnaissance level survey would allow for a more expeditious processing of thousands of dwellings within the identified neighborhoods.

3. **Intensive Level Survey / National Register Eligibility**

   Three neighborhoods—Dunleith, Oakmont, and Rosegate—should undergo intensive level survey (for National Register eligibility) in addition to modified reconnaissance level survey. These three neighborhoods were originally the only areas open to Black residents to purchase homes along the New Castle Avenue corridor from the 1940s into 1960s, while the other neighborhoods in the study area were first open only to white residents—and slowly integrated. As such, these three neighborhoods are potentially eligible for listing in the **National Register of Historic Places** under Criterion A for embodying social and demographic changes in New Castle County as examples of Black suburbanization. Intensive level survey would allow an assessment of the dwellings and their historic integrity.

4. **Develop Historic Context for Non-Residential Buildings within Route 9 Corridor**

   This historic context has dealt with only the residential suburban landscape of the Route 9 corridor. Other important aspects of the suburban landscape within the study area should be examined as part of a comprehensive context for suburbanization. Commercial, industrial, and community-based resources inherently followed residential development into the suburbs. Additional property types like new suburban schools, public libraries, houses of worship, healthcare facilities, shopping centers and strip malls, restaurants, gas stations, office buildings, etc. should be studied to help understand the evolution of the Route 9 corridor. A comprehensive historic context for the entire Route 9 corridor should include these non-domestic resources as they also reflect the historic themes of expansion of transportation, increased reliance on automobiles, and suburbanization.

5. **Continue Oral History Project**

   Additional oral histories should be collected. Many of the original owners and original children of the neighborhoods studied are now of advanced age, and preserving their recollections is urgent and time sensitive. During the course of this project, at least two original owners from the Dunleith

neighborhood (who were suggested for interviews) passed away before interviews could be scheduled. Also, though we reached out to community organizers and heads of all civic associations within the corridor, we were ultimately unable to interview people from all of the neighborhoods investigated. Interviewing individuals from communities not currently represented in the completed oral histories, like Simonds Gardens, Collins Park, and Swanwyck, would fill important gaps in understanding individual subdivisions and the history of the Route 9 corridor. Further, it is recommended to continue oral history recordation in neighborhoods where only one informant participated (i.e., Castle Hills and Oakmont) to preserve a more robust history.

6. **Commemoration**

Some of these neighborhoods, or specific locations within them, are good candidates to be recognized by historical markers, whether through the statewide program (Delaware Public Archives) or New Castle County's marker program, in order to further commemorate various aspects of the Route 9 corridor's history.

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