

The Camera & Clipboard

Historical & Architectural Survey Newsletter



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WORKSHOP FOCUS OF NEWSLETTER

This issue of *The Camera & Clipboard* newsletter is devoted to a review of the topics covered at the Colorado Preservation Inc. Pre-Conference Workshop entitled, "Identifying, Evaluating, and Nominating Post-World War II Residential Neighborhoods" held on February 8, 2006. Although the workshop was limited to 35 participants, the session content will prove increasingly important to the wider survey audience as resources of the recent past become the subject of historical & architectural survey projects and reach the National Register 'magic' 50-year mark for eligibility.

The three speakers-- Mary Therese Anstey and Dale Heckendorn from OAHF and James Hewat from the City of Boulder's Planning & Development Services Department-- emphasized the workshop represented an initial exploration of issues surrounding the survey and designation of postwar suburbs and would likely raise more questions than answers since so few surveys and nominations have been completed in Colorado. The workshop defined the postwar period as the span from the late 1940s to the 1960s; emphasized residential development during this period actually included both houses and community facilities; and stressed the term neighborhood appeared in the workshop title to highlight the need to consider groupings of resources instead of individual sites or buildings.

The articles in this issue of *The Camera & Clipboard* cover the major presentation topics. This newsletter also includes links to the supplement

tal materials all participants received in their workshop notebooks (see page 11). This publication is not meant to serve as a substitute for actual attendance at the workshop. Instead we hope it will provide useful information on an emerging topic in historic preservation. Staff welcome any questions readers may have about postwar issues and recognize the need for an ongoing dialogue about the survey and nomination of these fascinating resources.

POSTWAR NEIGHBORHOODS IN CONTEXT

A great deal of time at the workshop was spent on the historical aspects of survey and the presentation included both a brief overview of the national historic context for the period from the late 1940s to the 1960s and a look at relevant local context issues for Boulder.

National

The earliest housing developments outside cities were railroad suburbs, picturesque enclaves for the wealthy. By the late 1800s and early 1900s streetcar suburbs, with houses built on gridded streets within a five to ten minute walk from the nearest streetcar stop, developed in numerous Colorado communities. Little single-family home building occurred during either the Great Depression or World War II. The federal government commissioned defense housing during the war. Erected quickly, inexpensively and with rationing in mind, these projects introduced two factors, prefabrication and mobilization on a grand scale, which would impact the postwar suburban housing (Continued on page 2)

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

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developments. Lack of wartime building, rationing and emotive ads from manufacturers of household appliances fueled feelings of deferred gratification and encouraged soldiers and their families to envision the 'dream homes' they would establish after the war.

Immediately after the war housing was extremely scarce. The federal government passed legislation aimed at both providing for veterans and easing the housing crunch. The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the GI Bill, paid universities for tuition and provided a modest stipend to veteran students. A college education, and the extra earning power which accompanied it, was viewed as advantageous to veterans and the American economy. The Veterans' Emergency Housing Acts of 1946, 1948 and 1949 allowed the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to insure mortgages with no or low down payments on 30-year terms; FHA involvement in the building process encouraged lower cost homes in large-scale suburbs.

Any discussion of postwar residential neighborhoods must mention Levittown. Real estate lawyer Abraham Levitt, with his sons Alfred and William established Levitt and Sons, Inc. in 1929. The firm's earliest homes were built for wealthy Long Island clients. Their first suburban development was erected in 1934. The company experimented with low-cost housing during WWII, building 2350 rental units for the Navy in Norfolk, VA in 1941. Benefiting from FHA and VA financing and William's wartime experience as a Seabee, the firm constructed their first postwar residential development in 1947 on Long Island. Using assembly line methods they built 6000 homes, making Levittown, NY the largest housing development by a single builder. The Levitts repeated this successful model, building a second Levittown in Pennsylvania from 1951 to 1958. This development had not only 17,311 houses but also community facilities like schools, parks and shopping malls. The Levitts had demonstrated the feasibility of building large numbers of affordable houses; other builders

quickly replicated their methods for new subdivisions throughout the country.



The Levittown model illustrated the popularity and feasibility of large suburban housing developments.

The national historic context portion of the workshop concluded with an analysis of 1950s and 1960s social, political and housing influences.

Key buzzwords for the 1950s included optimism, prosperity and leisure. Americans believed their traditional values had won the war. In the postwar period the country witnessed an unprecedented baby boom, peaking in 1957 when 4.3 million babies were born. One wage families, with commuting fathers and stay-home mothers, were a sign of new leisure class status. During the postwar period the television was important for not only entertaining the family but also transmitting the suburban ideal. Many suburban residents were new to both homeownership and life outside the cities. Families on the sitcoms showed them how to cope with their new lifestyles.

Politically, 1946 to 1959 was a period of reconstruction with both physical rebuilding and social adjustment to the depression and war years. Weary of war, the country swung more towards policies of isolationism and conformity. This was the era of McCarthyism and the Red Scare. In this climate of suspicion, society shunned unstable foreign influences and reveled in all things American. One of the most influential pieces of

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

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legislation, the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, literally paved the way for continued postwar suburban development.

In the 1950s the Levittown model went nationwide. The massive shift to the suburbs was unprecedented in both the sheer number of single-family homes and the fact such houses were affordable to such a large cross-section of the population. Simple, inexpensive to construct one story ranch homes and contemporary styles were found across the country.

The 1960s witnessed a shift from conservatism towards idealism and rebellion. The baby boomers were teenagers who wanted to both break away from the safe life of uniformity in the postwar suburbs and be different from their parents in their clothing, music and lifestyle choices. In 1964 both Beatlemania and a general 'British Invasion' in music and fashion signaled the end of 1950s Ameri-centric culture.

1960s politics also witnessed a shift from conservatism towards idealism. President Kennedy set the tone for the decade in his inaugural address when he challenged the nation to "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." This was also a less innocent decade than the 1950s. The Cuban Missile Crisis, scientists' assertion nuclear war was not survivable and the assassinations of key leaders all demonstrated the increasing complexity of politics in the 1960s. A spirit of idealism and rebellion inspired key protest movements. Younger people were particularly engaged in efforts to change the world. Voter registration efforts and civil rights marches sought to end segregation and racial discrimination. Protests against American involvement in the Vietnam Conflict ranged from the mild-- sit-ins or teach-in on college campuses-- to outright rebellion and violence associated with the protests during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago.

1960s housing continued to be built in large suburban subdivisions. Housing types changed

slightly, with Ranches becoming more elongated and often featuring multi-car garages. Split-levels also emerged, giving families with older children more space on multiple levels. Increasingly buyers had higher standards and many chose to sell their starter homes and upgrade.

Local: Boulder

In the postwar period Boulder experienced explosive population growth. Between 1940 and 1960 the population nearly tripled from 13,000 to 38,000 causing a housing crunch. In 1946 approximately 100 houses were built, not enough to accommodate returning veterans who established a "Vet-Town" trailer park. The housing shortage remained acute into the 1950s, with Boulder averaging 650 housing starts from the late 1950s to the late 1960s.

Like the community, the University of Colorado experienced tremendous postwar growth. In 1940 approximately 5000 students were enrolled. Returning soldiers taking advantage of the GI Bill and the postwar baby boom both fueled an enrollment spike: by 1960 the university had over 10,000 students and by 1970 there were 20,000. Students also experienced scarce housing; 1950s university administrators periodically asked homeowners to billet students.

In keeping with national trends, road building impacted Boulder's postwar development. The Boulder Turnpike was constructed in 1951. Dubbed as both the "Shortline to the Skyline" and "Tomorrow's Highway Today", the road ended the city's relative isolation from the Denver metro area. During its first year an average of 5000 cars per day traveled the road, more than twice the pre-construction traffic estimate. Within a year of construction, the "Turnpike Builders" platted a subdivision of 330 low cost homes adjacent to the highway.

Key postwar housing developments in Boulder by decade include: 1940s - Hudson Subdivision, Sunset Hills (1948); 1950s - Highland Park (1952), Martin Acres (Phase I and II- 1952, 1955), Park East, Wagoner Estates; 1960s - Baseline Heights, Table Mesa Addition.



COMPONENTS OF POSTWAR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The workshop continued to emphasize the need, with postwar residential resources, to expand the focus of survey beyond the individual house or building to the wider environment. Such an approach requires an examination of location, subdivision design, homes, landscapes and community facilities.



Location - Postwar suburbs are auto-oriented so they tend to be located further out from the urban core and near accessible interstates or highways.

Subdivision Design – By the early 1940s, the curvilinear subdivision had evolved from Olmstead, City Beautiful and Garden City models to become the FHA-approved standard. Beyond FHA guidance, other organizations also provided information about how to design subdivisions; in 1947 the Urban Land Institute published the initial volume of the *Community Builder's Handbook*. Key elements shown on plat maps of postwar subdivisions include: 1) internal circulation routes: main and feeder roads and sidewalks, if they exist, 2) utilities; 3) house lots and 4) community facilities. In areas where many subdivisions were built at the same time, the plans included separation devices such as gates, fences, signs or planted gardens. Also be on the look out for distinctive lamp posts, sewer covers or monuments to distinguish one development from another.

Homes – The sameness of houses nearly defines postwar subdivisions. Many builders offered a limited number of models which differed only slightly, perhaps a different exterior paint color or variation of roof pitch. Many of the popular housing styles and types were designed and offered specifically to appeal to the stereotypical vision of what a suburb should be. Many builders based their homes on historical prototypes, some of which had little, if any, relationship to the geographic location of the property. For more information on postwar houses, see *Selected Post-World War II Residential Architectural Styles and Building Types* in the Post-World War II documents at <http://coloradohistory-oahp.org/programareas/infoman/infoman.htm>.

Landscapes – Subdivision landscapes feature the placement of the individual homes, garages and yards including lawns, fences, walls, plantings, pools, patios and sheds. Such landscapes are conceived in a three-layered process which involves choosing the location, designing the layout and creating the house and yard design. Most builders possessed a landscape vision for new suburbs based upon either English parks or golf courses. In reality, many owners moved into their new homes with no lawns, just mud or dust. The green lawn became part of the image of what a family home was supposed to be and usually required a great deal of effort from the homeowner—seeding, watering, mowing and edging. Many owners relied upon popular shelter magazines like *Arts and Architecture* or *Sunset* to create the interior/ exterior living areas promoted as essential for living in a Ranch or Contemporary home. These same publications offered tips on arranging yards into the lawn, a private patio, informal garden rooms and activity areas.



Colorado Springs suburban homes with a conspicuous absence of grass lawns.



St. Timothy's Episcopal Church (1961) in Littleton

Community Facilities – Immediate postwar developments, like the first Levittown, included only homes. However, it soon became standard practice for builders to at least plan for and usually provide community facilities. Typical non-residential elements located either in or adjacent to new subdivisions included shopping centers, parks, parkways, and institutions like schools, churches, stores, community buildings and libraries.



POSTWAR NEIGHBORHOODS: BUILDERS' AND HOMEOWNERS' PERSPECTIVES

The presentation considered Post World War II residential neighborhoods from both the builder and owner perspectives. The boxes below highlight the main differences between the two.

Builders/ Developers

- Build houses
- Develop subdivisions
- Interested in profit

Homeowners

- Create homes
- Develop neighborhoods
- Interested in equity

MERCHANT BUILDERS EMERGE IN POSTWAR PERIOD

The term merchant builder described a class of entrepreneurs involved with the entire house production process who designed and built much-needed housing in large tract suburban subdivisions across the United States. Two of the best known merchant builders were William Levitt on the east coast and Joe Eichler in California. As the sole point of contact and responsibility for these large developments, merchant builders were charged with four major tasks: land acquisition, financing, construction and marketing.

Land Acquisition: Early merchant builders were engaged in a risky business, choosing a plot of land sufficiently far out from the city to be inexpensive but sufficiently accessible to be profitable. The actual land purchase was only one part of the acquisition process. Builders also had to arrange for subdivision engineering and secure government approval for their plans. The builders relied heavily upon both civil engineers and lawyers for this phase of the project.

Financing: Merchant builders required large sums of money. Financing impacted three key phases of any subdivision development project: builders needed capital for the land acquisition and development, money to cover construction costs and increasingly builders became involved with facilitating financing for the home purchasers.

Construction: The first major construction task was building a group of highly visible model homes. The rush to get models and first phase

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POSTWAR OWNERS SEEKING 'AMERICAN DREAM'

In the period immediately after World War II, many veterans and their families were desperate for affordable housing. Critics, some within their own extended families, bemoaned the dreary monotony of new large tract subdivisions like Levittown and warned about feelings of isolation. While many new owners acknowledged these negative comments, they were still willing to make the big move. They welcomed the idea of a new home with space for a barbeque or other leisure activities. Most sought the community aspect promised in new subdivisions, choosing suburbs because they represented the best environment for families. Some owners viewed their homes as containers for shiny consumer goods denied during wartime. They possessed 1950s postwar attitudes based upon prosperity, optimism and leisure.

Most prospective owners had been urban renters previously. Their conceptions of what a single-family home ought to be were shaped not by personal experience but instead by traditional or sentimental ideas popularized in literature and the media. Many builders designed houses to fulfill stereotypical ideas of home. Levitt, attentive to historical precedent, employed the Cape Cod style to remind owners of the 'noble Pilgrims and the hardy New England colonials' they had learned about in school. Over time new owners demanded more modern homes, suburban dwellings with open-plans, picture windows and other modern elements. Ranch type homes were modern for the masses. Like the Cape Cod the Ranch came with historical associations such as rugged frontier individu-

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MERCHANT BUILDERS

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production started was part of an overall strategy. Merchant builders were not just out to build a few hundred houses in one project; instead they were trying also to perfect a process—meshing land acquisition, government processing, land development, financing, house construction and marketing.

Most builders viewed the existing industry as slow and inefficient. They were interested in both moving quickly and being in control because they had so much emotionally and financially invested in the success of their projects. Most merchant builders advocated an assembly line approach to house building, a radical departure from the way skilled carpenters had previously built single family homes. Merchant builders divided home construction into three basic sets of tasks: foundation, rough and finish. Each of these divisions was further divided into discrete subtasks. This division of labor allowed the crew members to specialize in a single aspect and to do that job only on multiple homes. These methods inspired comparisons between merchant builders and auto manufacturers.

Builders also simplified house designs to make construction easier, quicker and less expensive. The most revolutionary thing they did was remove the basement, building directly on a concrete slab. Other changes to enhance the speed of building included the introduction of both basic boxy shape and standard window and door sizes. The changes these builders instituted meant they could complete a house in three to six weeks instead of in several months.

Marketing: Marketing was an ongoing concern for most builders. In the land acquisition and financing of a project, marketing impacted site selection, product concept and pricing. In the construction of a project, marketing impacted model home presentation, advertising, selling, loan processing and warranty service.

The emergence of merchant builders during the postwar period represented a radical departure from previous house building practice. The most successful builders had attention to detail, ob-

session and high levels of both energy and will. All of these personal characteristics paid off for the bigger, most efficient builders who were able to create the shell of a \$10,000 house for \$2000.

POSTWAR HOMEOWNERS

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alism, wide open spaces, convenience and informality.

New owners wanted to get the most house for the least cash. Even with assistance from FHA or VA loans, new owners were concerned about the cost of home ownership. Nationwide FHA ads and billboards intended to dispel these concerns encouraged homebuyers to "Own a More Livable Home! Pay For It Like Rent." Local newspaper ads (such as the one from the *Pueblo Chieftain* below) carried similar messages, showing readers monthly house payments could be less than monthly rent.

WHY RENT? ...
NOW IT'S EASY TO—

OWN
YOUR OWN BEAUTIFUL NEW
HOME IN BELMONT ACRES!
JUST LOOK . . . TOTAL MONTHLY PAYMENTS ARE ONLY
\$89 Everything Included!
Principal, Int., Taxes, & Insurance
and every payment increases your equity in your own home.
Yes, think it over, **WHY RENT?** When you
can move right in for only a total of
\$99!

VETS! NOTHING DOWN **FHA!** LOW FHA FINANCING TOO!

See the Beautiful
"PIUTE"
Here are just a few of the
many "PIUTE" features: Three
carpeted bedrooms, storage area
off kitchen, shower, tub, linen
closet, etc. Hired bath-
room and shower.

**BOOST BELMONT
AND
WIN UP
TO \$1500!** If you refer a home buyer to Sproul
Homes in Belmont Acres you can win
up to \$1500! Just call a Sproul Home
Counselor at LI 2-1347 for the few
simple rules to follow.

VISIT BELMONT ACRES TODAY — or pickup the phone right now and
call a Sproul Home Counselor. There are many different plans to
choose from . . . a different Sproul home to fit every size family and
every size budget

STOP RENTING! NOW YOU CAN OWN!
1702 Jerry Murphy Rd.

**SPROUL
HOMES, Inc.** **BELMONT
ACRES**
Phone LI 2-1347

For many postwar homeowners, the move to the suburbs represented a radical change in lifestyle. The traditional image of the suburbs as conformist was not entirely accurate. Many of the new owners actually had left conformity-- in the shape of established urban neighborhoods and well-formed kinship networks-- behind. The suburbs were new with no one way of doing

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POSTWAR HOMEOWNERS (Continued from page 6)

things. According to historian Thomas Hine, "The new suburbia was not picturesque and elitist, as earlier American suburbs had been. Rather it was a place where the scrape of the bulldozer shaped the land and a newly massive middle class tried to figure out how to live." For that reason, many new homeowners in the suburbs experienced a high level of anxiety.

These new suburbanites quickly became fierce defenders of their new lifestyles and subdivisions. Few believed they, personally, lived in 'ticky-tacky little boxes'. They understood their new neighborhoods within the context of the places they had left. For example, Levittown pioneers, accustomed to block after block of brownstones or tenement apartments in Brooklyn or Queens, saw nothing objectionable about the hundreds of similar Cape Cods; at least in Levittown they had more land and an enhanced sense of physical space.

Many owners bought their new homes with the intention of taking full advantage of 1950s emphasis on leisure. Backyards, grassy lawns and entertaining took on added significance. Lawn maintenance was taken quite seriously with covenants in many subdivisions about how often the grass must be mowed. With emphasis on rolling lawns, fences were generally discouraged. 'Symbolic' fences-- enough to mark the territory around a front or back door-- were deemed acceptable. But high fences were referred to as 'spite fences', implying anyone who installed such an obstruction either hated their neighbors or was anti-community. Both television and popular magazines portrayed suburbanites as living spontaneous, informal lives. Historians Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen described this departure as "a moment when porch society gave way to patio society, where the formal dining room gave way to the barbeque and the TV dinner, where white gloves gave way to pedal pushers."

New suburban homeowners became active participants in the do-it-yourself (d.i.y.) phenomena. Popular d.i.y. projects included completing unfinished attics and converting carports or garages

to extra living space. Painting emerged as the quintessential do-it-yourself activity once new water-based paints, paint rollers and automated color mixing machines simplified the process. Popular advertisements reinforced traditional gender roles, portraying men as builders completing heavy duty jobs and women as painters and decorators.

The promise of not just houses, but other owners like themselves striving to create a community, appealed to many new residents of postwar suburbs. It was mostly women who took responsibility for establishing a community life for themselves, their families and their children. They organized a wide variety of activities, from the social to the political. They also spent a great deal of time arranging and transporting their children to activities like little league or girl and boy scouts.

Moving into affordable, large tract postwar subdivisions like Levittown clearly impacted these pioneering homeowners. Although critics decried the raw look, near-identical houses, class homogeneity and other factors of the original Levittown, residents defended the advantages of the postwar development. They praised the fact houses were built rapidly in order to satisfy desperate demand, were inexpensive enough for newly returning GIs, were appropriately sized (small enough for convenience but large enough for growing families) and were designed to draw the family into a common area around the built-in television. These Levittown pioneers also valued their community as an embodiment of postwar child-centered and optimistic values. Historian Kenneth T. Jackson agreed with this assessment, labeling the massive postwar housing effort as an "American success story."

Owners of suburban homes possessed their own perspective about suburban living, modern houses and making their houses into homes. They sought the American dream, yet they were not afraid of hard work either. Perhaps, one long-time resident of the New York Levittown summed it up best when she explained, "Levitt built the houses (but) it's the vets that moved in and created Levittown. He just built houses. They're the ones, it's their values and energy that created this community"



SURVEYING TIPS

Post-World War II residential neighborhoods differ from railroad and streetcar suburbs. For that reason they are likely to require different historical & architectural survey methods, techniques which may impact how projects are structured and fees are determined. Not enough survey projects devoted to postwar neighborhoods have been completed to say absolutely how all such projects should be structured. Anyone planning a postwar survey project should not only consult with staff but also consider the issues below.

Historic Context: Developing an historic context detailing the events and trends which influenced the location and subdivision design will be the first step for an historical & architectural survey of postwar resources. Without such a document it will be difficult to recognize the full significance of the architectural resources within the specific survey area. This historic context may enlighten your understanding of not only the original design of the houses and community facilities within the postwar neighborhood but also the type of alterations occurring over time. With postwar developments it may prove even more crucial to know prior to actual fieldwork about the builders involved and the owners who created a community within the survey area.

Comprehensive Reconnaissance and Selective Intensive: In post-1945 housing developments there are likely to be hundreds or thousands of houses based upon basic variations of a single model. For that reason, surveys of postwar resources may need to incorporate some type of simplified reconnaissance method to record all properties within large scale developments prior to selective intensive survey. A firm understanding of the subdivision, the type of knowledge which comes from a well-prepared context and general familiarity with the resources, will be necessary for developing a reconnaissance form which addresses the characteristics of the house models within the specific survey area.

Architects vs. Builders: After the detailed discussion of merchant builders (see pages 5-6), it should come as no surprise you are more likely to be recording a Builder in Field 27 than an Architect in Field 26 on the Architectural Inventory Form (#1403). Both the role of the merchant builder and the introduction of a few basic house models in postwar neighborhoods also may cause a shift away from Architecture as an Area of Significance either for field eligible resources or, much more likely, potentially eligible National Register districts. More likely Areas of Significance include Social History and Community Planning & Development.

Interiors: Most of us have become accustomed to thinking of historical & architectural survey as an activity conducted exclusively from the public right of way. But it will be difficult to fully document some of the character-defining aspects of postwar homes without a closer look. With houses of recent vintage, especially split-levels and bi-levels, it may be tricky to enter a Building Type in Field 22 without an interior inspection. Interiors can also indicate whether original open plan arrangements have been maintained, if houses still contain postwar materials and the type and extent of homeowner do-it-yourself projects completed over time. Obviously, to document interiors you will need to identify owners willing to give permission for you to photograph the inside of their home. Both finding receptive owners and actually recording interior conditions will require additional time within the project plan.

Form vs. Style: For the majority of postwar homes, the building form will be more important than the architectural style. In fact, *Selected Post-World War II Residential Architectural Styles and Building Types* lists only one style (Usonian) but five types. This emphasis on form means postwar architecture can be more difficult to assess for integrity. For example, on a Queen Anne Victorian home, if you changed the tall narrow windows to large picture windows or replaced the horizontal siding and fish scale shingles with aluminum, the property would most likely not retain sufficient integrity. But, on a Ranch home such window and siding replacement would not be as jarring (especially when considering contributing and noncontributing status within a potential district instead of individual eligibility) as long as the elongated, rectangular form with a low pitched roof remained. **(Continued on page 13)**



NOMINATING POST-WORLD WAR II RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

We always tell a more complete story when we nominate the fuller context of a district rather than a single, isolated property. Beyond this general advantage of the district approach, we can more easily explain the significance of local post-World War II social, commercial and architectural history when we talk in terms of communities and neighborhoods. Many of the people we will be trying to convince of the value of preserving these homes will likely have grown up in similar neighborhoods themselves.

Residential historic districts are of two major types: those with a builder/developer focus and those having a resident/owner focus. In the simplest of terms, developers build houses and construct subdivisions. Residents establish homes and create neighborhoods. This difference in perspective profoundly affects what we are looking for in a National Register-eligible district.

Builder/Developer Perspective Historic District

In the case of a district from a builder/developer perspective, historical significance is strongly related to the specific homebuilder. Who was he, what was his training and experience, what was his marketing philosophy, how did he view his role as a shaper of the lives and social interactions of his prospective buyers, and what was his degree of success?

Closely related is the district's architectural significance. What materials were used and what construction techniques were employed? What housing types were offered and how well did they sell? What options were offered to buyers and what proved most popular? Who and what supplied the inspiration for the house designs? Did the developer and his staff create the models or were outside designers and architects involved? From the larger perspective of community planning and development, what role did county or municipal governments play in encouraging and regulating the subdivision development? Who financed the construction and sale of the houses? How was community infrastructure-- elements such as roads, parks, schools, libraries, fire stations, religious institutions, and retail outlets—established?

In the builder/developer perspective district, the subdivision provides us with a preliminary district boundary. This may be modified to the extent that our developer of interest sold off portions of the subdivision to other builders. Our architectural survey evaluation will help us establish the physical integrity of the district and this may lead to boundary adjustments. The period of significance for the builder/developer district will be the duration of construction. If initial construction commenced in 1953 and the workers finished the final house in 1955, that brief interval forms the period of significance for the district.

Because we are interested in the full physical expression of the builder's activities, commercial areas, parks, schools, religious buildings, and shopping areas may be included in the district to the extent that the builder/developer was responsible for their existence.

When it comes to evaluating district integrity, original design, materials and workmanship are of primary importance in the builder/developer district. Changes to these aspects over time will diminish integrity. New materials, additions and alterations reduce the ability of the district to convey its significance related to original design and construction.

Homeowner Perspective Historic District

In the homeowner perspective district, significance is related primarily to such areas as social and ethnic history. Architectural significance can be important in the homeowner perspective district, but now the emphasis is on architectural adaptation and change.

In the homeowner perspective district, the "neighborhood" rather than the subdivision becomes the preliminary district boundary. The period of significance is not related merely to the **(Continued on page 10)**

NOMINATING NEIGHBORHOODS (Continued from page 9)

original construction of the houses but instead is related directly to the social history of the community.

As in the case of the builder/developer district, the homeowner perspective district may also include commercial areas, parks, schools, libraries, religious facilities and other community infrastructure to the extent that they form the “neighborhood.” Neighborhood is in quotation marks because the concept of a neighborhood is different from that of the subdivision. A neighborhood is something residents create over time and it is constantly being reshaped as resident needs change and as the population base and the community evolve.

The neighborhood is a very personal and family-specific creation. If we asked several individuals and families in the same subdivision to draw a map of their neighborhood, indicating key buildings and other important sites, we could find substantial variation in those maps. Elements affecting neighborhood definitions include:

- Ethnic status
- Racial-ethnic makeup
- School districts
- Friends
- Religious affiliations
- Shopping preferences
- Infrastructure utilization
- Travel patterns

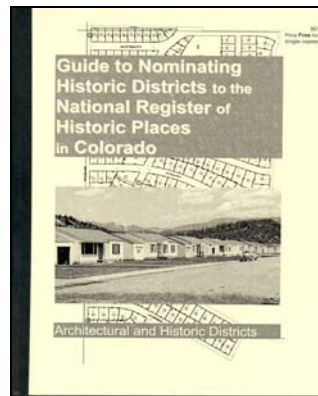
As district nominators, we may find ourselves frustrated as we try to map a neighborhood with tidy well-defined boundaries. Neighborhoods are living, changing organism that evolve over time, rarely respecting subdivision, zoning or any other politically imposed boundaries.

Neighborhood housing stock evolves, too, in response to owners and residents. Factors affecting neighborhood properties include:

- Changing family size
- Aging family members
- Extended family needs
- Fluctuating economic conditions
- Aging buildings
- Growing landscapes
- Family migration

Do-it-yourself became a major activity of many post-WW II homeowners. While some do-it-yourself projects consisted of general maintenance, other projects expressed themselves through substantial visible change. Whether it was fencing and landscaping the yard, finishing the basement, adding a garage, or enclosing the existing garage for more living space, houses will not convey the history of the do-it-yourself movement if they don't also exhibit change. These resident-executed alterations convey the significance that we seek to recognize and preserve. A challenge for surveyors and nominators will be in dating such changes to correlate with various time periods of interest. Many of these projects will be interior or otherwise not readily visible using the traditional historical & architectural survey methodology.

In our preparation of National Register nominations for neighborhoods from a homeowner perspective, integrity of association is critical. Is the neighborhood in question directly associated with the social history we want to recognize and convey? Integrity of design, materials and workmanship are based on the associated social history and its timeframe. Change during the period of significance related to this historical significance does not reduce a property's integrity.



A new historic district guide is available in hard copy or it may be downloaded from the OAHHP website. The guide is primarily for those community members who will be taking an active role in establishing historic districts.



NOTEBOOK MATERIALS WITHOUT THE BULKY BINDER

Workshop participants received a three-ring binder which one attendee called “great, but heavy.” All of the supplemental materials produced for the workshop, unless noted otherwise below, are available at <http://coloradohistory-oahp.org/programareas/infoman/infoman.htm>

National Register Bulletin: Historic Residential Suburbs-Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places – A comprehensive look at historic context, survey and nomination topics for American suburban development from 1830 to 1960, not just the postwar period. Both an online version and an order form for hardcopies are available at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/suburbs-start.htm>

Database of the Annual Denver Area Parade of Homes 1953-1963 – This document, sorted by location and by year, facilitates visiting actual examples of postwar housing to study stylistic changes over time and examples of specific builders’ work.

Selected Post-World War II Residential Architectural Styles and Building Types – This booklet includes new or revised entries for Usonian style and Minimal Traditional, Ranch, A-Frame, Bi-Level and Neo-Mansard types. The entries also appear in the online *Guide to Colorado’s Historic Architecture and Engineering*. Consultants are encouraged to begin using these styles and types for survey projects.

Guide to Nominating a Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places in Colorado – This publication offers guidance for planning and preparing historic district nominations. It is not specific to the postwar period.

Atomic Ranch – This contemporary shelter magazine is devoted to Ranch homes and all Mid-Century Modern topics. The Spring 2006 issue features an article about an H.B. Wolff &

Company home in Denver’s Lynwood. See <http://www.atomic-ranch.com/index.html> for subscription and retailer details

Bibliography of Suggested Reading – A list of articles, books, survey reports, websites and other resources which will keep you reading for a long time.

Article: “Evaluating the Significance of San Lorenzo Village, a Mid-Twentieth Century Suburban Community” from CRM, Summer 2005 – Article by California Department of Transportation environmental planner illustrates how social histories of community residents and its architectural manifestations are often ignored when focusing on original design and construction.

Harvey Park South Architectural Features Recording Sheet (Reconnaissance Form) – This document introduces a simplified reconnaissance method to be used to record all properties within large scale postwar developments prior to selective intensive survey.

Builder Biographies for Franklin Burns, K.C. Ensor, and Ted Hutchinson – Staff have routinely gathered or prepared architect biographies (many have appeared in *The Camera & Clipboard*). Knowing about builders will be increasingly important for postwar developments. Biographies of three metro-area builders highlight their company and personal backgrounds plus known projects.

Arapahoe Acres National Register Nomination (5AH.1434) – Well-documented nomination packet for first American postwar suburb listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

Sheely Drive District: Fort Collins Local Landmark Nomination – Example of a local landmark nomination for a postwar neighborhood; designated in 2000.

Driving Tour: Modern Neighborhoods of Denver’s Virginia Village – Get in the car to visit three Denver postwar neighborhoods. This tour was originally posted on the Mile-Hi Modern website.



SURVEYING TIPS (Continued from page 8)

Research sources: Particularly helpful sources include:

- Shelter magazines: *Arts and Architecture*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Popular Mechanics* provided builders and homeowners house design or d.i.y. project ideas.
- Local libraries: Holdings include builders' brochures, newspaper clippings or other materials related to postwar suburban development.
- Neighborhood association records: Minutes of meetings, scrapbooks, and newsletters will all prove useful for delving into social history topics. Individuals active in the association may also recommend long-time residents willing to give oral history interviews. Oral history, although time-consuming, is both rewarding and allows access to the type of information which rarely makes it into 'official' sources.
- Maps: A wide variety of map types may be useful when surveying postwar neighborhoods. For example, master plans determine those areas targeted for growth at the time and such documents will indicate where new subdivisions were most likely to have been built. Original plat maps show development boundaries; provide the name of the builder or sub-divider; and illustrate the original layout for the house lots, street patterns, utilities, adjoining streets and traffic patterns. If a development was not built to the platted plan or has changed substantially over time, it might be worthwhile to create map overlays to illustrate the differences between the plan and the current appearance. Aerial maps and photographs can be useful for not only identifying but also illustrating the curvilinear street patterns and resource distribution within postwar residential neighborhoods.

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