

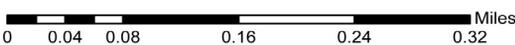
# Resources of the Recent Past

## Winter 2012



A City & Regional Planning  
Service Learning Studio  
Exploring the Colonial Hills  
Neighborhood in Worthington, Ohio

### Colonial Hills



The Ohio State University  
CRP: 510: Resources of the Recent Past  
2/15/2012  
D\_North\_American\_1983

#### Legend

- Roads
- Colonial Hills District





# Resources of the Recent Past

A City & Regional Planning Service  
Learning Studio Exploring the  
Colonial Hills Neighborhood  
in Worthington, Ohio



Winter 2012

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# Introduction



For Winter Quarter of 2012 at The Ohio State University, the City and Regional Planning studio class CRP 510 focused on “Resources of the Recent Past.” This term refers to elements of the built environment – homes, schools, churches, commercial buildings – built in the period between 1940 and 1970. There is a growing recognition in the historic preservation movement – and in the planning field generally – that these architectural resources, and the neighborhoods and districts that contain them, are now of sufficient age that judgments can be made about which buildings, structures, places, and districts help to tell the story of architectural design and community development in the United States during and since World War II.

To aid in this evaluation, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Ohio Historical Society, in 2010 published *Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past*. This document is called a context, a historical study of the roots of modern architecture, building types, materials, and development patterns in the three decades after 1940. The context provides a basis for identifying, studying, and evaluating the importance of “Mid-Century Modern” buildings and places, specifically to enable judgments about whether individual properties or historic districts warrant listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The 18 students of CRP 510 were assigned the task of studying and evaluating the Colonial Hills neighborhood of Worthington, Ohio. Worthington is a historic community on the north side of Columbus that pre-dates the founding of the capital city by several years. Colonial Hills is a 20th century neighborhood on the south edge of Worthington that was planned in the 1920s but not developed until the 1940s and later. It has a long and interesting story, some of which is well known and documented, but some parts of the story took further digging. The students did a thorough job of learning the neighborhood’s story, documenting its design and physical characteristics, and making a thoughtful judgment about its potential for listing in the National Register as a historic district. This report is the result of their work.

The instructors and students of CRP 510 extend their thanks to several people who were of invaluable help in learning about Colonial Hills: Lynda Bitar, Development Coordinator, City of Worthington; Paul Feldman, former Assistant City Manager of Worthington and a Colonial Hills resident; Rachel Dorothy, Colonial Hills resident and president of the Colonial Hills Civic Association; George Campbell, Webmaster and resident historian of Colonial Hills; Meredith Southard, Librarian, Worthington Libraries; and Barbara Powers, Department Head, Inventory and Registration, Ohio Historic Preservation Office.



**MARCH 7, 1803**

Scioto Company members contract to purchase 16,000 acres in the U.S. Military district for \$1.25 per acre. The land that will become Colonial Hills is two farm lots owned by Josiah Topping and Nathan Stuart.



**1916**

George T. Harding opens the Columbus Rural Rest Home and later it becomes Harding Hospital. Located at the northern border of Colonial Hills and now owned by OSU.



**1893**

An electric streetcar was established that allowed easy access to Worthington and had a major impact on the development of residential communities.



**FEBRUARY 18, 1940**

**1929**

The Great Depression began.

# 1800

**1817**

Philander Chase moves to Worthington to become the first rector of St. John's Episcopal church. He concurrently serves as rector of Episcopal churches in Columbus and Delaware and as principal of Worthington Academy.

**1915**

Water and gas lines were installed in Worthington.



**1925**

Paul Insley begins publishing "The Worthington News."



**1930**

Three homes are built by an artist in the Kenyon Brook subdivision, Edwin Albaugh, who is also a famous inventor.

**1927**

The northern half of Colonial Hills is platted and lots are put up for sale.



**FEBRUARY, 1942**





**OCTOBER 11, 1942**

Grand opening of the 200 home Colonial Hills project.

Colonial Hills  
Federal Home  
Bureaus at 36 E.  
Worthington Ave.



**1954**

Colonial Hills and Village of Worthington vote to annex Colonial Hills from Sharon Township to Worthington, making Worthington an official city.



**2003**

Worthington celebrated its bicentennial.

**2012**

Work begins on Colonial Hills by the Defense Homes Corporation.

**1948**

Colonial Hills Civic Association officially forms to deal with water shortage.



**NOVEMBER, 1955**

Colonial Hills Elementary School opens, neighborhood provides 330 students.

**2000**

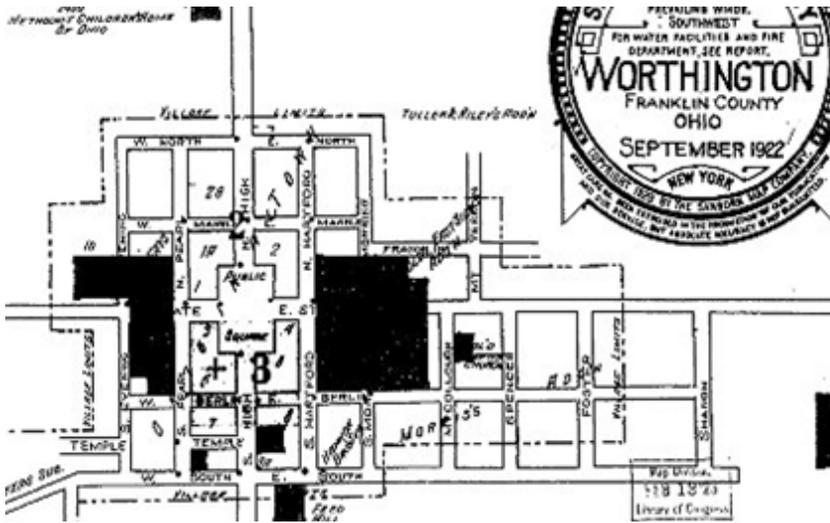
Colonial Hills population drops from 3000 in 1955 to 1800.

**2012**

Colonial Hills is being evaluated by Ohio State students, to see if it is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.







## Section 1:

# The Historic Context of Urban Planning from the 1920's to 1970

## Early 20th Century Planning

Various aspects of town planning have been present in American society since early colonial times. The plans made were to accommodate the settlers and meet their immediate needs, and to create orderly settlements where people could survive and thrive. The difference between town planning practices that existed early in American history and the onset of broader discussions of town planning principles in the early 20th century was the belief that the physical design of communities could have a long-term impact on the quality of people's lives.

The City Beautiful movement also made a mark on city planning in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries. In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition was hosted in the city of Chicago. It was here that various planners, architects, and other citizens shared ideas with one another and gave rise to various aspects of city planning and the City Beautiful Movement. During this time, communities in America were striving for beautiful, artistic and attractive aesthetics that would improve and maintain the quality of life for the citizens. Implementing the ideas of this movement resulted in the creation of public parks, civic centers, monumental architecture and public art that focused on improving the quality of life in urban areas. The City Beautiful movement elevated the professions of city planning, architecture, and landscape architecture.<sup>1</sup>

Planning, as we know it today, began to evolve at the turn of the 20th century, when a comprehensive approach to land use, public infrastructure, transportation and other issues were recognized as essential to creating and sustaining healthy and viable communities. Official city planning commissions were formed for the first time. Among the earliest were the following: Hartford (1907), Chicago (1909), Baltimore and Detroit (1910), Jersey City, Newark, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Salem, Massachusetts, and Lincoln, Nebraska (1911), Trenton, New Jersey (1912), and Cincinnati, Ohio (1913).<sup>2</sup> Planning commissions were established to provide a mechanism for local government to organize, plan and maintain order in all aspects of community development, including housing, sewers, water quality, economic development, and transportation. These planning commissions instituted official plans and policies that were to be followed by citizens and governments alike.

1 Anonymous. "Demands for The City Beautiful." *Municipal Journal & Engineer* 21 1906: 243

2 Fredrick Law Olmsted. "The Town-Planning Movement in America." *Housing and Town Planning. The Annals* 51 1914: 172-181.

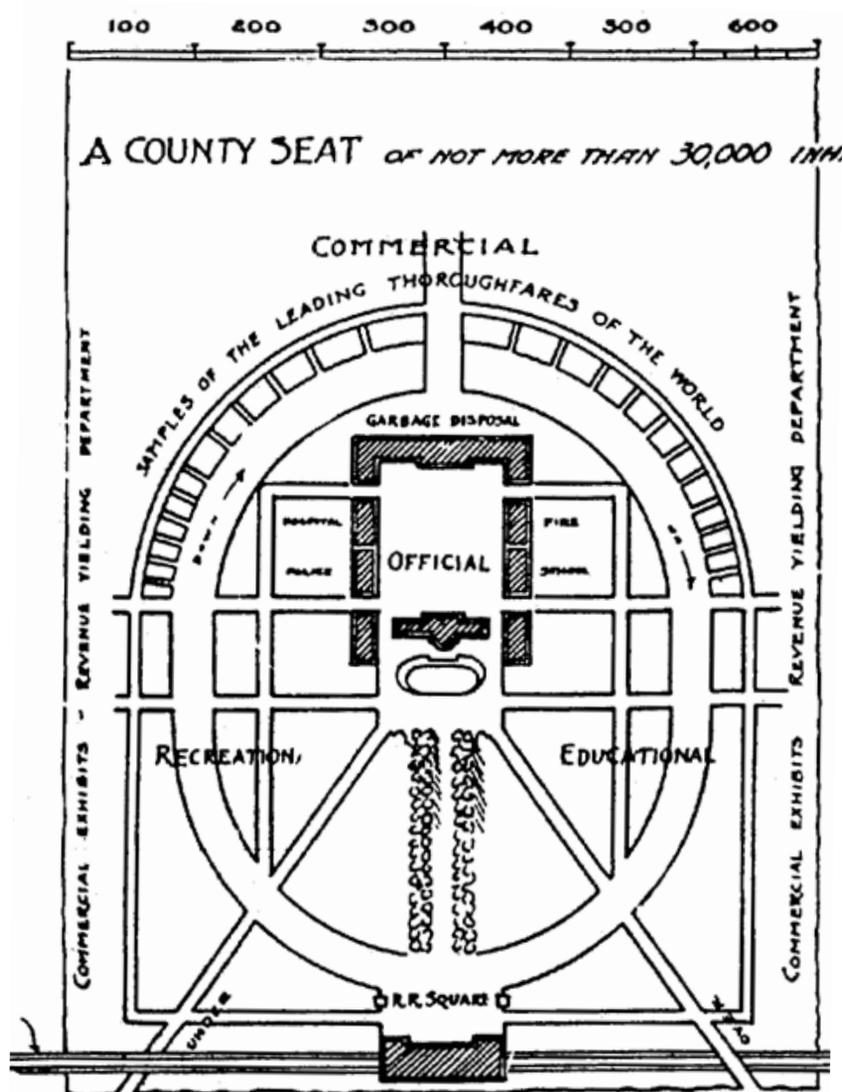
Zoning, as part of the law, gives municipalities the authority and ability to control both public and private land use in order to maintain social and civic order with issues that come with the evolution and complexity of cities, towns and communities.<sup>1</sup> Zoning ordinances provide local government with the ability to control how property is used and developed, including maximum building height, setbacks from the street and rear and side yards, minimum and maximum lot sizes, garage placement, the location of sidewalks and driveways, among other issues.

In the early years of zoning, there was some question about the constitutionality of regulating the use of private property. This was settled in the 1922 Supreme Court case—*The Village of Euclid vs. Ambler Realty Company*—which upheld municipal zoning ordinances and marked the beginning of widespread national acceptance of zoning as a part of city and town planning.<sup>2</sup>

Another important trend in early 20th century urban planning was the “Model City” prototype created in 1904 by prominent planners and

planning theorists. The Model City was a compilation of ideas, concepts, and drawings that Charles Mulford Robinson, Charles R. Lamb, William S. Crandall and Albert Kelsey deemed to be important characteristics of the perfect, “model city”. The plan was presented to the public a number of times, including at an exhibition at the 1904 St. Louis Worlds’ Fair. It became a topic of conversation throughout the nation and gained much approval from the press, public, and planners alike.

The Model City Plan



Source: Charles Mulford Robinson. “Plan of The Model City.” *The Criterion* 3 1902: 34-38.

1 B. Antrim Haldeman. *The Control of Municipal Development By The ‘Zone System’ and its Application in the United States*. Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on City Planning, Boston 1912: 173-188.

2 Wolf, Michael Allan. *The zoning of America: Euclid v. Ambler*. (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

The model city was to have no more than 30,000 inhabitants. As shown in the drawing on the previous page, the separation of public spaces was an idea presented in the model city plan. The separation of recreational, commercial, and educational and residential spaces was ideal. Circular parkways and boulevards would connect all sections of the town, creating a unified whole. A city/town center was an important concept presented in the Model City idea, this center could vary in size based on the size and character of the town and could include parks, plazas, educational centers, civic centers, restaurants, libraries, art galleries and bandstands. Everything constructed in the town would meet certain aesthetic standards. The Model City influenced how many planners thought about communities. The City of Columbus commissioned a plan in 1908, which followed many of the principles stated by Robinson.

**Transportation Developments** had a direct impact on planning trends in the in the early 20th century. Streetcars in the late 19th century and electric trolley lines in the early 20th century made outward expansion of cities practical. As public transit lines spread outward from city-centers new streetcar suburbs became a national trend. But it was the introduction of affordable automobile transportation that had the greatest impact. As cars became popular, the growth of cities and their sub-

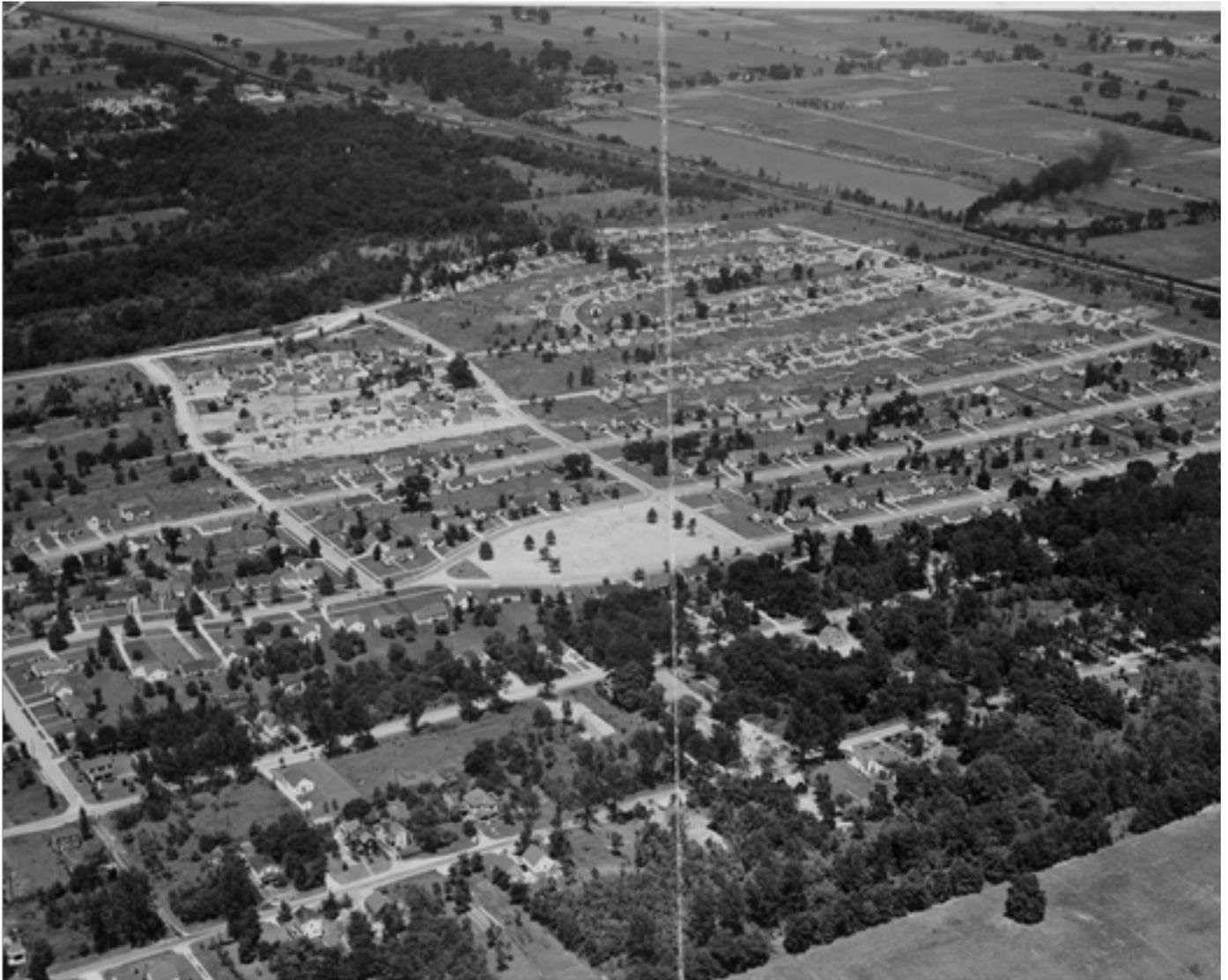
urbs was exponential. American car owners grew from 8 thousand in 1900 to 8 million in 1920 and increased steadily after that to over 50 million car owners in the 1950's. During the early 20th century, planners and engineers agreed that cities needed wider streets, traffic lights and other engineering and design elements that catered to the use of automobiles. New types of roads were developed, and later, a more complex engineered road design was developed that not only linked suburban areas to city centers, but also linked communities to one another – freeways:

“Transportation planners incorporated these features into plans for a type of facility that, it was thought, would be the permanent solution to urban traffic woes. The relatively free movement of vehicles on these proposed roads led to their eventual name: ‘freeways.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey A. Brown, Eric A Morris, and Brian D Taylor. “Paved with Good Intentions: Fiscal Politics, Freeways and the 20th Century American City.” Access Magazine Fall 2009.

## Robinson's Model City Standards

*“A great deal of thought, then, has been expended merely on the street plan of the little Model City, and in that alone the visitor will find much of suggestiveness and much surely that he can carry home and think about when he visits other cities. But the lessons do not merely stop with the laying out of the streets. From their appearance quite much is expected. They will, for one thing, be kept scrupulously clean. It has even been suggested that the Model City be called “Spotless Town!” They will be well paved, the sidewalks will be trim and even, trees will be planted, and on some, at least, of the streets there will be parking. There may be seats here and there beneath the trees along the wayside. There will be no overhead wires, the buildings will have no chimneys belching black smoke, the lighting apparatus will be decorative in its union of simplicity and dignity, and there will be no screaming of advertisements along the way. The streets will be named, and their signs will be artistic and legible. What has been called the practical basis of civic aesthetics will be emphasized with great care. It will be shown that the decoration of cities begins with the lowliest and most prosaic undertakings, with pavements and curbs and gutters, that the first step in the beautifying of a community is to have good streets, and then to keep them clean, so obtaining the appropriate setting for more ambitious decorative work. There will be no statues surrounded by mud, no parkways littered with papers and refuse, no vistas closed by screaming billboards. All will be orderly, cleanly, and dignified. The first great lesson of the Model City will be what city and town ought not to permit and the long step forward that may be taken by such purely negative action. In this, too, there will be something for the visitor to carry home” (Robinson, 1902 )*



“Worthington  
functioned  
as a distinct  
community.”

Prior to the early 20th century, Worthington functioned as a distinct community. It was near Columbus but had its own commercial area, institutions and residential areas. The introduction of the electric streetcar line between Columbus and Worthington was a turning point. It, along with the construction of public infrastructure, accommodated more growth and connectivity to the larger Columbus community.

Public utilities were introduced to Worthington in the following order : telephone communication between Columbus and Worthington in 1881; electric street railway connection between Clintonville and Worthington in the 1890s; electric service and brick paved sidewalks in 1894; gas lines in 1904; water lines in 1913; electric street lights in 1915; and sewers in 1920.<sup>1</sup> The original plat for colonial hills was established in 1927. Colonial Hills was a suburban neighborhood that was connected to the existing town of Worthington.

1 Virginia McCormick, Robert W. McCormick, Images of America Around Worthington. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999)



Bernard Hoffmann, for Life Magazine, Bernard Levey Family (Levittown, NY)

# Restrictive Covenants

## Restrictive Covenants & Public Policy

Worthington has always been a diverse and welcoming community. In 1856, Henry and Dolly Turk were to be the first African American family to own their home in Worthington located at 108 West New England. Early African American settlers played an active role in the community life of Worthington.<sup>1</sup> Many of the early settlers owned businesses such as grocery stores, restaurants, dentist offices, service businesses, physician offices, etc. African Americans may have been attracted to Worthington due to a 19th century Underground Railroad “station” known as Flint Ridge Terrace. Slaves fleeing the south for the Canadian border would have passed through the area. Unfortunately, many of the slaves did not make to Canada so they settled in Worthington. Flint ridge later served as the site for many of the homes for the African American community in Worthington.

However, for many years in the early 20th century across the United States, restrictive covenants were widely accepted as a way of creating and promoting “stable” communities. A Restrictive covenant is a legally binding contract written within the deed of the buyer of a property. Owners who violate the terms of covenants run the risk of forfeiting their property. The majority of the restrictive covenants “run with the land” and are legally enforceable on future buyers of the property. Racially restrictive covenants prohibit the purchase, lease, or occupation of a piece of property by a certain group of people.

Restrictive covenants were not only mutual agreements between property owners in a community not to sell to certain people, but they also were implemented through the cooperation

“... hereafter no part of said property or any portion thereof shall be ... occupied by any person not of the Caucasian race, it being intended hereby to restrict the use of said property ... against the occupancy as owners or tenants of any portion of said property for resident or other purpose by people of the Negro or Mongolian race.”

(Buggs, Understanding Fair Housing 1973)

<sup>1</sup> R. McCormick, a. Worthington Landmarks 1992: 58.

Racially restrictive covenants were so prevalent that by “1940, 80% of property in Chicago and Los Angeles carried restrictive covenants barring black families.”

of real estate boards and neighborhood associations.<sup>1</sup>

Restrictive covenants became a formal way of segregating African Americans from certain neighborhoods. The U.S. Supreme Court case *Buchanan v. Warley*, in 1917, deemed city segregation ordinances illegal, so in response to that ruling, segregationists turned to restrictive neighborhood covenants. The effect was to force African Americans into all-black neighborhoods, effectively creating cities within cities, starting in the 1920s. The largest was Harlem, in upper Manhattan, where 200,000 African Americans lived.<sup>2</sup> Ten years later, racially restrictive covenants were deemed legal by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Corrigan v. Buckley* in 1926. The ruling stated that while states are barred from creating race-based legislation, private deeds and developer plat maps are not similarly affected by the Fourteenth Amendment.

The practice of racially restrictive covenants became so socially acceptable that in “1937 a leading magazine of national range awarded 10 communities a ‘shield of honor’ for an umbrella of restrictions against the ‘wrong kind of people.’” Racially restrictive covenants were so prevalent that by “1940, 80%

of property in Chicago and Los Angeles carried restrictive covenants barring black families.”<sup>3</sup> Racially restrictive covenants even became the topic of the Federal Housing Administration. In its Technical Bulletin No. 5, of 1938, “Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses”, it states that “it is sometimes found desirable to include a clause limiting the use of the property.” It then goes on to say that “it is not our purpose to establish a standard form of restrictive covenants nor to indicate the exact manner in which they should be drawn.”<sup>4</sup> Racially restrictive covenants became legally unenforceable in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer* in 1948. It ruled that although racially restrictive covenants are private, not government contracts, they are nonetheless legally unenforceable, as they are in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>5</sup> It was not until eighteen months after the case that the Federal Housing Administration agreed to the court’s ruling. However, the new FHA policy of refusing to insure mortgages on properties carrying a racial covenant applied only to covenants filed after February 1950. This new policy left unaffected the first fifteen years of FHA-insured mortgages protected by the covenants on thousands of homes.<sup>6</sup>

1 Sands, “Historical Shift from Explicit to Implicit Policies Affecting Housing Segregation in Eastern Massachusetts,” *Boston Fair Housing*, 15 January 2012.

2 “The Great Migration,” *Digital History*, 2007, 15 Jan. 2012

3 Sands, n.p.

4 “Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses,” *Federal Housing Administration 1938*: 31.

5 Sands, n.p.

6 Buggs, *Understanding Fair Housing*

In 1968, racially restrictive covenants were addressed in the Federal Fair Housing Law. This law prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of properties and other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, etc. The Fair Housing Act essentially filled in the gap that Shelley v. Kraemer left, and prevented restrictive covenants from being legally upheld.<sup>1</sup>

In Columbus, due to the high demand for decent housing for African Americans, the construction of Poindexter Village, a large east side development of new housing, began in 1940. Poindexter Village was the first federally financed low-cost metropolitan housing community.<sup>2</sup> It was located on a site bounded by Mt. Vernon and Ohio Avenues and Long and Hughes Streets.<sup>3</sup> The great importance of the issue of housing prompted President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to preside over the opening ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> The village was to provide quality, affordable housing to local residents, many of whom were impoverished African Americans who had been sharecroppers but moved to Columbus from the south and lived in scrap wood homes that lacked

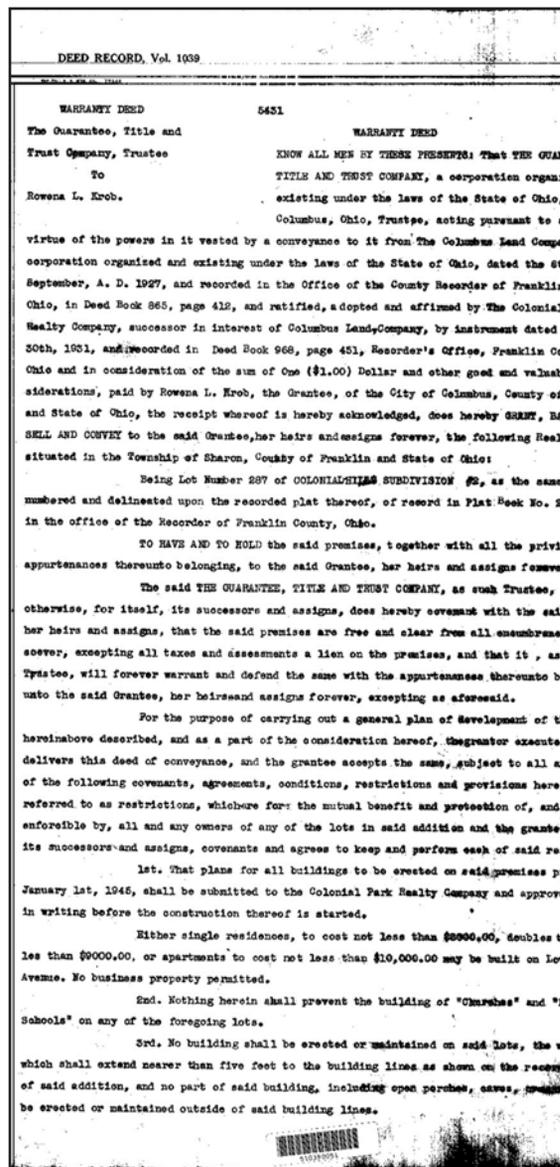
central heat and plumbing.<sup>5</sup>

Poindexter Village was successful in providing quality, but separate, housing for the African American community in Columbus.

Housing in Worthington in this period often was built with restrictive covenants. In 1942, for example, Colonial Hills was developed south of Worthington with restrictive covenants prohibiting African Americans. An example of a restrictive covenant read:

“No part of said addition or any buildings there on shall be owned, lease to or occupied by, any person other than one of the Caucasian race but this prohibition is not intended to exclude or prevent occupancy by such other persons as domestic servants of any resident of said addition. . . .”

Research for this project has not revealed any overt enforcement of such covenants in Colonial Hills. Today, of course, these restrictions are no longer legally enforceable, but their existence shows how events in Worthington and Colonial Hills represented national trends.



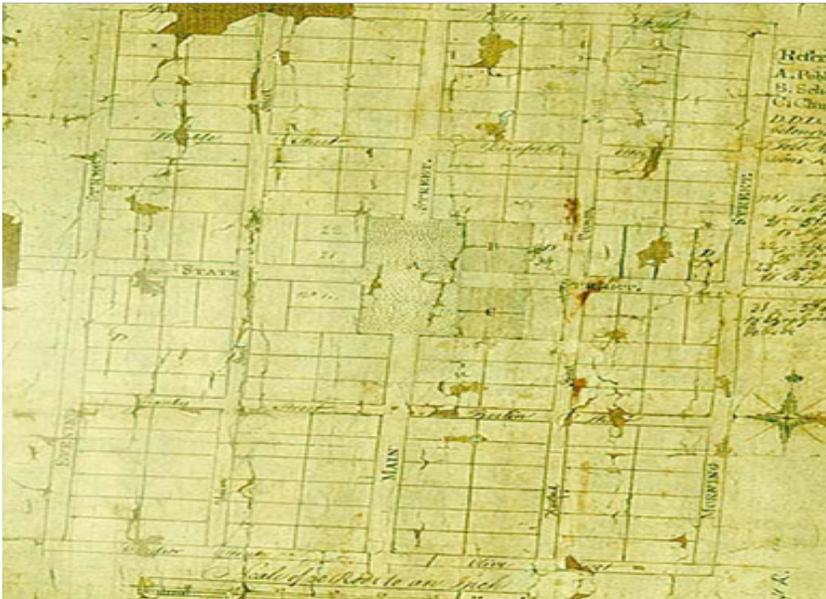
1 Sands, n.p.

2 “Justice for Poindexter Village,” Columbus Housing Justice 2009. 15 January 2012.

3 B. Hayes, “Negro-No.1,” Citizen Journal (1967, February 20): 12.

4 Justice for Poindexter Village (2009)

5 J. Wray, “Fighting the Blight,” Columbus C.E.O 19 May 2011, 15 Jan 2012



# Original Worthington Town Plan and Colonial Hills

## The Birth of Worthington

“Reverend Kilbourne was a remarkable man: farmer, mechanic, mathematician, businessman, soldier, and clergyman.”

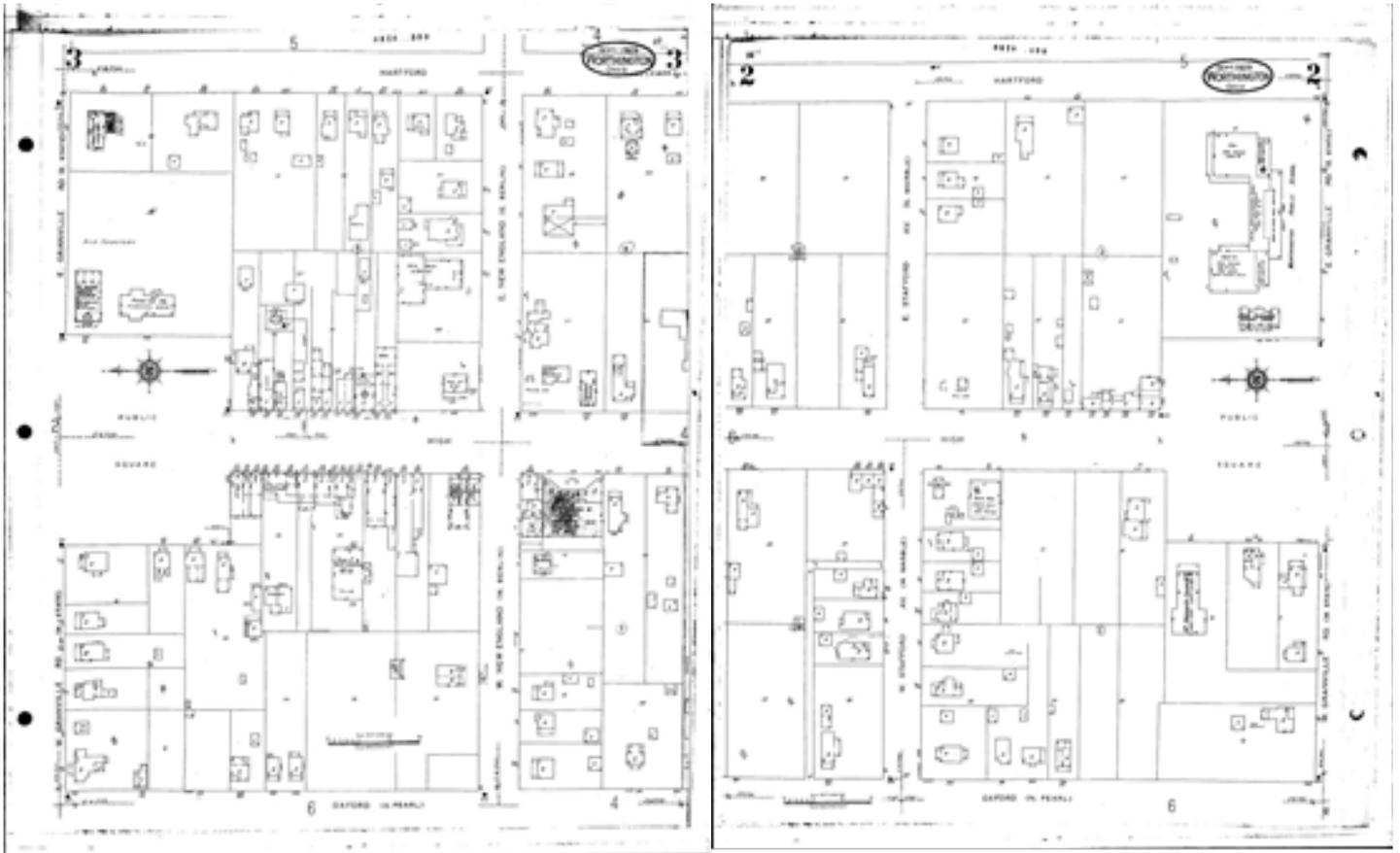
Worthington, Ohio began as a community established by Reverend Kilbourne in 1803. Reverend Kilbourne came with several people who worked for the Scioto Company to prepare the land for development. The location of the early settlement was to form a passage between the communities along the Muskingum River and Great Miami River in the Ohio Country. “Reverend Kilbourne was a remarkable man: farmer, mechanic, mathematician, businessman, soldier, and clergyman. Because he was born in the parish of Worthington, Connecticut the new settlement was named Worthington in his honor. The first building in Worthington, Ohio was of educational and religious purposes constructed on the south college lot.”<sup>1</sup> This building was

also used as the town hall and for people to come together to have social gatherings.

The village developed at a rapid pace and by 1806 general stores were built and brick buildings were constructed. Among the early businesses in the 19th century were the The Western Intelligencer and The Worthington Manufacturing Company.<sup>2</sup> Both companies aided in the economic growth of early Worthington and provided a good foundation for future companies to develop. Worthington was well established enough in its early years to be considered as one of the finalists for selection of a permanent capital of Ohio but unfortunately lost by only one vote.

<sup>1</sup> Virginia E. McCormick, Robert W. McCormick. *New Englanders on the Ohio Frontier: Migration and Settlement of Worthington, Ohio*. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1998. 96-97

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-195.

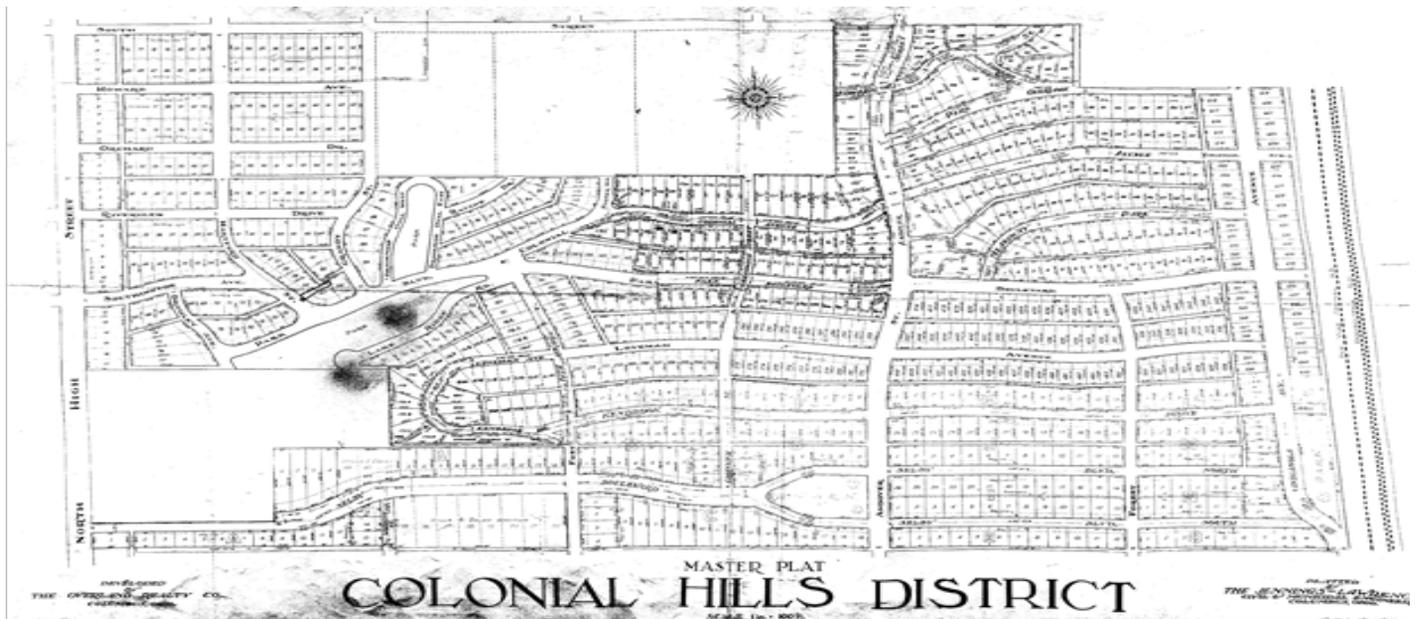


## Layout of Historic Worthington-New England Town Plan Characteristics

The grid layout of historic Worthington has been used for centuries, dating as far back as the Greek and Roman settlements. “The layout of a grid pattern involves two main processes: designing the street grid and block pattern and designing the detailed grid of plot parcels within the block.”<sup>1</sup> The use of a grid pattern “simplified surveying problems, minimized legal disputes over lot boundaries, and gave an illusion of orderliness and prosperity.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it provided a gathering place such as a park or market square that was at the center of the grid which is a defining characteristic of early New England settlements. The main focus for the settler’s grid plan was to provide a means for further expansion. It gave future construction the benefit of quickly knowing where to place property. Also, the grid pattern provided protection from encroaching enemies such as the Indians or animals because of the placement of the front of the buildings to the center of the grid. The image above is of a Sanborn Map created in 1922. The image displays the grid pattern and the ease of expansion.

“The main focus for the settler’s grid plan was to provide a means for further expansion“

1 Kostof, Spiro. The Grid. n.d. 18 02 2012.  
2 McCormick, 26.



## Layout of Colonial Hills

Although part of Colonial Hills was platted in 1927, it was not developed fully until immediately after the end of World War II with the return of veterans and the pent-up demand for housing. The development began as a plat of agricultural land located southeast of the original town plan of Worthington. “A 1925 speculative plat, as identified by Campbell, provided the basis for the neighborhood plan that ultimately was expanded in 1941.”<sup>1</sup> The combined plats created the neighborhood that is known as Colonial Hills today.

“The combined plan generally featured a rectilinear arrangement oriented along an east/west axis. The primary entry into the subdivision was along Selby Boulevard. At a park to be located roughly in the center of the neighborhood, the road then branched into two parallel streets, Selby North and

Selby South. Another street, Kenbrook, roughly paralleled Selby along the northern third of the plan. A series of five streets crossed the neighborhood from north to south. In keeping with the period’s suburban residential planning tenets, no alleys were included in the plan. The residential lots were almost uniformly square or rectangular in shape, while demonstrating some diversity in size. An aerial photograph of the neighborhood taken in 1947 illustrates that the neighborhood was built largely according to the plan.”<sup>2</sup> The map above shows a visual example of the rectilinear arrangement and the entry into Colonial hills at the crossroads of Selby Boulevard. The distinguishing characteristics of a rectilinear grid arrangement include the formation of blocks, different lot types, and efficient infrastructure. It does not work well on sharply slanting terrain. The rectilinear

arrangement was one form of the

FHA-recommended subdivision layouts that in 1938 were a part of the free review program for developers by the FHA Technical and Land Planning divisions. “This enabled developers to submit preliminary plans to the FHA, whose consultants would then suggest layouts conforming to FHA.”<sup>3</sup> The FHA also regulated specific characteristics of streets: relation of proposed streets to adjoining street systems, street alignment, street intersections, street width, roadway width, street names, and street trees. Through the creation of these guidelines and incentives, the FHA was able to shape the form of suburban communities throughout the country especially during the post-war period. It clearly had an impact on how Colonial Hills developed, and there are distinct similarities between the FHA’s suggested layouts for subdivisions and the Colonial Hills plan.

1 Lena L. Sweeten, M.A. Ohio Modern:Preserving Our Recent Past. Cincinnati: Gray & Pape, Inc., 2010, 16.

2 Lena L. Sweeten, M.A. Ohio Modern:Preserving Our Recent Past. Cincinnati: Gray & Pape, Inc., 2010, 16.

3 Ben-Joseph, Michael Southworth and Eran. “Street Standards and the Shaping of Suburbia.” 65-81



## Section 2: The Depression Era and World War II's Impact on Housing Development and Colonial Hills

In the earliest form of what was to become suburban development, *subdividers* were those involved in the practice of subdividing plots of land. Undeveloped land, typically located on the edges of established communities were usually targeted for future development. Large parcels were subdivided into smaller lots and usually came with minimal amenities; utilities, graded roads, storm drains and sidewalks. The individual lots were sold to future homeowners who would contract with a builder, or to builders who would purchase multiple plots to build homes on, and then sell to a prospective owner.

*“With a few exceptions, this was common practice in the United States until the early 1920’s. Subdivisions for the most part were laid out with little forethought as to plot size, spacing, traffic flow or general livability and aesthetics. “In 1922, twelve years before passage of the landmark National Housing Act of 1934, the Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Standards issued a new publication called “Recommended Minimum Requirements for Small Dwelling Construction.” It was prepared by the Bureau’s Building Code Committee and was based on extensive hearings held the previous year by the Senate Committee on Reconstruction and Production. The Committee found that the building codes of the country have not been developed upon scientific data but rather on compromise; they are not uniform in practice and in many instances involve an additional cost to construction without assuring more useful or more durable buildings.”*<sup>1</sup>

The building codes of the country have not been developed upon scientific data but rather on compromise...

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1 National Institute of Building Sciences. “Minimum Property Standards for One and Two Family Dwellings.” Huduser.org. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, Mar. 2003. Web. Jan. 2012. <[http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/mps\\_report.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/mps_report.pdf)>.

For the first time in America, there was an attempt to regulate our building practices in order to make them safer and a more sound investment for homeowners.

In the early 1920's, "The Better Homes Movement" was also taking shape. The movement, marketed heavily toward women, promoted consumerism and the purchase of homes as both an investment and patriotic duty. Driven by the New York magazine *The Delineator*, "The Better Homes Movement" was strongly supported by other mass publications and the Federal Government.

*"It was in the New York offices of the Butterick Publishing Company's household magazine The Delineator, in 1922, that the organization Better Homes in America was established. The goal of the Better Homes Movement was the building of a responsible consumerism, one that would in-*

**"There are two shrines at which mankind has always worshipped, must always worship: the altar which represents religion, and the hearthstone which represents the home. . .**

**-Vice President Coolidge**

*ulate mass consumerism from its dangerous tendencies -- one in which the housewife would be educated to spend money wisely and the family would spend time together in wholesome forms of leisure, President Coolidge himself was honorary chairman of the Advisory Council of the Better Homes in America, and Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, a prime mover in the formation of the organization, was president of the Board of Directors. Subsequently, the Better Homes in America organization was headquartered in Washington, D.C."*

*"An important pronouncement on home ownership by then-Vice President Coolidge, honorary chairman of the organization's Advisory Council, in the Better Homes in America Plan Book for Demonstration Week, October 9 to 14, 1922, commingles material, political and spiritual values: Coolidge said, "There are two shrines at which mankind has always worshipped, must always worship: the altar which represents religion, and the hearthstone which represents the home. . . . We believe in the right to acquire, to hold, and transmit property. . . . It is of little avail to assert that there is an inherent right to own property unless there is an open opportunity that this right may be enjoyed in a fair degree by all. That which is referred to in such critical terms as capitalism cannot prevail unless it is adapted to the general requirements. . . . It is time to demonstrate more effectively that property is of*

*the people. It is time to transfer some of the approbation and effort that has gone into the building of public works to the building, ornamenting, and owning of private homes by the people at large. . . . Let them begin, however slender their means, the building and perfecting of the national character by the building and adorning of a home which shall be worthy of the habitation of an American family, calm in the assurance that 'the gods send thread for a web begun'."*

*"In the same Better Homes in America Plan Book, Secretary of Commerce Hoover's essay 'The Home as An Investment' invokes connections among owning and adorning a home, solid law-abiding American citizenship, and consumer thrift: 'In the main because of the diversion of our economic strength from permanent construction to manufacturing of consumable commodities during and after the war, we are short about a million homes. . . . It means that in practically every American city of more than 200,000 . . . thousands of families are forced into unsanitary and dangerous quarters. This condition, in turn, means . . . that unrest which inevitably results from inhibition of the primal instinct in us all for home ownership. It makes for nomads and vagrants. . . . There is no incentive to thrift like the ownership of property.'"<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> American Memories Collection. "Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy 1921-1929." Lcweb2.loc.gov. United States Library of Congress, Aug. 1995. Web. Jan. 2012. <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov:8081/ammem/>

As can clearly be noted from the text and quotes above from Coolidge and Hoover, at this point in the American economy, home ownership and responsible consumption of home goods and appliances were very much mass marketed to the American public through multiple sources including the federal government. The goal of widespread homeownership was clearly becoming public policy. Owning a home was tied to our national defense, to civic duty, and included religious and moral references, as well.

Following the stock market crash of 1929 and the beginning of the Great Depression, the American government was struggling to find ways out of the nation's economic collapse. This was attempted on a number of fronts, including public works projects and the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) under the National Housing act in 1934. The FHA was an attempt to shore up the nation's building industry that had been devastated in the early years of the Depression. Along with this large push towards home ownership by both private enterprise and the federal government, there was a need to provide a federally regulated entity to implement minimal guidelines for developers and to procure financial backing to make home ownership possible. The federal government was stepping up its commitment to

building through the loosening of loan and mortgage requirements and providing Federal insurance for home loans. Down payment amounts were reduced and for the first time mortgages were lengthened to 20-30 years in order to make ownership more affordable.

*“Codified in the National Housing Act of 1934 (P.L. 73-479; 48 Stat. 1246), federal policy for privately constructed and financed single and multiple family homes shaped the character of American housing and suburban landscape in the mid-Twentieth Century. ‘Garden City planning principles and naturalistic landscape design coincided in many residential communities approved for federal mortgage insurance by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the 1930s.’ FHA standards for safe, self-contained neighborhoods and small, efficient low-cost dwellings institutionalized the ideal of suburban life that had been envisioned by several generations of American designers and established a foundation for sound real estate investment. They further embodied the goals of the Better Homes movement of the 1920s and reflected advances in zoning and subdivision regulation that had been advocated by city planners, community builders, and the real estate industry. FHA-approved and redesigned projects reflected New Deal economics and incorporated the emerging technologies of prefabrication, standardization, and economies of scale.”*

“Garden City planning principles and naturalistic landscape design coincided in many residential communities approved for federal mortgage insurance by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the 1930s.”

# Fannie Mae

*“The creation of a permanent, national program of mutual mortgage insurance, under Title II of the National Housing Act of 1934, revolutionized home financing. The Federal government insured loans granted by private lending institutions for as much as 80% of a property’s value. Mortgages were to be fully amortized through monthly payments extending over 20 years. Interest rates were to be relatively low, not exceeding 6 percent at the time, and required down payments were set at 20% of the cost of a home. Amendments to the Act in 1938 and 1948 and the Veteran’s Readjustment Act of 1944 liberalized the terms for home mortgages by lowering (and in some cases eliminating) down payments and extending the payment period to 25 and eventually 30 years.*

*The driving force behind*



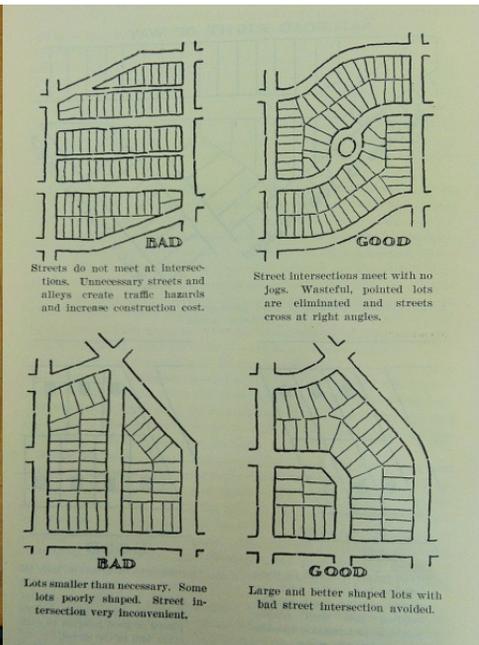
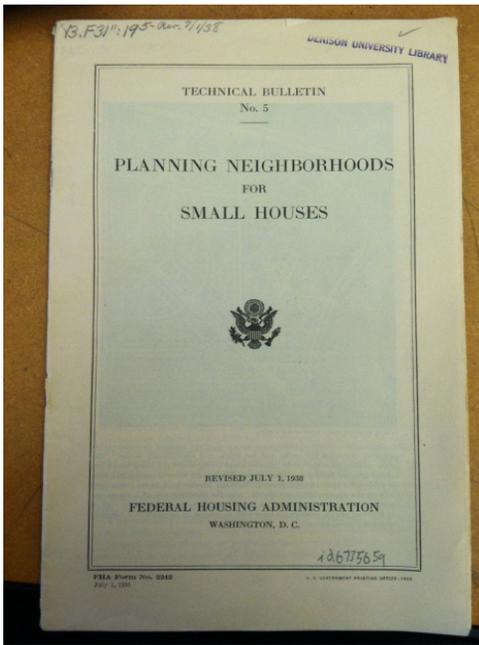
*the 1934 legislation was to stimulate the building industry, to gain the confidence of private lenders including the nation’s largest insurance companies as well as local savings and loan associations, and to ensure a sound and solid foundation for private real estate investment. For FHA administrators and designers setting the national standards that would be used to rate neighborhoods and homes for loan approval, the design of safe and healthy neighborhoods and efficient small houses offered an unprecedented opportunity to bring together the best practices of their respective professions and affect broad-sweeping change that would not only improve the quality of life for the average American family but also provide models for the growing metropolis of the future. FHA standards followed the established principles of landscape architecture and city planning, drew from successful garden city and curvilinear models, and reflected Clarence Perry’s Neighborhood Unit concept which had been endorsed at the President’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership in 1931.”<sup>1</sup>*

After the passage of the 1934 NHA and creation of the

FHA, the government’s role in neighborhood planning and home design dramatically increased. For the first time there was an economic interest on the part of the federal government to make sure these newer developments built using federally backed monies would succeed. This is when we see the resurgence of the “Better Homes Movement” ideology in the form of FHA Technical Bulletins and other published sources. These were intended as instructions to developers and home builders as well as encouragement for potential homeowners. Among the earliest published bulletins, Technical Bulletin Number 5 depicted in detail what the FHA considered “best practices” when it came to homes and subdivisions.

Technical Bulletin Number 5 titled, “Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses,” was published in 1936. This particular piece suggested to developers the importance of proper planning and neighborhood design — in other words, to better protect the government’s monetary investment and backing.

1 National Register of Historic Places. “NRHP Workshop @ NC-SHPO Annual Meeting -- Suburban Landscapes.” National Park Service Cultural Resources Discover History. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service National Register, History and Education, Mar. 2001. Web. Jan. 2012. <[http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/01workshop/sub\\_landsc.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/01workshop/sub_landsc.htm)>.



*“This bulletin is not intended to be a treatise on neighborhood planning, or in any way to offer a substitute for the esthetic and engineering skill required in the laying out of a subdivision. It seeks to call attention to the necessity for good planning and the economic advantages of good planning. It attempts to set forth the principles which must be followed if appropriate planning is to be achieved; and it endeavors to offer suggestions to sub-dividers, engineers, architects, land planners, and operative builders which will result in the production of more neighborhoods for modest homes- neighborhoods to which, with investment secure, mortgage money will flow at attractive rates, and in which owners will find lasting enjoyment and satisfaction.”(FHA tech bulletin number, 51938 update page two).*

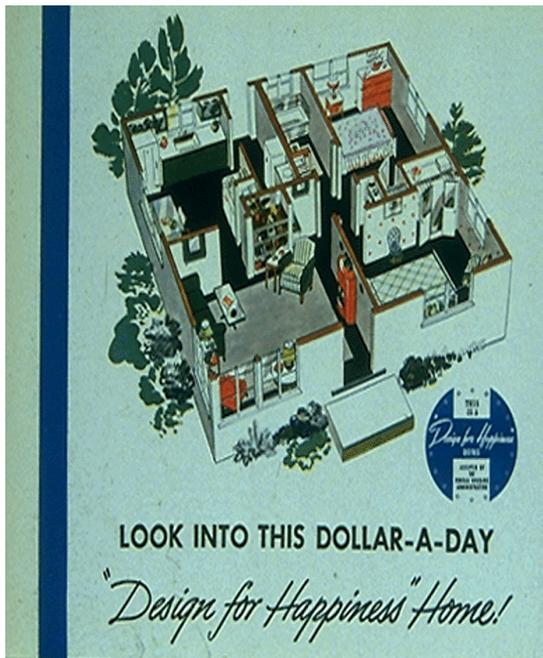
*“The FHA set forth seven minimum requirements for new subdivisions:*

- 1. Location exhibiting a healthy and active demand for homes.*
- 2. Location possessing a suitable site in terms of topography, soil condition, tree cover, and absence of hazards such as flood, fog, smoke, obnoxious odors, etc.*
- 3. Accessibility by means of public transportation (streetcars and buses) and adequate highways to schools, employment, and shopping centers.*
- 4. Installation of appropriate utilities and street improvements (meeting city or county specifications), and carefully related to needs of the development.*
- 5. Compliance with city, county or regional plans and regulations, particularly local zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the neighborhood will become stable (and real estate values as well.)*
- 6. Protection of values through “appropriate” deed restrictions (including set-backs, lot sizes, minimum costs of construction).*
- 7. Guarantee of a sound financial set up, whereby subdividers were financially able to carry through their sales and development program, and where taxes and assessments were in line with the type of development contemplated and likely to remain stable.”<sup>1</sup>*

As America today slowly pulls itself from economic depression, there are now tools such as these technical bulletins, and programs like the FHA that are in place to help the building industry. The New Deal accomplished more than the building of bridges and homes; it created new standards, new ideals and a new shape to the American suburb.

1 Ibid

# Defense Housing Coordinator



The Defense Housing Coordinator helped to ensure that there was no bottleneck with housing production as there had been in WWI.

Due to the exponentially increasing rate of wartime industrial growth and the economic problems carried over from the Great Depression, the early 1940s saw a housing crisis.<sup>1</sup>

Housing construction had essentially come to a halt during the Depression, financing for new projects was scarce, and high unemployment rates among workers diminished the number of potential home buyers. With the inevitability of America's involvement in World War II, there was a need for affordable defense housing for people in the armed forces and for people working in defense industries producing war materials.<sup>2</sup> Several public and private agencies started creating defense housing developments without inter-agency organization. In January of 1941, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8632 which coordinated national defense housing. It also established a Division of Defense Housing Coordination in the administration's office for emergency management. This agency was authorized to plan, construct, and operate defense housing facilities. Additionally, it could grant loans or subsidies for public housing purposes, assist the financing or construction of private housing, and conduct surveys of housing conditions and housing markets.<sup>3</sup> The Defense Housing Coordinator helped to ensure that

there was no bottleneck with housing production as there had been in World War I.

Within the Division of Defense Housing Coordination, housing was built by the US Housing Authority, the Army, the Navy, the Federal Works Agency, the Public Buildings Administration, and the Defense Homes Corporation (DHC) among others. The Defense Housing Coordinator also encompassed the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which insured mortgages on defense homes; the Reconstruction Finance Corporation mortgage company, which advanced funds on multi-unit developments; and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, which swelled the stream of credit so that it could flow into construction for defense housing.<sup>4</sup>

1 Grey and Pape. "Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past Statewide Historic Context." 2010

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

4 Division of Defense Housing Coordination. Homes for Defense: A Statement of Function. Executive Order. Washington DC, 1941.



# Defense Homes Corporation



As Colonial Hills grew and matured, residents worked together for a better, more improved community.

On October 23, 1940 the Roosevelt Administration established the Defense Homes Corporation (DHC) in response to a housing shortage for defense workers.<sup>1</sup> This agency financed housing for workers and was created under the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), which provided emergency financing facilities for financial institutions.<sup>2</sup> Initially, \$10,000,000 was allocated from the president's emergency funds to the RFC. This money was used to fund the FHA rental projects of the DHC.<sup>3</sup>

According to the official Defense Housing Coordinator document, "the DHC [operated] in areas in which extra hazards in the defense program put a damper on private investment and development."<sup>4</sup> The DHC only built for families who were able to pay a self-liquidating economic rent.<sup>5</sup> Eugene Morris, a National Archives employee, says the DHC most likely followed the FHA housing design guidelines. He could find no evidence to the contrary.

1 National Archives 234.5.4. [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov). College Park.

2 Strunk, Norman. "Progress in Defense Housing." *Jstor* (1941):92-97.

3 Ibid

4 Division of Defense Housing Coordination. *Homes for Defense: A Statement of Function*. Executive Order. Washington DC, 1941.

5 Ibid

# Colonial Hills Development

On February 4, 1942, the DHC was transferred to the Federal Public Housing Agency. Liquidation of the DHC began in 1945 at the war's end. All remaining DHC assets were transferred to the RFC for final liquidation in 1948.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1940s, Colonial Hills, a suburb of Worthington, Ohio, was chosen as the site of the Defense Homes Corporation's project to build homes to rent to workers in war industries. The major war-related industry in Columbus was the Curtiss-Wright aircraft plant, and its workers were primarily executives.<sup>2</sup> This project included 200 single family homes.<sup>3</sup> In January 1942, the construction of the Colonial Hills development began. By October 11, 1942, 2 homes were completely finished and open for public inspection.<sup>4</sup> By spring of 1943, the first 50 homes were completed and ready to be rented out.<sup>5</sup>

Of the 200 single-family homes, 184 of them were to have 2 bedrooms, and the remaining 16 homes were to have 3 bedrooms.<sup>6</sup> Todd Tibbals, a Columbus architect, designed the buildings based on variations of nine housing plans, and the firm of Arthur Olsen Inc. of New York City oversaw the construction project. The Olsen firm established a headquarters in Colonial Hills and was located in the same building as the Howard Lynn house trailer dealer and the Secretary of the Selective Service Board at 57 North High Street.<sup>7</sup> The first phase of Colonial Hills construction employed 400 to 500 men, with a project cost of \$1,250,000.<sup>8</sup> After the war, the homes were sold to the renter occupants, returning war veterans, and in some cases to investors who purchased multiple houses for later re-sale.<sup>9</sup>

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- 1 National Archives 234.5.4. [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov). College Park.
  - 2 "Worthington Tour of Homes and Gardens." Colonial Hills Courier (2010): 2.
  - 3 "New Homes are Started Here." The Worthington News (1942).
  - 4 "Colonial Hills and Dales Area Open Sunday." Columbus Dispatch (1942): C5.
  - 5 "Worthington Tour of Homes and Gardens." Colonial Hills Courier (2010): 2.
  - 6 Ibid
  - 7 "New Homes are Started Here." The Worthington News (1942).
  - 8 "Colonial Hills and Dales Area Open Sunday." Columbus Dispatch (1942): C5.
  - 9 "Worthington Tour of Homes and Gardens." Colonial Hills Courier (2010): 2.

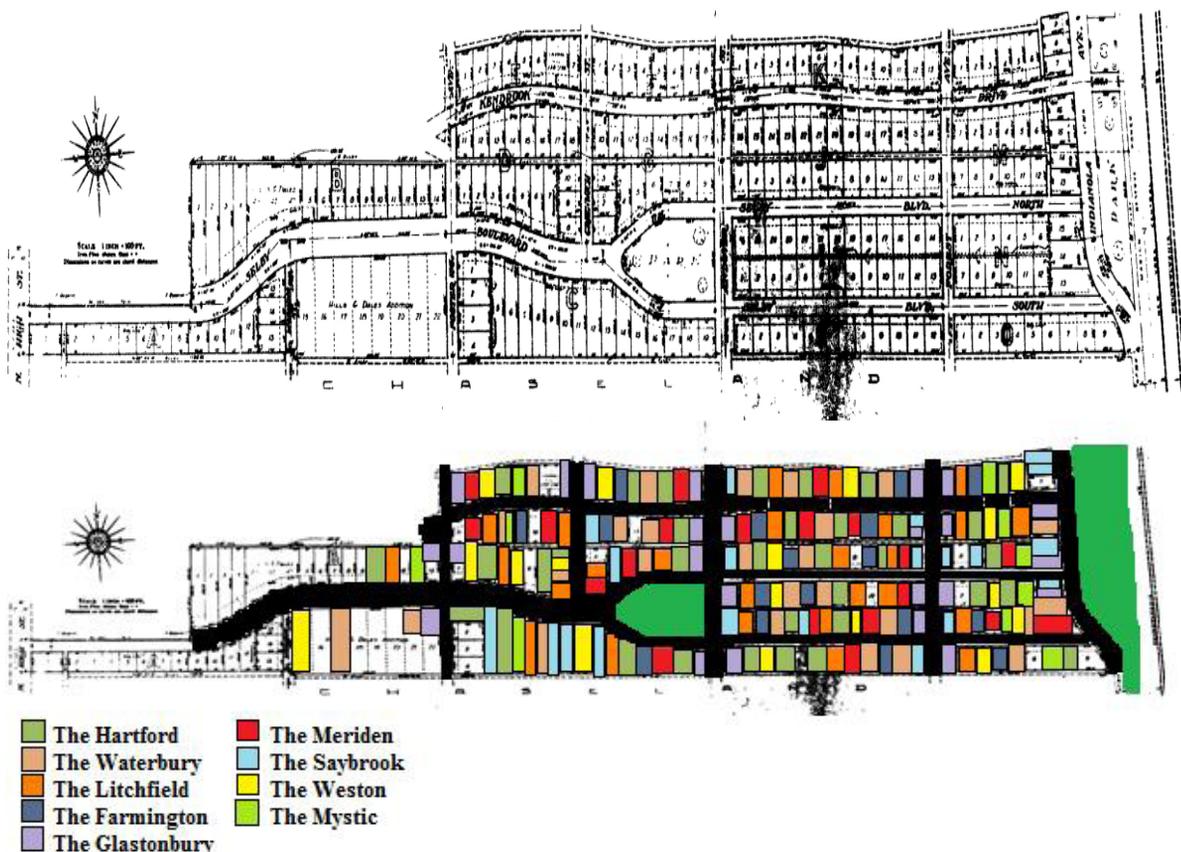


# Todd Tibbals

Todd Tibbals was an American architect who worked in the Columbus area. Tibbals was born January 2, 1910 and began his professional career in Columbus in 1935. He was a 1932 graduate of The Ohio State University and started his architecture firm, Todd Tibbals and Associates, at the corner of East 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and North High Street. Tibbals began his firm with fellow OSU graduate and friend Noverre Musson. Tibbals was the lead architect in the development of the first housing within the Colonial Hills neighborhood.

Tibbals and Associates designed the original 200 homes located in the 1941 plat of Colonial Hills and Dales (later shortened to Colonial Hills). He “gave extensive study to the type, character, and setting of each house and the general harmony of the group once it was completed.”<sup>1</sup> . The original plat that was developed by the Defense Homes Corporation consisted of East, South, and North Selby Boulevard, as well as Kenbrook Drive running east and west. Indianola Avenue, Greenwich, Andover, and Forest Streets run along the North and South boundaries.

The following two images compare the 1942 Plat with the location of the 200 original homes in the neighborhood.



Plat Comparison, plat image/ house names attributed to George Campbell [www.tallgeorge.com](http://www.tallgeorge.com)

1 “New Homes Are Started Here.” The Worthington News [Worthington] 29 Jan. 1942. Print.

Among these 200 homes were nine different “colonial styles” scattered around the neighborhood. In the Tibbals-designed homes “several of the homes were designed with one floor plan, with two or three bedrooms, dining room, kitchen and bath, utility room and garage.”<sup>1</sup> All of the homes included garages, some were attached garages while others have a garage in a lower level, and all garages were originally equipped with a tool room. It is worth noting that even during war time, this neighborhood was developed with amenities that would be desirable in a post-war era – public park, sidewalks, and attached garages.

In 1945 Tibbals and Associates changed its name to Tibbals, Crumley, and Musson. Tibbals continued to be successful and designed a number of single-family homes in the Columbus area. Some examples are similar to the early Cape Cod houses, but larger in scale and with more costly exterior materials. Tibbals established a company to undertake residential apartment development, “Shortly after World War II, in April 1951 as a means to provide high-quality and affordable housing for returning U.S. veterans and their families,”<sup>2</sup> Lincoln Management Company was formed to

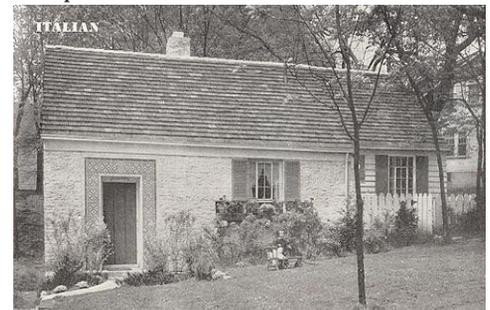
undertake the development. The apartment complexes developed by Lincoln Management Company were sold recently to New Life Properties. These apartments are located in Whitehall, Ohio near the Port Columbus Airport.

“During the period 1942 through 1953, Tibbals either owned or controlled numerous other corporations which engaged in various related activities, such as the ownership and management of rental properties (including FHA housing projects), the manufacture and sale of lumber, and the manufacture and sale of panels for prefabricated houses.”<sup>3</sup>

Later in his career Tibbals would concentrate on the design of one-of-a-kind houses, some larger than those he designed early in his career in Colonial Hills, but reflecting his earlier experience. These homes can be found mainly in the Columbus area and Upper Arlington, Ohio. One home is also located just to the southeast of Columbus in Lancaster, Ohio. He designed his personal residence at 995 Woodhill Drive, Grandview Heights, Ohio, in 1942. Among his other commissions were the Lazarus Store at Westland Mall in 1962; one of the first retirement homes in the country, First Community Village in 1963 in Columbus; the Ohio Bell Building, owned and operated by AT&T, in downtown Columbus; and the Ohio State School for the Deaf just south of Worthington.

His last two notable designs were for his alma mater – the Fine Arts Building (1957) and Drake Union (1972) at The Ohio State University.

A Tibbals home in *Better Homes and Gardens*, November, 1940 pg. 27/George Campbell



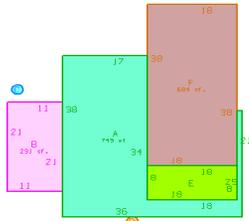
1 “New Homes Are Started Here.” The Worthington News [Worthington] 29 Jan. 1942. Print.

2 Corvo, Kevin. “Columbus Local News: Archives Region News Whitehall Apartments Change Hands in \$18.25 Million Deal.” Columbus Local News:Front. 21 Nov. 2011. Web. 13 Feb. 2012. <[http://www.snponline.com/articles/2011/11/30/multiple\\_papers/news/allwhengli\\_20111118\\_0939pm\\_4.txt](http://www.snponline.com/articles/2011/11/30/multiple_papers/news/allwhengli_20111118_0939pm_4.txt)>

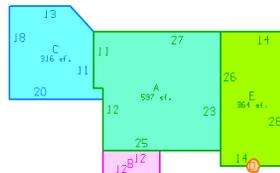
3 Todd Tibbals and Helen A. Tibbals v. the United States. United States Court of Claims. 10 June 1966. Justialaw. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. <<http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/362/266/59822/>>.

The following photographs and layouts are of the nine original housing styles that can be found in Colonial Hills and Dales:

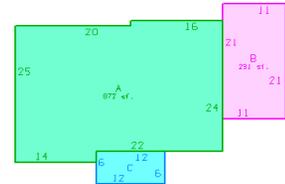
The Hartford



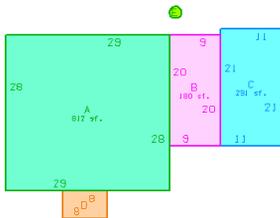
The Mystic



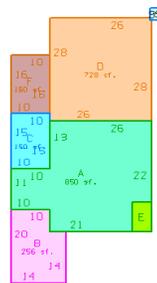
The Waterbury



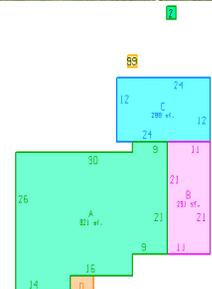
The Weston



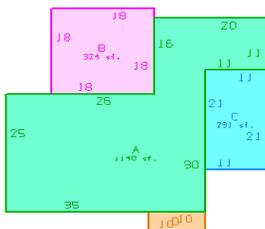
The Saybrook



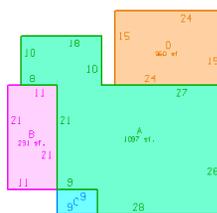
The Meriden



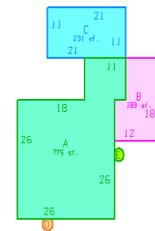
The Farmington



The Glastonbury



The Litchfield



The images shown are from Franklin County Auditors Website/TallGeorge.com

# Prefabricated Housing

Prefabricated homes were important to government efforts to provide both worker housing during World War II and to meet the expected demand for homes for military personnel and their families following the war. A shortage of building materials and a rapid increase in demand for single-family housing quickly created problems even early in the 1940s. In order to meet demand, builders had to find ways to provide housing quickly and with limited availability of materials. American Housing, Incorporated was one of the early firms that provided prefabricated houses. The company began in 1932 and later teamed up with General Electric Company to provide homes for workers at General Motors. Princeton-trained architect Robert McLaughlin was the co-founder of American Housing, Inc. The company sold modern prefabricated houses made of asbestos-cement panels attached to a steel frame.

Prefabricated houses, also called prefab homes, were manufactured in sub-assemblies that could be easily delivered to any destination and quickly constructed. The prefab market grew rapidly due to the shortage of materials and their resulting high prices; factory assembly allowed maximum use of materials, with little waste, and the time economy of assembly-line production. According to book about the Lustron Home, which was produced in Columbus, Ohio

after the war in a former aircraft factory, “during the early part of World War II, much of the productive energy of the American industrial system was converted to military needs and the earlier advances in prefabricated housing came from wartime necessities.”<sup>1</sup> A news story from the early war years noted the importance of Columbus: “In the Fall of 1941, even before pearl Harbor, it became apparent to those in authority in Washington, that Columbus, due to its strategic location and importance in connection with the defense effort, faced an immediate and serious housing shortage of available better class homes for executives engaged in war production.”<sup>2</sup>

The post-war period also was an opportunity for the prefab industry to grow rapidly, since demand was high and materials remained scarce. In this period, practicality rather than style seemed to shape the stock of new housing. American Housing described its prefab home as “a machine in which to live.”

Most parts of a prefab house were assembled before being shipped. When the company delivered the components to the

site, a builder handled the assembly and finishing. According to a *Time* magazine article about prefab housing, “The four-room unit on display cost \$3800 complete, including erection within 100 miles of New York. Shipped by truck from the company’s distribution depot, the parts are put together in two weeks under the expert eye of a company superintendent. A local building crew sinks a shallow concrete foundation (there is no cellar), erects a steel frame. Then the walls consisting of 4-ft.-by-10-ft. Panels, are bolted together with long strips of aluminum which give a modernistic effect to the exterior. The panels, 2 1/4 in. thick, consist of two layers of mixed cement and asbestos. Between the layers is an insulating substance, which looks like burnt cork and is termite-proof. The outside of the house is a light grey, needs no paint. Extra rooms can be added from time to time by ‘unbuttoning’ one outside wall”<sup>3</sup>

1 Feters, Thomas T. About the Lustron Home. North Carolina and London: McFarland &, 2002. Print.

2 “Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow.” Worthington News [Worthington] 11 Oct. 1942: 4-5. Print.

3 “Business & Finance: Home in Cellophane - TIME.” Breaking News, Analysis, Politics, Blogs, News Photos, Video, Tech Reviews - TIME. com. TIME. Web. 04 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,748707,00.html>>.

Traditionally, single-family houses were completely assembled on site. Many people, including some architects, felt that prefabricated houses did not blend well with older traditional houses. This likely was at least one reason that prefab homes tended to be built in large groups or in newly-developed neighborhoods.

Prefab home design also responded to some very specific government guidelines for what was considered appropriate housing. The local print media discussed this in a story: “Colonial hills and Dales was chosen as the location best suited for the undertaking, was re-platted and modified to meet the rigid government specifications for this huge model home project, now nearing completion, involving an investment of approximately \$1,250,000.00, and consisting of 200 single family units, supplying all essentials to individual and community living of the highest order.”<sup>1</sup> The name of the development was later shortened to “Colonial Hills.”

Some questioned the wisdom of building prefab homes and whether they should be considered permanent housing: “Prefabricated structures were often seen as temporary expedients in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some structures were of wood and canvas; others of cast or corrugated iron. Pre-fabricated iron churches offered sturdy and secure places of worship that could be erected fairly quickly. But the notion persisted that prefabrication was a ‘temporary’ solution to housing, and this notion haunts the proponents of prefabricated housing to this day.”<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, the early homes in Colonial Hills were not temporary. They survive today and contribute to the character of this mid-century neighborhood. The quality of design, materials and construction has stood the test of time.

1 “Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow.” Worthington News [Worthington] 11 Oct. 1942: 4-5. Print.

2 Feters, Thomas T. About the Lustron Home. North Carolina and London: McFarland &, 2002. Print.

House located at Selby Blvd. In Colonial Hills

### Colonial Hills and Dales Street Scene



ONE OF THE STREETS IN THE NEW COLONIAL HILLS AND DALES AREA

These Photos are example of Colonial hills in the beginning



Example of Prefab homes in US in 40's





## Section 3

### Post-War Colonial Hills: The Baby Boom, the Civic Association, and Annexation

Immediately following World War II was an era of greatly increased birth rates across the nation known as the “Baby Boom.” This period, lasting from 1946 through 1964, was marked by the birth of just over 78 million people in the United States and it had an enormous impact upon housing availability and the trend toward suburbanization.

In the the Depression period before World War II, many Americans faced poverty and poor living conditions. Low incomes and the lack of housing loans made fulfilling the “American Dream” of owning a home and starting a family difficult for most families. Despite the economic recovery it would bring, the start of World War II caused an even greater hardship on American families. With over 16 million Americans serving in the military, any plans for new families had were immediately set aside for the higher interest of the nation. <sup>1</sup>

Upon the end of the war in 1945, our veterans returned home with re-ignited hope of starting families and moving away from older cities. This was a difficult task, however, with the average house in the United States costing \$4,200. The average income was just over half of this, \$2,400. With a 50% down payment customarily required, purchasing a home seemed nearly impossible for most people. The federal government foresaw the lack of access to housing for the returning veterans, and under President Franklin D. Roosevelt the original Serviceman’s Readjustment Act (often referred to as the GI Bill) established Veterans Loans, known as VA Loans. This gave veterans the opportunity to purchase a home with a zero down payment and a federally insured loan. Making homes accessible with no down payment ensured that the veterans could purchase and move into their homes as quickly as possible. Using the VA Loans from the G.I. Bill, the sprawl into the outskirts of cities further spurred the nation’s move toward suburbanization that had begun with development of the automobile. Americans felt that the cleaner and safer housing options outside of the cities

<sup>1</sup> Cromartie, John and Nelson, Peter. (2009, August). Baby boom migration and its impact on rural america. United States Department of Agriculture.

Upon the end of the war in 1945, our veterans returned home with re-ignited hope of starting families and moving away from older cities.

“Between 1950 and 1970, 83% of the nation’s population growth was in the suburbs”

-California and the Postwar Suburban Home

“Franklin County had a 1940 population of 388,712 people. Just ten years later the population had increased 29.5 percent to 503,410 people, and then jumped 35.7 percent again by 1960 to 682,962 people.”

provided suitable conditions to start families and raise children.<sup>1</sup>

Colonial Hills was no exception to these trends across the country. Taking a look at the census data from the surrounding counties shows the great growth in population during the post-war era. According to the census data, Franklin County had a 1940 population of 388,712 people. Just ten years later the population had increased 29.5 percent to 503,410 people, and then jumped 35.7 percent again by 1960 to 682,962 people. The county rounded out the Baby Boom era by increasing another 22 percent to 833,249 by 1970. Overall, in the baby-boom era, Franklin County showed an increase in population by 444,537. This is more than a doubling of the population in a time period of only 30 years.

The community of Worthington also showed great population growth in this period. Following annexation of Colonial Hills to Worthington in the mid-1950s, the city’s population grew from just over 5,000 people to 9,239 in 1960 and then to 15,326 in 1970.

The federal government also realized that the number of houses being built in the post-war era would need to increase. To remedy this, planned communities were located across the country to stimulate housing growth. Colonial Hills was chosen as a site for one of these communities, resulting in greater access to housing for

<sup>1</sup> Texcorp Mortgage Bankers, Inc. (2012). Va loan history.

people moving to the suburbs of Columbus. Housing was not the only shortage that resulted from the great increase in suburban population. New communities also needed schools and parks for children, as well as churches, businesses, and public areas for families.<sup>2</sup>

### Mid-Century Housing Styles

Homes in Colonial Hills were built in several housing styles that were common in various other mid-century neighborhoods. Even homes built in whole or in part with prefabricated components share the same stylistic elements as traditionally-built ones. Throughout the years, some of the houses in Colonial Hills have been renovated and additions have been built, but overall their original designs remain intact.

### Cape Cod

Cape Cods are smaller, more conservative houses that became popular during the post-war housing boom. These houses are characterized by their symmetry, centered front door, and identical windows on each side of the entry way. Some Cape Cods are only one story with an attic space upstairs, but most of the time there is either a large room or two bedrooms and a bathroom on a half-story upper floor. On the front and the rear, Cape Cods typically have very narrow eaves, unless

<sup>2</sup> Cromartie, John and Nelson, Peter. (2009, August). Baby boom migration and its impact on rural america.

they have been modified later. Originally, the siding on these houses was wood shingle or simulated shingle; some had brick exteriors. In Colonial Hills today, some wood-sided houses still exist, but many have been re-sided with vinyl siding to avoid painting and to ease cleaning.

Cape Cods are a version of the Colonial Revival style. Homes in this style resemble houses built by settlers in the nation's colonial era of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Cape Cods became popular around 1920 and even are being built today. Older Cape Cods have stood for many years and still characterize many American neighborhoods.

A traditional Cape Cod had a main hallway, sometimes with stairs leading to an upper half-story. The main floor was usually divided into three and sometimes four rooms. These typically were a living room, a kitchen, and a dining room. Some Cape Cods had a bedroom and occasionally a bathroom on the main floor. When there was a true upper half-story, as opposed to just an attic, there could be two bedrooms and a bathroom, but sometimes there was just one large room.

When they were introduced, Cape Cods became popular because they were good "starter" homes for new families; they were small but adequate, inexpensive, and easy to build and maintain. As

a family grew, its Cape Cod house could easily be added to for more space.

### Suburban Ranch

Another mid-century housing style was the Suburban Ranch. These homes were single-story, asymmetrical, and usually were built on larger lots than Cape Cods. Characteristics of Suburban Ranches included lower roofs, basements, large overhanging eaves, an attached garage (except for some earlier models with detached garages), and an open floor plan.

In Ranches, the outdoors is very accessible. Large picture windows, multiple entrances, and an overall large number of windows all characterized a typical Suburban Ranch. Along with the Cape Cod, numerous Ranches can be found in post-war neighborhoods across the country.

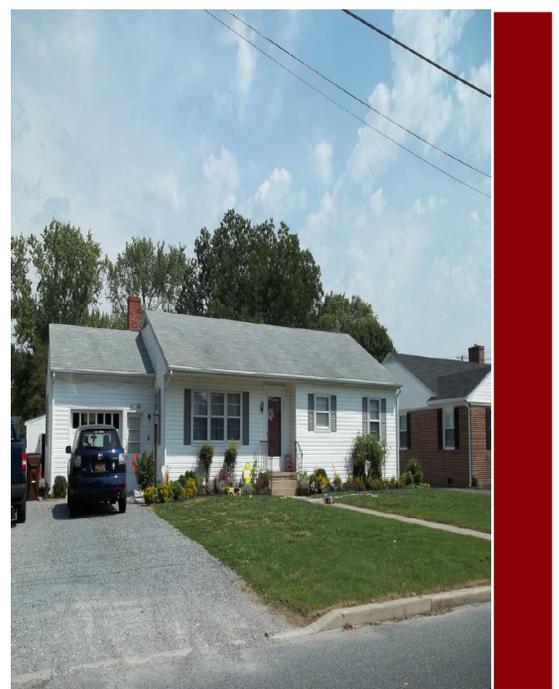
### Colonial Revival

In 1876, at the United States Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the Colonial Revival style was born. Based on architectural designs from America's colonial period prior to independence in 1776, the style grew in popularity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and remained in vogue until the 1950s. Colonial Revival style housing can be found throughout the United States; its "boom" period was between the World Wars.

Characteristics of the Colonial Revival style include symmetrical form, a rectangular shape, a two- or three-story

height, brick masonry or wood siding, a central entrance, often elevated and shaded by a porch or portico, classical columns and pilasters, large front doors with sidelights and paneling, multi-paned double-hung windows with shutters, a gabled roof, and dormers. On the interior, common elements include an entry foyer inside the main entrance, spaces such as the parlor, living room, kitchen and dining room on the first floor, and personal spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor.

Cape Cods are a version of the Colonial Revival style. Homes in this style resemble houses built by settlers in the nation's colonial era of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.





As Colonial Hills grew and matured, residents worked together for a better, more improved community.

## Mid-Century Landscaping

### The Back Yard

In earlier times, the back yard was a personal space that could have an outhouse, a storage shed, and a garden. After the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people began using their back yards for more leisurely activities. With new housing styles coming into vogue as the century progressed, back porches and rear patios appeared. With widespread access to indoor plumbing and automobile ownership, outhouses disappeared, and garages were moved forward and often attached to the house, thereby freeing up even more backyard space for leisure use. In the period following World War II, the fenced back yard became the primary play space for children.

### Setbacks

During the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes by ordinance and sometimes by design preference, houses were placed deeper on their lots than in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was particularly

# Changes in Developments and Mid-Century Landscaping

true in suburban areas, where more abundant land than in cities enabled people to live further from neighbors away from street noise. Privacy was important, and with growing recreational use of the yard, people wanted more outdoor space. The front well-tended yard also became a symbol of a family's character and economic success.

### Driveways

Suburban lots, larger than typical city lots, met another need of the family: taking care of the car. With the growth of automobile transportation, people needed space to wash, show off, and house their cars. The answer was the driveway and the garage.

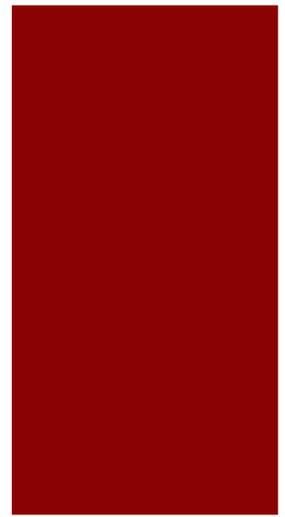
Before the birth of the automobile, driveways generally were not prominent landscape features. Carriage houses were located at the rear of a house lot, and access typically was from the rear or side. Development of the automobile changed this dynamic.

### Sidewalks

Today many suburban neighborhoods do not have sidewalks. However, sidewalks were an important part of the landscape in post-war neighborhoods such as Colonial Hills as a mean of separating the pedestrians from automobiles. For the growing number of children in such neighborhoods, sidewalks enabled safe walking to school, playgrounds, and friends' homes.

### The Civic Association

As Colonial Hills grew and matured, residents worked together for a better, more improved community. To this end, the Colonial Hills Civic Association was founded in 1948, in particular as a response to the water shortage the neighborhood was experiencing in the hot summertime. After months of committee meetings, the Civic Association came to the decision that it would install a "new 12 inch main . . . from Morse Road north along the railroad tracks to Indianola, where it will tie in at the high



point of the Colonial Hills gridwork.” The water main cost Colonial Hills \$25,000. The cost was divided among property owners, with each paying a total of \$50 per lot over a 10 year period, or \$5 a year.<sup>1</sup>

After the water problem was solved, the Civic Association began to shift its focus to improvement of the neighborhood park and community events. Selby Park was dedicated as a playground for children a few years before the Civic Association was formed, but not much had been done to improve or maintain it. The community of Colonial Hills spent approximately \$5,600 in two years on renovating the playground.<sup>2</sup> Among the improvements were installing a water fountain, planting shade trees, adding new playground equipment, constructing a shelter house, moving the basketball courts to Indianola Park, installing a permanent electric system, and installing tennis courts. Selby Park continues to be an important central feature in the community. The shelter house is the meeting place for the Civic Association, as well as for other community events. Indianola Park, which was developed by the City of Worthington, also serves the Colonial Hills neighborhood, but its development came later in the 1970s.

The Civic Association has long hosted a wide variety of community events. These include a Spring Dance, a Christmas Light Contest, and the Fourth of July parade. In the past, the Association encouraged participation in events offering incentives such as door prizes. One flier from 1949 for the Fourth of July Parade advertised big cash prizes with the donation of only \$1. The flier for the 1949 Spring Dance listed prizes such as a Westinghouse Pop-up Toaster and a Tecron Electric Clock. The proceeds of the event supported the further development of Selby Park.<sup>3</sup> The many community events helped bring residents together as a community and gave them a sense of identity. According to Association historian George Campbell, the Civic Association

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<sup>1</sup> Colonial Hills Civic Association. (1949, May). Colonial Hills Courier.

<sup>2</sup> Colonial Hills Civic Association. (1949, September).

<sup>3</sup> Colonial Hills Civic Association. (1949, July).



Today, the Civic Association focuses on community engagement.

was responsible for much of the fundraising through bake sales, spaghetti dinners, and raffles.

Today, the Civic Association focuses on community engagement. Each month it publishes a newsletter, *The Colonial Hills Courier*, on the neighborhood website to inform residents of current events. The Association's online presence has created a social network where residents become more involved in their community.

### The School

In 1955, Colonial Hills Elementary School was built to serve neighborhood children. Before this, children attended schools outside the neighborhood. The elementary school was built as a result of the annexation of Colonial Hills to Worthington and the resulting increase in student population during the early 1950s Baby Boom. The school was originally supposed to be completed by April of 1954, but the neighborhood's ongoing sewage problem delayed construction.<sup>1</sup>

### Annexation to Worthington

Between 1954 and 1955 Colonial Hills debated the issue of whether it should be annexed to Worthington or the City of Columbus. This was a major issue debated among city officials, community members, and councilmen and was slowly being resolved.

<sup>1</sup> Worthington City Schools. (2012). History of worthington.

Securing sufficient water supplies and dealing with sewer issues became the driving force, not only behind the creation of the Civic Association, but also for the proposed annexation. The sewer facilities in Worthington and Sharon Township were studied by local engineers. Although they believed that adequate sewers and sewage disposal were essential to the public health and welfare of the community, they determined that the systems at the time were "intolerable" and adequate services were not being provided to the entire Colonial Hills area. The issue of proper installation, repair and maintenance, along with funding, mattered greatly to the residents.

A conflict arose between Colonial Hills, the City of Columbus, and Worthington. The City of Columbus proposed annexation of the entirety of Sharon Township, except Worthington and Riverlea, whereas the Worthington ordinance would annex only the southwest third of Sharon Township. The residents were asked to vote "for" Worthington and "against" Columbus OR "against" Worthington and "for" Columbus. Although the City of Columbus offered to do repairs and provide services if Colonial Hills was annexed to the city, the residents were afraid of city control, as seen in "Do YOU Fear "Control."<sup>2</sup>

Since the City of Columbus was seeking all

<sup>2</sup> "Issue 46 Do YOU Fear "Control"?" Worthington News (1954): 4.

unincorporated territory south of Worthington, including school and church properties, its officials were doing everything within their power to discourage and defeat the annexation of Colonial Hills to Worthington. Concern for public finance, schools, and libraries continued to come up at village council meetings. Residents were concerned that annexation to Columbus would heavily influence public finance, that their taxes would increase, and that educational costs for students would increase.

This motivated the residents to push for annexation to Worthington. Although the Worthington population was considerably larger than in Colonial Hills, the residents of Colonial Hills believed that they would have more of influence with Worthington than with the City of Columbus.<sup>1</sup> The citizens stated in the Worthington News, "... Worthington and its many fine organizations and institutions can not long continue at their present level of service without the active support, respect and cooperation of many hundreds of residents living outside the village limits" ("Do YOU Fear Control") while trying to encourage residents from both Worthington and Colonial Hills to work together to fix community problems.

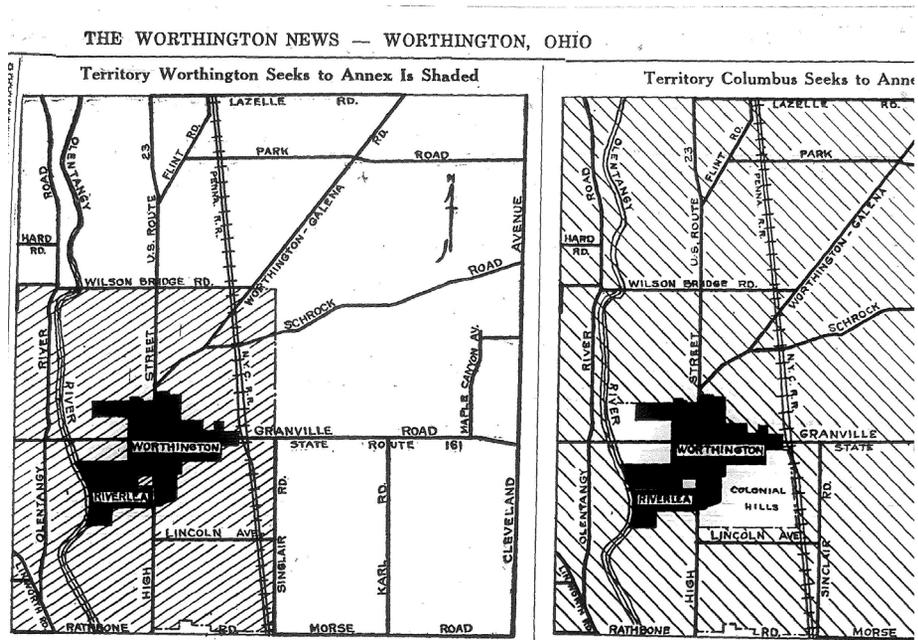
With such important issues being debated, the Worthington village council

<sup>1</sup> "Issue 47 Village Population Still Exceeds That of Colonial Hills." Worthington News (1954): 1.

held multiple meetings before bringing the issue to a vote. The *Worthington News* was continuously trying to educate residents and encourage a decision: "The future of Worthington is now squarely up to the residents of the village. The first step toward a bright new future -- one wherein Worthington can take its rightful place on the horizon -- is the annexation of the Colonial Hills section." The city of Columbus pushed for petitions and public votes in November of 1954, although the residents continued to work towards annexation to Worthington. A final vote in November, 1954 showed that 76% of residents, 970 to 312, voted in favor of having Colonial Hills annexed to Worthington.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Issue 31 Annexation of "Hills" Approved 970 to 312." Worthington News (1954): 1.

A final vote in November, 1954 showed that 76% of residents, 970 to 312, voted in favor of having Colonial Hills annexed to Worthington.



The above map of Sharon Township shows the territory (shaded area) which the Village of Worthington seeks to annex. All residents of the un-incorporated area of Sharon Township will vote on both the Worthington and the Columbus proposals.

Shown in the above map of Sharon Township (in the shaded area) is the territory which Columbus seeks to annex. All voters of the un-incorporated area of Sharon Township will vote on both the Columbus and Worthington proposals.

### **Cape Cod**

- Smaller and more conservative
- Symmetrical
- Centered front door
- 1-1.5 stories
- Wood shingles or brick exteriors
- Narrow eaves
- Sometimes have dormers
- Early models didn't have basements



### **Suburban Ranch**

- Single story
- Asymmetrical
- Built on larger lots
- Low roof
- Basements
- Large, overhanging eaves
- Attached garage
- Open floor plan
- Large picture windows
- Multiple entrances



### **Colonial Revival**

- Symmetrical
- Rectangular shape
- 2-3 stories
- Brick masonry or wood siding
- Elevated porch or portico
- Columns and Pilasters
- Multi-paned double-hung windows
- Shutters
- Gabled roof
- Dormers





# Section 4

## National Register of Historic Places

### Assessment

#### Introduction

Based on the information in this report, it appears that Colonial Hills may be eligible for listing as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Colonial Hills appears to qualify for historic district status under the NRHP's Criteria A and C, and it possesses the level of integrity required for National Register listing. An explanation of the criteria used to assess a neighborhood and the components of integrity follow.

#### Criteria and Integrity Applied to Nominations

The NRHP uses four established criteria and an evaluation of integrity to determine the eligibility of a neighborhood as a historic district. The nomination process includes the preparation of a National Register nomination form based on at least one of the National Register criteria and an evaluation of integrity. Although the criteria are general in nature, they apply to a wide range of the nation's historic resources and the history and significance they represent.

Rarely does a property qualify for listing under all four criteria; only one is required. When nominating neighborhoods and properties for the National Register it is best to focus on the criterion or criteria that are most defensible in making the case for nomination.

The criteria used to evaluate National Register nominations are broad and inclusive. The same criteria are used for buildings, structures, objects, sites and historic districts. This discussion is focused on Colonial Hills as a potential historic district. Application of the criteria to neighborhoods, according to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office's (OHPO) *Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past* publication, are as follows:

**The NRHP uses four criteria and a test of integrity to determine the appropriateness of denoting a neighborhood as a historic district.**

- *A neighborhood qualifies under Criterion A if it is “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.”*
- *Neighborhoods qualifying under Criterion B “are associated with the lives of persons significant to our past.”*
- *A neighborhood that qualifies under Criterion C will “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.”*
- *Neighborhoods qualifying under Criterion D “have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

The evaluation of integrity is intended to determine whether a neighborhood which “retains sufficient integrity to illustrate or convey its significance.” Where the application of criteria is broad, the evaluation of integrity a neighborhood must possess is much more specific. The NRHP utilizes this evaluation to ensure that a historic district “retains much of the features it had during the historic period, in the same configuration, and in similar condition.” Properties within historic districts do not need to retain all of the original components and materials used when they were built. However, they do need to retain sufficient character to clearly convey the areas of significance that are claimed.

According to *Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past*, “Historic integrity is the composite of seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association as they relate to the significance of a property.” Every nomination needs to address all seven qualities of integrity. A neighborhood does not need to present characteristics of each of the qualities of integrity to the same degree. A neighborhood with significance under one of the National Register criteria and maintaining a high degree of integrity is encouraged to apply for historic district status. The NRHP list historic districts that represent the history of the locality, state, or nation. Through designation as historic districts, neighborhoods continue to write the story of their history.

## Criterion A

The National Register of Historic Places evaluates neighborhoods who wish to apply for historic district status under Criterion A according to their association “with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” According to *Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past*, Criterion A is applicable to past resources in the following circumstances:

- *A neighborhood which “reflects an important historic trend in development and growth of a locality or metropolitan area.”*
- *A suburb that “represents an important event or association, such as the expansion of housing associated with wartime industries during World War II, or the racial integration of suburban neighborhoods in the 1950s.”*
- *A suburb which “introduced conventions important in the history of community planning, such as zoning, deed restrictions, or subdivision regulations.”*
- *A neighborhood “associated with the heritage of social, economic, racial, or ethnic groups important in the history of a locality or metropolitan area.”*
- *A suburb “associated with a group of individuals, including merchants, industrialists, educators, and community leaders, important in the history and development of a locality or metropolitan area.”*

Neighborhoods successfully achieving historic district status often embody a multitude of broad patterns that fit within the above circumstances. Each district (listed under Criterion A) has experienced various events forming a unique set of broad patterns. This set makes each district distinct from all other listed districts and important to describing the local, state, and national history. *Ohio Modern: Preserving Our Recent Past* lists common broad patterns of our nation and, more specifically, Ohio. The history and development of Colonial Hills reflect many of Ohio's broad patterns.

### Changing Demographics

This pattern includes various changes such as rural-to-city migration, suburbanization and sprawl, the migration of Southerners (specifically African Americans), and the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family. Other topics for consideration related to changing demographics are greater educational opportunities, increased mobility, and income distribution related to population shifts.



### Social History

This pattern contains the emergence of the middle class, federal housing initiatives and their impacts (especially on the suburbs), and racial and gender discrimination. The rise of consumer culture, the growth of the African American middle class, recreational and cultural expansion, and surviving traditional ethnic identities are related subtopics.

### Changing Demographics

Colonial Hills developed largely as a result of Columbus's changing demographics in the years following World War II. The first 200 houses in Colonial Hills were built by the Defense Homes Corporation. These homes were built to address a shortage of worker housing during World War II. Following the conclusion of the war, Colonial Hills's development continued to provide for the influx of war veterans looking to start a family, adding a large number of young families to the demographics of this community. The post-war baby boom resulted in the need for an elementary school to serve the children of Colonial Hills. Similarly, other facilities, such as the development of Selby Park and the activities of the Colonial Hills Civic Association, were created for the residents of Colonial Hills, both young and old.

Colonial Hills originally had restrictive covenants included in the deeds to restrict rental or sale to minorities. The covenants were eventually declared unconstitutional, but in the post-war period they were legal and the neighborhood was 100% Caucasian. This was not an uncommon practice at the time; in fact, even FHA publications in the 1930s and 1940s promoted covenants as a way to create stable neighborhoods. Colonial Hills is representative of the movement of post-war Americans out of cities and into newly developed suburban neighborhoods.

### Social History

Colonial Hills reflects the broad social trends that were prevalent during the mid-20th century in Ohio and elsewhere. As World War II ended, there was pent-up demand for housing and a large number of returning veterans who were eligible to purchase houses, aided by Veterans Administration (VA) loans. The rapid development of Colonial Hills in the 1940s and 1950s was in direct response to the demand and availability of mortgages to many new homeowners.



### Land Use Planning

This pattern may include the suburban character which developed during this time, including transportation routes and commercial districts. Other important topics to be considered are urban and suburban annexation conflicts, Urban Renewal and its impacts, the impact of federal housing policies, and the characteristics of residential, suburban, and industrial developments.



As previously mentioned the development of a new elementary school in the neighborhood also reflects this trend of new families and rapid population growth due to the baby boom. Colonial Hills Elementary School was built in 1955 to serve its immediate neighborhood. Colonial Hills developed a small park for recreational and social interaction and its own civic association as a way to foster neighborliness and community pride. Outdoor events such as parades, celebrations, etc. were held throughout the community and the Selby Park Shelter House was built to hold various local indoor events.

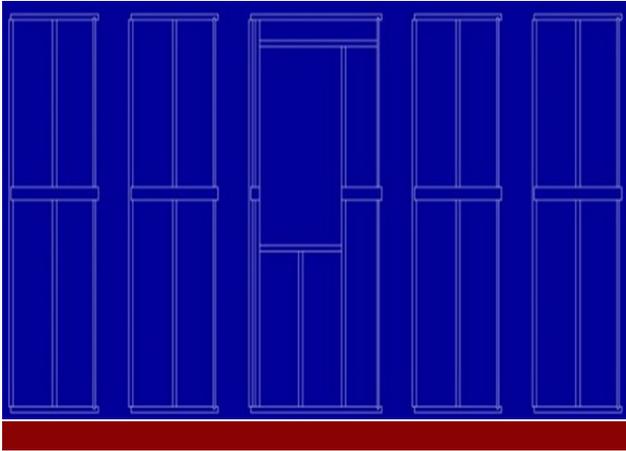
### Land Use Planning

The manner in which Colonial Hills developed has reflected similar World War II and post-war land use planning trends. The original platting of Colonial Hills (1927) and the expanded plat in 1941 reflected an early to mid-20th century suburban ideal of single-family residential uses, broad streets, sidewalks, a park at the center, and individual building lots with established setbacks for buildings. Although mainly a grid, there are a few curvilinear streets to break up the monotony of the grid.

Colonial Hills experienced two waves of housing development. The first wave occurred as the Defense Homes Corporation developed war-industry housing within the area. Following World War II, a second wave occurred as veterans utilized VA loans to secure housing. As developers laid out housing, land use techniques such as building setbacks, landscaped sidewalks, and lot size requirements were instituted. These techniques are seen widely throughout Colonial Hills. Curvilinear street design throughout Colonial Hills reflected modern planning trend of the time.

## Technological Innovations

This pattern includes the impact of the military-industrial complex and university research and development and how construction innovations changed the built environment. Changes in manufacturing technology, the consequences of automation, the use of new construction methods and materials, and the changing of construction trades are some subtopics.



## Technological Innovations

Technological innovations of World War II carried over into life during and after the war. Housing construction was not an exception. During World War II, the military-industrial complex encouraged assembly line development where multiple sections of a house could be built in a factory, shipped to the site, and assembled on site in a very quick manner. The Defense Homes Corporation utilized this technique to quickly build the first 200 houses in Colonial Hills for war-time workers. New materials such as molded plywood and gypsum board (drywall) were used widely in the construction of housing and were utilized in many Colonial Hills houses. In fact, the earliest houses used gypsum board instead of plaster, thus speeding the construction process.

## City vs. Suburb

This pattern may include the decline of the central city's influence and population, city change related to transportation policies, and Urban Renewal. Related topics are "white flight," the rise of the urban African American middle class, the upsurge of narcotics within criminal activity, the impact of urban disinvestment, and the environmental costs of sprawl.



## City vs. Suburb

Relative to the City vs. Suburb issue, many suburbs developed residential neighborhoods that looked drastically different from those within cities. Design trends (such as curvilinear streets), land use controls (such as setback requirements), and policies (such as restrictive covenants) were widely employed to create this newer type of development. These trends and FHA policies are evident in the character and design of Colonial Hills.

## Design Trends

This pattern includes the assortment of architectural styles utilized and resources used for design. The impact of European architecture on American design, new construction materials, design trends in relation to zoning regulations and population shifts, and the variety in design from region to region are some subtopics.



## Design Trends

Design trends seen throughout housing during World War II and post-war housing development are displayed in Colonial Hills housing design trends. During 1942-43, the first 200 homes in Colonial Hills were built as partially prefabricated housing. Todd Tibbals, a local architect, was chosen to design these homes. Most of these houses were modest Cape Cod designs but included variations to make the neighborhood visually interesting, and incorporated amenities such as attached garages, which would make the house marketable after the war. In post-war communities, Cape Cod houses continued to be popular and Ranch and Split-level houses also became common throughout the nation. These tree housing types are the most predominant in Colonial Hills.

Throughout the period from its original plat in 1927, its early development during World War II, and its post-war development, Colonial Hills clearly reflects broad patterns of American development. These patterns shaped the physical environment and character of Colonial Hills. Understanding how Colonial Hills developed and the reasons behind the development provide useful knowledge for understanding local, state-wide, and national suburban history during World War II and the time period immediately following the war.

## Criterion C

The National Register of Historic Places defines Criterion C for a nomination as follows; “Properties that have distinctive design characteristics of a specific type, method or period of construction, represent the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.” This is the most commonly used criterion for National Register nominations and is important because it specifically identifies the character-defining aspects of a property or district that makes it significant or distinctive within its local, state or national context. This criterion includes aspects of engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture while emphasizing the values of each one. Significance arises when:

- a.) An individual building or a collection of buildings is an important example of a distinctive period of construction, method of construction, or the work of one or more notable architects.
- b.) An individual property or a suburb reflects principles of design important in the history of community planning and landscape architecture, or is the work of a master landscape architect, site planner, or design firm.
- c.) An individual property or a subdivision, planned community, or other suburban type embodies high artistic values through its overall plan or the design of entranceways, streets, homes, and community spaces.

Colonial Hills appears to qualify for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its representation of two periods of development: the first for construction during World War II, and the second for continued construction in the immediate post-war period.

In the early years of World War II, the Federal Government created the Defense Homes Corporation to address the need for affordable housing for defense workers, as well as solving a looming housing shortage. The government wanted to build communities of homes near war production facilities to aid the war effort. Colonial Hills was developed by the Defense Homes Corporation for that reason. The neighborhood was designed to house workers from the Curtiss-Wright aviation plant near Port Columbus airport, however it is unclear why the DHC chose a site just south of the village of Worthington since it was not located near the aircraft plant on the east side of Columbus. In any case, in January of 1942, 400 workers began construction and by October of the same year, the 200 original homes were ready to be occupied. The speed with which the homes were erected is indicative of how focused the war effort was at the time. The speed of construction was made possible largely due to the designs used for the nine types of original housing and the partial prefabrication of housing elements that could be assembled quickly onsite.

*Ohio Modern's* chapter "Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of the Recent Past" lists several areas of significance that fall under Criterion C. One of these areas is architecture which is described as "when significant qualities are embodied in the design, style, or method of construction of buildings and structures, such as houses, office towers, skyscrapers, manufacturing facilities, and shopping centers, and enclosed malls." The homes developed during World War II were designed by an Ohio State University graduate, architect Todd Tibbals. His nine Colonial Revival house types were designed to be partially prefabricated. Wood panels were delivered and bolted together to form the structural frames of the houses.

His designs did not include basements, which also helped speed up the construction process. Plaster, the most common wall material at the time, took time and skilled labor to install, so it was replaced with new materials. The 200 original homes used a new type of building material that would eventually replace most plaster in home building: sheetrock (also called drywall) made from gypsum. It could be cut into panels and then attached to wood studs and painted over in any level of finish. The process of hanging drywall was much faster and allowed for continuous construction and did not have to dry. Using sheetrock cut the construction time in half.

Wood exterior materials were the most common, but some of the original homes also had brick exteriors. A number of the structures retain their original siding and cedar shingles. One of the unusual features in this first phase of Colonial Hills was the inclusion of attached garages. Up until this time, garages were typically in back yards because they were thought to be dangerous if attached to or located near the house. The designs by Todd Tibbals addressed concerns about safety by designing a concrete firewall between the home and the attached garage. In the event of a fire, the concrete wall would slow down the spread of the fire to allow the family to escape and would result in minimal amounts of damage. These designs also reflected the period of time when dependence on the automobile became more pronounced and garages became very important features in new home designs.

## Integrity

The National Register of Historic Places has defined the quality of integrity as follows: “Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but it also must have integrity.” Absent a high level of integrity, even significant properties cannot qualify for listing. Nominations to the National Register are evaluated on seven basic aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. All seven aspects of integrity do not necessarily have to be present in order for a property or a historic district to qualify for listing, but a higher level of integrity makes listing more likely.

- “Location is place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.”
- “Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.”
- “Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.”
- “Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.”
- “Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.”
- “Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.”
- “Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.”

The Colonial Hills neighborhood is fortunate in that it retains meets all seven of these aspects of integrity.



## **Location**

During World War II, the federal government created the Defense Homes Corporation to provide affordable housing for defense workers during looming housing shortages. The first portion of Colonial Hills to be built was intended to house workers of the Curtiss-Wright aircraft plant near Port Columbus airport. Post-war development in the neighborhood housed many more individuals and families. The fact that Colonial Hills remains intact on its original site gives it a high level of integrity of location.

## **Design**

There were nine original types of homes designed for Colonial Hills. The floor plans were designed by an Ohio State University graduate, architect Todd Tibbals. His Colonial Revival style designs were simple to construct and used pre-fabricated elements, which enabled rapid construction. Homes built in the post-war period continued to employ Colonial Revival design elements. However, some Ranch and Split-Level designs were also built as time went on. Even with some later alterations such as additions, the majority of homes in Colonial Hills today maintain their original designs largely intact, retaining a high level of integrity of design. One of the design features that is significant is the incorporation of attached garages to nearly all of the houses in the neighborhood. Even during World War II, the original housing designs had attached garages – an amenity that was not common at the time. Typically, garages were separate and located in the rear yards. This was due to concerns over safety and cleanliness. To address these concerns, Tibbals designed homes that had a thick concrete wall between the garage and home to address concerns over possible fire hazards. Many of these homes have altered the interior of the garage areas to become an extra room or storage place but the visual aspects of the homes in their time period are still present today.

## **Setting**

Colonial Hills has a high level of integrity of setting due to the relationship between its buildings, its landscape features, and its open spaces. “These features and their relationships should be examined not only within the exact boundaries of the property, but also between the property and its surroundings. This is particularly important for districts.” As one walks or drives through Colonial Hills, the feeling of the mid-20th century is still present because the spatial relationships among the homes and the sites on which they stand remain almost entirely unaltered. While trees and other landscaping have grown or changed, the neighborhood still communicates the setting of more than half a century ago.

## **Materials**

Integrity of materials refers to a property or a district possessing a very large percentage of the building products – wood, metal, glass, masonry – that were originally used to construct it. Colonial Hills was built in nine different styles. Traditional materials such as wood siding and shingles, brick masonry, and wood-framed windows were widely used. Colonial Hills today retains a preponderance of these materials, many of which have continued in use without major alteration. This gives it a high level of integrity of materials.

## **Workmanship**

Colonial Hills is representative of its period of construction. The simple, yet modest, designs by Tibbals allowed for partial prefabrication and efficient construction. The first 200 homes were planned and erected in under a year, speed that would have been unthinkable prior to World War II. The homes were constructed with quality materials and innovative construction techniques, and the quality of the workmanship survives today, maintained and preserved for over 60 years.

**Association**

Colonial Hills is directly associated with one of the most significant events in U.S. history. It is linked with World War II and the housing efforts that went along with it. In a sense, World War II created Colonial Hills. The majority of America's employment during this time came from defense workers in the war efforts. As many of the plants and factories that worked on defense projects employed large numbers of workers, the demand for housing was very dense in certain areas. Colonial Hills was created to give sufficient housing to the workers of the Curtis-Wright Aviation Plant and retains its historical association with the World War II era.

**Feeling**

Colonial Hills retains the sense and quality of mid-20th century life. Many houses (after additions and new construction) still have the feeling they originally communicated. Many of the homes still include original windows, doors, and siding. As one drives through this neighborhood, it is very easy to imagine the people and neighborhood 60 to 70 years ago.

The chart on the next page shows in tabular form the defining characteristics of several National Register of Historic Places historic districts in Ohio. Included are the criteria of significance for which each district was listed.



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