is a good example of an original house which has retained its original, one car garage attached to the house by a glassed in breezeway. The house has maintained its original orientation with the main entrance facing the path and the garage oriented to the cul-de-sac behind it. Other examples of the original house with the attached garage can be found at 5 McCarthy Road and 30 Keller Path.

727 Saw Mill Brook Parkway is a fine example of an original detached garage as well as of a moderately altered house which has retained its original character. Changes include shifting the front entrance to the side of the house and adding a small entrance porch. Other examples of moderately altered structures include 15

30, 57, and 77 Bontempo Avery Path, 552 Saw Mill Brook Parkway, and 36 Bontempo

On November 11, 1998, Newton recognized the 50th anniversary of the construction of Veteran's housing in Oak Hill 634 Saw Mill Brook Parkway Park with the dedication of a monument to Newton Veterans of All Wars. The monument is located on Saw Mill Brook Parkway directly across from the business and shopping center.

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David B. Cohen, Mayor



Discover Historic

he end of World War II housing projects in other commucreated a unique problem nities, Oak Hill Park was financed In American history. As by the City itself, without the aid veterans returned to their home- of state or federal funds. The City towns and families, most found funded the project with a that while they wanted to buy or \$1,250,000 bond issue. In addirent homes, very few were avail- tion, the new sewer and water able. Around the country, com- main, which was estimated to cost munities looked for ways to pro- an additional \$4,000 per lot was vide affordable, modern housing provided by the City. The land, as quickly as possible, and the City formerly the Highland Sand and of Newton was no exception. Gravel Pit, was sold to the Unlike most other communities, contractor for \$50 per lot, though, Newton chose to build an although its per lot value at entirely new neighborhood the time was estimated at \$2,000-\$2,500. It for its veterans, including 412 was the largest single projhouses, a ect ever shopping undercenter, taken and a by the school. This City, and it n e w was the neighlargest borhood was called local project of its kind built Oak Hill Park 1947 Streetscape under Chapter 372

allowed the City to borrow and

spend money outside the debt limit

to construct housing for Veterans.

The project began in 1946, and

by the end of 1947, preliminary

plans and estimates were complet-

ed. City Engineer Ashley L.

Oak Hill Park is located in the southernmost part of the City at the West Roxbury (a Boston neighborhood) line. It is roughly bounded by Mt. Ida College to the north, the Boston City limits to the south, Dedham Street to the east, and the Charles River to the west.

the coordination of the enormous work load generated by this project. The plan, reminiscent of the April 1948, they chose to name the English "garden city" or the 33 streets and paths in the neigh-"greenbelt" towns constructed by borhood after Newton citizens the New Deal, reflected prece- who had died in WWII. On April dents of earlier private subdivi- 14, a lottery was held to pick the sions created in the 1920s and names from the list of over 200 1930s, such as Radburn, NJ (ca. Newton citizens, while those 1926). Oak Hill Park featured a whose names were not picked series of cul-de-sacs, with houses were memorialized when the facing away from the street and in school was dedicated in their toward public walkways which honor. transverse the development and lead to the school and business center. The intent of the path system was to provide a traditional, the dangers and confusion of modern life, where "American" values into the City of Newton. could be nurtured and perpetuatof the Acts of 1946, which ed. The path system minimized

S. Pratt, laid out the

development.

They were

responsible

for the

design of

Oak Hill

Park, as

well as

Department to oversee the devel- chose a design with the help of a

trian ways.

the intrusion of cars and attempted

to foster community and neighbor-

hood interaction by encouraging

people to favor the common pedes-

sales representative. Two homes standard features included venewere born in 1946 or 1947.

OAK HILL OAK HILL

This agency set the

standards and

guidelines for

the con-

struction,

and also

sold the

houses.

One of

its first

acts was to

choose the

names for the

paths and streets. In

Great attention was paid to variety and convenience in the overall plan and street layout, and the houses were built without sacrificing architectural variety, modern amenities, or pleasant sur- ing, the most expensive houses still roundings. The 412 small but cost less than \$10,000, and worked modern cottage style homes were out to be about \$62.39/month for constructed from six basic designs the mortgage and taxes. With the for a base price of \$7,820. Each average veteran making \$58/week, basic house included three bed- the houses were easily within their rooms, a living room, dining area, price range. Though all of the kitchen, bath, and utility room. houses were the same size, the The houses lacked basements, but availability of extras, and the stag-

were available as models in tian blinds, window shutters and November 1948, but it appears boxes, door knockers and chimes, that the homes sold themselves built in ironing boards, and fluowithout the use of the models. The rescent kitchen lights. All the average Oak Hill Park family in homes boasted oil fired radiant 1950 was under the age of 30 and heating. In addition to their had married just before or after choice of six different designs, the war. One third of the children prospective owners could select clapboard, cedar shingle, or asbestos shingle siding, hip or gable roof treatment, and, for a modest additional sum, the addition of a porch (\$325), breezeway (\$300), or garage (\$1,000). With all the extras, including cedar sid-

Area politicians officially dedicated Oak Hill Park on May 21, 1950 with a parade and speeches. homelike atmosphere, secure from It was the first and only time that an entire village was incorporated

of Public Works Director Willard opment of Oak Hill Park itself.

The City set only two qualifications for homeowners — they had to be veterans and Newton residents before the war. Interested couples who met these requirements went to City Hall where an office was set up to sell In January of 1948, the City Oak Hill Park homes. The couple created the Veterans Housing selected a lot from the map and



Unlike many similar veterans' Robinson, under the supervision

Aerial View 1948

gering of lots, insured that the area was not monotonous. Roof forms were also slightly varied.

Arlington began construction in utilities available in the area in June of 1948, preparing foundations at the rate of 10 per day. While the project took only thirteen months to complete, it was finished behind schedule. Part of December 1948, 73 homes were this could be attributed to prob-The gravel pit was prone to flooding problems that were initially difficult to deal with. A millworks

Additional delays were blamed on the scarcity of materials after the War. Despite the fact that these The Kelly Company of shortages meant there were still no December 1948, owners had already begun moving in. The first family moved in on November 15, and by the end of occupied. In addition, another 359 lems clearing and grading the land. had already been framed, 219 of which only needed paint and an inspection to be complete. By the spring of 1949, the roads were

with assembly line techniques. In addition to houses, Oak Hill Park includes a two-story buff brick International Style school, dating from 1950. Memorial School (accessible by the path system and Stein Circle off of the Saw Mill Brook Parkway) was built to serve the families of Oak Hill Park, but was closed in 1977 due to declining enrollment in the city. It is now used by the Solomon Schechter Day School and includes a modern addi-

The business center (located on Saw Mill Brook Parkway) was built in 1954 and was also part of the original plan. A few small stores remain, but it appears to have been substantially reconstructed in the recent past with shops and apartments for the elderly.

By September of 1949, Oak Hill Park was fully occupied. The landscaping of the neighborhood, with maple trees lining the streets and linden trees lining the paths, was complete, and homeowners were settling into their new community as quickly as possible. The school was only partially complete, though, and the shopping center had yet to be started.

The northernmost section of Oak Hill Park was not constructed until the 1950s, and the house types

and sizes deviate from the original housing. The split-level houses on the northern part of Spiers Road and Wiswall Road, as well as Indian Ridge Road, Esty Farm Road, June Lane, and the top parts of Marvin and Myerson Lane, were not part of the original Veterans Housing Department Project. However, they are considered part of the Oak Hill Park neighborhood and are within the natural neighborhood boundary

of Dedham Street, Wiswall, and Spiers Roads.

From the beginning, Oak Hill Park had a strong sense of community among its residents. While its inhabitants came from a wide variety of occupations and economic backgrounds, they all shared a common experience as veterans and new homeowners. A community association was



For the most part, Oak Hill Park has lived up to the high expectations of its planners. There is no feeling that it is a "lowerincome project" largely built up in the span of one year. However, no neighborhood can remain unchanged over time, and Oak early homes are listed below. Hill Park is no exception. Over However, none of these properties the years, many homeowners have are open to the public. reoriented their front doors

Newton's Answer to the

Veterans Housing Problem

started as soon as people began to towards the road, reflecting the impact of the automobile on daily life. Many of the houses have had 2nd floor additions, and an increasing number of homes have been completely demolished and replaced with a much larger modern house.

> Despite these changes, there are still intact examples of original Oak Hill Park homes located throughout the neighborhood. The most intact area of Oak Hill Park is the section south of Saw Mill Brook Parkway, where many homes still face the path system. Examples of unaltered and moderately altered examples of these



