

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Subdivisions Built by Edmund Bennett and designed by Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon in
Montgomery County, Maryland, 1956 -1973

Section number E Page 59

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

1 A – General description of projects and house models

Considered individually, each of the models described in this section does not attain “perfection” with regards to its proportions, fenestration or interior layout. However, in the subdivisions and communities we are about to present, one can hardly find a single instance of a house that is not well sited or does not engage in a rich dialogue with its surroundings. Bennett’s trial and error approach to home design was pragmatic, based on studies as well as his own perception of market demand. He claimed that “80% of Washington, D.C. buyers want[ed] brick houses with basements” and was able to meet their expectations without compromising his preference for “clean and crisp” design.²²² This section highlights the constant desire, on the part of the builder and his architects, to improve upon the floor plans of these suburban tract houses. The concurrent increase in size of models reflects an overall pattern of upward mobility among suburbanites in the Capital Region and the country in general.

Although continuity in landscape and design philosophies is a defining feature of the Bennett/KLC projects, each of their subdivisions has its own identity. No matter how small, each one served as a testing ground for their builder and designers. Three exceptionally well-preserved “visual communities” - if we use Mr. Bennett’s own words -- are of outstanding significance, and complement each other in terms of their contributions to the history of modernist tract housing and residential site planning. Of the three, Potomac Overlook marks a peak in modernist design. Its models have the crispest, most geometrical detailing of all houses designed by KLC for Bennett. It is where the use of building components is most clearly expressed on the outside. Indeed, from a stylistic point of view, the late 1950s, when Potomac Overlook was built, can be regarded as the most radical phase of “situated modernism” in the Maryland suburbs and, to a great extent, in the United States in general. At Carderock Springs, the diversity of models, their siting and interior layout, as well as the design quality of the clubhouse and pool complex, are truly exceptional. New Marks Commons was, as initially planned, a very innovative experiment in community planning and, as built, achieves a remarkable degree of sophistication with regard to landscaping and town house clustering.

1 B – Precedents for the Bennett/KLC projects and house models

The “family tree” of tract houses by Lethbridge and his associates begins with those they designed for the Lurias in Northern Virginia. It is therefore necessary to introduce these precedents, as they served as departure points for KLC’s work for Mr. Bennett.

- Holmes Run Acres, designed 1950 (see plate 2)

²²² Edmund J. Bennett, “Let’s Re-examine Program Plans and Assumptions,” *Home Builders Monthly* 16 (February 1959), 46.

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Designed by Satterlee and Lethbridge, Holmes Run Acres anticipated Bennett subdivisions in substantial ways. An unusual feature (which will be repeated in the other subdivisions we shall describe) was that the architects were responsible for the preliminary layout of the streets and lots (after this initial phase, Satterlee and Lethbridge worked out details with a civil engineer who acted as subcontractor).²²³ Streets at Holmes Run Acres did not include sidewalks, to preserve the rural character of the site. Streetlights, which were not required in Fairfax County, were also omitted. Some cul-de-sacs had "grassy play areas for children." The Lurias deeded ten acres to build a school and a community center (opened in 1953) and also gave four acres to create a stream valley public park. Some blocks had "interior areas with back yards left opened for a potential communal space," but individual lots were progressively closed off, especially to control pets.²²⁴ The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) objected to some aspects of the site planning but, in the end, requested only minor changes for approval.²²⁵ A major hardship, however, was complying with the county's setback restrictions on each lot. Also, Lethbridge insisted that he prepared site plans for no less than 20 units, in order to ensure privacy for each house, despite the abundant glazing. Privacy was reinforced by the erection of short wooden fences, designed by the architects, and the creation of berms and "small hillocks," made possible by minor grading.²²⁶ The budget for shrubbery was "barely enough to purchase the FHA minimum of eight plants per house," but the Lurias called upon a talented landscape architect, Lou Bernard Voight (who also worked in Hollin Hills) to suggest additional planting options for home buyers (Bennett would adopt and refine the formula of advisory landscape work at Carderock Springs).

Satterlee and Lethbridge devised one basic plan with five variations, resulting from the addition of a carport (with either a flat or a single-pitched roof) and/or of a basement level, which offered a recreation room, as well as a garage or an additional bedroom. The two-story houses, which appealed to local preferences, were built on the steepest lots; the version with the enclosed garage suited uphill sites. This formula of bi-level living, which could be either fully off the ground or half-sunken, always offered better daylight than traditional raised basements. On the upper floor, the rectangular layout was almost equally split between day and night sections: the former consisted of an L-shaped living-dining space and a kitchen adjacent to the eating area; the latter included three bedrooms and one bathroom. The bedroom adjacent to the living room could be used as a study or could be integrated into the living room, as separation was through a movable partition. The principle of "borrowed" visual space, from one public room to another, which was a major staple of modernist home design, allowed for small homes at Holmes Run Acres to appear more spacious than they really were. The formula of the compact, bifocal layout would be repeated in most houses Lethbridge and his partners designed for Bennett. Other enduring characteristics were the prominent display of brick inside and outside, variations in siding (vertical, horizontal, vertical with battens) of the upper floor and the role of the architect as coordinator for outside colors. Holmes Run Acres also anticipated Bennett's work in its use of standardized, pre-cut

²²³ Martin, 161.

²²⁴ Martin, 216

²²⁵ Martin, 172

²²⁶ Martin, 162

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lumber components, prefabricated bedroom closets, and clear-span roof trusses (purchased from the Timber Engineering Company or TECO).

- Pine Springs, first phase, designed 1952

At Pine Springs, Keyes, Smith and Satterlee refined the Holmes Run Acres formula. The subdivision was named for the many pine trees preserved on its grounds. Both exteriors and interiors exhibited more harmonious proportions and sophisticated details than at Holmes Run Acres. Windows were larger; pine siding was replaced by more luxurious and durable redwood and cypress. Homes featured distinctive and prominent carports (found at Potomac Overlook in the John Matthews house). These carports - with a single-slope or a zigzag roof - formed an open air patio / breezeway off the dining area and kitchen, which could be used as an *al fresco* dining space (a solution found at Carderock Springs as well).

- Houses for Charles Luria on Massachusetts Avenue, designed 1951

In the late 1940s, Massachusetts Avenue, which used to end at Westmoreland Circle in the District of Columbia, was extended, giving rise to a new upscale neighborhood beyond the D.C. limits, Massachusetts Heights. A subdivision along the avenue, as well Osceola and Onondaga Roads, was called High Point and developed by a namesake corporation. Advertisements in the *Washington Post* indicate that Charles Luria built ten houses in High Point according to plans by Keyes, Smith, Satterlee and Lethbridge. They were all located along Massachusetts Avenue, which is currently a busy thoroughfare; some are set sideways on their lot, and only their gable can be seen from the street. They have all survived, but their visual identity is not very strong. Some have been painted white and a few negatively altered.²²⁷

At High Point, Pine Springs' bi-level layout was adapted to much larger dimensions. Major differences consisted in the projection of the day-section in the back, the central (instead of lateral) placement of the fireplace in the living room, and the consistent use of very large floor-to-ceiling windows on the upper floor, with thin geometrical mullions. Priced from \$30,000 to \$34,000, all High Point houses (plate 3) had the same plan, with four bedrooms, two and a half baths, and a recreation room, as well as "an automatic summer ventilator fan in the roof that draws cool air through the entire house during warm weather."²²⁸ Houses with upper level entrances, such as 5801 Massachusetts (photograph 1; balcony removed, otherwise intact) and 5805, had flat-roofed carports and lateral entrances; those accessed from the bottom floor had a built-in garage. The model home was furnished by W. & J. Sloane, a well-known local interior design firm. An advertisement in the *Washington Post* mentioned that "design elements which give increased spaciousness are the sloping

²²⁷ For instance, at 5715 Massachusetts Avenue, the balcony was removed, windows were reduced in size and the garage and entrance doors have totally incompatible replacements.

²²⁸ Display ad, *Washington Post*, May 4, 1952, R 6

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ceilings, free-standing fireplace, skylit bedroom hall, folding doors at study-bedroom, and the big long pass-thru snack counter between dining room and kitchen."²²⁹ Outside, the only concession to tradition was a two-slope roof, albeit with a low pitch. End walls were in brick; the lower floor is half sunken and is expressed by an inconspicuous ribbon window.

- Houses for Gaddy and Gaddy at Holmes Run Acres, designed 1954 (see plate 4)

When the Lurias stepped out of home building, a new section of Holmes Run Acres was erected by Joseph and Anthony Gaddy. It consisted of 30 four-bedroom, two-bath houses of approximately 2,100 square feet on steep 100' lots, priced between \$19,250 and \$21,500. They all had identical plans. As mentioned in *American Builder*, the Gaddys did not succumb to the split-level fashion, estimating that "a cleaner design could be achieved with two-stories."²³⁰ The Gaddy houses were in fact smaller than those at Pine Springs (while their width remained 26'-0", their length was 38'-3", as opposed to 41'-1/4"). Triangular transoms on gables were abandoned for strictly rectangular openings. The addition of a balcony changed considerably the character of the facade. The superimposed openings of the recreation and living rooms did not read anymore as a large unified (and modernist) window wall. Instead, the upper floor, painted a darker color than at Pine Springs, read as a separate, primarily horizontal entity. It is this new version that would serve as a starting point for Bennett's Highview model in Potomac Overlook, and for its subsequent transformations, under the "Overlook" denomination.

2 - Bennett/KLC Projects and House Models

2 A - Kenwood Park group, 1956

The first Bennett/KLC project that was extensively advertised, and received media attention and design recognition, was built in 1956 in Bethesda's Kenwood Park. This 300-acre subdivision was located in the southern section of the district comprised by River Road, Wilson Lane, Bradley Boulevard, and Goldsboro Road. On May 6, 1956, the *Washington Post* reported that 35 homes were already completed and that ultimately Kenwood Park would have more than 800 homes, with 60 builders constructing houses starting at \$35,000:

A permanent architectural committee controls the size and character of each house. To date the homes have been three, four and five bedroom structures with two or more baths. Architectural styles are colonial and contemporary.²³¹

A few days later, the *Washington Post* noted that Kenwood Park would be "predominantly a

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ "How these Washington builders worked their idea of a foolproof house," *American Builder* (August 1955), 113.

²³¹ "Kenwood Park Takes Shape," *Washington Post*, May 6, 1956, G1.

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community of modern ramblers with two-level houses permitted only where necessary by topography." "For Sale" signs were forbidden, as well as "the removal of any tree bigger than 6 inches in diameter that is not within the building area." Houses could be "contemporary but not modern," as "large expanses of glass" were not allowed on the street side. Builders were required to buy at least three lots.²³² Kenwood Park soon had an active Citizens Association and attracted prominent politicians. For example, in 1957, the *Washington Post* mentioned that Senator Frank J. Lausche (D-Ohio) bought a \$40,000 Rambler at 6916 Marbury Road, sight unseen.²³³ Mr. Bennett recalls that the house he built at 6704 Pemberton Street was acquired by Senator Frank Church of Idaho. One of Kenwood Park's most prolific builders was Robert L. Silverman. In 1956, he employed local firms Rinaudot & Coupard, Walter Durant Byrd, and Jack Cohen, as well as Baltimore architect Von Fossen Schwab, to build sprawling houses in the 6800 hundred block of Granby Street, ranging from \$ 41,500 to \$ 48,500.²³⁴ After two years, Silverman had sold nineteen such houses, designed in a moderately modern idiom and displaying limited curb appeal. In 1958, as well, Kettler Brothers bought 44 lots on and near Durbin Road, and built colonial models.

Mr. Bennett acquired six lots with direct views on the golf course of the Kenwood Country Club: four on the 5800 block of Marbury Road and two on an adjacent dead-end street, Pemberton Street. He was not able to purchase the corner lot, where a house of a different style was erected by another builder. This was Mr. Bennett's first attempt to create a harmonious but not repetitive group of houses, set on lots ranging from more than 10,000 to 21,000 square feet and priced from \$43,000. On May 13, 1956, Bennett ran the following advertisement in the *Washington Post*:

Bennett Contemporary Homes Announces a new group of distinctive split-level homes, designed by Architects Keyes & Lethbridge, AIA, in Kenwood Park ... the new prestige community overlooking Kenwood Country Club.

Emphasis is placed on appealing contemporary design, integration of indoor and outdoor living areas, orientation toward sun and golf course view, spacious room areas for comfortable living, fine materials, and quality workmanship under the builder's personal supervision.

Key features include:

- . four and five bedrooms
- . three baths
- . cantilevered balconies overlooking golf course
- . screened porches and patios
- . two-car garages
- . recreation rooms and studios
- . fully equipped General Electric kitchen with breakfast alcoves
- . spacious living and dining rooms with high-sloping ceilings

²³² "Plans for Kenwood Park," *Washington Post*, May 22, 1956, G5

²³³ "Senator Hasn't Seen it Yet. Lausches Moving into First House," *Washington Post*, September 23, 1957, B 4

²³⁴ "Homes for the Custom-Conscious," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1956, G 12.

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. large landscaped lots with hardwood trees and dogwoods.²³⁵

Press coverage focused on the exhibit house located at **5848 Marbury Road** (photograph 2, plate 5), which was set on a 15,813.00 square-foot lot, comprised 2,810 square feet of living space, and was priced at \$ 47,000. Sparingly furnished by Modern Design Incorporated, it opened for public inspection in May 1956.²³⁶ A month later, the real estate section of the *Washington Evening Star* devoted a long article to the house, which had just received an award in the Second Annual Residential Architecture Competition co-sponsored by the newspaper and the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the AIA. Jurors had commended "its very imaginative sense of space organization," its "overhead lighting" and deemed the plan "well organized."²³⁷ In early October, the *Washington Star* announced its coverage in the current issue of *House and Home* and inclusion in exhibitions at the National Housing Center in Washington, D.C. and at the annual convention of the National Association of Home Builders, to be held in Chicago in January 1957.²³⁸ Other awards came from the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA: one for architectural detailing, and a first prize for development houses.

Facades of # 5848 Marbury Road complied with Kenwood Park's restrictions; they were very simple, dominated by walls in pale red brick (which was new and sand-molded) and overhanging roofs (covered with white asbestos shingles). The reception rooms were as dramatic as the outside was unprepossessing. The L-shaped footprint was adapted to the terrain. At entrance level, the long wing sheltered the two-car garage, eat-in kitchen, living and dining rooms. These two reception rooms shared a cathedral ceiling soaring to 19 feet and were separated by a dramatic free standing fire place and, on the entry side, by a low storage unit. According to the *Washington Star*, "entering the living room from the low-ceilinged entry gives you something of the same small sense of shock and thrill that comes when you step into a high vaulted cathedral from a small entrance passage."²³⁹ The same pebble aggregate concrete was used for the floors of the front porch, the entry, and a small terrace on axis with the entry. A porch ran 38 feet long and 10 feet deep along the living, dining, and kitchen spaces, overlooking the golf course.

In the split-level fashion, the short wing had two floors staggered half a story up and down the entrance hall. The lower level included one bedroom, one bathroom, a family room giving access to a laundry room, and a utility room; all these spaces had outside windows. The upper level included three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Half a story above this main bedroom section, a long and narrow balcony

²³⁵ *Washington Post*, May 20, 1956, I 11.

²³⁶ "Dramatic Construction [photograph and caption], *Washington Post*, May 20, 1956, G 9.

²³⁷ Robert J. Lewis, "Award Winner. Center Hall is Hub Of 4-Level Plan," *Washington Evening Star* (Real Estate Section), June 30, 1956, B-1 and B-4. Another winning design was a Charles Goodman house in Hollin Hills.

²³⁸ Robert J. Lewis, "Three Homes in Area Chosen For Exhibit," *Washington Evening Star* (Real Estate Section), October 6, 1956, B-1 and B-4 (others were a house by Charles Goodman in Hollin Hills and one designed by Carl Freeman with architect Joseph Miller as consultant in Fairfax County).

²³⁹ Robert J. Lewis, "Center Hall is Hub of 4-Level Plan," *Washington Evening Star*, June 30, 1956, B-1

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led to an open study that looked over the reception rooms and was continued by an outside balcony. This balcony also led to a closed den, giving access to the attic. The addition of this top level created a very dramatic spatial experience, enhanced by the open and slender detailing of the stairs and of the interior and exterior balconies. Indeed, a more sophisticated interior rendition of the split-level formula would have been difficult to achieve.

Fenestration at 5848 Marbury Road complied with sun exposure. Floor to ceiling glazing in the living and dining spaces was protected by the deep overhang of the porch. On the side elevation that faced southwest, windows were kept small, with the exception of those fronting the terrace and the recessed balcony, which were protected by a deep overhang. Robert Lautman's photograph of the central portion encompassing the terrace and balcony (plate 5) was published in the *Washington Post* with the title "Dramatic Construction" and (a rare occurrence indeed!) as a full-page color inset in *House and Home*.²⁴⁰ Partly concealed by landscaping, the Marbury Street facade (photograph 2, note that this view was not published in the media) encompassed the low, blind wing of the two-car garage and kitchen and the projecting two-story bedroom / family room block, where ribbon windows and spandrels of horizontal wood siding were framed by brick.

The October 1956 issue of *House and Home* featured 5848 Marbury Road in a four-page article entitled "Good design makes this a handsome split from any angle." This piece stressed all the great ideas "that would make most of today's split-levels more livable and better looking." The house was the living proof that "splits" were "best on sloping sites." It was a successful example of indoor-outdoor living and avoided the "banana split" exterior of most split levels, as it used "only red brick with white wood trim to get a warm simple exterior familiar in traditional Maryland houses."²⁴¹ Achieving the sophistication of a custom-built home, 5848 Marbury Road was not duplicated in other subdivisions built by Edmund Bennett. In addition to its relatively high price, it also had some planning inadequacies: for instance, the kitchen was dark because its windows opened onto two porches and the garage was connected to the main house solely by a covered porch. Currently painted green, 5848 Marbury Road appears to be unchanged.

As far as we know, the other five houses in Bennett's Kenwood Park group were not published and did not receive awards. Their front facades were designed to create a harmonious group. Next door to 5848 is **5852 Marbury** (photograph 3), which adopts the same proportions and layout. The front facade of the bedroom wing received a different treatment, however; its ribbon windows and wood panels (with vertical battens) span the entire width of this wing and are framed by a thin strip of brick marking the end of the side walls. The result is a crisper, less traditional composition than at 5848 Marbury Road. The brick walls are currently painted white. Also adjacent to 5848 is **5844 Marbury Road**, which adopts the same general massing but has a smaller footprint; its brick walls are currently painted brown. Next door is **5840 Marbury Road**, which was built for James V. Bennett, the builder's father, and for which we have

²⁴⁰ "Dramatic Construction," *Washington Post*, May 20, 1956, G9.

²⁴¹ "Good design makes this a handsome split from any angle," *House and Home* (October 1956), 120-123

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only found an image of the back facade and yard, overlooking the golf course.²⁴² It is presently painted bright blue and seems to have been considerably altered. Number **5836 Marbury** is not a split level but a two-level house with the garage below. The garage and bedroom wing has a gabled front; the brick has been painted gray. Number **6708 Pemberton Street** (photographs 4 and 5) adopts a massing related to 5848 and 5852 Marbury Road; however, the two-car garage is located on the lower level of the two-story projecting wing and there is no balcony on the side.²⁴³ At **6704 Pemberton Street** (photograph 6), the two-car garage is also located on the lower level of the projecting wing. Above, the gable runs parallel to the street side. The frontal glazing reaches all the way to the roof, creating the effect of a triangular transom. The entire second story is covered in wood, which has vertical battens on the side walls. On the lower wing, the end gable features narrow horizontal windows illuminating the kitchen and a triangular section of contrasting horizontal siding.

2 B- Potomac Overlook, 1956-58

In 1896, Glen Echo was described as "the Rhine County of Washington," where the Potomac River "picturesque, wild and romantic, is shored by tall, abrupt, rock ribbed and forest covered hills." Glen Echo Heights is located between MacArthur Boulevard and Massachusetts Avenue, only a mile away from the District Line. Its eastern section was laid out in the 1890s with streets meeting at right angles and carrying picturesque-sounding names such as Tuskarawas and Wapakonta. A subsection of Glen Echo Heights received the name Mohican Hills and its narrow and extra steep curving roads were given Indian names. Even today, climbing Mohican, Walhonding, or Wiscasset Roads procures the feeling that one has left the polished world of upscale suburbia far behind, and has rejoined pre-industrial wilderness. The maze of narrow and steep roads serves bumpy, craggy, and heavily wooded lots where houses of different periods and styles nestle comfortably. The neighborhood is changing fast, however; its smallest houses are being replaced by pseudo-Victorian or Arts and Craft houses that are not designed with the rugged terrain in mind.

In the 1950s, small or large lots were put for sale by owners of Glen Echo Heights historic homes, and Bennett, who was still a budding home builder, purchased several of them. In 1954 and 1955, he built, after plans by Keyes and Lethbridge, four houses on adjacent lots on Wiscasset Road (6220, 6216, where he lived with his wife and four children, 6212, and 6210). These houses, which have all survived, were downhill models; their single-story front elevations are rather inconspicuous. Alterations make it difficult to see whether they were all exactly the same model.

Information can be found on **6210 Wiscasset Road** (plates 6 and 7), whose original owner was Franklin Newhall, because it won an award in the 1956 Annual Residential Architecture Competition sponsored by the Washington-Metropolitan Chapter of the AIA and the *Washington Evening Star*, which

²⁴² John B. Willmann, "Contemporary Homes Built to Fit 'Bethesda Family Profile,'" *Washington Post*, May 26, 1962, B1.

²⁴³ Advertisement, *Washington Evening Star*, January 4, 1957, B-4

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described it at length.²⁴⁴ Outside walls mixed redwood tongue-and-groove siding and used brick. Drywall construction was used inside. The roof originally had white coral chips. The lot sloped from the street. The single-story front facade (with the kitchen in median position) looked very inconspicuous, as it was shielded from view by a wooden fence made of a frame slightly raised from the ground and of vertical louvers which were 5'8" tall. Much more spectacular was the back elevation, set amidst rocks and trees, and ending in a deck. Measuring 38 by 36 feet, 6210 Wiscasset Road had four bedrooms, three very small baths, and a "multi-use" room off the kitchen. It included 1,818 square feet of finished space and 850 square feet of unfinished space. The lower floor had a very large recreation room (25"x13"), a basement/laundry room measuring 36"x14", a fourth bedroom, and a bathroom. A detached carport ended with a storage closet. One entered the upper floor laterally, coming directly into the dining room, which was separated from the living room by a stair hall. Domed skylights in plastic, which were quite new at the time, were used for the upstairs bathrooms. Chimneys had a brick base and two cylindrical metal flues, allowing for an uninterrupted glass transom. With this experimental house, Bennett and his architects whetted the appetite of prospective customers, but its fence has been removed and windows have apparently been altered. The carport has also been modified.

Potomac Overlook took two years to plan before ground was broken. It was a joint venture between Bennett Construction Company and Matthews & Potter. Built on nine acres of particularly "craggy terrain" that "was passed up for years by other builders as too difficult," but with stunning and unimpeded views of the Potomac River and the Virginia hills beyond, the 19-home subdivision (plate 8) has very irregular boundaries. According to Mr. Matthews, he and Mr. Bennett bought the property after a woman realtor who lived in Glen Echo Heights asked them to do so. Potomac Overlook was comprised of four houses along MacArthur Boulevard (the easternmost of these houses, at the intersection of Mohican Road has been recently demolished and replaced by a much larger residence), and of homes facing two small cul-de-sac streets off Wiscasset Road: Rivercrest Court (seven houses) and Virginia View Court (eight houses, two of them with driveways accessed through Wiscasset Road). In Virginia View Court, Matthews & Potter built houses on the south side and Bennett those on the north side. Wooded lots ranged from 9,880 square feet to 30,075 square feet, averaging 1/3 of an acre. All had irregular shapes.

There is something quite enchanting, almost magical, about Potomac Overlook (photographs 7 and 9). Despite its loose boundaries, it is definitely a "visual community." The topography and scenic siting of each house afford privacy, but also give the impression of a semi-formal "family portrait," like a picnic gathering. The steeply sloping terrain and meandering roads allow many houses to be seen on several sides, a rather rare occurrence in subdivisions, and one can appreciate the simple elegance of their massing and fenestration. The Virginia View Court cluster is particularly intact and pleasing. The natural look is effortlessly achieved: there are no sidewalks, the curved, non intrusive, driveways of varying lengths had been "contoured so deftly that only 2,500 cubic yards of earth have to be moved

²⁴⁴ Robert J. Lewis, "This Plan is Clean, Compact," *Washington Evening Star*, August 4, 1956, B-1 and B-6.

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from one lot to another."²⁴⁵ In the yards, patches of ivy create soft geometrical surfaces that complement the crisp architecture. Quarry stone was used to erect retaining walls and there are rustic fences. At the edge of Virginia View Court, 6541 Wiscasset is accessed by a bridge.

Potomac Overlook offered three basic models, averaging 2,200 square feet; all plans adopted an elongated rectangular footprint. Massing conveyed an impression of lightness, of not imposing on the land. Of all Bennett / KLC houses, these were the ones that departed most from tradition. Exteriors displayed a crisp and taut, Mondrian-like interplay of horizontal and vertical divisions. Slender white accents divided panels of redwood tongue and groove siding and used brick. Opened or screened porches and decks added visual interest and individualized each house; so did the flat or sloping, attached or detached, carports set parallel or perpendicular to the front facades.

The smallest model was the **Highview** (photograph 8 and plate 9), priced at \$29,700 in 1958.²⁴⁶

Six of these four- bedroom, two-bath homes were built: three along MacArthur Boulevard, one on Wiscasset Road and two on Virginia View Court. The Gaddy model for Pine Springs, with slightly larger rooms and minor variations in closet and bathroom spaces, was extended on the living/dining side by a lower patio and upper porches. The division between the brick base and the wood-clad upper story was emphasized by a band painted white that was much wider than at Pine Springs and matched the floor width on the screened porch.

The plan for the Highview model was extremely compact, with basically no corridor space. Downstairs, a porch protected a lateral entrance to a hallway that gave access to two bedrooms (one measuring 12'-6" by 13'; the other, rather dimly lit, 12'-6" by 8'), a bathroom, and a spacious recreation room (approximately 18' by 15'-2"). One entered the laundry-utility space (12'-10" by 9') from the recreation room. Upstairs, the rectangular living room (measuring 21'-0" by 15'-6") included the stairs and formed an unobstructed L-shaped space with the dining space (a square of 10'). The adjacent kitchen measured 10'-5" by 9'-6". On the long side of the house, the window wall of the living room opened onto a balcony, approximately four feet wide and 16 feet long. The wooden railing had wide supports that slanted outward on its length: quasi-invisible wiring was used (instead of wood at Pine Springs) for the intermediate horizontal divisions. The living room was continued by a screened porch (13 by 16 feet), the dining room by an open porch (12 by 10 feet). The "night" section, also inscribed in a rectangle, included a very spacious master bedroom (13' by 11'-7"), a smaller bedroom, and a bathroom composed of an anteroom with a sink and an outside room for the bathtub and toilet.

The intermediate model was the **Valleyview** (photographs 11 and 12). We did not find plans for this four-bedroom, three-bath house priced at \$33,400 in 1958. Six of these were built at Potomac Overlook: one on MacArthur Boulevard, two on Rivercrest Court, and three on Virginia View Court. Of the three Potomac Overlook models, the Valleyview's exterior had the lightest and most elegant

²⁴⁵ "The Challenge in By-Passed Land," *NAHB Journal of Homebuilding* 12 (February 1958), 50

²⁴⁶ Advertisement, *Washington Post*, June 14, 1958, C 12

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appearance. Instead of being screened, the upper deck off the living room was opened and supported by just one set of very thin columns placed at approximately 2/3 of its length, leaving the corners unobstructed. The railing consisted of thin metal members that continued the vertical rhythm of the board and batten wall panels. The gable fronting this terrace formed an abstract composition: it featured a lateral glass door and a brick wall and was topped by a glazed triangular transom, from which two metal chimney stacks were detached, acting as sculptural, free-standing cylinders. On some Valleyview homes, the entrance porch was extended by a flat-roofed carport that balanced the profile of the terrace.

The **Riverview** (photograph 13 and plate 10) had five bedrooms and three bathrooms and was priced at \$35,500 in 1958. A total of seven were built at Potomac Overlook: five on Rivercrest Court, two on Virginia View Court (including the one Mr. Matthews built for himself at # 6604). On one end, there was a carport topped by a low-pitched roof, adjacent storage space and a screened porch surmounting a patio. An entry separated the L-shaped living / dining space from the bedroom section. Least satisfactory was the transverse placement of the kitchen, treated as a long and narrow rectangle tucked against the carport, with limited window space. There was only one flight of stairs, descending to the extra-spacious recreation room, running 27 feet, with windows all the way across, a utility/laundry space, two (rather poorly lit) bedrooms, and one bathroom. The living room had a cathedral ceiling encompassing one full slope and approximately one fourth of the second slope. Its side walls were covered with panels in stained wood. Its end wall, which opened onto the porch, had a glazed transom. The central fireplace wall in used brick, thin white mullions, and porch laths created crisp indoor-outdoor geometrical patterns. In the recreation room, the fireplace wall, also in used brick, contrasted with the glazed door giving access to the patio and backyard beyond.

Builder John Matthews's house (6604 River View Court, photographs 14 and 15) is a Riverview model that, according to its owner, was slightly reoriented on the site in order to preserve a large tree close to the glazed walls at the back. The carport was slightly detached from the house itself, making room for an intimate terrace-breezeway off the kitchen. Matthews recently painted the brick and the paneling in the living room to brighten up the room. The fireplace now holds a wood-burning stove. The top screened porch has been glazed, and the kitchen enlarged. The bathrooms have retained their original fixtures.

Potomac Overlook was an immediate success. When it was first completed, people used to come in buses or groups to visit.²⁴⁷ In 1958, it received an NAHB Neighborhood Development Award, the judges commenting on the fact that "platting and housing siting is excellent, resulting in family privacy and retention of good views,"²⁴⁸ as well as an NAHB Merit Award in Design.²⁴⁹ The same year, the Riverview Model received an Honorable mention in the annual award program sponsored by the

²⁴⁷ John Matthews, Interview with Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, 24 March 2003.

²⁴⁸ *NAHB Journal of Homebuilding*, 12 (April 1958), 35

²⁴⁹ *NAHB Journal of Homebuilding*, 12 (April 1958), 34-35

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Potomac Valley chapter of the AIA.²⁵⁰

Potomac Overlook has a neighborhood committee and covenants controlling land use and the appearance of fences, yards, and additions and alterations to houses. A panel of three residents must review all construction plans for houses and approve them before building commences. These covenants are in writing and are a part of each deed. Alterations (many of them entrusted to John Matthews himself) have been performed with great respect for the original fabric and have not altered proportions. A good example is the enclosure of the lower terrace on the Valleyview model at 6601 Valley View Court. The house that has changed most is 6601 River Crest Court, which is now painted gray and yellow. On this Valleyview model, the terrace has been replaced by an addition with slopes of widely differing lengths, which contradicts the impression of repose and balance conveyed by the original roofs.²⁵¹

Overall there are more than 30 houses designed by Donald Lethbridge and his associates in Glen Echo Heights. In 1957, Bennett built one at 6115 Wiscasset Road (corner Onondaga); the following year, he built two other houses at 5419 and 5421 Wiscasset. In 1958-59, two Highview models were built (by either Bennett or Matthews) on adjacent lots right above Potomac Overlook (6516 and 6520 Wiscasset). In 1960-61, Mr. Matthews built seven KLC-designed homes after he bought from the owner of "The Castle" \$85,000 worth of land on the other side of Mohican Road from Potomac Overlook.²⁵²

2 C - Flint Hill , 1958-1961.

Flint Hill is not as architecturally distinctive and progressive as Potomac Overlook, but it greatly appealed to home building professionals when it opened, and helped Bennett gain fame and expand his business. In July 1958, Bennett bought 25 acres of wooded land south of River Road and west of Wilson Lane in the Bannockburn section of Bethesda. This newer neighborhood, farther west from the D.C. limits than Glen Echo Heights, hosted a fairly large proportion of modern homes. In fact, the site purchased by Mr. Bennett was located one block west of Crail Drive where, during the same years, Silver-Spring based architect Jack Cohen was designing modern custom homes for himself and enlightened clients.

A first section opened in the late fall of 1958, a second one in the spring of 1960, and construction continued until 1961. The 31 houses (plate 11) fronted three different streets: Nevis Road, a wide street climbing sharply upwards from its point of origin at River Road (nine houses, including two which were far recessed from the road and shared a driveway); Broxburn Court, which dead ended around a grassy, elliptical, island (seventeen houses); and a stretched-out cul-de-sac at the extremity of Sle Kirk Drive (five houses, built in 1961). Contour alterations and tree cutting were kept to a minimum, but the parallel lots, straight driveways and quasi-uniform distance between house and road did not depart from suburban

²⁵⁰ *Potomac Valley Architect* (June 1958), n.p.

²⁵¹ An original photograph of this house was published in the *Washington Post*, July 12, 1958, C11.

²⁵² See advertisement, *Washington Post* May 4, 1960, B8 and October 7, 1961, B17.

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standards. Some period photographs (plate 12) indicate that lots were delineated by rustic-looking wooden fences; a few of these have survived. According to *House and Home*, the lender, Prudential Insurance Company, a major local savings and loan company, "influenced basic decisions like the choice of exterior materials and roof types."²⁵³ With brick walls and rather traditionally shaped openings, street elevations were far less progressive than at Potomac Overlook.

Designed for hillside lots, the four basic models all had two stories, four bedrooms (lateral extensions allowed owners to expand their number to five or six), three baths, a family room, and two fireplaces. The best selling model was the **Overlook** (photographs 17, 18 and 19; plates 13, 14 and 15), designed for an uphill site with a lower level entry. It offered 2,720 square feet of indoor living space and, on a half-acre lot, was initially offered at \$34,900. This was a variation on Potomac Overlook's Highview model, with the same kind of lateral recessed entrance. The most visible difference on the outside was the removal of the lateral screened porch, replaced by a terrace at the back of the house. The railing of the balcony changed, adopting a straight vertical profile on its long side (it was slanted at Potomac Overlook). The kitchen received much more outside light, through a set of floor-to-ceiling sliding doors opening on the back terrace. A major change to the plan was the inclusion of a lower level garage, continued by a perpendicular storage area. The distribution of the four bedrooms had changed: there were three on the upper floor (instead of two) and only one in the lower floor. As a result, the bathrooms were also different: that on the lower floor had been reduced in size (allowing for the addition of a coat closet in the entry); and there were two on the top floor, one of them directly connected to the master bedroom. The kitchen was considerably enlarged (from 10'-5" x 9'-6" to 12'-6" x 12').

The other three models were devised for downhill sites, with a single-story elevation on the street, from which they looked like rather inconspicuous ramblers. The smaller windows of the Hillside and Woodside models had non-operable shutters, the only instance of this traditional feature in a Bennett/KLC model. With five bedrooms, three baths, 2,688 square feet (without the porch), the **Californian** (photograph 20 plate 16) had an elongated rectangular footprint. From the street, the low-lying facade exhibited a lateral, slightly projecting carport as well as a fence shielding the kitchen and dining room. More opened, the back elevation resembled that of the Riverview and Valleyview models at Potomac Overlook. Flaws in the plan were evident: the entry was at the back of the carport and directly into the living/dining space; stairs were directly connected to the living room; the kitchen was separated from the carport and entry by the dining room; and the screened porch was relatively small (14' by 9'-6").

Measuring 1,960 square feet and offered at \$36,900, the **Hillside model** (photograph 21, plates 17 and 18) had three bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. The carport ran the entire width of the house and was continued by a front porch leading to the centrally located entrance door. The house had a formal, enclosed dining room, adjacent to both the front kitchen and projecting living room, which featured floor to ceiling glazing on its end wall and a balcony protected by an overhang. This was the

²⁵³ "What happens when a smart builder gets together with a team of top architects?," 157

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only example of a T-shaped plan in a KLC/Bennett tract house. Additionally, the Hillside was the first Bennett/KLC model to feature two flights of steps (instead of a single one).

The **Woodside model** (plate 19) had 2,189 square feet of finished living space and cost \$37,800. It had an L-shaped plan, with the short and shallow wing ending on a front gable (another "traditionalizing" feature). A major drawback of this plan was that the front porch and carport darkened the kitchen. The lower level bathroom featured a shower stall. *House and Home* called the Woodside "the kind of house that much of today's home-buying market wants" and appraised its mix of "contemporary and traditional features":

Its old appeals: 1) a relatively high pitched roof (almost 5- in -12), 2) a front porch, 3) warm materials (cedar shingles; used brick), 4) a separate dining room, 5) a generous central entry hall. Its new appeals: 1) deep overhangs, 2) some exterior panelization, 3) window walls across the rear, 4) an open stairwell between the two levels, 5) a front kitchen, 6) indoor-outdoor living (off the lower-level recreation room and in the carport, which doubles as a porch).²⁵⁴

The back wall of the living room was paneled in grooved plywood, with the exception of the fireplace mantel, built in used brick.

Flint Hill won numerous accolades. In 1960, it received an Award of Merit in Community Planning from NAHB, with the following comments of the jury: "Seldom is such care taken to design the house to fit the lot."²⁵⁵ In 1960 as well, Flint Hill received a First Honor Award for merchant built homes over \$25,000 in the AIA's Homes for Better Living Competition; it was named Best Small Subdivision by the Suburban Maryland Builders Association, and received the "Finest for Family Living Award" from the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Washington in the over \$30,000 category.²⁵⁶ In 1961, Flint Hill was selected by the Montgomery County Council as the "Best Subdivision of the Year" for "lots of more than 10,000 square feet and less than one acre."²⁵⁷

The Hillside, Woodside and Overlook models all won NAHB design awards in 1959. In *House and Home*, they were commended for their "crisp and straightforward" exteriors, the "warmth" of their materials, "the good use of their lower level for extra low-cost living space."²⁵⁸ The Hillside model also won an *American Builder* Award of Merit in the \$25,000-45,000 class for combining "tremendous eye-

²⁵⁴ *House and Home* (April 1959), 160.

²⁵⁵ *NAHB Journal of Homebuilding*, 14 (April 1960), 57

²⁵⁶ Classified advertisement, *Washington Star*, June 11, 1960, B-4.

²⁵⁷ Alan Dessoiff, "Council Honors Area Builders," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1961, D1. The competition was suggested by Delegate Blair Lee III and backed by M-NCPPC "as a means of encouraging land developers to make maximum use of the trees and natural topography in their subdivisions."

²⁵⁸ "What happens when a smart builder gets together with a team of top architects? Every house is a prize winner," *House and Home* (April 1959), 157-161

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appeal with two floors of compact living on a steep plot."²⁵⁹ The Woodside model won another Award of Merit in *American Builder's* Annual Quality Model Home Contest "in recognition of the use of quality materials and construction."²⁶⁰ In 1959, the Overlook model was declared Best Home for the Money by *American Home* and received the *House and Home* 1960 Quality Model House Award.²⁶¹ In 1960, the Overlook Model won the Lawrence A. Funt Award granted by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, for Best Home in the area,²⁶² as well as an Award of Merit from the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA.²⁶³ The same year, the Californian model won in the "Contemporary over \$30,000" category in the second Annual "Finest for Family Living Contest" organized by Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Washington.²⁶⁴

Sloping down from Broxburn Court in the direction of River Road, houses on Nevis Road are the least altered. These are 7300, 7304 (Woodside model, carport has been enclosed), 7308 (Hillside, with enclosed carport), 7312, 7400 (Overlook model, with new balcony, photograph 19), 7404 (Overlook), 7408 (Overlook), 7412 (Woodside), 7500 (Overlook), 7502 (Overlook), and 7504 (rebuilt). Land mostly slopes down on both sides of Broxburn, which is essentially lined by downhill models with a single-story street elevation. However, 7301 Broxburn Court (photograph 17), at the corner Nevis Road, is an unaltered Overlook model that has maintained its original balcony railing. Its neighbor, 7303, has been demolished and replaced by a neo-Arts and Crafts house that looks twice as big as any of its neighbors. Number 7305 is a Woodside model, fairly radically altered, 7307 (Californian) and 7309 (Hillside, the carport of which has been filled) were built in 1960. Number 7311 Broxburn (Woodside with altered carport, made into a gabled two-car garage), 7313 (Californian, photograph 20), 7315 (Overlook, with changed garage door, photograph 18), and 7317 (Hillside, photograph 21) were erected in 1961.

On the opposite side of Broxburn are 7300 (which is not a KLC design); 7302 (Woodside, unaltered), 7304 (Californian, altered, with the addition of a pedimented porch); 7308 (Californian, altered, garage enclosed); 7310; 7312 (Hillside, altered, with two wings added); 7314 (Woodside, with altered garage and fenestration); 7316; and 7318 (Hillside model, little altered). The five houses on Selkirk Drive, which are totally separated from other Flint Hill homes, have been considerably altered. Because of their layout, the visual connection between Flint Hill's three streets is either weak or nonexistent. Flint Hill's status as "visual community" is far less evident than at Potomac Overlook; its "mainstreaming" seems to

²⁵⁹ *American Builder* 83 (February 1961), 100; "Bennett 'Hillside' Home wins award," *Washington Post*, November 12, 1960, B 12.

²⁶⁰ "Year's End Highlights 1960," *Home Builders Monthly* (December 1960), 85

²⁶¹ *House and Home* (May 1960), 135 (Quality model House Award). "Early '60 Awards to Area Builders," *Washington Post*, January 30, 1960, B-6

²⁶² "Flint Hill Project Wins 8th Award," *Washington Star*, January 14, 1961, B-1; this award was donated by a "nationally prominent orthodontist" in Bethesda.

²⁶³ *Potomac Valley Architect* (June 1960) 10

²⁶⁴ "Winners in the 2nd Annual 'Finest for Family Living' Contest," *Home Builders Monthly* 17 (June 1960), p.31

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demonstrate that mildly "contemporary" architecture is more likely to be altered than frankly modern design.

2 D - Carderock Springs, 1962-66

While he was still completing Flint Hill, Mr. Bennett was able to purchase one of the last large tracts of unbuilt land in Bethesda. With 275 houses, Carderock Springs (plate 20) was the largest subdivision of contemporary homes built in the Capital Region in the first half of the 1960s, and marked a quantum leap in Mr. Bennett's production. It attracted considerable attention in the home building press and the *Washington Post* consistently covered its construction and sales progress.²⁶⁵ In 1961, in order to test how cost-effective the use of off-site components would be at Carderock Springs, Mr. Bennett built three contiguous "applied-research houses" at 9210, 9300 and 9306 Fernwood, just north of Bradley Boulevard.

The Carderock Springs subdivision is bounded by the Capital Beltway (I-495) to the south, Persimmon Tree Lane to the southwest, the grounds of the Congressional Country Club to the northwest, Cabin John Creek Park to the northeast, and Seven Locks Road to the southeast. This perimeter also includes an operating quarry accessible from Seven Lock Road. Bennett-built houses are located from the northern end of the subdivision to the southern edge of Lilly Stone Drive (on this drive, houses beyond Edgewood Court in the direction of Seven Locks Road are not Bennett-built). The southern section of Carderock Springs, where Ms. Stone's Glenmore is located, was not purchased by Mr. Bennett. It includes the Carderock Springs Elementary School (opened for 510 children in 1966), which was designed by Burket, Tilghman, Nelson Associates, a local firm specializing in school buildings, in a style highly compatible with KLC's houses.²⁶⁶ In the late 1960s, lots at the southern end of Fenway Road and Comanche Court were acquired by two builder-developers, Charles Hilton and Jacobson Brothers. In the early 1980s, Hilton defaulted and had to resell some of his lots. The community fought to protect the land directly surrounding Glenmore from development, but it was eventually purchased by Richard Ashley. Fortunately, the old mansion was preserved. What is sometimes referred to as the "Glenmore area" includes mostly traditional houses, located along Comanche Court, Stone Trail Drive, the southern section of Hamilton Spring Road, as well as two cul-de-sacs, Edgewood and Thornley Courts. There are no material boundaries between Bennett-developed land and adjacent homes.

Bennett sold his Carderock Springs land in six sections, starting from the northern tip of his property. Altogether, he built 275 houses. The first section of 75 homes opened in June 1962. It offered six models, located in the 8600 block of Fenway Road, at the northern end of Bennett's property. A short illustrated note published in the *Washington Post* on September 8, 1962 mentioned that sales totaling \$1.5 million in three months proved that "contemporary styling" and research-tested functional features

²⁶⁵ John B. Willmann, "Contemporary Homes Built to Fit 'Bethesda Family Profile'," *Washington Post*, May 26, 1962, B1.

²⁶⁶ "Carderock Springs Elementary School," *Esoterica* 2 (June 1965), 1.

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had found public acceptance in the capital region.²⁶⁷ Gordon Smith remembers that initial buyers wanted to move in, even though streets were not paved; compressors provided electricity; bathrooms were "in the woods," and everyone got cans of water.²⁶⁸ Homes erected in 1962 are found along Magruder Mill Court (named after local eighteenth century farmer Samuel Brewer Magruder), Peck Place, and Still Spring Court. Building progressively moved south toward Lilly Stone Drive. Section 2 opened in February 1963;²⁶⁹ Section 3 in October 1963 (sold out June 1964), with six new furnished model homes (starting at \$34,900), also located on Fenway, just north of Hamilton Spring Court²⁷⁰; Section 4 in June 1964 (55 houses starting at \$42,500, with some lots adjoining the Cabin John Stream Valley Park exceeding half an acre);²⁷¹ Section 5 (21 homes) in May 1965, at a time when 225 houses had already been sold²⁷²; and Section 6 in the Summer of 1965.²⁷³ In early 1964, the Carderock Springs Citizens Association was formed. By March 1966, 266 homes had been sold and the average price of CS houses was \$45,000.

From June to September 1965, Bennett, who wanted to see if models with flat roofs and a different plan would attract buyers, showcased with great fanfare a new atrium model, with grounds landscaped by Thurman Donovan. He struck a deal with the high end magazine *House and Garden*, which took care of furnishing the model home and gave this "House of Color" a ten-page coverage in its September 1965 issue.²⁷⁴ The decor (by the interior design firm of Bewley and Bratton) was rather traditional and garish (Bennett did not care for it, but was nonetheless excited by the publicity the article could generate). Interiors were devised "for an imaginary couple with a twelve-year old son and a fourteen-year-old daughter." Without the plush carpet and big furniture and without references to its location in Carderock Springs, the atrium house was also published in *House and Home*.²⁷⁵ It also appeared in the annual Mid-May home issue of *Architectural Record*, which generally featured more expensive, custom-built designs.²⁷⁶

Lilly Stone Drive, at 8316, hosts a house built by Bennett. This was NAHB's Research House VI

²⁶⁷ "Contemporary Styling Sells at Carderock Springs," *Washington Post*, September 8, 1962, D45.

²⁶⁸ Gordon Smith, Speech, Carderock Springs anniversary party, March 7, 2004.

²⁶⁹ "New Section Open [sic] at Carderock Springs," *Washington Post*, February 16, 1963, D10, with the same photograph of the Clubview model as that published on September 8, 1962.

²⁷⁰ "New Section Opened at Carderock Springs," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1963, D15.

²⁷¹ *Esoterica* 1 (May 1964), 1.

²⁷² "Section Open at Carderock Springs," *Washington Post*, May 15, 1965, R 11.

²⁷³ "Carderock Total Sales Reach 132," *Washington Post*, June 13, 1964, E 14.

²⁷⁴ "H&G's House of Color illustrates the new swing to subtlety," *House and Garden* 128 (September 1965), 200-209.

²⁷⁵ "A hillside atrium house with a variety of outdoor-indoor living areas," *House and Home* 28 (September 1965), 64-65.

²⁷⁶ The atrium house was also published in *American Builder* (March 1966), 67 and *American Home* (March 1966), 57.

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(photograph 23), which opened to the public in May 1966. It was built to test new materials and building techniques²⁷⁷ Costing in the \$60,000 bracket, with relatively conservative interiors realized by the Hecht Company, the house was not designed by KLC.²⁷⁸ It had a front gable supported by a brick wall that concealed a large carport and storage space. We visited this house, since it was on the market in January 2004. Its plan is clustered and very impractical.

Land planning and landscaping for Carderock Springs achieved a much higher degree of sophistication than at Flint Hill. Streets were curved, avoiding sharp right-angle turns that were inconvenient for buried cables. The principal streets, which meet close to Persimmon Tree Lane, are Fenway Road, which sloped downwards towards the south and where the model homes were located, and Lilly Stone Drive. Tributaries of Fenway Road are Magruder Mill and Still Spring Court, which both end in landscaped cul-de-sacs, but are connected by Peck Place. Hamilton Spring Road links Fenway Road to Lilly Stone; it gives access to the sports club and to two loop roads, Park Overlook and Glenmore Spring. Between Fenway Road and Lilly Stone Drive, Carderock Drive is a short street serving Carderock Court. In the spring of 1964, Bennett and Matthews planted approximately 150 trees - "including maples, red dogwoods, oaks, white pines and flowering crabs" - as "a finishing touch to the community." "Carefully selected" by Donovan, the trees were arranged to provide interesting groupings as one travels the streets." *Esoterica* quoted the landscape architect: "Planting trees in a soldier-like fashion along the edge of the roadway is as old-fashioned as having houses with similar street set backs."²⁷⁹ Donovan also created rustic looking street signs in wood (plate 21) and two formal entrances: a rather simple one on Carderock Springs Drive off of River Road, and a more elaborate composition (c. 1965, photograph 22), at the intersection of Lilly Stone Drive and Persimmon Tree Lane. Because there are no sidewalks, children are bused to Carderock Springs Elementary School. Originally, there were few streetlights in order to preserve the natural character; some have since been added for security reasons.

Each model came with a landscape plan (plate 22) by Donovan, with "three alternative schemes of planting." It was offered for free to new owners and a cost of only \$10 to the builder.²⁸⁰ Some home buyers approached Donovan to make personalized plans. One such plan (plate 23), for a Pineview model at 8012 Hamilton Spring Road, is in the possession of the current owners; it called for a random

²⁷⁷ "Research House Planned in County," *Washington Post*, August 7, 1965, R 15. Display ad, *Washington Post*, May 14 and 21, 1966, D 15 and F 8. "Research House Planned in County," *Washington Post*, August 7, 1965, E 15. See also a view of the living room in *Washington Post*, May 14, 1966, D 19. "Atrium Planting," *Washington Post*, April 2, 1966, F 10. In 1957, an NAHB Research House was built on 3811 Denfield Avenue in Kensington by Clarke Daniel of Standard Properties and was visited by 15,000 persons (see *American Builder* (July 1957), 22-23. "Clarke Daniel Builds NAHB Research House in Kensington," *Home Builders Monthly* (June 1957), 17. NAHB's Experimental House of 1963 was built in Rockville by Evan Buchanan.

²⁷⁸ The sources we consulted did not mention a designer, but a plan indicates architect Herman Yo (incomplete name) of Jamaica, NY as consultant.

²⁷⁹ *Esoterica* 1 (May 1964), p.4.

²⁸⁰ "59 research tested ideas", 158

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flagstone walk interspersed with bushes leading from the driveway to the entrance terrace. In the back, the patio, in concrete aggregate provided by the builder, was extended. To shield this back terrace from neighbors, Donovan proposed a "wood screen detail" for a 6-foot fence that had attractive open trellis work at the top and complied with specifications by Bennett and KLC. In the early years of Carderock Springs, any planned outbuildings and fences needed to be submitted for KLC's approval and it was forbidden to remove hardwood trees.

With the exception of a few parcels at the southwestern end of Lilly Stone Drive, all lots have irregular shapes. In the first section, the minimum size allowed by county ordinance was a half acre; it was subsequently amended to one third. Bennett took advantage of "minimum and average-lot size zoning" newly instituted by Montgomery County to reduce some lots to 15,000 square feet, while he donated land toward 2 ½ acres of public woodland.²⁸¹

Mr. Bennett "worked with Montgomery County planners to implement new cluster groupings."²⁸² Market studies indicated that homebuyers preferred a home in a dead-end street and Bennett sold such houses at a premium.²⁸³ Located off the western side of Fenway Road (where they backed onto the Congressional Country Club), on Park Overlook Drive and its namesake court, small "triad" or "quad" courts (plate 24) group three or four houses (generally of different models) which share the same access drive. For Mr. Bennett, this dead-end configuration carried many advantages:

- 1) it avoids the monotony of rows of houses with standard setbacks
- 2) it permits screening of garages from the street with planting or fencing
- 3) it reduces the noise and danger from through traffic
- 4) it provides plenty of off-street parking
- 5) it permits the siting of houses to save more trees and natural ground cover.²⁸⁴

These so-called "knobs" were named after trees or plants -- Hickory Hill (plate 25), Holly Hill, Laurel Hill (photograph 25), and Wild Cherry. At the entrance, their names and house numbers appear on wooden signs, painted red with white characters (photograph 24). These new versions of the cul-de-sac, less dispirited than most dead ends, are maintained by surrounding homeowners, who are also responsible for landscaping their central island. Currently, some of these islands feature benches, lights, or concrete paving.

From Hamilton Spring to Fenway Roads, the northern side of Lilly Stone Drive (the last section built by Mr. Bennett) was punctuated by three larger knobs grouping five lots; these were not really cul-de-sacs, as they were devised as an extension of the street, forming a little recessed half-plaza where

²⁸¹ "Research-tested ideas," 159

²⁸² Brochure, first section, Carderock Springs.

²⁸³ "Economics and the Visual Community," 49.

²⁸⁴ "Research-test ideas," 159.

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houses of different models sit, fan-like, creating a picturesque ensemble.

Quasi unbuildable land at the end of Hamilton Springs Court was reserved for the Swim and Tennis Club (photographs 26 and 27), steep "nature trails" (which linked the club to Still Spring Court and to Park Overlook Drive), and picnic grounds.²⁸⁵ Built by Robert Furman (as opposed to Mr. Bennett himself), the club was completed in September 1964 at a cost of \$125,000, including decks and equipment. Membership was limited to 400 families and included in the price of houses for the section being sold at the time and for subsequent ones. When the club opened, membership could also be purchased for \$700 by persons living outside Carderock Springs (certainly a "bargain" compared to prices charged by neighboring country clubs). Annual dues were modest. Edmund J. Bennett Associates turned the control of the facility over to its members in November 1967. At the time, there were 343 members, of whom all but 20 were Carderock Springs homeowners.²⁸⁶ The design for the club received an Award of Merit from the Washington Board of Trade in 1965. The very photogenic view of the club and pools taken from one of the nature trails appeared in both *House and Home* and *Professional Builder*.²⁸⁷

Protected by a wooden fence, the three pool basins are constructed of steel reinforced gunite. They include a "25-meter pool with seven competition lanes and a diving 'L' with a 1-meter and a 3-meter board, a junior pool, and wading pool. All are surrounded by 6700 square feet of concrete and 3000 square feet of lawn at the east end."²⁸⁸ When it opened, the club had two all-weather tennis courts, with two more in the planning stage. There are currently five courts, as well as a basketball court and a play court. Designed with interspersed vegetation, the parking lot accommodates approximately 75 cars. Original benches have also been preserved.

The design of the clubhouse (photographs 28 and 29) conforms with that of surrounding homes. It has a concrete block base and a frame superstructure, covered with board and batten siding painted a blue-gray color (the original color has been preserved). The steep, two-slope broken roof, enlivened by a continuous clerestory window, creates a picturesque and rustic, barn-like silhouette. The lower floor features a small entrance, locker rooms for men and women, toilets, shower rooms, and a manager's office. Upstairs, the meeting room (photographs 30 and 31) forms a rectangle running the entire length of the club-house, measuring 29'-8" by 64'-3." Intended for "fireside, social, arts and craft activities" it has

²⁸⁵ According to *Esoterica* 1 (February 1964), 5, in the nineteenth century, oxen carried the stone quarried at Carderock, "using the trail which runs through the Community Club area to the foot of the seven locks section of the canal. Hamilton Springs - which runs along the oxen trail - was used to water the oxen. This natural spring - preserved by Bennett Associates - spills ten gallons of water a minute and will be open to the residents following the completion of the recreation area."

²⁸⁶ "Members Get Carderock Club," *Washington Post*, December 16, 1967, E 6. When the club opened, non-resident family membership was offered for an annual fee of \$110.

²⁸⁷ "Swimming pools: most popular facility, and readily tailored to any type of project," *House and Home* (September 1966), 88; "The Private Club: How to make it pay off," *Professional Builder* (February 1968), 33.

²⁸⁸ "New Pools Being Used at Carderock Springs," *Washington Post*, September 12, 1964, D 10

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exposed wooden columns, wooden cathedral ceilings, a fireplace, and a seating capacity of 200.²⁸⁹ The top floor, which is at the same level as the pool, also has an office for lifeguards, a kitchen with a pass through to the meeting room, and a window to the pool, so that it can also be used as a snack bar. The clubhouse is extensively used for exercise classes, scout meetings, and social events all year round, such as an annual international potluck meal and a crab feast. It is where Carderock Springs residents celebrated their 25th anniversary with a black-tie cocktail party and sit-down dinner. Edmund Bennett, Donald Lethbridge, and David Condon were in attendance and in 2004, a (slightly delayed) 40th anniversary, organized by Brenda Bennett Bell and realtor Mary Lou Shannon, was held with Bennett, Arthur Keyes, and Gordon Smith in attendance.²⁹⁰

First series of models, 1962.

Carderock Spring's first models differed from those at Potomac Overlook and Flint Hill in several significant ways. Screened porches were out; air conditioning was in. Market research, and the fact that 60% of Flint Hill residents had installed air conditioning within a year of having moved into their homes, dictated this change, which was rather typical for houses in this price range in the Washington, D.C. area.²⁹¹ Customer surveys also led to a "new emphasis on formalized entrances that utilize landscape screening on the outside and well-defined foyers on the inside." As a result, reception foyers were at least six feet wide. "Spacious master bedroom suites with complementary dressing room baths that create a luxurious adult retreat" were also offered.²⁹² Instead of carports, one-car garages (measuring 10'-8" by 20'-0") were offered as an option. They were totally enclosed, as many homeowners wanted to use them for storage; covered with a low-pitched roof, the gable of which could face, or run perpendicular to, the street; and separated from the main house by a breezeway or, in the case of the Valleyview, by a covered patio, which could serve as an *alfresco* dining space off the kitchen, as was already the case at Pine Springs.

A new version of the **Overlook** (photograph 32 and plate 28), a model already present at Potomac Overlook and Flint Hill, was offered. This was the only model with an integral one-car garage, which some owners have transformed into an extra bedroom or den. The house had 4 bedrooms, 3 baths (one more than in previous versions), 2,540 square feet (as opposed to 2,274 at Flint Hill), and cost \$34,500 in 1963. Compared with previous versions, the facade was regularized, as the narrow porch protecting the entrance ran through the entire length of the facade instead of being just on one half. The entrance was frontal (as opposed to lateral) and therefore more conspicuous. The glass wall overlooking the balcony extended to the entire length of the living area. The balcony was also lengthened, to encompass the sliding glass doors of the adjacent bedroom, and its railing changed. The fact that the

²⁸⁹ Display ad, *The Washington Post*, November 25, 1967, E 3.

²⁹⁰ See Monica Wraga Soloday, "Community Seeks to Preserve Modernist Houses in Area," *Montgomery County Gazette*, March 17, 2004, A-6 and 7.

²⁹¹ "Screened Porch Losing Allure," *Washington Post*, May 25, 1963, C4.

²⁹² Edmund J. Bennett, Sales Brochure, Carderock Springs, first session, 1962.

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entry / stair hall combination ran the entire width of the house, and that its length was slightly expanded, accounted for most of the additional square footage. The kitchen had acquired a countertop with boomerang design. Well preserved examples are found at 8612 Fenway, which was the model home, and 8105 and 8201 Hamilton Spring Court. This first version of Carderock Springs' Overlook model received significant press exposure. *McCall's* published it in October 1963 as a model "certified" by the Congress on Better Living, which the magazine sponsored; judges gave it "among the highest" scores.²⁹³

With its redwood and brick siding, this house is as trim and neat as the car park at your door. The charm of its design is keyed to the shadows cast by deep eaves and balcony. They give ever-changing texture to the face of the house, cut out excessive summer sun, shelter the doors.

The plan is excellent for a side-of-a-hill split. The room and bath on the grade would make an excellent professional suite, guest room, or retreat for an older relative.

The upper level is conveniently zoned, with a complete separation of bedroom and living space and desirable access to the back terrace and garden. A big, airy living-room area, with closely associated kitchen, simplifies service of family meals and entertaining.

Overflow space on the lower level is invaluable for work or storage, and the playroom fireplace makes this a second living area (...) Quality materials and appliances have been used throughout.²⁹⁴

The **Valleyview** (plate 29) was an uphill model with 2,240 square feet of floor space. Its lateral inset entrance and extremely compact plan made it the direct descendant of the Gaddy model at Holmes Run Acres and of Potomac Overlook's Highview. The lower floor had a rectangular entry, two back-to-back bedrooms, one bathroom, a laundry/utility space with no windows, and a recreation room measuring 19'-4" by 14', with its own lateral entrance. The upper floor included the master suite with a tiny, naturally lit shower room; a smaller front bedroom; another full bath; and an L-shaped living/dining space, complemented by a kitchen placed at the back. The living room, directly connected to the stair hall, had two large sliding glass floor-to-ceiling windows, framed by a front balcony; the dining space and kitchen had the same type of windows, opening onto a patio. One flaw of this extremely compact plan was that the only interior access to the kitchen was through the dining space. Well preserved examples of the Valleyview are found at 8608 Fenway Road, the model home which was "selected by the editors of *Better Homes and Gardens* for selection in the Home Building Ideas for 1964 yearbook," and 8409 Fenway Road.²⁹⁵

The **Clubview** (plate 30) was a 2,115 square-foot split-level model with a center hall foyer. At the entrance level, the living/dining/kitchen block was configured in the same way as in the Parkridge model (with the added advantage of a double exposure in the kitchen); so was the upper floor of the bedroom

²⁹³ "Carderock Models Win Awards," *Washington Post*, September 28, 1963, D4.

²⁹⁴ "McCall's Certified House. \$ 28,000 in Maryland," *McCall's* 91 (October 1963), p.200

²⁹⁵ *Esoterica* 1 (May 1964), 6.

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wing. The lower floor of the bedroom wing included an additional bedroom, bathroom, recreation room (14.7 by 14.2 ft), and small separate laundry and utility rooms. The idea of a protruding fireplace with cylindrical flues and glazed gable transom was borrowed from Potomac Overlook. A notable difference with previous Bennett/KLC models was the two-foot overhang between the first and second levels in the bedroom wing: as a result, volumes give the impression of being more articulated; the upper part of the bedroom wing reads almost as a small independent house. Surface continuity, an important element of the modernist syntax, is lost. The preponderance of small windows, as opposed to floor-to-ceiling glazing, is another rather traditional feature. A well preserved example of the Clubview model is found at 8308 Still Spring Court (photograph 33).

Designed for a site with a lateral slope, the plan for the **Hillcrest model** (plate 31, 2,240 square feet) was rather unprecedented in KLC's work. It was dictated by the presence of a central split foyer entry, located halfway between the upper floor (which included an abbreviated living/dining space with balconies on either front and back, as well as two bedrooms and two bathrooms, both placed back to back) and the lower level (which included two bedrooms, one bath, and a recreation room, placed on the street side, and lit with ribbon windows). The front facade marked a new emphasis on entry, as a glazed transom was placed above the entrance door. The contrast and balance between mass and voids is striking: the vertical entrance separates a primarily glazed section from a brick wall punctured by a rather small bedroom window. Inside, the living room "borrows" space and light from the stair hall. A slightly off-balanced silhouette was generated by the addition of a garage at the lower level. Well preserved examples of the Hillcrest model are found at 8613 Fenway Road (model home) (photograph 34), 8601 Fenway Road, and 8306 Still Spring Court (photograph 35). In 1963, the Hillcrest model was certified by the Congress on Better Living sponsored by *McCall's* and received a design award from *Practical Builder*.

The **Woodside model** (plate 32) was much larger than at Flint Hill (2,720 as opposed to 2,189 square feet, extended in both length and width and affecting the size of the kitchen). The only change to the upper floor was the transformation of the carport into an enclosed garage. Use of the lower floor was improved upon: the recreation room had larger windows; the adjacent room was planned as a "future bedroom" instead of a windowless storage space; both rooms had direct access to a new terrace called the "patio." The model had no cathedral ceiling and was discontinued. Well preserved examples of the Woodside model are found at 8617 Fenway Road (model home), 8600 Fenway Road, and 8416 Magruder Mill Court.

The **Parkridge model** (plate 33) was, to our knowledge, the only single-level house ever designed by KLC for Bennett. It measured 1,940 square feet and its facade stretched 73 feet. The house was composed of three blocks of different sizes, each almost square. The central block (preceded by a shallow front porch and jutting on the back) comprised the entry, an L-shaped living /dining space, and a front kitchen, as well as a utility room which was only accessible from the backyard. The entry also led to a three-bedroom, two-bath block; a smaller lateral block, accessible from the kitchen, the entrance porch, or the back patio, had the recreation room (which had no fireplace), a shower room, and the laundry. A patio was accessible from the recreation and living rooms. A garage could be attached to or face the

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smaller block, its gable enlivening the rather dull elevation. The absence of a basement and a cumbersome circulation pattern hampered sales and the model was "scrapped."²⁹⁶ A well preserved example can be found at 8216 Fenway Road (Pine Hill Knob).

Second series of models, 1963.

New or updated models were devised for the third phase of Carderock Springs and were offered until the subdivision was completed. Although rooms were arranged in the same way, the **Overlook** and **Hillcrest** models were slightly bigger, by approximately 100 or 150 square feet, because some bedrooms had been enlarged to a "twin size" format. On the Hillcrest model (plate 34), the gable of the garage was turned sideways, to reinforce the effect of "strong horizontal line" and to keep the house "from looking too high on its site."²⁹⁷

The ground floor of the second Overlook model, on 8205 Fenway Road (plate 35), was initially used as the sales office. Since 1967, the owner Brenda Bell, Edmund Bennett's sister, has lived there; in 1977, she had the living/ dining / kitchen space extended and remodeled by David Condon. Landscaped by Thurman Donovan, the original patio/ front yard (plate 36) is still extant. Trimmed in redwood, the gridded paving is in brick donated by the American Brick Association.²⁹⁸ Other well preserved examples are at 7704 Glenmore Spring Road and 8309 Lilly Stone Drive.

The revised **Clubview** model (plate 37) was extended to 2,710 square feet, gaining nearly 600 square feet. The small laundry/ utility space was replaced by a very large, artificially lit room under the kitchen/ living wing. The kitchen was transferred to the end and had direct access to the patio. Well preserved examples are 8209 Fenway Road, which was the model home (addition by architect Doug-Soe-Lin) and 8100 Fenway Road (photograph 36).

Two new models were offered. The **Glenmore** (plate 38) had 2,750 square feet of space and looked like a stretched version of the Overlook model. The balcony spanned the entire width of the living room and stair hall (photograph 37). In late 1963, it was Carderock Springs' best seller, with six sales in three months²⁹⁹ In 1964, it received an award from *McCall's* and the Congress on Better Living. An option was to replace the garage by a bedroom and bathroom. The new **Pineview** model (plate 39) was 72 feet long and measured 2,850 square feet. A two-story block was centered on a large entry foyer; the bottom floor had, in the front, a separate dining room and a study and, in the back, the living room and kitchen. The top floor had four bedrooms, two baths, and a study alcove. A lower wing comprised a recreation room and attic storage, and could be extended by a garage. More formal and symmetrical than in previous Bennett/KLC models, the plan and the facade, in painted brick punctured by traditionally

²⁹⁶ "Bennett Talks of Building 'New Town,'" *Washington Post*, July 25, 1964, C1

²⁹⁷ *House and Home* (October 1964), 46

²⁹⁸ Display ad, *Washington Post*, October 12, 1963, D 5.

²⁹⁹ "Newest Marketing Trends," *House and Home* (March 1964), 96-97

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sized window, mark an aesthetic shift away from Situated Modernism. In 1963, the Pineview model received an award for the Middle Atlantic Area from *McCall's* Magazine. In 1964, it received an Award of Merit from the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA and was published in *Better Homes and Gardens - Home building ideas*.

/ Atrium model, 1965

Conceived as a downhill model, the 1965 atrium house (photographs 38, 39 and 40 and plate 40) had 2,265 square feet of living space. The upper floor had four sections anchored by the atrium and its wrap-around gallery-entry. These were (clockwise, from the entry) a paneled study with its own half-bath and walk-in closet; a kitchen connected to the family room by a large pass-through (photograph 41); a living/ dining space separated by a two-way fireplace in exposed brick (photographs 42 and 43), continued by a 35' balcony; and a bedroom wing, with a master suite and two extra bedrooms sharing a bath. Accessed by a single-flight stair, the lower floor included a fourth bedroom, another full bath, and a recreation room with its own door to the outside (photograph 40). The plan was conceived with entertainment in mind: "Guests can gather in the atrium-courtyard for indoor garden parties - outdoors on the terrace and grounds. Serve cocktails fireside in the living room or lower level in the recreation room while offspring entertain their friends in the family room adjoining the kitchen. And all entertainment centers are easily catered from the gourmet-size kitchen."³⁰⁰

Both the atrium house and its garage, reached through a breezeway/ pergola, had a flat roof and were entirely sheathed in vertical shingles, with crisp white trim defining the top, bottom, and corners. In the front, the upper floor projects from approximately one foot and seems to float on a podium. The extra-wide recessed entrance has a double front door that can swing open. The 15-foot ceilings increase the impression of loftiness. To allow floor-to-ceiling openings, transoms adopt the width of the exposed beams that run perpendicular to the front and back facades. A transom and slit side windows frame the recessed street entrance, sidelights, and the garage door. This type of detail gives the atrium a sophisticated finish rarely found in speculative houses. The construction technique was also quite sophisticated. According to *House and Home*, "a prefabricator panelizes the post-and-beam house - exterior wall finish and all glazing is factory-installed, but the roof is pre-cut - and the builder's crew assembles it with the aid of a crane."³⁰¹ In fact, both builders and architects deem their atrium house some kind of an anomaly in their collaboration: Arthur Keyes considers that its plan generated "a lot of walking around" and Edmund Bennett deems its abundance of wall surfaces uneconomical and its maintenance cost-intensive. In all, seven atrium houses were built in Carderock Springs, and all have preserved their original facades. Only one has changed owners. We visited the Alan and Sue Astrove House on 7909 Overlook Drive, which is in mint condition. The Astroves have added a miniature pond in the atrium. Some owners (at # 8022 Park Overlook, for instance) have put a skylight over theirs. At least two atrium houses have been poorly maintained.

³⁰⁰ Display ad, *Washington Post*, September 11, 1965, D 13.

³⁰¹ "A hillside atrium house," 64

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2 E - Carderock Springs South, 1967-1969.

Mr. Bennett was able to purchase land just south of the Capital Beltway from Carderock Springs, on the eastern side of Persimmon Tree Road. In the mid-1960s, this area was sparsely inhabited, with just a few houses nestled in the woods, such as the minimalist box designed in 1956 by architect James Hilleary for himself, at 8200 Osage Lane.³⁰² The earliest printed mention of Carderock Springs South we were able to find dates back to March 1966.³⁰³ The subdivision's "Grand Opening" was advertised in the *Washington Post* on November 25, 1967 (plate 41), after Mr. Bennett had started selling homes at New Mark Commons. According to this advertisement, "homes at Carderock Springs have consistently appreciated on an average of \$ 3,000 a year. Yet, due to more flexible land planning and improved building techniques, prices at Carderock South start in the low 40's." Although purchase carried membership in the Carderock Springs Tennis and Swimming Club, Carderock Springs South had separate covenants.

Set on an irregular quadrilateral parcel of land, Carderock Springs South comprised 45 houses: nine (including three on a triad court) are accessible from Persimmon Tree Road, an old thoroughfare connecting MacArthur Boulevard to Potomac; seven are lined on the southern side of Tomlinson Avenue, which runs parallel to the Beltway; nineteen are located on Barkwater Court, a cul-de-sac subsidiary of Tomlinson Avenue; and ten are on Persimmon Court, a short cul-de-sac street off Persimmon Tree Road. The entrance at the intersection of Persimmon Tree Road and Tomlinson Avenue is marked by a wooden sign resting on a stone base, most likely designed by Thurman Donovan (photograph 44). The cul-de-sac streets feature landscaped islands.

On average, home lots were smaller than at Carderock Springs, but almost half of them backed to an internal reserve (photograph 45), commonly owned and maintained by all Carderock Springs South homeowners. An advertisement in the *Washington Post* mentioned that this was the first cluster-planned subdivision approved by Montgomery County, with a "4 ½ acre park at the heart of the community" enabling "nearly every home" to "back up to a wooded common."³⁰⁴ The park is also accessible from informal or concrete pathways by those whose houses have no direct frontage. It is this common space that provides a visual and social identity to Carderock Springs South. Sloping down toward the south, the park is a natural stretch of gently rolling grass, planted with bushes and tall trees. Most backyards have been kept open and the common space is heavily used by children. Beyond the limits of Carderock Springs South, the park seamlessly continues through other subdivisions, which were built at a subsequent date.

According to tax assessment documents, houses were built in 1968 and 1969; sales continued

³⁰² This house still exists, but Mr. Hilleary added a prominent pitched roof.

³⁰³ "New at Carderock," *The Washington Post*, March 26, 1966, C8

³⁰⁴ Display ad, *The Washington Post*, November 25, 1967, E 3

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until 1970. The advertisements and brochures we were able to find identify only two model homes built *in situ*, the **Overlook Mark II** and the **Hillcrest** model. For the two other models, the sales brochures reproduced photographs of houses already erected at New Mark Commons. The Overlook Mark II (plate 42) is described as the Mark 70 - UH at New Mark Commons. The **Pineview** (plate 43) is similar to New Mark's Mark 70-TST model; a well preserved example is located at 7008 Barkwater Court. The description of the **Glenmore Mark II** (plate 44) matches that of the Mark 70-DH (downhill) at New Mark Commons; a well preserved example is located at 7009 Barkwater Court).

Carderock Spring South's Hillcrest Mark II model (downhill, with only half of the lower floor expressed in the front, priced at \$ 37,900) and Mark III (uphill, priced at \$ 43,400) (plate 45) were not among New Mark Commons' original models, however. Their plan was similar to that of the namesake model in the second series of houses at Carderock Springs, although it was slightly smaller (with 2,260 instead of 2,370 square feet of interior space). The facade was modified by the introduction of a bow window motif for the living room. Well preserved examples are located at 7004 Barkwater Court and 8300 Tomlinson Avenue.

Carderock Springs South's internal park is well preserved, but many houses have seen their exteriors altered, sometimes even "Georgianized." As wooden balconies have rotted, they have been replaced or entirely removed.

2 F - New Mark Commons, 1966-1971

New Mark Commons (plate 46) is located in West Rockville on a 96.4 -acre piece of land previously known as the McCohihe Tract. It is bounded by Maryland Avenue, Argyle Street, Monroe Street, Tower Oaks, and I-270. When the project opened, I-270's Maryland Avenue exit did not yet exist; the closest exit was further north, on West Montgomery Avenue.

New Mark Commons belongs to Rockville's Planning Area 3, located immediately south of the Town Center between Maryland Avenue and Jefferson Street and north of Wootton Parkway, and for the most part annexed to the city in 1949. Other sections are Monroe-Lynfield, where single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment buildings were for the most part erected between 1947 and 1960, and the Hungerford-Stoneridge subdivision, which was developed in the 1950s and 1960s and currently has over 600 single-family detached homes. The New Mark property is in the immediate vicinity of two city-owned recreation areas, Dogwood and Monument Parks, which are located on the opposite side of Monroe Street and Montgomery Avenue and encompass 25 and 8 acres, respectively.

New Mark was the fifth community planned and built under the city's Planned Residential Unit (PRU) zoning ordinance, which had been passed in 1964. Liberalizing land use patterns with regard to minimum lot sizes and setbacks, Rockville's ordinance allowed planned residential communities of less than 100 acres with a maximum density of 4.11 dwellings per acre, while Montgomery County's general ordinance imposed a minimum of about 230 acres. Bennett would have preferred a higher density of 6

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dwellings per acre. His idea was to build in three or four years a "Modern Mini-Town" with 186 single-family homes and 196 townhouses, and a village center for recreational and commercial activities.³⁰⁵ The name New Mark Commons was coined by Robert C. Ledermann, Director of Land Acquisition and Planning for Edmund Bennett Associates, who had previously directed NAHB's Department of Community Facilities and Urban Renewal.³⁰⁶ Bennett also sought advice from outside consultants, such as Donald N. Michael of Washington's Institute for Policy Studies, and Robert Fralick, of the Radburn Association. While the project was in the planning stage, Ledermann, Michael, and Fralick, as well as the famous landscape architect Hideo Sasaki (who had previously acted as consultant for Eichler Homes) participated in a three-day brainstorming colloquium at the Kenwood Country Club (Keyes and Lethbridge came for the first day; Colden Florance attended all of them).³⁰⁷ Sasaki "served as consultant on landscape features of the water area and community center."³⁰⁸ Additionally, Mr. Bennett hired Carl Norcross and Larry Smith and Co. for market research. Already present at Carderock Springs, landscape architect Thurman Donovan and the engineering/surveying firm of Greenhorne and O'Mara, were asked to work on the project.

In 1965, Bennett filed an Exploratory Stage Application with the municipality of Rockville. With his architects, he gave a compelling slide presentation of examples of planned communities in Northern Europe and the United States and explained the many unusual and attractive features of New Mark Commons. While the preliminary design was under consideration, it was discussed in glowing terms by the local gazette, the *Sentinel*:

Connecting the lake with the focal point of the community – a village common – will be a running stream, broadened into a pond at one point, with cascades and fountains (...) The village common will be surrounded by indoor and outdoor recreational facilities and convenient shopping facilities. Enhancing this entire focal area will be sculpture and fountains, kiosks and pergolas. (...) The primary roadway through the subdivision will be similar to a parkway. Trees will be saved on both sides and no house will front on it. Privacy and safety for residents will be the key to the circulation pattern³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ John B. Willmann, "A Modern Mini-Town is His Goal," *Washington Post*, December 16, 1967, E1. "New Mark Commons: \$14 Million 'Village' Opens," *Washington Post*, December 31, 1966, D 1. According to Zweigenhaft, prior developments of the McConihe tract "proposed 313 standard lots in a grid plan arrangement."

³⁰⁶ See Robert Lederman, "The Common Green," *Journal of Homebuilding* (November 1961), 103-104.

³⁰⁷ In Maryland, Sasaki, Dawson, & Demay, whose main office was located in Watertown, CT., also worked on Towson's Goucher College campus.

³⁰⁸ Penny Zweigenhaft, "Hope for Ending Dreary Suburbia Looms Through New Use of Land," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 4 November 1965 (clipping. Rose Krasnow's private collection).

³⁰⁹ Zweigenhaft, "Hope for Ending Dreary Suburbia." A note dated March 22, 1966 kept in Rose Krasnow's personal archives also mentions the promise of "several tot lots and small scale recreation outlets throughout the development" and a "garden area for residents to grow plants and flowers."

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The exploratory application was approved by Rockville's mayor and councilors on January 10, 1966. They required, however, "that a market analysis be conducted to determine the amount of supportable commercial space in the proposed center." On April 27, 1966, a Detailed Planning Stage Application was positively reviewed by Rockville's Planning Commission, which accepted the figure of 30,000 square feet of commercial space proposed by the market analysis (10,000 for Mr. Bennett's own offices, 2,000 for a medical-dental facility, 3,000 for other professional offices, 10,000 for a restaurant and 5,000 for retail) and the creation, as the final phase of the New Mark project, of a commercial area of three acres including parking space for 121 cars.³¹⁰ The final approval was subject to some conditions, including the provision of a lighting system for the walkways.³¹¹

Mr. Bennett targeted "perceptive families" who were sensing "something missing in the human/environmental equation," a "new breed" of home buyers who "won't settle for suburban sprawl, but won't live in the city either," and shunned "unnecessary housework and lawn tending."³¹² An advertisement in the *Washington Post* carried the title "Be a one car family again."³¹³ In January 1967, the first model homes opened for immediate sale. Mr. Bennett knew that some buyers were purposely looking for contemporary homes. One of them was Claudia Rathbone, who purchased a house at 501 New Mark Esplanade in 1967 and whom we interviewed. Because she favored the clean look of contemporary design, she and her husband originally looked at Carderock Springs but the only homes left there at the time were not on desirable lots —too close to the Beltway and not very wooded. The sales agent recommended that she visit New Mark Commons. Although Rockville seemed a long way out at that time, it worked well for her husband, who worked on River Road.

Bennett commercialized New Mark's first townhouses in December 1967. This was his first venture in a rapidly expanding market. Targeting empty nesters and young families, townhouses were popular because Washington area buyers were "tired of paying rent without getting equity" and townhouses were more affordable than single-family homes; these buyers also desired "freedom from house and yard maintenance" and yearned for "a better environment and recreation facilities."³¹⁴ Bennett restricted to townhouses the clause in Rockville's PRU ordinance that authorized that 30% of the units could be permanent rentals.³¹⁵ The mix of detached and row houses encouraged a greater diversity of age and income than had been achieved in previous Bennett-built communities. A 1971 market study indicated that "55 per cent of the purchasers of the townhouses are less than 35 years old and about 70 per cent of the buyers over 50 bought townhouses. About 70 per cent of New Mark buyers in the

³¹⁰ Technical Staff Report, City of Rockville Planning Department, June 15, 1973 (Rose Krasnow's personal archive)

³¹¹ *New Mark Commonist*, August 1971, p.8. At the time of the writing lights had not been installed yet along the pedestrian paths.

³¹² *Washington Post*, June 24, 1967 and July 29, 1967, D4.

³¹³ *Washington Post*, April 22, 1967, 42.

³¹⁴ Norcross, 7

³¹⁵ Zweigenhaft.

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35-49 age group chose single houses." Two thirds of those purchasing townhouses had no children living at home.³¹⁶ Among original townhouse owners was a substantial group of divorced women, attracted by the safety procured at New Mark, and a lone "bachelor girl," Wini Herrmann, whom we interviewed.

The swim and tennis club and its "Four Seasons" clubhouse opened in the summer of 1968, adding appeal to New Mark. However, Bennett faced a far from auspicious economic environment for a venture that was much more ambitious and risky than his previous endeavors. Loan interest rates were reaching record highs and larger down payments were required from homebuyers. Higher density was regarded as the solution to curb high real estate prices, which were in great part due to the rising land costs. From January to June 1967, starting prices for New Mark houses went from \$36,900 to the low \$40,000s. Because the market was slow, Mr. Bennett offered a "guaranteed trade-in plan" to New Mark homebuyers. He stopped selling townhouse units with all the extras; instead, he dropped their price and offered additional features (air conditioning, fireplace, central vacuum system, intercom, luminous ceiling, garbage can enclosures, and a roofed enclosure and patio screen) as options.³¹⁷

To stay financially afloat, Mr. Bennett was compelled to sell a portion of the land dedicated to single-family homes, on either side of Bentana Way and Welwyn Way and its tributary dead-end courts, to another developer, Louis A. Zuckerman. Initially platted for 79 lots and re-divided into 68 lots, the resulting development, Briarglen, opened in the spring of 1971. It offered six traditional designs but respected the overall character of the landscape.³¹⁸ Mr. Bennett introduced the lakeside villas in January 1971, the Waterside cluster (200-300 New Mark Esplanade) was completed in the early Fall, and by the end of the year, 60% of the projected 392 units had been erected. Built between 1971 and 1973, the southern section of New Mark Commons with Scandia Way as its sub-collector street features both Bennett-built homes and compatible contemporary wooden homes of lesser architectural interest. Homes designed by KLC become less numerous as one proceeds toward I-270. On Vallingby Court, only # 11 was built by Bennett, in 1973. At New Mark, KLC's late single-family and attached houses introduced variations from models published in sales brochures; a detailed examination of these changes goes beyond the scope of this nomination.

As mentioned in the original sales brochure: "Edmund J. Bennett Associates has established a separate non-profit corporation, known as the New Mark Commons Homes Association, Inc., solely for the purpose of operating the club and maintaining the club properties, recreational facilities, and all of the commonly owned grounds, walkways and lake. (...) During the period of construction, the developer will control the Homes Association." Until Bennett relinquished his control over the association in 1973, his dual and often incompatible roles as developer and association president

³¹⁶ Willmann, "Open Space Comes High," C1.

³¹⁷ Winifred Herrmann, interview with Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, January 21, 2004.

³¹⁸ Display Advertisement, *Washington Post*, April 3, 1971, D8 and April 24, 1971, D 22. Briarglen's homeowners are members of the Four Seasons Club and the New Mark Commons Home Association.

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alienated many New Mark residents.³¹⁹ These tensions, notably concerning the deterioration of the lake and acts of vandalism in the clubhouse, have left a paper trail in the residents' "independent newsletter," the *New Mark Commonist*. Today the Homes Association is headed by a full time administrator and regulated by its 1967 covenants. Article X - section 1 reads as follows:

Except for original construction or as otherwise in these covenants provided, no building, fence, wall or other structure shall be commenced, erected, or maintained upon The Property, nor shall any exterior addition to or change (including any change in color) or alteration therein be made until the plans and specifications showing the nature, kind, shape, height, materials, color and location of the same shall have been submitted to and approved in writing as to harmony of external design, color and location in relation to surrounding structures and topography by the Board of Directors of the Association and by an architectural control committee composed of (3) three members appointed by the Board of Directors.

The Association's board and its architectural committee have 30 days to approve or reject any request for change and "additional volunteer committees oversee activities relating to landscaping, the pool, the lake, and property maintenance."³²⁰

New Mark's commercial facilities were never built, due to strong resident opposition. According to Ms. Herrmann, concerns arose about additional traffic and trash. Residents did not want outsiders to compromise the peaceful character of their community.³²¹ According to Mr. Bennett, residents "requested the Rockville Planning Commission to reverse the prior approval of New Mark's principal artery (New Mark Esplanade) to connect to the existing adjoining primary street (Maryland Avenue) on the south border," at a midnight meeting about which he was never notified. Officially decreed by the municipality of Rockville in 1973, the dead-ending of New Mark Esplanade, the connector street, made the village center "uneconomic." As he lost "considerable investment on the land intended for the village center," Mr. Bennett suffered "a stiff loss" on the entire community.³²² From the beginning, economic planning for New Mark, including the cost of creating the lake and the dam, was premised on

³¹⁹ Early directors for the Association were Mr. Bennett, his sister Brenda Bell and Barry M. Fitzpatrick. According to Winifred Herrmann, in New Mark's early years, nothing could be done without Mr. Bennett's approval. She recalls one winter when a snow storm occurred when Bennett was vacationing in Florida. At that time, the city of Rockville did not service New Mark Commons and the workmen would not remove snow because Mr. Bennett was not there to authorize it.

³²⁰ New Mark Commons website, [www.rocknet.org/Community/New Mark](http://www.rocknet.org/Community/New%20Mark). New Mark homeowners are allowed to pursue, along with one co-worker, a professional activity in their unit, as long as they are authorized by local codes.

³²¹ Winifred Herrmann, interview with Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, January 21, 2004.

³²² Edmund J. Bennett, note to Isabelle Gournay, October 2003; telephone conversation with Mary Corbin Sies, January 15, 2005.

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the income expected from the long term leasing of the commercial property.³²³ In 1973, Mr. Bennett requested "approval for deletion of commercial facilities and approval for a 25-unit townhouse cluster in the same area;" this number represented "11 single family detached units previously shown on the 'approval plan' but deleted by the developer during construction" and "14 units which represent the allowable yield of the 3 acre parcel" previously intended for commercial use.³²⁴ According to the President of the New Marks Homes Association at the time, "roughly 90 per cent of the residents opposed construction of these new residential units."³²⁵ In 1985, thirteen townhouses were built at the site of the planned commercial facilities, forming Tegner Way and Tegner Court. The builder (and one of the current residents) was Mr. Charles Burgdorf, who worked for Bennett in the early 1970s. Although bulkier and entirely built of wood, his models are well sited and stylistically compatible with neighboring units.

New Mark Commons received less media attention than Carderock Springs, although it was often mentioned in the *Washington Post*. In 1968, it received an Award of Merit from the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA; in 1971, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) dedicated to New Mark the very first number in a longstanding series of Project Reference Files. In 1973, ULI published Dr. Carl Norcross' *Townhouses & Condominiums: Residents' Likes and Dislikes*, a study of California and Greater Washington, D.C., "the townhouse capital of the East."³²⁶ New Mark Commons figured prominently in this study, which mentioned that the pool was used by 86% of residents. The complex was rated "very high" on the Owner's Satisfaction Scale Norcross had established, and "easy maintenance, environment and good design" were cited as "the three best features."³²⁷

Site planning and landscaping

New Mark Commons (plate 47) represents the culmination of Mr. Bennett's experience as a community builder. As planned, it best illustrated his desire to curb the evolution of the Maryland

³²³ Bennett noted that he did not think residents understood the financial implications of eliminating the commercial property from New Mark when they pushed for the dead-ending of New Mark Esplanade, nor did members of the planning commission, which had changed personnel since Bennett had filed his initial plans four years earlier. Residents were concerned about protecting their neighborhood from thru traffic that would bring outsiders into the community. Edmund Bennett to Mary Corbin Sies, telephone conversation, January 15, 2005.

³²⁴ Technical Staff Report. Bennett was holding a \$350,000 loan from the Perpetual Building Association and was expecting the revenue from leasing the commercial property to enable him to repay the loan. Sale of the townhomes only brought in about a third of the amount and Bennett had to repay the loan from other sources. Edmund Bennett to Mary Corbin Sies, telephone conversation, January 15, 2005.

³²⁵ Letter of David B. Lamb to Frank Ecker, chair of the Planning Commission, City of Rockville, July 30, 1973 (Rose Kasnow's personal archive)

³²⁶ Nineteen examples were in Maryland, almost exclusively in Montgomery County, 15 in Northern Virginia, 15 in California.

³²⁷ Norcross, p.20.

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suburbs. For him, New Mark avoided "both the sterile panning and visual pollution of suburbia and the growing pains of the big new towns."³²⁸ The 186 single-family homes were to be erected on 49.2 acres (achieving a density of 3.8 dwellings per acre) and the 196 townhouses on 27.2 acres (7.2 dwellings per acre). Accounting for open and recreation spaces, New Mark's overall density was 3.97 dwelling units per acre.

New Mark was promoted as "A Twentieth Century Village that's one foot in the future and a step back to a better time."³²⁹ An advertisement established a parallel between its proposed "village green" and those built in Colonial New England.³³⁰ Mr. Bennett also wanted "to design all of the elements to human scale, to place recreational and commercial facilities within easy reach of the residents in the manner of the best examples of new town planning in Scandinavia."³³¹ Most of the streets were named after new towns in England (Welwyn Way led to Letchworth, Welwyn and Stenevage Circles; Cumbernauld and Harlow Courts), Sweden (Vallingby Circle, Farsta Court), Finland (Tapiola Court), Canada (Don Mills Court), and the United States (Radburn Court). The name Watchwater Way relates to this street's visual connection to the lake.

At the intersection of Maryland Avenue, which was widened by five feet, and New Mark Esplanade, the principal entrance to the subdivision is bisected by a landscaped island (automobile access is also secured by way of Potomac Valley Road). This island hosts a wooden pylon (photograph 46), nicknamed "the totem pole," which the *Washington Post* illustrated in March 1969 with the following caption:

This graphic symbol of the initials NMC was conceived by sculptor Leonard Rennie and designed by architect David Condon and built by Robert Furman for developer Edmund Bennett's small new town.

The 18-foot high New Mark has a concrete center shaft, 6-inch thick redwood slabs stained in gray-brown on the four outer sides. Bennett also plans a 100-foot-high New Mark for the village green.³³²

Inscribed in a tall rectangle, the contours of the totem served as a logo for New Mark Commons' brochures and advertising, which is still used by the Homes Association.

³²⁸ "Village Life in New Mark Commons Offers Values Lost in Suburban Sprawl," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, January 5, 1968, 1.

³²⁹ *Washington Post*, August 19, 1967, C 4.

³³⁰ *Washington Post*, July 29, 1967.

³³¹ Bennett 1967, 49

³³² *Washington Post*, March 29, 1969, D 10. A slide preserved at the University of Maryland shows a large panel on the other side of Maryland Avenue, with the inscription "Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon, Architects F.A.I.A" below the inscription indicating Mr. Bennett's firm.

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New Mark Esplanade is the collector street that feeds the townhouse clusters and the cul-de-sac streets in the single-family home sections. These streets end for the most part in landscaped round-about islands, and are presently dedicated and maintained by the City of Rockville. No single-family home directly fronts on New Mark Esplanade, which ends onto a grassy pedestrian mall before reaching Monroe Street.

New Mark Commons features 17.5 acres of open common space (plates 48 and 49), including 4.7 acres for an artificial lake, made possible by the erection of a small concrete dam and the channeling of an existing stream. Mr. Bennett was adamant that the project needed a lake, just like the new towns of Reston and Columbia. As New Mark Esplanade curves, a picturesque vista of the water (photographs 47 and 48), wooden dock, trees, and townhouses begins to unfold. The lake catches first-time visitors by surprise. Its unusual shape, alternating sharp edges and more natural curvilinear contours, and its architectural and landscaping treatment make it a particularly scenic element. Bennett decided against planting trees in the immediate vicinity of the water (maybe to insure its cleanliness), which, according to Mr. Keyes, makes the lake look "too barren."³³³ Although the lake was also meant to have a cooling effect in the summer, its purpose is more aesthetic than practical. Advertisements mention that the water had been stocked with trout and showed "youngsters in sailboats" and a child with a fishing rod (plate 50), but the lake is too small for most water sports.³³⁴ In 1970, a jet fountain was added in its center.³³⁵ Mr. Bennett deemed Lake New Mark "not necessarily a profitable feature," as the cost of building a retaining wall amounted to \$2,250 for each lakeside townhouse site.³³⁶

In addition to one sidewalk on every street in the single-family home section and all around the townhouse parking courts, residents have at their disposal several pedestrian pathways. A centrally located and slightly meandering north-south spine (photographs 49 and 50) is paved in concrete for more durability and lit by distinctive lamp posts with glass globes. It originates at the parking lot for the sports club, goes along the pool, and bisects the townhouse section, where it is framed by tall trees and bushes. Beyond New Mark Esplanade, this pedestrian and bike path becomes a backyard alley between Bentana and Watchwater Ways, then runs parallel to Maryland Avenue, ending at the totem. It also connects with a pedestrian underpass that allows New Mark residents to access Monument Park without having to cross Maryland Avenue. This underpass was funded in half by Mr. Bennett and in half by the City of Rockville. Accessible from New Mark Esplanade by a set of stairs, which do not retain their original aspect, another concrete path crosses a small bridge and runs along the southern bank of the lake (photograph 48). Alongside are a few benches. At the edge of the property, right behind the

³³³ Arthur Keyes, interview with Isabelle Gournay and Mary Corbin Sies, 24 March 2003.

³³⁴ Skating was possible in New Mark's early years, as the lake was shallower than it is today.

³³⁵ John B. Willmann, "Lower Loan Rates Seen as Stimulant to Housing," *Washington Post*, December 5, 1970, R 15.

³³⁶ "New Mark Commons, Rockville, Maryland." *The Urban Land Institute. Project Reference File*, vol.1, 1971, 4.

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Summit Apartments, the path becomes a large swath of lawn bordered by retaining walls made of heavy timber (photograph 51). Additionally, narrow paved alleys connect the different townhouse clusters and link them to the lake and sports club.

Vegetation (generally kept close to its pre-development condition) abounds in the subdivision, where 653 trees of at least 12 feet in diameter were initially surveyed and preserved during construction. To this day, hardwood trees cannot be removed without the approval of the Homes Association, which also discourages planting shrubs requiring extraordinary maintenance. The tree canopy has become so thick in some places that it is hard to grow anything under it. Wood painted a dark red is used for address signs for the townhouse clusters and homes' knobs off New Mark Esplanade. Natural wood is used for low U-shaped fences hiding garbage cans in front of the town houses (photograph 52), and for custom-built benches, including one in a townhouse cluster (photograph 53) and a extremely long one, near the sports club.

With the exception of a cluster of single-family homes on Lakeside Overlook next to the Maryland Avenue entrance, the section east of New Mark Esplanade is devoted to townhouses and communal space. The back of the lakeside townhouses, located at the boundary of the property, is essentially treated as a service and parking area. The site strategy (photographs 54 and 55) adopted for all other "village" townhouses achieves a degree of sophistication rarely matched for this residential typology. Access roads have been kept to a minimum. They serve clusters of four to eight, generally staggered units. In 1968, four linear clusters with adjoining one-story garages (which have no interior connections with their units, however) and front fenced patios were built alongside New Mark Esplanade. Other "village" townhouses do not have garages. They are lined to form courts of varying width and length, accommodating two parking spaces for each unit, and connected by pathways. Two of these courts are large enough to host a landscaped island, complete with benches. Planting minimizes the presence of automobiles, as do transverse sidewalks acting as pedestrian "jetties." Front yards have low brick walls hiding air conditioning equipment and bushes providing privacy. Patios in the back are generally fenced in, but residual spaces between back yards are kept as natural as possible, and tend to become natural pathways.

Fences pre-approved by the Board of the Home Association and its architectural committee are "either horizontal rustic, unfinished split rail, or vertical split sapling." Proposals for any other type of fence require pre-approval from the association. Article X section 4 - f of the 1967 covenants stipulates that "outdoor clothes dryers or clothes lines shall be placed within a screened enclosure of any approved design of attractive rustic wood not over (8) eight feet in height."

Communal space currently centers on the pool complex (photographs 56 and 57), which has retained its original character. The 25-meter swimming pool and the wading pool are surrounded by a vertical wooden fence. At one end, stands the two-story Four Seasons Club, a simple mass of brick painted white with two-slope roofs, which Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon designed to match the scale and character of the surrounding housing stock. Like at Carderock Springs, the two-story clubhouse

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features locker areas for the pool (as well as a sauna) at the lower level, and a large upstairs entertainment hall that opens onto a balcony facing the pool. This multi-purpose room features walls in exposed brick and a wooden cathedral ceiling. An ingenious system of large barn-like sliding doors on its length conceals a fireplace and conversation pit, as well as a catering kitchen. New Mark residents can reserve this space (as well as the pool) for private functions. In the early days of New Mark Commons, the large room was used to show children movies on weekends. Adjacent to the pool are two all-weather tennis courts and a playground and, at a lower level, a parking lot accessed from New Mark Esplanade.³³⁷

Two additional communal structures (plates 51 and 52) designed by KLC were planned alongside and just north of the clubhouse, but were never built. The convenience shopping center (with office suites above) and a free standing gourmet restaurant would have framed an open courtyard graced by stairs, an oval pool with stone walls, and a "120-foot-high tower," which would have served "as an identity feature, visible above the trees from Rockville and the nearby highway."³³⁸ Renderings show evidence of a particularly fine design.

- Single-family homes

The five basic models originally offered at New Mark Commons formed the Mark 70 series. This name derived from the assumption, stated in advertisements, that "many design features and appointments presage those you'll find in homes of the 1970s."³³⁹ The initial model homes were built on Radburn Court, in the very center of the community. As evidenced in period photographs (photograph 58 and plate 53), only every other lot was originally built upon, which allowed for more appealing photographs. Remaining lots were built in 1968 (#3 Radburn Court) and in 1971 (# 1, 5, 7, and 9).

Ranging from 2,644 to 3,648 square feet, the model homes were intended for lots averaging 11,000 square feet. Differences from houses built at Carderock Springs were notable. Panelization methods for the facades had been abandoned. On the lower floor of the downhill models, fluted concrete made of light gray aggregate had been substituted for brick. As had already been the case for the very last houses built at Carderock Springs, thicker laths in reddish wood replaced metal rods on balcony railings. Roofs continued to be covered with cedar shingles, but the type of hand split shakes found at Carderock Springs came as a more expensive option.

Inside, changes were also significant. Cathedral ceilings covered not only the living/ dining space, but also all upstairs bedrooms. Triangular transoms were used systematically in living rooms, to provide views of the surrounding trees, while preserving privacy as well as wall space for paintings and furniture. A projecting fireplace and its free-standing circular flue, profiled against the transoms, gave a dramatic

³³⁷ Initial plans called for six tennis courts.

³³⁸ Bennett, "Economics and the Visual Community," 50.

³³⁹ Display ad, Washington Post, January 28, 1967, E 4.

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visual anchor to the living/dining space. The railings for staircases were still pre-assembled (with open steps) and elegantly detailed, but they were built in wood instead of metal. Luminous ceilings were placed in kitchens and in many bathrooms, replacing skylights: composed of large translucent tiles made of Owens-Corning fiber glass supported by a grid of redwood laths, they were intended to convey "a daylight appearance even in a sunless day."³⁴⁰ In kitchens, Formica-faced cabinets (in light brown with a wood grain motif) had distinctive circular handles and light gray back splashes. Bathrooms featured one-piece fiberglass tub/shower units manufactured by Universal Rundle; sinks were embedded in consoles supported by chrome legs. "Newly developed vinyl covered wall boards" were used in recreation rooms; their texture added "a casual look" and ensured "easy cleaning of children's handprints and even crayon and pencil marks." Offered as options were a central vacuum system produced by Black & Decker, electronic air filters by Honeywell, remote control for garage doors, Humidaire power humidifiers, and an intercom system. Electrical switch plates were in chrome, to "eliminate fingerprints." A built-in panel phone with a retractable cord was also installed in each unit.

The **Mark 70 - UH** or Mark 70 Uphill (same as Overlook - Mark II in Carderock Springs South) (photograph 59 and plate 54) had the same plan and was roughly the same size as the second Overlook model at Carderock Springs (2,656 square feet, a deficit of 4 square feet). The balcony was slightly reduced in length, as windows for the living room did not reach the side wall, leaving instead a lateral strip of siding. The overhang running through the entire front facade was not as deep. The interior differed significantly from that of Carderock Springs' second Overlook model. The long and narrow transverse entry stairhall splitting the lower floor in half was abandoned for a frontal stair that landed in the living room. The kitchen in the back gained space formerly used for the stairs; it acquired a breakfast alcove, separated from the living room by a double door. As a result of the new stair placement, the fenestration for the lower floor changed dramatically, as openings for the recreation room, the entry / stair hall, and the fourth bedroom formed a floor-to-ceiling window wall around the wooden entrance door, painted a bright color. A slightly awkward detail, which can be found in several models, was the visual and physical juncture between the glass plane of the facade and the stair landing. On the lower floor, the laundry room was separated from the utility room, and the back wall of the recreation room was treated as a storage space connected with the utility room. The garage had a lateral internal door that did not exist at Carderock Springs. The recreation room was smaller than at Carderock Springs, to allow space for a larger utility room in the back. The exhibition home for the Mark 70 - UH model is at # 4 Radburn Court.

The plans for the **Mark 70- MU** (mid-entry uphill) (plate 55) and **70- MD** (mid-entry downhill; there was no display model for this version) were essentially similar to that of the Mark 70 - UH, which we have just described. However, a major difference related to the mid-level placement of the stairs, which allowed the designers to eliminate the lateral entry and to return to the time-tested formula of the elongated and frontal recreation room. The interruption of the top floor overhang at the central stair hall strengthened the impression of recessed entry. The top floor was sheathed in shingles; in the late 1960s, this type of rough, earthbound surface treatment inspired by the early Colonial architecture of the Atlantic

³⁴⁰ *Montgomery County Sentinel*, January 5, 1968, 3

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Seaboard was gaining favor among post-modern architects, such as Robert Venturi and Charles Moore. The front balcony was also protected by a shingled parapet; it was smaller than for the Overlook-Mark II at Carderock Springs South, as its length matched that of the two double floor-to-ceiling windows of the living room. This model was offered with an optional carport or enclosed garage. A well preserved example is at #10 Lakeside Overlook (photograph 60), which gently nestles into the trees; for this particular house, the fact that one must climb an exterior stair and then go down again to the downstairs room is not totally rational.

The **Mark 70-SL** or Mark 70 Split Level (plate 56) has already been described as the Clubview model in the second phase of Carderock Springs. The only difference in plan was that the family room in the back was smaller, in order to expand the adjoining "garden room." The Mark 70-SL was offered with an optional attached carport off the living room. The exhibition home for this model is at # 6 Radburn Court.

The **Mark 70-DH** (downhill) (plate 57) derived from the namesake model at Carderock Springs, but it was smaller (2,762 as opposed to 3,050 square feet). The fireplace did not project out; there was no porch preceding the garage. A small balcony was added to the master bedroom window and the balcony off the back side of the living room was shortened in length. The kitchen was placed in the front. Accessible from the living room, a narrow gallery illuminated by floor-to-ceiling windows terminated the entry foyer. The exhibition home for the Mark 70-DH is # 10 Radburn Court. A well preserved example is 501 New Mark Esplanade (photographs 61, 62 and 63). The owners, Mr. and Mrs. Rathbone, added skylights in the foyer and kitchen (which is completely remodeled, though within the original footprint). There has been no change to the living/dining room. The side patio, opening from the dining area through a sliding glass window, is original—the same aggregate concrete squares with wood dividers. The hallway still has its original luminous ceiling. The master bedroom has its original very tall closets and an attractive floor to ceiling vertical window. The second bedroom has not been altered at all, just carpeted. The original dark paneling in the stair hall has been covered with light-colored wallboard. On the lower floor, the full bath still has its original fiberglass bath/shower stall. The one-car garage and unfinished utility room remain unchanged. Like many New Mark homeowners, the Rathbones have replaced the balcony off the living room by a much larger deck and installed a patio below the deck.

The largest of New Mark's original models (3,300 square feet) was the **Mark 70-TST**, also called Mark 70 Two-Story or Mark II (plate 58). It was described in the sales brochure as "an imposing two-story design, perfectly planned for outdoor-indoor living." The main two-story block was the same as in Carderock Springs' Pineview model, but the lower block was completely changed, as the garage was placed in frontal projecting position, and the recreation room was pushed to the back. An interesting detail was the floor-to-ceiling glazed slit filling the projection between the recreation room and the narrower garage. An artificially lit basement was under the entire first floor. Increase in surface through the addition of this basement hiked the price to \$57,700. The main block was entirely covered in brick; the lower wing had horizontal siding. The display model was located on # 8 Radburn Court, with the

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Recreation room and garage utilized as a Community Exhibit Center. Priced at \$62,200, the **Mark 70 TSA** or Mark III Alternate included a finished recreation room on the lower level, and an optional fifth bedroom and bath.

In November 1969, Mr. Bennett offered two new models, which were built in a rectangular court off New Mark Esplanade, at # 705 and # 703 New Mark Esplanade between Potomac Valley Road and Don Mills Court (# 701, the last house on the court, was built in 1971). The major novelty was a "master bedroom - living suite(s)" with cathedral ceiling on the upper level. The **Sturbridge model** (# 705 New Mark Esplanade, plate 59 and photograph 64) was a new version of the Mark 70-MU and was offered in uphill and downhill versions (the recreation room was located in the front in the former, in the back in the latter). The overhang of the second story was shallower than for Mark 70-MU. The balcony had no depth; it was only destined to allow floor-to-ceiling sliding windows of the living-room to open. A closet was added in the entry. The Nantucket model (3,245 square feet, plate 60 and photograph 65) was a variation on the Mark 70-TST and TSA. In terms of massing, it featured the same symmetrical main section, but the projecting wing comprising the garage and the recreation room (renamed family room) was larger and higher and housed a second-floor master bedroom. This wing was clad in brick, as opposed to wood siding in the previous versions. The plan for the lower floor was radically reconfigured. Adopting a frontal position, the dining room was totally separated from the living room. The kitchen and family room were located in the back and formed, for the first time in a Bennett-KLC house, a common entity, separated only by a countertop. The family room included on the wall adjacent to the garage a laundry closet closed by accordion doors. Upstairs, the hall ended in a bow window. The Nantucket alternate model (3,615 square feet) offered a two-car garage, which was new for a Bennett house; as a result, the family room and the master bedroom upstairs gained six feet in length. From 1970 to 1973, variations on existing models were also built. For instance 16 Watchwater Way (photograph 66) features an integral garage and a larger balcony and # 17 Farsta Court (photographs 67 and 68) was built in 1972 as a Hillcrest model, which we have already described for Carderock Springs South.

- Townhouses

In the townhouse clusters, architectural unity was conferred by the uniform 72-foot lot length and identical roof slopes; individuality by variations in unit width, massing (through setbacks between units and recesses in individual units), openings (projecting bow windows, arched entries in later units), and wall finishes (contrasts between brick, dark cedar shakes, and white window and door trim became increasingly complex as construction progressed).

Village houses (plates 61 and 62) were generously sized. Most were downhill models, adopting a three-story layout that superimposed a recreation room, opening onto a private backyard through large sliding glass doors, with a living room ending in a bow window or a projecting boxed balcony (photograph 69). There were three basic models, with variations related to the configuration of the entrance and its powder room and to the availability of a full or half bath on the lower floor, near the recreation room. The **Windemere** model (2,480 square feet of gross area, 2 Bedrooms and a recreation room, 3 ½ baths) was

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17'4" wide. The **Windemere II** had similar characteristics, but was an end unit, selling at a premium. The **Scandia** was the largest model (2,628 square feet of gross area, 3 Bedrooms and a recreation room, 3 ½ baths). It was 21'4" wide and had a dining room in front, opening onto an enclosed patio court, and a centrally located kitchen, with a luminous ceiling. The **Scandia II** had a frontal kitchen and a half bath on the lower level. **The Lakeview** (2,470 square feet of floor area, 3 Bedrooms and a recreation room, 3 ½ baths) was always an end unit; its two-flight stair hall was placed perpendicular to the end wall and illuminated by a vertical strip window. It had a dining room in front and a centrally located kitchen. Its front facade had a deeply recessed entrance, and above it a daylight master bath. The living room bow windows or balconies were centrally located in the Windemere model, but held a lateral position in the Scandia and Lakeview models. A later, and wider, version of the Windemere was named **The Bentana**.

We visited a 1968 Windemere townhouse at 504 New Mark Esplanade, a center unit with a balcony off the living room. It is occupied by its original owner, Winifred Herrmann, who did not opt for a fireplace because it took up too much wall space. In the dining room, recessed lights replace a hanging chandelier. The family room has preserved its dark paneled wall (with an irregular pattern of verticals) and linoleum floor covering. The upstairs bathroom off the bedroom facing the backyard maintains its original fixtures in a light avocado green, including a fiberglass bath/shower unit, and a single globe light over the sink. The kitchen has its original padded linoleum "brick" floor, Formica counters and cabinets (including metal handles), Formica splash guard, and stove with a double oven in coppertone. In the kitchen, a floor to ceiling sliding glass door opens onto the front patio, which has its original redwood fence and a dogwood tree that Wini transplanted (with permission) after workers dug it up when they were recontouring the landscaping behind her house. Re-flooring the patio has involved recreating the original concrete aggregate with wood dividers. Ms. Herrmann carpeted over the steps and closed the gap between the lowest step and the floor of the landing, to protect a blind dog from missteps. She replaced the original outside door that she considered plain and too flimsy; Mr. Bennett approved a heavy custom-made oak door since it was not visible to passersbys. Ms. Hermann put in a skylight over the staircase and framed it off with oak. She also had a pulldown stair put in to give access to a small attic storage space over the bathrooms.

There are 43 "**lakeside villas**" (photograph 70). Some units are located right on the water and possess a wooden balcony, with vertical laths; others have a waterfront patio. Some master bedrooms have bow windows. Preceded by an enclosed "forecourt," all lakeside villas have the same three-level layout; a skylight illuminates their straight, lateral stairs. The first floor had, in the front, an eat-in kitchen and a powder room, a centrally located dining room, and a living room (with an optional fireplace) in the back, facing the lake. Many units had a "stepped down" living room that made interiors feel less cavernous. The second floor offered a waterside master bedroom and, depending on the unit's width, one or two bedrooms on the other side; sandwiched in between were two bathrooms. The basement had a blind storage room on the waterside, an intermediate laundry room, and a recreation room with a window.

Advertisements assured that the lakeside townhouses were "clearly influenced by the charm of

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the villas on the canal of Venice." The **Lido I** (1,775 square feet, 2 Bedrooms, 2 ½ baths) was only 15 feet wide and had a small square balcony overlooking the lake, a master bedroom with a bow window, and a slightly recessed lateral window for the second bedroom. The **Lido II** (plate 63) (2,138 square feet) had the same plan, but with a width of 17'4", which allowed for a more generous entry and balcony. The **Venezia I** (2,155 square feet, 3 Bedrooms, 2 ½ baths) was 19'4" wide and had a patio on the lake. The **Venezia II** (plate 64) had the same width and a shallow balcony off the master bedroom. The **Fontana** (plate 65) (2,738 square feet, 3 Bedrooms, 2 ½ baths) was 22'4" wide; it had a 406-square foot balcony and a bow window off the master bedroom. Another version of the Fontana was the **Villa del Lago** that featured a waterside patio stepping down to the living room.

Registration Requirements

In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register as a historic district under this Multiple Property Submission, a subdivision must retain the key features of site planning, landscaping, and communal uses which are characteristic of Bennett/KLC collaboration (see Section E, 3C), and the majority of the houses within the subdivision must retain integrity of design, form, and materials to clearly identify them as representative examples of their type (see Section F, 2).

Note that this Multiple Property Submission applies at the level of the subdivision or district only; it does not provide for the evaluation or nomination of individual properties.

