

*Beyond the Gardens:
Residential Architecture and Advertising in Forest Hills, Queens*

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of the builder-developer in shaping the demographics and sociocultural identity of a neighborhood through the ways in which houses are marketed to the public using the contemporaneous developments of Stafford Lawns in Forest Hills and Laurelton Homes in Laurelton as examples. I begin with an overview of the general development of Forest Hills beyond the bounds of Forest Hills Gardens, followed by a detailed examination of the houses built by brothers Leon and A. B. Wolosoff as the Stafford Lawns development. I then compare the print media approach taken by the Wolosoffs to market their houses to potential buyers to that taken by Laurelton Homes, Inc., a precursor to the Gross-Morton Company, who built remarkably similar houses in Laurelton. By analyzing ads placed by both developers in the *New York Times* on Sunday, October 26, 1930, I attempt to decipher the developers' intentions and to identify the type of potential buyer they wish to attract. To determine the impact of these advertising tactics in the near term, I use the Home Owners' Loan Corporation map of Queens, which was based on assessments made in 1937 and subsequently published in 1938, and the 1940 U.S. Census. To examine the long-term impacts, I look at data from the 2020 U.S. Census and current real estate market value estimates available on the real estate website Zillow.com.

Intertwined with the deceptively straightforward architectural aesthetics that appear to determine the attractiveness or desirability of a neighborhood are issues of systemic and structural racism. Residential segregation, housing discrimination, fluctuations in racial identity, and social mobility (and its impediments) are all factors that contribute to neighborhood desirability. This thesis establishes that location as a real estate quality is influenced by demography just as much as by geography and that perceived preferences regarding sociocultural resident identity have greater influence on monetary real estate values than the aesthetics and form of the buildings themselves.

Keywords: Forest Hills, NY; Laurelton, NY; Queens, NY; Stafford Lawns; Laurelton Homes; Wolosoff; Gross; Morton; developer; advertisement

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Introduction

From Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* to Amazon's *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*,¹ New York City's Forest Hills Gardens has captivated the public imagination for over a century while masquerading as Forest Hills.² Although Forest Hills may owe much of its cachet and desirability to its proximity to "the Gardens," as locals refer to the experimental private garden suburb with which it is often conflated, greater Forest Hills actually predates Forest Hills Gardens. Yet most of what has been written about Forest Hills focuses almost exclusively on Forest Hills Gardens, ignoring the everyday to focus on the exceptional. This thesis aims to address this oversight and begin to close the gap by looking beyond the Gardens and illuminating that which is often overlooked.

As a former resident of Forest Hills, I have long wondered why the neighborhood looks the way it does. Were developers trying to mimic the English style of the Gardens due to their popularity? Were the various blocks developed in a particular order, for example, outward from the Gardens? After finding a sales brochure for a development called Stafford Lawns, I was intrigued, as I had never heard that name despite passing the houses routinely. As I did further research, I was surprised to learn that the style of house I so closely associated with Forest Hills could be found elsewhere in Queens. In this thesis, I examine newspaper advertisements for Stafford Lawns, in Forest Hills, and a development in Laurelton that features nearly identical houses. I look particularly at how the developers discuss their offerings in terms of features,

¹ Oren Peleg, "In The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel Season Three, Midge Hits Miami, Las Vegas, and More," *Architectural Digest*, December 5, 2019, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/season-3-of-the-marvelous-mrs-maisel-set-design-interview>.

² An exception to this is Sam Raimi's 2002 *Spider-Man*, which uses the house at 88-39 69th Road, Forest Hills, as the home of Peter Parker's Uncle Ben and Aunt May. The address given for Parker in a 1989 Marvel comic, 20 Ingram Street, is located in Forest Hills Gardens. Corey Kilgannon, "So, Spider-Man! Brilliant Disguise!," *New York Times*, May 8, 2002.

finances, and of course, location. I then look at the effects of their advertising strategies and the neighborhoods that they created.

Forest Hills is located in central Queens, one of the outer boroughs of New York City. Its location is at once both suburban and urban. While it is located within the city's boundaries and in a single-fare zone for public transportation, it is decidedly urban today. However, in the time period addressed here, the 1920s and early 1930s, the land was in the process of being converted from farmland. Its position relative to the already built-up parts of New York City would have classified it as suburban, although another term that would be appropriate is "near urban," as described by Neal Hitch.³ The near urban neighborhood straddled the line between city and suburb, accommodating pedestrians as well as automobiles.

In the interwar period, residents of Forest Hills waited as patiently as they could for subway service to arrive at Continental Avenue. Developers and other businessmen publicly anticipated the completion of the subway, but the project seemed to drag on forever, opening at last on the final day of 1936.⁴ In the meantime, residents were fortunate to have the option of the Long Island Railroad for travel into Manhattan. Kenneth T. Jackson discusses how the private automobile revolutionized transportation and transformed the landscape between public transportation lines.⁵ Forest Hills' location would have allowed it to still develop without the

³ Neal Vernon Hitch, "Between City and Suburb: The near Urban Neighborhood, Technology, and the Commodification of the American House, 1914–1934" (PhD diss., Columbus, The Ohio State University, 2005), 4–9.

⁴ "City Subway Opens Queens Link Today," *New York Times*, December 31, 1936; "Promise of Subway Helps Realty Values," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 19, 1930; "Trunk Line Subway Wanted by Queens," *New York Times*, August 24, 1924; "Subway Construction Spur to Residential Operations," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 14, 1931.

⁵ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 183–89.

automobile, but areas such as Rego Park and Middle Village, once known as Forest Hills West, were areas that benefited from the automobile.

When discussing Forest Hills, one must consider the garden suburb as an architectural type rather than focusing solely on suburbs in general. The first American garden suburb was Llewellyn Park, NJ, which was funded by and named for Llewellyn Haskell and designed by Alexander Jackson Davis. Haskell assembled a tract of 420 acres of land in the foothills of the Orange Mountains in West Orange, NJ. The garden suburb hallmarks of Llewellyn Park were undulating roads, rejecting any semblance of the city grid, and a 50-acre natural area called the “Ramble.” Haskell and Davis were attempting to create more than just a gentleman’s escape from the city. They were trying to create an ideal world and a new way of life in accordance with the theories of Swedenborgianism, Fourierism, and Transcendentalism. However, their ideals could not stand up against the realities of everyday life. The community was gated, the roads were private, and only the very rich could afford to live there and pay to commute to Manhattan by train.⁶

Another early garden suburb was Riverside, IL, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, designers of New York’s Central Park. Riverside was a western suburb of Chicago on the Des Plaines River. The Riverside Improvement Company was founded in 1868 by Emery E. Childs and other investors. Olmsted and Vaux designed every aspect of Riverside, including public works, parks, schools, a natural area, and a dam across the river to create an area for pleasure boating. Lot sizes were generous, and the roads were curvilinear, eschewing the urban grid. Olmsted even designed a turnpike to connect Riverside to Chicago with express lanes at the

⁶ Jackson, 75–79; Richard Guy Wilson, “Idealism and the Origin of the First American Suburb: Llewellyn Park, New Jersey,” *American Art Journal* 11, no. 4 (October 1, 1979): 79–90.

center and service roads on the outside. The turnpike never materialized because it was outside the bounds of the town. Unfortunately, the Riverside Improvement Company went bankrupt in the Panic of 1873, and the full plan was not realized. However, of the many suburbs that Olmsted and Vaux designed, Riverside came the closest to representing Olmsted's ideal residential area.⁷ Olmsted's youngest son and namesake, only a toddler when the senior Olmsted worked on Riverside, would follow in his father's footsteps and eventually take on the role of landscape architect for Forest Hills Gardens in 1909.⁸

While Davis, Haskell, Olmsted, and Vaux were trying to create ideal suburban environments, middle-class Victorian Americans were focused on creating ideal home environments. The ideal Victorian Era American home was suburban, away from the dirt and unclean influences of the city, keeping the family separated from their economic inferiors, such as immigrants and other members of the working class. Homes were big and sprawling, with projecting porches, windows, and wings. For the most part, many rooms served a single purpose, and a home could have multiple rooms that served the same purpose for different audiences, for example, a formal parlor for entertaining guests and a more casual parlor for the family. Rooms were filled to the brim with decorative items that served no real purpose except to demonstrate the family's economic respectability, although they were ostensibly meant to assist the housewife in educating her children according to society's expectations of taste and refinement. While family members considered their decorative belongings to represent their individual styles and tastes, the reality was that most of the objects in their homes were mass produced and found in the homes of all of their social equals. The technology of mass production and distribution

⁷ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 79–81.

⁸ Susan L. Klaus, *A Modern Arcadia*, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. & the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 26–32.

also led to the rise in magazines and books that catered to telling middle-class women what they wanted, or better yet, needed, to have a satisfactorily fashionable home. The Victorian suburban home was all about decoration and display, and Victorian life was a performance that had to meet expected standards. Prior to this time, expectations regarding taste and decorum were passed down through in-person instruction, typically from mother to child. In addition to selling the desire for material goods, books and magazines could also teach and inform the best way to do things with efficiency.⁹

If the Victorian home had to be summed up in a single word, it would be maximalism. There was a maximum number of rooms, a maximum amount of ornamentation, and a maximum number of things on display around the home. Just as the economy goes through cyclical changes, so too do styles. The technological advances that brought all of the stuff into the Victorian home led to changes in household technology, ushering in a new era of mechanization, efficiency, and simplicity around the turn of the 20th century.

The Progressive Era sought to cure the ills of society, and in the home, that meant eliminating all of the stuff and stuffiness of the Victorian Era. The technology of the home became more complex and costly as humans learned how to exert control over nature and regulate the environment in the home. Controlling the temperature, air, and light in the home would lead to better health and comfort. Running water meant indoor bathrooms. Electricity and sanitation contributed to a minimum standard of living, bringing up the possibility that everyone could achieve a middle-class existence. Therefore, domestic technology became more important than ever. New materials also improved safety. Insulation preserved heat, hot air furnaces and steam heat cut down on the need for fires, and fire-preventive and -proofing materials made the

⁹ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 99–113.

threat of fire less of a concern. New appliances, such as iceboxes, gas stoves, and hand-cranked washing machines, made routine tasks less onerous. The new domestic technologies came with a price tag. In addition to costing money, they consumed space in the house.¹⁰

The kitchen became more important in the Progressive Era. The kitchen was already important, as it was where food was prepared to nourish the family, but since multipurpose is the buzzword of the Progressive Era home, the kitchen became more than just a place to prepare meals and do laundry. It became the heart and brain of the home; the housewife could treat it as an office to make phone calls and pay bills. Cabinets and pantries were built-in rather than being freestanding pieces of furniture, like the previously popular Hoosier cabinet.¹¹

The overall design of houses became simpler and boxier, with fewer projecting segments and a more streamlined design. The style was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, with Craftsman, Japanese, and Mission influences. There was an emphasis on natural materials and more natural colors. Objects were camplike and rugged with less ornamentation. Multipurpose and collapsible furniture designs were popular.¹²

With the importance of technology and the space it consumed, houses necessarily became smaller. The monetary cost of technology meant there was less money to spend on traditional building materials, so architects had to find a way to use fewer materials. Houses had less square footage and fewer rooms, but the rooms were bigger and the floorplans were more open. The Progressive Era plan had three rooms on the first floor: living room, dining room, and kitchen. The rooms were all open to each other. Home heating technology meant rooms did not need to be closed off to preserve heat. Cutting down on interior walls also cut down on the amount, and

¹⁰ Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 234–39.

¹¹ Wright, 240–43.

¹² Wright, 243–44.

therefore cost, of building materials. Reduced square footage throughout the house also meant there was less storage space. However, the same technology eating away at the space in the house was being used to facilitate a faster changing of styles and to increase the ease of obtaining consumer goods. As styles changed, people did not need to keep things as long as they would have in the past. Goods were also being produced more cheaply, so they did not last as long either. Housewives no longer needed to do home canning because they could get food at the grocery store, so they no longer needed to store months' worth of food. Again, rooms were used for multiple purposes; there was no longer a need for a formal parlor and family parlor. The living room could be used for reading, playing music, and entertaining guests.¹³

Another way to cut costs was to make the home more standardized and less individualized. The more the home-building process could resemble an assembly line, the lower the costs would be. Since the hallmark of the Progressive Era was working toward a better society, the less individualized home can be seen as a means of denying the self to promote the good of society.¹⁴

The minimal home of the Progressive Era was austere and boxlike. As the Progressive Era came to an end, Americans craved something more than minimalism. Having survived the Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Great War, a dose of normalcy was just what the doctor ordered. The federal government had begun pushing the idea of home ownership in 1917 in the wake of the Russian Revolution, considering property ownership to represent a buy-in to capitalism and therefore a safeguard against interest in Communism.¹⁵

¹³ Wright, 244–46.

¹⁴ Wright, 246–51.

¹⁵ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017), 60–63.

Once the 1920 Census revealed how few Americans were homeowners, the government redoubled its efforts to promote homeownership. The charge was led by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, who envisioned a three-way partnership between civic groups, the government, and business interests to promote better housing. The “Own Your Home” Campaign began in 1920 and included federally financed housing for war workers. The Bureau of Standards tested household products and encouraged standardization of various household and building materials. The Bureau of Home Economics studied household efficiency and home appliances. The Advisory Committee on Building Codes attempted to coordinate separate local codes into a set of uniform codes. The Division of Building and Housing brought together professionals in the fields of real estate, construction, and building materials production with the common goal of modernizing building practices. They pushed for mass production and year-round construction. They established standard grading scales for building materials and a set of uniform construction details in addition to publishing model zoning acts for states and municipalities.¹⁶

Hoover achieved his goal of establishing a public-private partnership to promote home ownership with the creation of Better Homes In America, Inc., in 1922. Local Better Homes committees organized home-related activities annually during Better Homes Week, with a highlight being a “demonstration house,” or model home, that was on display and open for tours. Rather than a dream home, the demonstration house was an affordable, moderate-cost home built throughout the year as a cooperative effort among local professionals. Other activities during Better Homes Week included contests, lectures, construction and remodeling demonstrations, and instruction on how to handle home repairs and painting. During the rest of the year, committees sponsored discussions and events related to home care, financing, and zoning, with

¹⁶ Wright, *Building the Dream*, 195–97.

children's activities to teach boys how to build and girls how to decorate. The Better Homes committees focused on suburban and rural areas.¹⁷

In urban areas, companies, unions, and philanthropic groups worked to provide affordable housing to workers. In New York, the state government incentivized limited-dividend companies to sponsor moderately priced housing by providing tax benefits through the State Housing Act of 1926. In New York City, unions and philanthropic groups sponsored cooperative tenant-owned apartment buildings. In other cities, groups worked together to underwrite mortgages for single-family homes.¹⁸

The large-scale development of single-family housing in Queens in the 1920s and 1930s helped a segment of the population raise their standard of living and elevate themselves from working class to middle class, as discussed by Thomas C. Hubka in *How the Working Class Home Became Modern, 1900-1940*. Hubka focuses his analysis on what he calls the “middle majority,” or the 60% of the population representing the 20th to 80th income percentiles.¹⁹ The chapter on new standards of living outlines nine changes present in the modern middle class home compared to the previous working class residence: the three-fixture bathroom, kitchen and housework improvements, utilities and public services, the dining room, the private bedroom, larger houses with more rooms, storage closets, the front porch, and the car and garage.²⁰ The houses considered in this thesis have all nine of these changes. While they do not have a front porch per se, they have the spirit of a front porch with outdoor living spaces in the front and/or back of the house.

¹⁷ Wright, 197–98.

¹⁸ Wright, 198–99.

¹⁹ Thomas C. Hubka, *How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900–1940* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), xix.

²⁰ Hubka, 85–133.

While investigating the development of Forest Hills, this thesis considers how builders and developers shaped the neighborhood by targeting a particular type of buyer. Although developers could target buyers through their advertisements, they were not entirely free to populate their neighborhoods with whomever could afford to live there. Racism and racial segregation were harsh realities of the 1920s. Municipalities across the country had used zoning as a means of racial segregation, but in 1917, the Supreme Court struck down race-based zoning ordinances in *Buchanan v. Warley* on the premise that the zoning restrictions interfered with the rights of individuals to sell their property.²¹ In response, cities reconsidered their zoning practices, designating areas for business, industry, and residential use. Residential areas were broken down further into single- and multifamily zones under the assumption that Blacks had lower incomes and therefore could not afford to purchase single-family homes.²²

Another tactic to maintain residential segregation removed government entities from the equation, relying on the willingness of individuals to maintain their status quo through private agreements. Restrictive covenants were written into deeds for property, prohibiting the sale or rental of property to Blacks and/or other groups based on race or religion. In some cases, the covenants established an outright prohibition, and in others, the prohibition was dependent upon approval by a percentage of local property owners.²³ Exclusionary covenants in some Queens neighborhoods prohibited Black, Jewish, and Catholic residents, while other neighborhoods prohibited such residents in practice, without codification.²⁴

²¹ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 45.

²² Rothstein, 46–54.

²³ Dorceta E. Taylor, *The Environment and the People in American Cities, 1600-1900s: Disorder, Inequality, and Social Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 398–402.

²⁴ Ines M. Miyares, “From Exclusionary Covenant to Ethnic Hyperdiversity in Jackson Heights, Queens,” *Geographical Review* 94, no. 4 (October 1, 2004): 472, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1931-0846.2004.tb00183.x>.

President Herbert Hoover hosted the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership in December 1931. The conference promoted the single-family home as the ideal living environment. Apartments were considered undesirable in part because of their association with immigrants. Segregationist rhetoric was rampant, and the conference paid only lip service to the issue of housing for African Americans.²⁵

Under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the federal government became fully immersed in the promotion of home ownership. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was created in 1933 to rescue home owners who were about to default on their mortgages. Essentially, the HOLC purchased these mortgages and refinanced them with a 15-year term and amortized payments. To protect themselves from bad investments, the HOLC asked real estate agents to provide assessments of their local areas; this was done for all metropolitan areas in the country.²⁶ Each area was graded and color coded according to risk: A (best), green; B (still desirable), blue; C (definitely declining), yellow; D (hazardous), red.²⁷ The HOLC map for Queens was made available in 1938 and is shown in Figure 0-1. Generally speaking, any area with African-American residents was given a rating of D and colored red, hence the term "redlining," and federal funds were not made available for mortgages in these areas. In Queens, five of the C-rated areas had African-American populations (percentages of African Americans are indicated in parentheses): C46 (1%), C50 (5.5%), C54 (6%), C83 (1%), and C91 (5%). In areas C46, C50, and C91, the areas where African Americans lived are shaded red. Areas C54 and C83 do not contain any red-shaded areas.

²⁵ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 60–63.

²⁶ At this time, real estate agents were bound by a vocational code of ethics to maintain segregation.

²⁷ Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 63–64; Robert K. Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality," accessed November 19, 2020, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>.

Skin color was not the only basis for housing discrimination in the 1920s. Whites of Anglo-Saxon extraction felt threatened by the influx of immigrants in the late 19th century. In response, they found ways to other the immigrants by not considering them to be White. The populations most targeted by this discrimination were the Irish, Italians, and Jews, and religion was a major sticking point. The Irish and Italians were predominantly Catholic and therefore seen as prioritizing fidelity to the Pope rather than the U.S. government, making them poor candidates for citizenship.²⁸ This religious bent is made all the more distinct by the instructions provided on the 1930 and 1940 U.S. census population schedules. Enumerators were instructed to differentiate between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland if a person was Irish. People from the Irish Free State were assumed to be Catholic, and those from Northern Ireland were assumed to be Protestant.²⁹

Jews, in addition to not being Christian, had roots in the Middle East. This led them to be lumped in with Arabs and Levantines, and therefore, by geographic proximity to Africa, they were considered Black.³⁰ It is worth noting that the word “ghetto,” which today is typically used to signify an urban neighborhood inhabited by minorities, first came into use to signify a neighborhood to which Jews were confined. Many are familiar with the term’s connection to Jews due to the Warsaw Ghetto. However, the term is considerably older, dating to 1516 in

²⁸ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 68–75.

²⁹ Bureau of the Census, “Leon B. Wolosoff,” in *1930 United States Federal Census* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1930), https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/40672346:6224?_phsrc=Ngy1&_phstart=successSource&gsfn=leon&gsln=wolosoff&ml_rpos=1&queryId=81f27a7a96df8a3b6a1e3003f72d6307; Bureau of the Census, “Queens County - ED 41-1746A,” in *1940 Census Population Schedules - New York - Queens County - ED 41-1746A*, File Unit: 1940 Census - New York - Queens County, 1940 - 1940 (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940).

³⁰ Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 171–84.

Venice, Italy.³¹ This social context of discrimination and racism must be kept in mind as the backdrop to the development of the neighborhood.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the history of the neighborhood now known as Forest Hills. I attempt to identify the many figures, investors, builders, and developers who contributed to the establishment of the neighborhood by examining newspaper announcements and advertisements as well as professional publications from the Queens Borough Chamber of Commerce. I touch on issues that have arisen in some of the oldest parts of the neighborhood that served to unite and divide residents on social and aesthetic fronts. I also look at the construction types and predominating styles in areas built without a master plan.

Chapter 2 takes a closer look at Stafford Lawns, one of the many developments that comprise Forest Hills to the south and west of the Gardens. Using a sales brochure as my starting point, I attempt to reconcile the developer's vision with today's reality. I used the real estate website Zillow.com to search for recent views of home interiors, and I assessed exterior views and alley configurations using satellite and street view Google imagery as well as in-person visits.

Chapter 3 focuses on advertisements for Stafford Lawns and looks at them in conjunction with advertisements for a similar development in Laurelton. I am interested in how the developers shaped the populations of their respective neighborhoods by what they emphasized in the advertisements. By focusing on financial matters pertaining to the home purchase, builders targeted buyers who were concerned with their ability to afford a home and keep up with payments. A builder who mentions price with no financing information is targeting a buyer who

³¹ Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, "Ghetto," accessed November 26, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ghetto>.

has ample financial resources and knowledge and is less concerned about financing details to make a purchase decision. An emphasis on accessibility via public transportation speaks to a perceived need for its use. The name of a neighborhood gives the buyer a very short synopsis of what the developer wants to convey about the area.

Chapter 4 examines the impact and legacy of these advertisements and developments. I look at data from the 1940 U.S. Census to determine the composition of families living in these houses and compare the demographics of the two neighborhoods. I am particularly interested in whether these families employed domestic help, lived with extended family, or took in boarders. The 1940 census also included home values and rent costs, so I compare these values to the home prices and monthly costs advertised by the builders. In addition, I look at demographic data from the 2020 U.S. Census and current home value estimates provided by the real estate website Zillow.com.

Introduction Figure

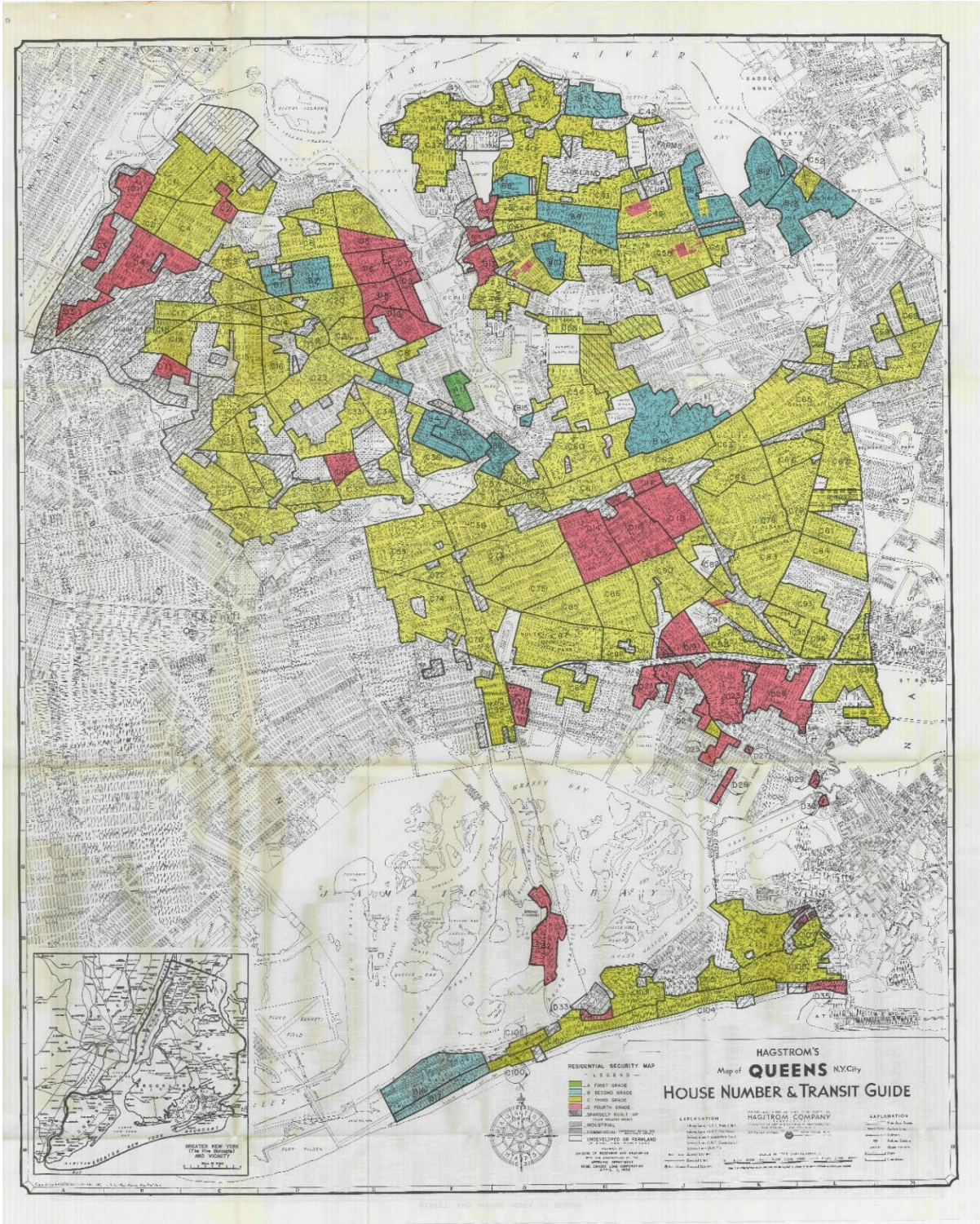


Figure 0-1 HOLC map for Queens County (from "Mapping Inequality"³²).

³² Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality."

Chapter 1 Forest Hills: Its History and Development

Formerly known variously as Middleburgh, Newtown, Whitepot, and Hopedale, Forest Hills was the brainchild of developer Cord Meyer, Jr. Meyer pieced together the initial tract by buying 600 acres of farmland from the Backus, Bolmer, Lott, Squire, and Van Siclen families in 1904 (Figure 1-1).³³ The eastern end of the plot abutted Forest Park and the northern edge was on a high point overlooking Flushing Meadow, so Meyer named his new neighborhood Forest Hills. His eponymous real estate development company started paving streets and building houses. The company headquarters on Queens Boulevard were built in 1904, and the first houses were built in 1906 on Roman Avenue (now 72nd Avenue).³⁴

When Meyer first conceived of Forest Hills, the only way to get there was by stage from the Long Island Railroad station at Elmhurst or Glendale (Figure 1-2).³⁵ While the Main Line tracks went through Forest Hills, there was no station and trains did not stop. To make his new development more accessible, Meyer petitioned the Long Island Railroad to open a station in Forest Hills, and train service began in 1909.³⁶ Consequently, when the Russell Sage Foundation wanted to buy land, the tracks of the Long Island Railroad provided a logical line of demarcation.³⁷

Greater Forest Hills continued to grow with development spurred on by improved transportation options. As of 2010, Forest Hills covers 1,328 acres, more than double the size of

³³ Vincent F. Seyfried and William Asadorian, *Old Queens, N.Y., in Early Photographs* (New York: Dover Publications, 1991), 158; Joseph P. Day, "Growth of City Forces Sale of Great Estates," *New York Herald*, December 24, 1922.

³⁴ Joseph P. Fried, "News of Realty: Styles in Queens," *New York Times*, August 10, 1967.

³⁵ Elmhurst was also developed by Meyer.

³⁶ Vincent F. Seyfried, *The Long Island Rail Road: A Comprehensive History. Part Seven: The Age of Electrification, 1901-1916* (Garden City, NY: Vincent F. Seyfried, 1984); Seyfried, 198.

³⁷ Day, "Growth of City Forces Sale of Great Estates."

Cord Meyer's original tract (Figure 1-3).³⁸ The Queensborough Bridge opened in 1909, and vehicular traffic could access Forest Hills directly from Manhattan via Queens Boulevard, which effectively splits Forest Hills into two major parts. In the 1920s, Queens Boulevard was widened to 200 feet, increasing its traffic capacity. The Interboro and Grand Central Parkways were built along the edges of Forest Hills in the 1930s. The Interboro Parkway, now the Jackie Robinson Parkway, provides access to Brooklyn. The Grand Central Parkway facilitates travel to Long Island to the east and to Manhattan and the Bronx, via the Robert F. Kennedy (formerly Triborough) Bridge, to the west.

In addition to the Main Line of the Long Island Railroad, early public transportation options included trolley service on Queens Boulevard and Metropolitan Avenue. The long-awaited IND subway service at Queens Boulevard began on December 31, 1936.³⁹ At one point, the subway was proposed to go to Metropolitan Avenue. This was used as a selling point by developers; however, it was never realized. The areas closer to Metropolitan were considered to be a double-fare zone, which was used as justification for the C rating given to them by the HOLC (Figure 1-4).⁴⁰

The Rockaway Beach branch of the Long Island Railroad branched off from the main line at Rego Park, originally known as Forest Hills West, turning south and forming the western border of Forest Hills. In 1922, the Long Island Railroad opened a station on the Rockaway Beach line at 66th Avenue. The station was named Matawok after the Matawok Land company, which owned land in the area, but was also called Forest Hills West; the station ceased

³⁸ "Table PL-P5 NTA: Total Population and Persons Per Acre" (NYC Department of City Planning, February 2012), 5.

³⁹ "City Subway Opens Queens Link Today."

⁴⁰ Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality."

operations in 1925.⁴¹ In March 1927, the Long Island Railroad announced that a new station on the Rockaway Beach line would be built at Metropolitan Avenue.⁴² The new station, originally called Glendale, opened in August 1927; it was renamed Parkside in October of the same year.⁴³

The area north of Queens Boulevard is roughly bounded by the Long Island Expressway, the Grand Central Parkway, and Union Turnpike. The core of this area is known as the Cord Meyer tract, or Old Forest Hills, and it lies between Yellowstone Boulevard and the Grand Central Parkway and stretches from 66th Road to 75th Avenue. The Cord Meyer tract is populated with detached houses, most of them single-family homes. The remainder of the housing on this side of Queens Boulevard comprises apartments, ranging from low-rise garden apartments to high-rise buildings. In addition to stores and businesses along Queens Boulevard, there is a commercial area between 63rd Road and 65th Avenue along 108th Street.

On the south side of Queens Boulevard, there is a business and shopping district between Queens Boulevard and Austin Street which now stretches from Yellowstone Boulevard to Ascan Avenue. In the 1970s, most of the businesses were located between Continental and Ascan Avenues and the area was quaintly referred to as “The Village.”⁴⁴ There are now several high-rise apartment buildings in the area. Along Austin Street from Ascan Avenue to Union Turnpike, most of the housing is mid-rise apartment buildings. Single-family homes fill a few blocks between Austin Street and Queens Boulevard closer to Union Turnpike. Although not considered part of the Cord Meyer tract, most of this area was part of Cord Meyer’s original purchase. Some

⁴¹ Seyfried, *The Long Island Rail Road*, 340.

⁴² “New Long Island Station,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1927.

⁴³ Vincent F. Seyfried, *The Long Island Railroad: A Comprehensive History. Part Five: The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R. R.; The New York & Rockaway Beach Railway; The New York & Long Beach R. R.; New York & Rockaway Railroad; Brooklyn Rapid Transit Operation to Rockaway Over L. I. R. R.* (Garden City, NY: Vincent F. Seyfried, 1966), 167.

⁴⁴ Leonard Sloane, “Proposal for Garage Up In Air,” *New York Times*, April 7, 1974.

of it was developed by the Cord Meyer Development Company (CMDC) and later sold, and some is still owned by the CMDC. The 1904 CMDC headquarters building and a neighboring CMDC-owned retail building were razed in the 1960s and replaced with a 9-story building, known as the Cord Meyer Building, offering retail and office space with an underground parking garage.⁴⁵

The Long Island Railroad runs south of and parallel to Austin Street, limiting the number of cross streets that connect Austin Street to the residential areas to the south. Vehicles and pedestrians can pass under the railroad at Ascan Avenue, Continental Avenue, and Yellowstone Boulevard. There is a pedestrian bridge over the railroad at the extreme western edge of Forest Hills at 67th Avenue.

The parts of Forest Hills that lie south of the Long Island Railroad and do not comprise the Gardens, notably the majority of the area circumscribed by Burns Street, 71st/Continental Avenue, Union Turnpike, and Yellowstone Boulevard, were not developed by a single developer. Just west of this section, now forming the border between Forest Hills and Rego Park, lies the abandoned Rockaway Beach branch of the Long Island Railroad, which once drew potential homeowners to the neighborhood. Housing in this area is primarily single-family homes, split evenly between rowhouses and semi- or fully detached houses. There are some apartment buildings, mostly on or adjacent to Burns Street, with one located on 69th Avenue between Ingram and Juno Streets. The East-West streets in this area kept their alphabetical street

⁴⁵ Fried, "News of Realty."

names when Queens adopted the Philadelphia numbering system. These areas of Forest Hills were rated B and C by the HOLC (Figure 1-4).⁴⁶

This part of Forest Hills is served by the retail arteries of Austin Street to the north and Metropolitan Avenue to the south. In addition to these main business areas, there are stores and restaurants lining both sides of Yellowstone Boulevard between Clyde and Exeter Streets. Further down Yellowstone, between Ingram and Juno Streets, there is a block of stores and restaurants on the east side of the street. There is also a block of businesses on the west side of 69th Avenue between Groton and Harrow Streets.

In terms of single-family housing stock, there are generally three areas that comprise Forest Hills: the Cord Meyer tract, Forest Hills Gardens, and unaffiliated areas. As mentioned above, the Cord Meyer tract borders the Grand Central Parkway and Flushing Meadows Corona Park, the site of two World's Fairs. Forest Hills Gardens is only a small portion of Forest Hills, but it is the most recognizable to outsiders. The rest of Forest Hills was developed, in large part, without a planner's oversight. Beholden only to the city's zoning ordinance and the economic laws of supply and demand, small builders and developers purchased plots of land and built speculative tract housing. While these builders may have named their developments, those names did not stick.

The Cord Meyer Tract

The CMDC purchased the land for Forest Hills but did not rush to develop everything all at once. The company sold houses and land and built houses to order (Figure 1-5).⁴⁷ Buyers who

⁴⁶ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 74; Charles U. Powell, "Bringing Order Out of Chaos in Street Naming and House Numbering," *The American City*, February 1928; Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality."

⁴⁷ *Queensborough*, April 1923, 161.

purchased land were obligated to have a house built on the property and occupy it; the CMDC prohibited speculation to ensure the establishment of an ideal community.⁴⁸ Development proceeded slowly across several decades, beginning with single-family homes and eventually including high-rise apartment buildings. However, without a set plan for the neighborhood or restrictions related to building forms, residents were free to develop their own vision of what the neighborhood should be. For the most part, that vision was limited to modest single-family homes. When they felt threatened by change, residents have not been afraid to react, protest, and seek codification of their ideals to protect their neighborhood.

In 1941, the increased construction of apartment houses north of Queens Boulevard became a cause of concern for residents. In an effort to preserve the character of their neighborhood, 300 residents, organized as the Association of Old Forest Hills, Inc., petitioned the City Planning Commission to designate 33 blocks of their neighborhood as single-family housing, preventing the construction of apartments within the zone.⁴⁹ In June 1941, the City Planning Commission voted to create a “G” zone in the Cord Meyer tract.⁵⁰ The CMDC and other nonresident property owners were opposed to the zoning action and presented their arguments at a hearing before the Board of Estimate in July.⁵¹ Before the Board of Estimate held a final vote in September, housewives picketed outside City Hall to reiterate their support for the zoning measure.⁵² The CMDC argued that the company was only able to cover its taxes by

⁴⁸ “Cord Meyer’s Forest Hills an Unusual Development,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 7, 1909.

⁴⁹ “Asks for Forest Hills Zoning,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1941.

⁵⁰ “Forest Hills Gets Private Home Zone,” *New York Times*, June 29, 1941; “City of New York 1916 Zoning Resolution Including All Amendments Adopted Prior to November 1, 1960,” City Planning Commission, Department of City Planning, 32-33.

⁵¹ “Forest Hills Zoning To Be Fought Today,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1941; the Board of Estimate is comprised of the Mayor, the City Comptroller, the President of the City Council, and the Presidents of each of the five boroughs.

⁵² “Wives Picket City Hall,” *New York Times*, September 24, 1941.

building apartments and that the cost of single-family homes would be too high for anyone to purchase them. However, the Board of Estimate approved the “G” zoning, restricting the area to single-family homes.⁵³

In 1960, a plan was announced to open Jewel Avenue to through traffic to facilitate access between Flushing Meadows and the subway at 71st/Continental Ave in Forest Hills. Commuters from Kew Gardens Hills, the neighborhood on the other side of Flushing Meadows Corona Park, had complained that the existing roadways were not sufficient to handle the existing traffic demands and that the situation would worsen when the 1964 World’s Fair opened.⁵⁴ Cord Meyer tract residents were concerned about the effects of the increased traffic and feared for the safety of their children walking to and from school. There were also concerns that property values would plummet and the increased accessibility to the neighborhood would lead to changes in zoning that residents had fought for in 1941.⁵⁵ A group of 100 women protested at Borough Hall in Kew Gardens regarding the city acquiring a park on Jewel Avenue to open the road to through traffic.⁵⁶ The residents were not successful in their protests, as the current roadway configuration attests.

In a 1963 article in the *New York Times*, Charles Friedman, who typically covered tennis, discussed changes that had occurred in Queens, particularly in Forest Hills, between 1955 and 1963. With the explosion in apartment building construction and an influx of new residents, Forest Hills had become one of the most populous neighborhoods in the borough. Friedman noted that only two areas had retained their original character: Forest Hills Gardens and the Cord

⁵³ “Zoning Plea Won by Forest Hills,” *New York Times*, September 26, 1941.

⁵⁴ Kew Gardens Hills was developed after the 1939 World’s Fair.

⁵⁵ “1964 Fair Bridge Irks Forest Hills,” *New York Times*, July 23, 1960.

⁵⁶ “Women Protest Road Plan,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1960.

Meyer tract.⁵⁷ It was no surprise that Forest Hills Gardens retained its original character, as the restrictions put in place from the start and reaffirmed by residents every 20 years ensure that there is no change. The Cord Meyer tract was able to remain unchanged due to the zoning regulations put in place in 1941. However, without community-wide restrictions related to building materials, setback, height, landscaping, and fencing, the Cord Meyer tract was destined to change eventually.

In the early 1970s, Forest Hills attracted national attention when residents organized in opposition to the construction of scatter-site public housing on a vacant block at the edge of the neighborhood at 108th Street and the Long Island Expressway. The area had been left undeveloped due to its swampy ground. Since the land was not developed, no existing housing needed to be acquired and demolished and, therefore, no residents would be displaced. The plan for the housing project had been passed quickly and quietly in 1966, with residents given little to no notice to comment. A plan for a new high school in neighboring Corona garnered much publicity while Forest Hills residents were lulled into thinking the public housing project would be canceled due to the swampy ground on the selected lot.⁵⁸

By this time, Forest Hills was a predominantly white and Jewish neighborhood, and members of the Queens Jewish Community Council, Inc., spoke up to say that they felt like they were being singled out for “experiments in social engineering.”⁵⁹ Dr. Alvin Lashinsky pointed out that of 11 sites selected for scatter-site public housing projects in the same period, only 3 were still considered viable, and all of those were in Jewish neighborhoods. Others proffered that

⁵⁷ Charles Friedman, “Boom Irks Many in Forest Hills; Commercial Building Is Decried,” *New York Times*, June 3, 1963.

⁵⁸ Mario M. Cuomo, *Forest Hills Diary: the Crisis of Low-Income Housing* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 12, 15, 22.

⁵⁹ “Queens Jewish Leaders Fear Effects of the Forest Hills Project,” *New York Times*, December 2, 1971.

Jewish neighborhoods were being chosen because Jews would not oppose the projects for fear of being perceived as racist, which runs counter to their reputation for being liberal. While most of the Jewish leaders interviewed believed that Jews would be pushed out by the housing projects, one rabbi pointed out that if “they stay where they are they will have their community.”⁶⁰ Mayor John Lindsay tapped lawyer Mario Cuomo to mediate the dispute between the neighborhood residents and the city. In the end, the project was halved, with 3 12-story buildings to house 432 tenants, as opposed to the original plans for 3 24-story buildings to house 842 tenants. Additionally, 40% of the units were reserved for the elderly, and only 30% of residents would be on welfare.⁶¹

Although the CMDC did not establish formal restrictions or guiding principles for the neighborhood it established in Forest Hills, the residents took it upon themselves to work with planning authorities to establish guidelines to govern future development in their seemingly fully developed neighborhood. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Long Island Railroad tracks, Forest Hills Gardens appears to have been untouched by time, governed by restrictions set forth over a century ago and reconfirmed by its residents every 20 years.

Forest Hills Gardens

The development of Forest Hills Gardens has been a collaborative effort since its inception. Mrs. Russell Sage is often credited as the driving force behind the Gardens, as she supplied the money. However, had the Gardens depended solely on her involvement, the project

⁶⁰ “Queens Jewish Leaders Fear Effects of the Forest Hills Project,” *New York Times*, December 2, 1971.

⁶¹ Cuomo, 22-23, 140, 147; Sam Roberts, “Jerry Birbach, Leader of Fight to Block Poor Tenants in Queens, Dies at 87,” *New York Times*, March 1, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2mb3zX0>; Sam Roberts, “Simeon Golar, Who Fought for Public Housing, Dies at 84,” *New York Times*, August 13, 2013, <https://nyti.ms/1eI6VCm>.

may never have been fully realized, given her advanced age and eventual death in 1918. Susan Klaus credits the idea to Robert de Forest, the Sage family's lawyer.⁶²

Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage (Mrs. Russell Sage) established the Russell Sage Foundation as a philanthropic entity in 1907 to fund causes for the betterment of society. The Foundation purchased 142 acres of land from Cord Meyer with the intent to develop a model suburb, inspired by Ebenezer Howard's writings on garden cities.⁶³ In turn, the Russell Sage Foundation established the Sage Foundation Realty Development Company to develop the suburb and the Sage Foundation Homes Company to handle the day-to-day operations. The neighborhood of Forest Hills Gardens was designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and architect Grosvenor Atterbury. Except for the cross streets of Ascan and Continental Avenues, the streets within the Gardens do not follow the established grid plan; they meander, introducing a suburban element to this part of the city. The standards established for home designs as well as restrictions and guidelines for building created an economically exclusive neighborhood.⁶⁴ In an interesting turn, in 1938, Forest Hills Gardens received a B rating from the HOLC because the area had been fully developed and there was no space for future growth, whereas the Cord Meyer tract was the only neighborhood in the borough of Queens to receive an A rating (Figure 1-4).⁶⁵

⁶² Klaus, *A Modern Arcadia*, 10.

⁶³ Howard is known as the founder of the garden city movement, the ideals of which he set forth in his 1898 book *To-Morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, reprinted as *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* in 1902.

⁶⁴ Klaus, *A Modern Arcadia*, 45–45, 115–16; Sage Foundation Homes, "The Forest Hills Gardens Development, Its Restrictions, and the Powers of the Membership Corporation Which Enforces Them," in *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*, vol. Neighborhood and Community Planning, Appendix B: The Neighborhood Unit, 7 vols. (New York: Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, 1929), 132–40; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 76.

⁶⁵ Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality."

The grand entrance to Forest Hills Gardens is Station Square, which is reached by passing under the Long Island Railroad on Continental Avenue. The station itself was a cooperative effort. In 1911, the station was rebuilt with a design to fit in with Station Square and Forest Hills Gardens. The redesigned station was much more expensive than other stations, so the expense was shared by the Russell Sage Foundation, the CMDC, and the Long Island Railroad.⁶⁶

The frenetic pace of Austin Street is worlds away from the calm atmosphere of Station Square. Visitors would be forgiven for thinking they have stumbled through a portal and been transported to another time and place. Elevated and enclosed pedestrian walkways connect all of the buildings around Station Square, providing a sense of liminality, setting the square apart from the rest of the neighborhood, and buffering the residential areas from the hubbub of Austin Street. The Square is paved with brick pavers, forcing pedestrians and vehicles alike to slow down as they travel through the space (Figure 1-6 and Figure 1-7).

The idyllic landscape provides a charming backdrop for the exclusive community, but the exclusivity was not simply economic. Astute observers will notice that there are 3 churches in the Gardens, all Protestant. There is no Catholic church, nor is there a synagogue. This model garden suburb was built for middle-class whites, and in the 1910s and 1920s, that meant no Catholics or Jews.⁶⁷ While not explicitly codified in the restrictions, the prohibition against Catholics, Jews, and other nonwhites was carried out via unspoken gentlemen's agreements. While these prohibitions no longer exist, it is important to remember that they once did. These exclusionary practices may have played a role in the demographic development of Forest Hills as

⁶⁶ Klaus, *A Modern Arcadia*, 69.

⁶⁷ John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 230; Klaus, *A Modern Arcadia*, 114.

a whole. With Jews and Catholics excluded from the Gardens, they may have moved into the areas adjacent to the Gardens because that was as close to the Gardens as they could get.

Unaffiliated Areas

The balance of Forest Hills situated south and west of the Gardens was built up by an assortment of builders who purchased plots of land between Austin Street and Metropolitan Avenue and built houses on spec, typically covering a block at a time. For most of this area, there were no guidelines other than city zoning ordinances. The result is a neighborhood of primarily single-family homes, with a mix of detached, semi-detached, and detached houses. Most houses have garages, either attached or detached, which are accessed either via alleys in the rear or driveways to the street. For some houses with detached garages in the rear, narrow driveways are shared with a neighbor.

In 1923, the Vanderveer farm was sold at auction and called Forest Hills Estates.⁶⁸ This land was adjacent to Forest Hills Gardens and was split into restricted and unrestricted areas.⁶⁹ As a condition of the sale of their property, the Vanderveers agreed that the portion of their property from the eastern property line to the east side of Stafford (69th) Avenue and from the northern property line to Kessel Street would be subject to the same formal architectural restrictions as property located within Forest Hills Gardens; this area was referred to as the restricted area.⁷⁰ Essentially, homeowners in the restricted area were bound by the formal, architectural restrictions of the Gardens without actually being part of the Gardens; the social

⁶⁸ The name Forest Hills Estates is used in the restriction agreements. The area was referred to as Forest Hills Terrace in *Queensborough*, vol. IX, no. 7, p. 396; this may be the name given to the unrestricted portion of the Vanderveer farm.

⁶⁹ "Forest Hills Auction," *New York Times*, June 5, 1923; "A Forest Hills Sale," *New York Times*, May 13, 1923.

⁷⁰ Forest Hills Gardens Corporation, "Agreement between Forest Hills Gardens Corporation and Assenting Property Owners," April 21, 1969.

restrictions did not apply. This arrangement effectively created a buffer zone between Forest Hills Gardens and the rest of Forest Hills, ensuring that property values at the edge of the Gardens would not be negatively affected by the properties just outside the Gardens (Figure 1-8).

A similar arrangement was made regarding land formerly belonging to the Debevoise family. A portion of the Debevoise Estate was renamed Forest Hills Court and sold at auction in 1923.⁷¹ As with the restricted part of the Vanderveer tract, homeowners in Forest Hills Court entered into an agreement with the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation to abide by the same formal architectural restrictions that applied to homeowners who lived in the Gardens.

Eventually, the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation decided to discontinue enforcement of the restrictions in the Vanderveer tract and Forest Hills Court. The homeowners in these areas then created their own organization, calling themselves the Forest Hills Van-Court Association. The Association is a governing body for the area and functions like a homeowners' association. The restriction agreement must be renewed every 20 years with the approval of the owners of 2/3 of the property area.⁷² This area is now known as the Van-Court part of Forest Hills and is part of the area designated B4 on the HOLC map (Figure 1-4), helped in part by these architectural restrictions.

Situated between the restricted area of Forest Hills Court and Metropolitan Avenue, another portion of the former Debevoise property, sometimes referred to as Debevoise Farms,

⁷¹ "Debevoise Estate, Forest Hills Court, Auction Ad," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 16, 1923; "Debevoise Estate Auction Ad," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 5, 1923; "Debevoise Estate Auction Ad," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 3, 1923.

⁷² Forest Hills Van-Court Association, "Agreement between Forest Hills Van-Court Association, LLC, and Assenting Property Owners," April 18, 2008; Forest Hills Van-Court Association, "Forest Hills Van-Court Association Architecture and Construction Procedures and Guidelines" (Forest Hills Van-Court Association, 2014).

was developed by brothers George and Alfred Gross and Lawrence Morton.⁷³ They built frame houses on Nansen Street between 71st and 72nd Avenues, which were advertised as “Shocks Modern Homes” and sold for \$6850 in 1924 (Figure 1-9 and Figure 1-10). After their success in Forest Hills, the Grosses and Morton shifted their operations to Laurelton, where they bought the Laurelton Golf Club and built thousands of houses under the name Laurelton Homes.⁷⁴

The Kew-Forest Construction Company, operated by brothers Leon and A. B. Wolosoff, built Stafford Lawns, attached brick Tudor Revival homes on Ingram and Juno Streets between Baldwin (68th) and Stafford (69th) Avenues and on Baldwin Avenue between Ingram and Manse Streets. They also built houses in the Van-Court area and an apartment building on Stafford Avenue between Ingram and Juno Streets.⁷⁵ Like many other builders, they were also active in other parts of the borough and in Nassau County.⁷⁶

Royal Homes built houses on Exeter, Fleet, and Groton Streets between Baldwin (now 68th) Avenue and Yellowstone Boulevard between 1937 and 1940.⁷⁷ An area known as Forest Hills Manor was developed by the Newman Building Company (frame houses) and S. W. Eckman (brick houses).⁷⁸ The Gascoyne Homes Corporation built 150 single-family houses in Forest Park Terrace, and Stanolt Corporation built 3 blocks of single-family brick houses in

⁷³ Franklin J. Sherman and Brooklyn Biographical Society, *Building up Greater Queens Borough: An Estimate of Its Development and the Outlook* (New York: The Brooklyn Biographical Society, 1929), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100947243>; Percival Millikin, “Home Building,” *Queensborough*, September 1923, 396.

⁷⁴ “2,500 Homes on Golf Links,” *New York Times*, April 1, 1928; “Busy Centres in Queens Borough,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1927.

⁷⁵ “Stafford Lawns Active,” *New York Times*, June 1, 1930; “Forest Hill Homes,” *New York Times*, October 5, 1930; “Forest Hills Home Group Started,” *New York Times*, August 30, 1931, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1931/08/30/118421315.html>; “Forest Hills House Is Sold by Builders,” *New York Times*, June 19, 1957.

⁷⁶ “St. Albans Development,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1931; “Sales at Freeport Lawns,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1931.

⁷⁷ Advertisements from the *New York Times*: October 3, 1937; February 13, 1938; March 5, 1939; May 12, 1940.

⁷⁸ Millikin, “Home Building,” 396.

Forest Hills Terrace.⁷⁹ Some of the other companies that built homes in this part of Forest Hills were Distinctive Homes Corporation, the Nagel Company, Light & Abrams, K.I.H. Building Corporation, Paramount Homes, Gatehouse Brothers, Well-Made Construction Company, George Viebrock, Jr., Five Gables, Inc., Sunhill Homes, Forest Hills Homes Corp., Kragolif Building Corporation, Cordaro & La Vecchia, Inc., Fleet Street Realty Corp., Thornton Homes, Inc., and Donner Lumber Company.⁸⁰

Housing styles varied from block to block. In addition to wooden frame houses (Figure 1-11), there were brick, stone, and stucco homes. Several of the revival styles that grew out of the Arts and Crafts movement were represented. Gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial Revival houses can be found on Manse Street (Figure 1-12). So-called “Spanish style” houses were built on Fleet Street (Figure 1-13 and Figure 1-14). Advertisements in the *New York Times* from the mid-1920s suggest that Mediterranean and Mission Revival styles were popular. Words such as villa, Riviera, Tuscan, Spanish Quarter, and Casa Española were featured, as were housing models called the Alhambra and the Barcelona (Figure 1-15 and Figure 1-16). Exteriors featured stucco walls and tile roofs. In the later 1920s and into 1930, styles changed, with Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival becoming more popular than Mediterranean. Advertisements mentioned “English style,” with references to cottages and the Cotswolds (Figure 1-15). Stucco was combined with half-timbering and random bricks and stone, and slate replaced tile on roofs. Of the various builders and styles represented in this part of Forest Hills, the Wolosoff brothers’ Stafford Lawns is a prime example of the Tudor Revival.

⁷⁹ “Queens’ Rapid Growth Leads United States,” *Queensborough*, August 1924, 398.

⁸⁰ “Queens’ Rapid Growth Leads United States,” 398; “Queens Is New York City’s Fastest Growing Borough Reports Show,” *Queensborough*, January 1926, 12.

The houses in the unaffiliated area of Forest Hills, located south and west of the Gardens had the greatest variety in architectural style of the three sections of Forest Hills. The predominant reason for the eclectic mix in this area is that no single developer planned the whole area or applied uniform restrictions. However, the result is not a complete hodgepodge because builders and developers bought multiple lots at a time and typically developed the entire side of a block together.

The area with the greatest architectural homogeneity is, of course, Forest Hills Gardens. The combination of the master plan for the Gardens and the restrictions on architectural form and materials have created a harmonious arrangement where little has changed, from a design perspective, in the last century. The Van-Court area forms a buffer between the Gardens and the unaffiliated area. This buffer may be one of the most ingenious aspects of the plan for the Gardens and is certainly worthy of further study. Homeowners within this buffer zone are bound by the formal architectural restrictions of the Gardens without actually living in or being part of the Gardens.

Finally, the oldest part of Forest Hills, the Cord Meyer tract, presents its own brand of architectural variety. While the area was originally purchased by one controlling interest, the CMDC, there was no overall plan for the area. The only rule was that there would be no speculation: those who purchased lots were expected to build on them and live in the houses they built. As a result, the area was built up much more slowly, and therefore, the architectural styles vary due to changes in taste over time.

Chapter 1 Figures

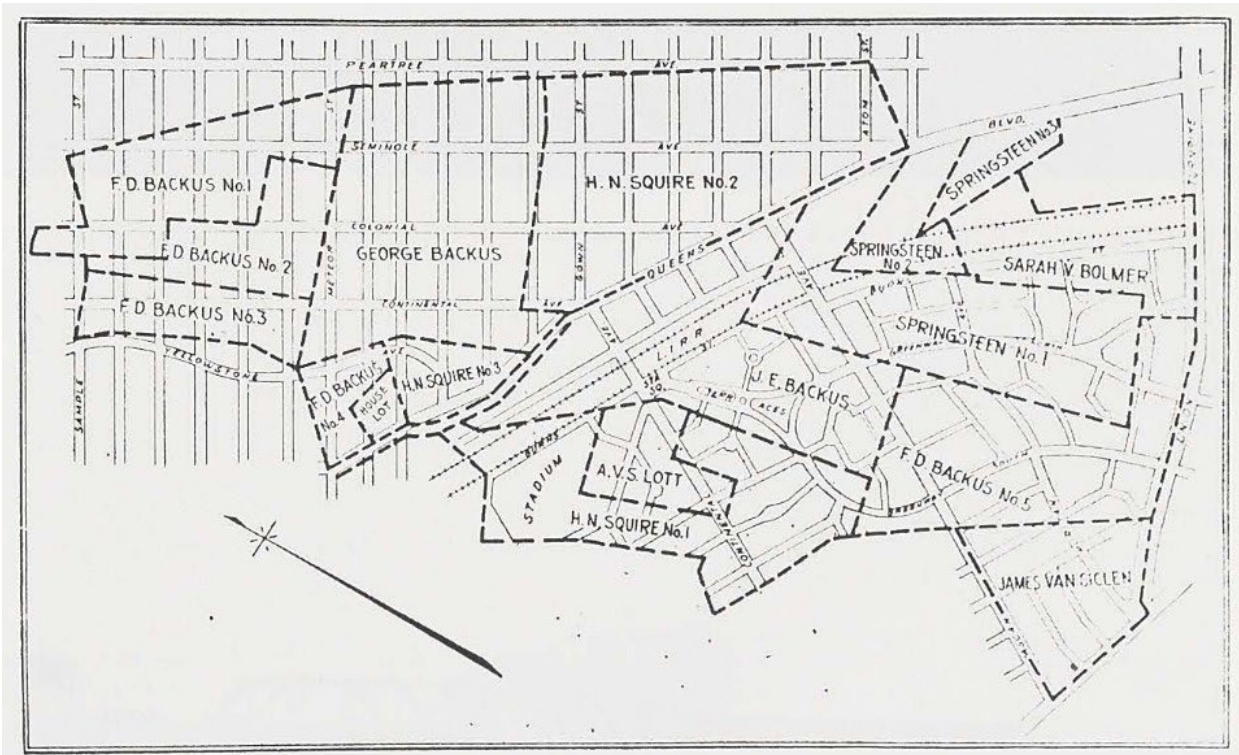


Figure 1-1 Map of Forest Hills, ca. 1917, showing the farm parcels purchased by Cord Meyer (from Old Queens, NY, in Early Photographs⁸¹).

⁸¹ Seyfried and Asadorian, *Old Queens, N.Y., in Early Photographs*, 158.

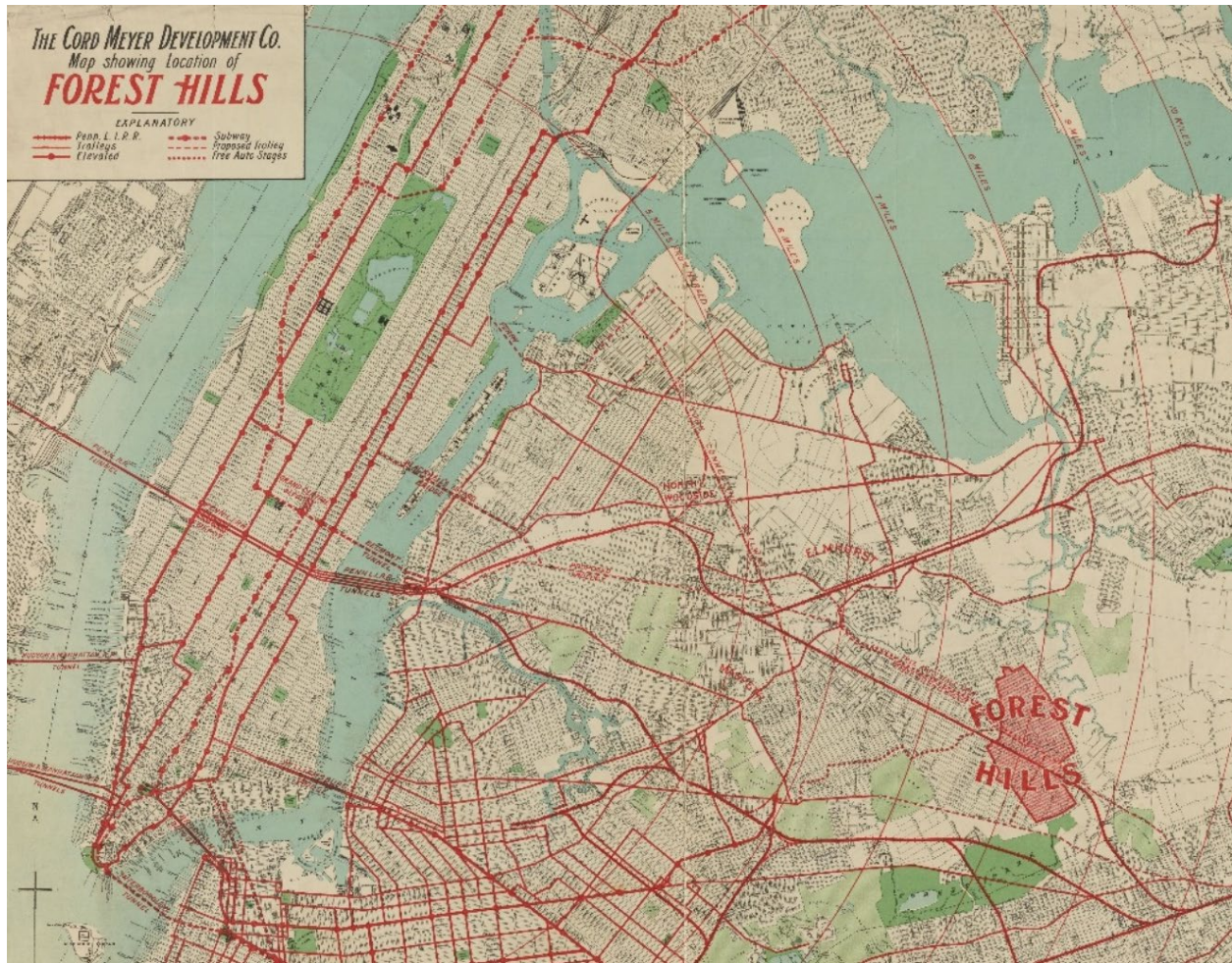


Figure 1-2 Cord Meyer map showing the location of Forest Hills (New York Public Library⁸²).

⁸² *The Cord Meyer Development Co. Map Showing Location of Forest Hills* (August R. Ohman & Co., 1908), Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/f203abf0-0dbb-0131-b1c4-58d385a7b928>.

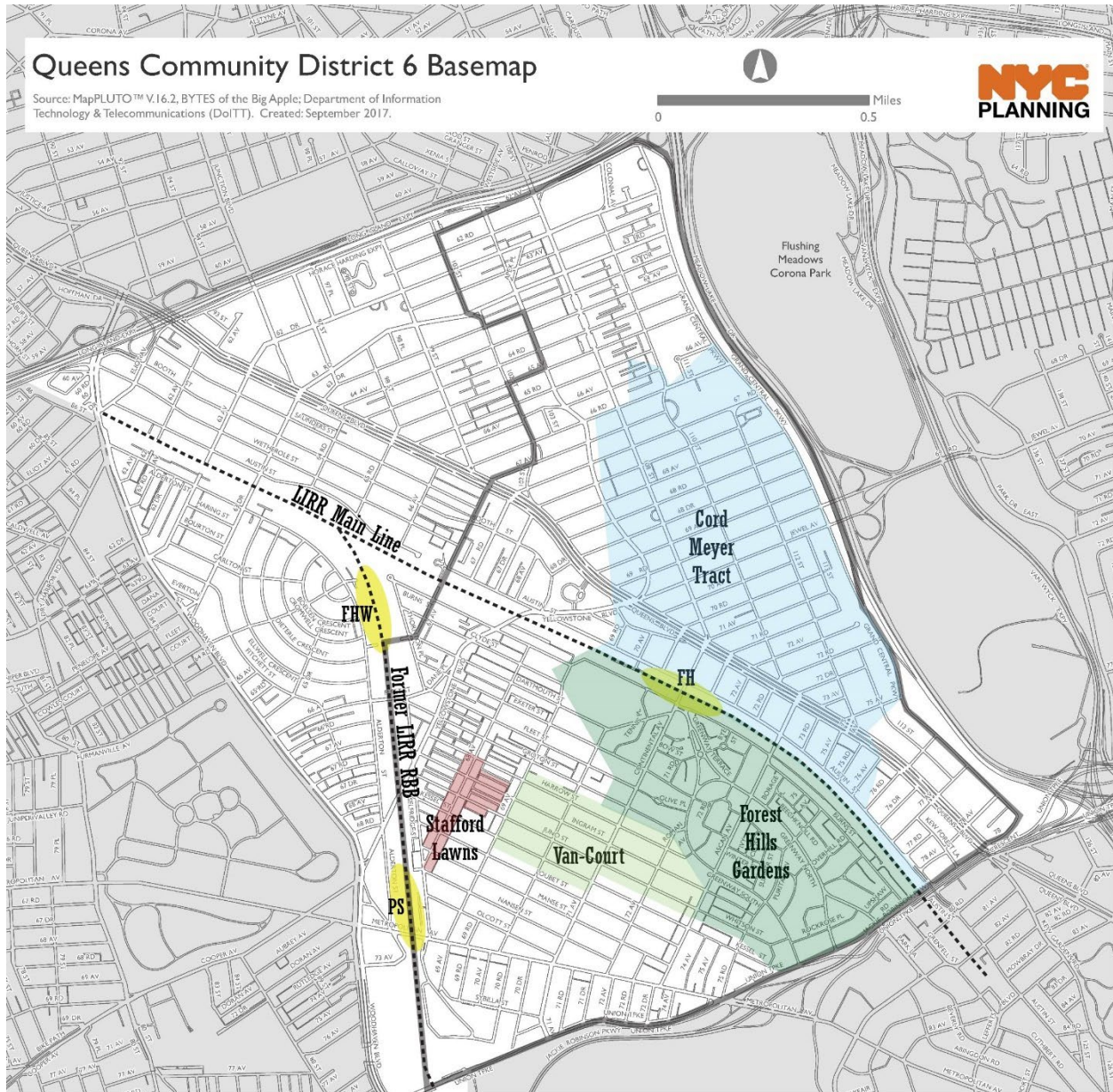


Figure 1-3 Map of Forest Hills, NY. The dark gray line indicates the border of Forest Hills, based on the boundary of the zip code 11375. The Cord Meyer tract is shown in blue, Forest Hills Gardens is shown in medium green, the Van-Court area is shown in light green, and Stafford Lawns is shown in light red. Current and former Long Island Railroad (LIRR) lines are indicated by dashed lines, with station locations indicated in yellow. FHW, Forest Hills West; FH, Forest Hills; PS, Parkside (base map is from NYC Planning, edited by the author).

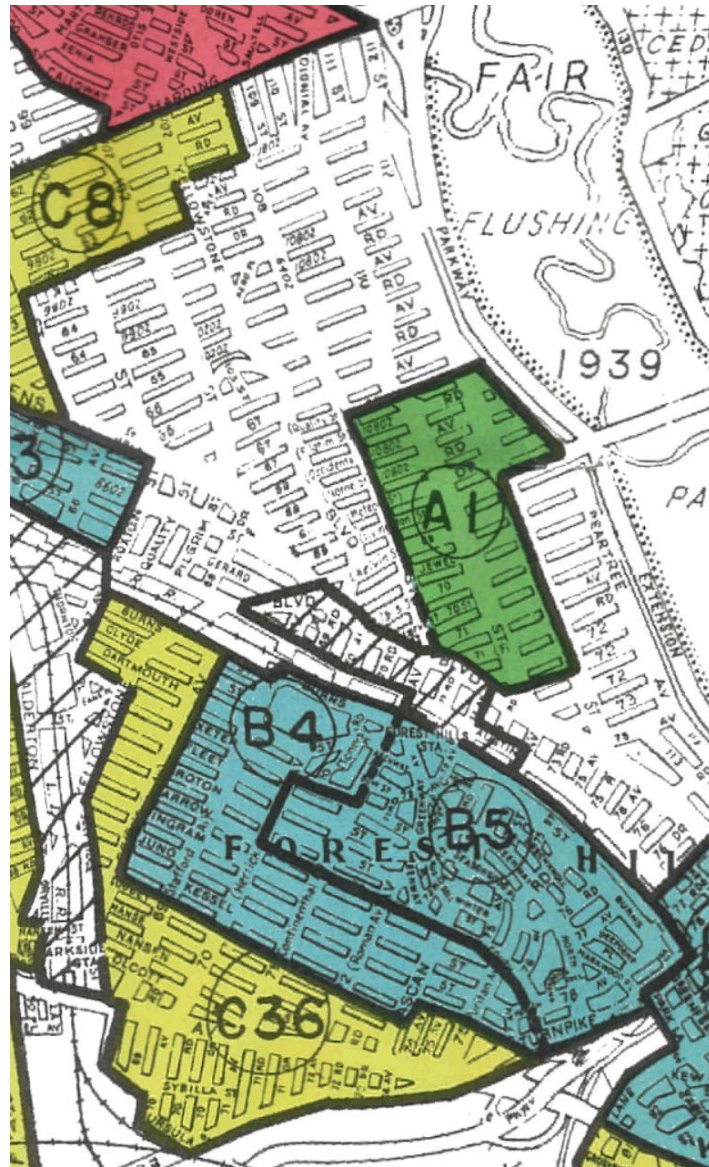


Figure 1-4 HOLC map of Forest Hills, NY. The Cord Meyer tract is labeled A1, Forest Hills Gardens is B5, the Van-Court section is B4, and the unaffiliated areas of Forest Hills are in the B4 and C36 areas (map from “Mapping Inequality”⁸³).

⁸³ Nelson et al., “Mapping Inequality.”

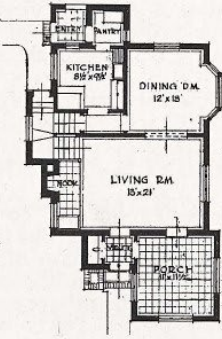
Forest Hills

HOUSES FOR SALE
LOTS FOR SALE

HOUSES BUILT
TO ORDER



A RECENTLY COMPLETED HOUSE



Phone
6256 Blvd.

Cord Meyer Development Co.

161

Figure 1-5 Cord Meyer advertisement (Queensborough, April 1923).



Figure 1-6 Station Square, Forest Hills Gardens, looking east toward Burns Street (left) and Greenway Terrace (right) (personal photo).



Figure 1-7 Station Square, Forest Hills Gardens, looking south along Continental Avenue, with Burns Street to the right (personal photo).



Figure 1-8 A detached Tudor style home in the Van-Court section of Forest Hills. This was the home of Leon Wolosoff and his family (personal photo).



Figure 1-9 Old Debevoise farmhouse on Metropolitan Avenue in 1924. A billboard for Shocks Modern Homes can be seen in front of the farmhouse, with homes under construction on Nansen Street in the background. The old house at the far right is the New Debevoise farmhouse (Queens Public Library Digital Collection⁸⁴).

⁸⁴ Eugene L. Armbruster, *Newtown - Shocks Modern Homes - Forest Hills*, March 31, 1924, Black & white photograph, March 31, 1924, Queens Public Library Digital Collection, <http://digitalarchives.queenslibrary.org/browse/newtown-shocks-modern-homes-forest-hills>.



Figure 1-10 Frame houses on Nansen Street in Forest Hills (personal photo).

\$1000 Cash

buys a beautiful home in the most charming and exclusive of all Long Island communities.



14 MINUTES TO PENN. STATION, NEW YORK

Our Houses Are But a Short Walk to the Station

*\$73 Per Month Carrying Charges, Which Includes
Installation on Principal*

6 ROOMS—TAX EXEMPT—PRICE \$8,650

The bath and kitchen, shower, steam heat, electricity, enclosed porch, shades, parquet, white enamel gas range, closets; open attic; many other conveniences.

FOREST HILLS Homes Corp.

Roman Ave. & Loubet St.

Phone Boulevard 8431. Jamaica 5366

L. I. E. R. to Forest Hills. Walk South on Continental Ave. to Loubet St.; Queensboro Blvd. Trolley to Continental Ave. or Metropolitan Ave. Trolley to Roman Ave.

Figure 1-11 Advertisement for a frame house on Loubet Street, Forest Hills (New York Times, November 9, 1924).



Figure 1-12 Manse Street houses (personal photo).



Figure 1-13 Spanish-style homes on Fleet Street in Forest Hills (personal photo).

LONG ISLAND—FOR SALE OR TO LET. | LONG ISLAND—FOR SALE OR TO LET.



*A Perfectly
Planned
Small Home
Ready for
Occupancy*

Tribune Model House—120A

**7 Rooms and Garage
FLEET ST. AND STAFFORD AVE.**

Forest Hills

adjoining Forest Hills Gardens, L. I.

15 minutes from Penn. Station

Two minutes walk from Forest Hills Station

Close to West Side Tennis Club

Accessible — Economical — Tax Exempt

House No. 2 As An Example

	Price	\$16,750.00		
	Cash Required	3,750.00		
Carrying charges	— 56000 — 6%		\$360.00	
First Mortgage	— 4500 — 6%		270.00	
Second Mortgage	— 2500 — 6%		150.00	
Third Mortgage				\$780.00
Interest on Mortgages				
Taxes (\$5000 exempt)			137.00	
Insurance			30.00	
Water			20.00	
Fixed charges				
Amortization				187.00
Second Mortgage — 10%			450.00	
Third Mortgage — 20%			500.00	
Yearly savings required				
				950.00
				\$1917.00
Total charges				
Total monthly charges (approx.)			\$160.00	
Saving by reduction of Mortgages (approx.)			80.00	
Actual cost of house (approx.)			\$ 80.00	a month

Write for Illustrated Booklet

DISTINCTIVE HOMES CORPORATION

300 Madison Ave. "Houses of Character" Murray Hill 1176
Or Your Own Broker

Figure 1-14 Advertisement for a Spanish-style home on Fleet Street, Forest Hills (New York Times, October 19, 1924).

A DISTINCTIVE ACHIEVEMENT — ADVANTAGES and VALUES BEYOND COMPARISON
 All-year Homes, with Garage—Prices \$8,500 to \$20,000; convenient terms arranged. A number of English, Spanish and Studio Type Houses just completed—ready for occupancy—as distinguished as the unusual guaranteed basis on which they are sold. High-class construction—materials and equipment “Trade Marked” Known Highest Quality. We unqualifiedly guarantee our houses—cellars to roof—high-class construction—and perfect in every detail.



NEW SPANISH ALL-YEAR VILLA
 With Private Water Front and Dock

Six beautiful spacious rooms tiled bath, shower stall, extra lavatory, breakfast room. Spanish hand wrought iron window grills, exquisite colorful Spanish interior decoration—huge open fireplace—several upper balconies. Grounds 60 ft. on Ave. 20 ft. on Water. Garage attached to house. PRICE \$16,500. CONVENIENT TERMS ARRANGED.

Prominent architects designed these real homes; they are as artistic—good to look at—as they are substantial, convenient, comfortable to live in. Delight the most fastidious taste, irresistibly appeal to all, particularly those who love the water. Each house has garage, private dock for owner's boat, grounds beautifully landscaped, sixty feet on avenue, sixty feet on water or larger.

Here are all the conveniences and charm of a fine suburb combined with recreative advantages of a select water resort.

The sea air is bracing, invigorating, clear of dust and smoke, a healthy place to live in. A real paradise for the kiddies, away from motor hazard.

Freeport Bay Estates solves the summer vacation problem in a most delightful way. You can live here (at home), attend to business and enjoy all vacation recreations the year round with your family.

SHOULD YOU PREFER. WE WILL BUILD FROM YOUR PLANS UPON PART PAYMENT OF PLOT COST ONLY. A NUMBER OF CHOICE HOMESITES ARE AVAILABLE.



NEW ENGLISH ALL-YEAR HOME
 With Private Water Front and Dock

A big roomy all-year home—six unusually large rooms, tiled bath, shower, extra lavatory, breakfast room, beautiful, open fireplace—huge veranda, upper balcony and sleeping porch—Grounds 60 ft. on Ave., 60 ft. on Water. Garage attached to house. PRICE \$15,000. VERY CONVENIENT TERMS TO RESPONSIBLE PURCHASER.

If you have dreamed of finding your ideal Home in a perfect environment—but doubt that dreams come true, then come here—see where many discriminating people have realized their ideal of Home. Why not motor out Today—Call, Write or Phone.
FREEPORT BAY ESTATES, Office Cor. Carman and Bedell Sts., Freeport, L. I. Tel. FREEport 3200 SIX BLOCKS SOUTH OF HERRICK ROAD
NEW YORK OFFICE: 393 Seventh Ave., N. Y. C. Tel. LAClawanna 5447 (opposite Penn. Station)

Figure 1-15 Advertisement for Spanish and English style houses at Freeport, Long Island. Note the use of the word “villa” to describe the Spanish-style house versus the word “home” to describe the English-style house (New York Times, May, 27, 1928).

Spanish Villas
fronting on the water.

at PORT WASHINGTON—on the beautiful North Shore of Long Island—only 35 minutes from New York.
a delightful place to live

HERE you will find a pleasantly private little island extending its green length into Manhasset Bay. A causeway gives access to the shopping and social facilities of thriving Port Washington nearby on the Long Island Sound.

Villas are available in a number of strikingly beautiful variations of the Spanish design. Each home comprises a large studio living room; dining room; patio; kitchen; breakfast room; three large bedrooms; bath and extra lavatory and shower. A large garage is attached.

As low as \$1200 cash is required
Terms will be arranged

There's a mile-long beach for bathing. And all the summer long pleasure boats frolic in the vicinity of the island.

40 odd golf clubs and country clubs of Nassau County can be reached in a matter of minutes by motor.

Water Front Villas on
MANHASSET ISLE

BY MOTOR: One crosses over the Queensboro Bridge to the Plaza and then out along Jackson Avenue and Northern Boulevard; thru Flushing, Broadway, Bayside, Manhasset to Port Washington.

BUILDERS
VILLAS ON MANHASSET ISLE, Inc., Manhasset-Isle. Port Washington 1189
(Open Daily)
New York Office—Real Estate Board Building, 12 E. 41st St., N.Y., LEXington 6226-7

Figure 1-16 Advertisement for Spanish-style homes on Long Island (New York Times, May 27, 1928).

Chapter 2 Stafford Lawns

Brothers Leon and Alvin⁸⁵ Wolosoff were among the many developers who contributed to the fabric of the neighborhood of Forest Hills beginning in the 1920s.⁸⁶ In 1930, using the name Kew-Forest Construction Company, the Wolosoff brothers debuted the Stafford Lawns development (Figure 2-1).⁸⁷ Taking its name from Stafford Avenue, which formed its eastern border, it provided a simple mnemonic for directing potential homeowners to the site. However, the avenue name was lost to memory, as it was renamed 69th Avenue when Queens simplified its street names.⁸⁸

The second half of the development's name may hint at the unique arrangement of the houses of Stafford Lawns with regard to the streets and alleys. Houses face the street along all four sides of the block, with alleys at the interior. Whereas a typical block of attached houses would have a single alley at the back, many of these blocks have alleys that cut across property lines surrounding the backyards. The alleys are accessed from the named streets via two short alleys running parallel to the avenues and cutting across the entire block. Two longer alleys run parallel to the named streets and connect to the short alleys. If left unmodified and planted with grass, there would be a single, large lawn at the center of the block. This is similar to the plan for Sunnyside Gardens developed by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, which was itself a descendant of the villa park model found in England, albeit on a much smaller scale.⁸⁹ Forest

⁸⁵ Alvin changed his name from Abraham.

⁸⁶ Linda Wolfe, *Double Life: The Shattering Affair Between Chief Judge Sol Wachtler and Socialite Joy Silverman* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 20–22. While not a scholarly source, this publication provides distilled background information on the Wolosoff brothers and their beginnings in the Queens real estate scene.

⁸⁷ “Stafford Lawns Active.”

⁸⁸ Powell, “Bringing Order Out of Chaos in Street Naming and House Numbering.”

⁸⁹ Rebecca Trumbull Wiesenthal, “Sunnyside Gardens and the Regional Planning Association of America: An Approach to Housing Reform in the United States” (Master's thesis, Charlottesville, University of Virginia, 1984),

Close and Arbor Close, two block-sized Cord Meyer developments, are local examples of this model.

Another explanation for the moniker was posited in the NYC Landmarks Preservation Council's Designation Report for the Cambria Heights-227th Street historic district. The area comprising this historic district was developed by the Wolosoff brothers in 1931 under the name St. Albans Lawns (Figure 2-2). The introductory essay in the report suggests that the development took its name from the continuous front lawns made possible by the rear alleys and garages.⁹⁰ However, it must be noted that a third contemporaneous Wolosoff development has "Lawns" in its name and does not follow the arrangement of Stafford Lawns or St. Albans Lawns. Freeport Lawns, located in Freeport on Long Island, consisted of detached single-family homes separated by driveways (Figure 2-3).⁹¹ Each house had both front and backyards. Bearing this in mind, it may have been the intention of the Wolosoffs to simply emphasize that each house had its own land.

Today, the lawns at Stafford Lawns are divided at the property lines, with a plot of land belonging to each house that faces a named street.⁹² The houses that face the numbered avenues do not have a separate plot of land. For the most part, garages are incorporated into the house design, located on the basement level and accessed from the alley. Essentially, these houses have attached garages and detached lawns (Figure 2-4, Figure 2-5, Figure 2-6, Figure 2-7, and Figure 2-8).

41; Jeffrey Andrew Kroessler, "Building Queens: The Urbanization of New York's Largest Borough" (PhD diss., New York, City University of New York, 1991), 370–73; Taylor, *Environment and the People*, 367–68.

⁹⁰ NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Cambria Heights-227th Street Historic District, Designation Report," June 28, 2022.

⁹¹ "Freeport Lawns Advertisement," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 3, 1931.

⁹² Further research could determine whether the developers intended the lawns to serve as a communal park or as individual plots of land.

Stafford Lawns houses line 68th Avenue (formerly Baldwin Avenue) from Juno Street to Nansen Street, but other houses on those blocks were built by other builders. The houses on Kessel, Loubet, Manse, and Nansen Streets between 68th and 69th Avenues are detached frame houses with driveways and backyards. Consequently, there is no need for a central alley on these blocks; there is just the alley at the end of the block behind the Stafford Lawns houses. These houses have detached garages, which are situated at an angle to make the best use of the space available (Figure 2-9).

The houses of Stafford Lawns were constructed in groups, with construction progressing along one street at a time. The designs of the homes changed as the development progressed. Some changes were made to accommodate the attached garages for some of the homes; other changes may have been made due to changing tastes and aesthetics from one year to the next or just to prevent all of the houses from being identical. There is a particularly noticeable design difference in the groups of houses along 68th Avenue; the end units have their front doors on the long side of the house facing the named street. For example, 94-02 68th Avenue, located at the corner of 68th Avenue and Ingram Street, has its front door facing Ingram Street. At the other end of the block, 94-20 68th Avenue has its front door facing Harrow Street. The interior homes, i.e., houses numbered -02 to -19, of the 68th Avenue groups have floorplans that match those presented in the brochure for Stafford Lawns from 1932 (Figure 2-10, Figure 2-11, Figure 2-12, and Figure 2-13).

These are attached single-family houses made of brick with slate roofs in the Tudor Revival style (Figure 2-14). Prominent chimneys signal the presence of fireplaces inside the homes. Some of the facades are almost entirely brick, while others have a combination of brick and stucco. Some of the houses have decorative half-timbering. No two facades are identical due

to the numerous ways the various elements can be combined. There is not a particular bond pattern that predominates overall. The bulk of the brickwork may be in Flemish bond on one block and in Common bond on another block. There is decorative brickwork in herringbone and basketweave patterns as well as diapering. Where there is stucco, there are patches of bricks added in for decorative effect. Stones are also placed in the stucco and sometimes in the brick as well. In some places, there is stucco over bricks or in places where bricks appear to have been removed. The combination of textures and materials and overall nonuniformity give the houses an imperfect appearance. They look like they were individually crafted rather than mass produced. They also seem as if they have been repaired over time, appearing older than they are (Figure 2-15). These characteristics are hallmarks of the Arts and Crafts movement.⁹³

The Arts and Crafts influence continues inside the house. The front door opens onto an entryway containing a closet, and a lighted door opens to the living room. The spacious living room has high ceilings lined with hand-hewn beams (Figure 2-16). The windows on the front wall are oversized leaded casement windows with stained glass elements. A fireplace in the corner juts out into the room rather than being set into the wall. Its dramatic chimneypiece extends to the ceiling with a gentle taper, emphasizing its position as the heart of the home. Directly opposite of the nearly floor-to-ceiling windows is the dining room (Figure 2-17). The two rooms are almost completely open to each other, but a dramatic division between the two is communicated by an arched opening, two steps, and a swooping wrought iron railing. The threshold provided by the steps and the railing maintains a distinction between the living room and dining room in terms of their functions; these are clearly two separate rooms. However, the

⁹³ These characteristics also call to mind the Japanese aesthetic concept of wabi-sabi. Given that there was a marked interest in all things Japanese as part of the Arts and Crafts movement due to the reopening of Japan to the West, this is not surprising.

lack of a physical wall between the rooms serves its own very important purpose; natural light is able to pass through from one room to the other. This is an attached house, so there can only be windows on the front and back walls. A wall between the living room and dining room would make both rooms significantly drearier. This would be especially noticeable in the dining room because it has wood paneling.

In the living room, there is a small bookcase built into the wall to the left of the archway leading to the dining room; the top of the bookcase has an arch that closely resembles that of the archway. This feature indicates that the intended homeowner is a member of at least the middle class. The shelving is intended as a place to display books or other objects that may or may not have a practical purpose. The growing consumerism of the time meant that people with means were buying things just to have them.⁹⁴ At the same time, house-related technologies were evolving and houses became smaller. Single-use rooms went out of style in favor of multipurpose rooms and more open floor plans.⁹⁵ Houses were heated by radiators rather than fireplaces or stoves, so there was no need to close a room off to keep the heat in. The already smaller rooms thus had even less wall space, and therefore, not as much furniture could be brought into the room. The built-in shelves eliminate the need for a bookcase or display cabinet that would have to be placed against a wall, and their position higher on the wall leaves space for furniture to be placed underneath them.

The original kitchen contained “built-in kitchen units” featuring automated refrigeration, a gas range with a ventilation hood, colored tile drainboards, and built-in cabinets. There was

⁹⁴ Ted Striphas, “Disowning Commodities: EBooks, Capitalism, and Intellectual Property Law,” *Television & New Media* 7, no. 3 (2006): 234–39, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/1527476404270551>; Larry Tye, *The Father of Spin: Edward L. Bernays & the Birth of Public Relations* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1998), 52.

⁹⁵ Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 1980, 244–46.

also a laundry chute.⁹⁶ An archway matching the one between the living and dining rooms separates the kitchen from the breakfast room behind it (Figure 2-18). Large windows on the back wall of the breakfast room allow natural light into the kitchen. A built-in China hutch is set into the party wall in the breakfast room (Figure 2-19). The top of the hutch has the same arch seen throughout the first floor; however, this particular arch is trimmed out with wood that matches the rest of the hutch. Across from the hutch is the backdoor, which is not solid but has four panes of glass to allow natural light into the room.

Returning to the living room, the stairs to the second floor have wrought iron railings that match those between the living and dining rooms. At the sixth step, there is a landing; the side of the landing facing the living room curves and overhangs slightly into the living room. The railing follows the curve, creating a miniature balcony. On each side of the curved portion, a wrought iron baluster extends all the way to the beam at the ceiling instead of just to the height of the railing. Each of these full-height balusters has a decorative piece on it positioned about halfway between the railing and the ceiling. Each decorative piece consists of a loop with two hooks below. These have the appearance of being suited for holding plants, either potted (set into the loop) or hanging (from the hooks). They might also be used to facilitate hanging holiday garlands or other decorative items (Figure 2-20).

On the second floor, there is another built-in hutch at the top of the stairs (Figure 2-21). It is topped with the same style of arch seen on the other built-ins and trimmed out similar to the China hutch in the breakfast room. The railing in the upstairs hallway is not wrought iron. The railing is made of wood, and the balusters are flat sawn rather than turned.⁹⁷ The newel is a

⁹⁶ I have not been able to find photos of an unmodified kitchen.

⁹⁷ The balusters appear to be 1" x 4" boards cut along their long edges.

turned 4" x 4" post. This was likely a cost-reducing measure, as wooden balusters would cost less than wrought iron railings. The wrought iron was used where it would be seen by visitors.

The second floor has three bedrooms, six closets, and a bathroom. The main bedroom (12' x 17') is at the back of the house and has two closets and a direct door to the bathroom. Two bedrooms (11' x 15' and 8' x 12') are at the front of the house; they each have a single closet. There are two closets in the hallway, one of which is lined with cedar.

The bathroom was advertised in the brochure as a "Vanity Fair bathroom with dressing table," and the developers devoted more space to its features than they did to any other part of the house. This multipiece bathroom arrangement consumed more space than a typical minimal bathroom, presaging the expansive master bathrooms that became popular in the late 20th century.⁹⁸ The brochure showed a black and white sketch of the bathroom but indicated that the fixtures and tile were pastel colored.

The colorful tile and extensive detail in the bathroom were influenced by a marketing push by manufacturers of sanitary fixtures. In 1929, the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company published a book on the use of color in bathrooms. Standard urged designers to give as much thought to bathrooms as they gave to other interiors of the home, arguing that the bathroom was important to the health of the family and promoting the consideration of light, air, and sunshine in its design as well as the selection of its fixtures. Emphasizing that the word fixture is used in reference to the lavatory, water closet, and bath because these items are fixed in place, Standard pointed out that these items would not be easy to replace; therefore, care should be taken in the selection of appropriate fixtures. The book then discusses the inspiration for the

⁹⁸ Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home*, 1980, 237.

10 colors presented: T'äng Red, Orchid of Vincennes, Royal Copenhagen Blue, Ivoire de Medici, St. Porchaire Brown, Rose du Barry, Ionian Black, Clair de Lune Blue, Ming Green, and Meissen White. Standard advised that all fixtures for the bathroom be purchased from the same manufacturer; since the fixtures were made of different materials, e.g., vitreous china and enameled iron, proprietary color formulations had been developed to ensure consistency of color on the various materials. Two color palettes were suggested for each featured fixture color, with color suggestions for the floor, floor covering, walls, ceiling, furniture, and draperies. A bathroom layout was selected for each fixture color, and illustrations of each suggested color palette were shown, with the floorplans for all 10 layouts also provided in the book.⁹⁹

The Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company sponsored a design competition using their bath fixtures and colors, publishing a book featuring some of the winning designs in 1931. There were two categories for the competition based on home cost: the budget category was for homes that would not cost more than \$15,000 and the unlimited category was for homes where cost was not a major consideration. The unlimited bathrooms tended to be very spacious, often incorporating home gym spaces, and having multiple sinks, separate tubs and showers, separate vanity spaces, and sometimes a bidet or an additional junior-sized toilet for children. In the budget category, the most luxurious of the bathrooms were similar to the "Vanity Fair" bathroom of Stafford Lawns: separate tub and shower, combination sink and vanity, and an alcove for the toilet.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, *Color and Style in Bathroom Furnishing and Decoration* (Pittsburgh, PA: Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, 1929).

¹⁰⁰ Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, *The Bathroom: A New Interior* (Pittsburgh, PA: Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, 1931).

This was the only bathroom on the bedroom level; it featured the expected hall door as well as a second door from the main bedroom (Figure 2-22). The sink was set into an arched recess and featured a built-in mirrored vanity dresser and a “Venetian triple-mirrored medicine cabinet.” The triple mirror was hinged, not fixed in place, allowing the user to adjust the mirrors to desired angles. The arched recess allowed for the placement of additional built-in storage on the walls to the right and left of the sink (Figure 2-23 and Figure 2-24).

The sink area was flanked by arched niches for the shower and toilet. The shower had a plate glass door with a grille above the door to allow for air circulation (Figure 2-25). A separate tub was located in its own arched recess on the other side of the bathroom, with a step up from the floor level along the edge of the tub (Figure 2-26). A casement window was located on the back wall above the radiator; stained glass provided privacy (Figure 2-27). The hallway door and the window were both arched to match the various recesses and niches in the bathroom. The door to the main bedroom was a traditional rectangular door, but there was an arch of tile in the wall around it in the bathroom. These arches were more geometric than those throughout the rest of the house.

The brochure states that there was a “bathroom linen supplyette” in the bathroom; this likely refers to the hall closet just outside the bathroom. There was also a laundry chute from the bathroom, but it cannot be identified in any of the available photos. The brochure also specifically mentions the colored tile in the bathroom as well as chromium fittings. The sketch of the bathroom shown in the brochure makes the room appear larger than it is; it would be impossible to back up enough inside the bathroom to take a photo that shows everything in the sketch.

In addition to the main bathroom on the second floor, there was an extra lavatory on the main floor. This was located just outside the kitchen at the top of the stairs to the basement. The floorplan on the brochure shows a door between the kitchen and the stairs to the basement. The door does not open directly to the basement stairs, however. There is a landing at the top of the stairs, and the lavatory is just off to the side of the landing.

The basement was partially finished and featured a wood-paneled recreation room with a second fireplace. Windows on the front wall allowed natural light to come in but offered no view. Like the living room fireplace, the basement fireplace was located in the corner, jutting out into the room (Figure 2-28). However, due to the lower ceilings, the chimneypiece was less imposing than its upstairs counterpart. A closet provided a bit of storage space, and according to the brochure, there is another book niche next to the closet.

The back half of the basement was the utility area, featuring space for laundry as well as the boiler room and coal bin. A door at the back opened to stairs up to the backyard. Of all the aspects of home life, utilities and laundry have changed the most since 1930, so it is not surprising that no photos of unmodified laundry and utility rooms are shown with home listings. These are the areas most likely to be changed by homeowners when given the opportunity. Also, the lifespan of water heaters and boilers is such that their replacement becomes a necessity rather than a choice.

Unmodified kitchens were also nonexistent. Technological advancements, limited appliance lifespans, and changing tastes all contribute to the need and desire to make changes to the kitchen. The main floor half bath was frequently overlooked in realty photos because the room is so small. The photos that can be found tend to have such a skewed perspective that it is difficult to tell where things actually are. The floorplan from the brochure gives such little detail

that the room appears to only have a toilet; this detail is particularly interesting because the advertisements use the term lavatory, which was typically used to refer to a bathroom sink.¹⁰¹

The sales brochure has a floorplan that matches several houses on 68th Avenue with backyards and diagonally situated garages. The key to matching the floorplan to these houses was the second-floor bathroom. Finding photos of the distinctive bathroom led to identification of similarities between houses, for example, the shape of the arches on the built-ins and between the living and dining rooms. Other houses that are clearly part of Stafford Lawns, particularly those with the detached yards, have slight differences in their interior details, which would make it difficult to conclusively link them to Stafford Lawns through the brochure floorplan alone.

While the Wolosoff brothers were selling homes at Stafford Lawns, another pair of brothers and former Forest Hills developers were building very similar homes in Laurelton in eastern Queens (Figure 2-29). The Gross brothers, along with their brother-in-law Lawrence Morton and associates Joseph Moss and Harry Sirkin, purchased the Laurelton Golf Club in 1928 with plans to turn it into a residential neighborhood. By 1930, the Laurelton Homes development was in its third phase, selling brick studio homes (Figure 2-30) very similar in design to the homes at Stafford Lawns (Figure 2-31 and Figure 2-32). Previous sections of the Laurelton Homes development had comprised detached homes in Spanish (Figure 2-33) and English (Figure 2-34) styles. All three types of homes built by Laurelton Homes were offered at price points lower than that of the Stafford Lawns houses, implying a difference in the socioeconomic status of buyers in the two neighborhoods.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Hubka, *How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900–1940*, 89.

¹⁰² “2,500 Homes on Golf Links”; “Sell More Laurelton Homes,” *New York Times*, April 7, 1929; “Building 1,100 Homes on Laurelton Plots,” *New York Times*, April 21, 1929; “Laurelton Homes Sold,” *New York Times*, October 12, 1930; “Latest Laurelton Home Type,” *New York Times*, September 28, 1930.

The homes of Stafford Lawns were intended for middle class residents. The decorative touches and the practical innovations all indicate that these homes were providing more than the most basic shelter. The prominent fireplace with imposing chimneypiece that was the focal point of the living room was the symbolic hearth as heart of the home. It was not needed to heat the home; it was for decorative and nostalgic purposes. The wood paneling in the dining room was also decorative: an unnecessary, applied finish on top of the wall material. The built-in bookshelves and China hutch as well as the stairway hooks were placed in the home to display objects and to show visitors what the homeowners' money could buy. Colorful tile in the kitchen and bathroom, rather than plain white, was another way to display disposable income. The differentiation of public and private spaces was evident in the different materials used for the railings on the main floor versus the second floor, with the more expensive, decorative wrought iron on display on the main floor and wood on the private second floor.

Innovations that allowed the necessities of life to be hidden also demonstrate a higher standard of living. All houses require heating, but the radiators in these homes were concealed in the walls. They are still visible, but they do not take up space in each room. The laundry chutes provided a way to hide the mundane yet necessary task of getting dirty clothing and linens to the laundry area in the basement without carrying them through the public spaces of the house. The clothes dryer in the basement allowed laundry to be hung up inside the house rather than outside for the neighbors to see. Likewise, the extra lavatory on the main floor, while not given as much attention as the upstairs bathroom, allowed for guests, or hired help, to use the bathroom without going into the family's private space upstairs. The multi-fixture bathroom on the second floor was more luxurious than the standard three-piece bathroom. The many closets provide space to store more material goods as well as a way to keep things out of sight if they are not the type of

goods one wishes to display. These are innovations that tend to necessary functions with more style than the minimum required for subsistence living.

Stylistically, the houses built by the Wolosoff brothers in the Stafford Lawns development fit in well with other houses in the unaffiliated area of Forest Hills. As discussed in the previous chapter, the various Revival styles that arose from the Arts and Crafts movement can be found throughout the neighborhood, with Tudor Revival predominating, particularly in the Gardens and the Van-Court area. However, this style did not become popular in Forest Hills just due to proximity to the Gardens, and this style is not unique to Forest Hills. As it turns out, the style was popular across Queens at the time, with nearly identical houses available in other neighborhoods but at lower prices.

Chapter 2 Figures



Figure 2-1 Stafford Lawns houses on Juno Street, between 68th and 69th Avenues, Forest Hills, NY (personal photo).



Figure 2-2 St. Albans Lawns houses on 227th Street, between Linden Boulevard and 116th Avenue, Cambria Heights, NY (personal photo).



Figure 2-3 Freeport Lawns houses on Dutchess Street, between Prince Avenue and Davis Street, Freeport, NY (screenshot from Google Maps).



Figure 2-4 View of one the long alleys on the block bounded by Ingram and Juno Streets and 68th and 69th Avenues (personal photo).



Figure 2-5 Detached lawn on the block bound by Ingram and June Streets and 68th and 69th Avenues (personal photo).



Figure 2-6 Detached lawn on the block bound by Ingram and Juno Streets and 68th and 69th Avenues (personal photo).



Figure 2-7 Detached lawn on the block bound by Ingram and Juno Streets and 68th and 69th Avenues (personal photo).



Figure 2-8 Detached lawn on the block bound by Ingram and Juno Streets and 68th and 69th Avenues (personal photo).



Figure 2-9 Alley behind houses on 68th Avenue looking toward Loubet Street from Manse Street (personal photo).

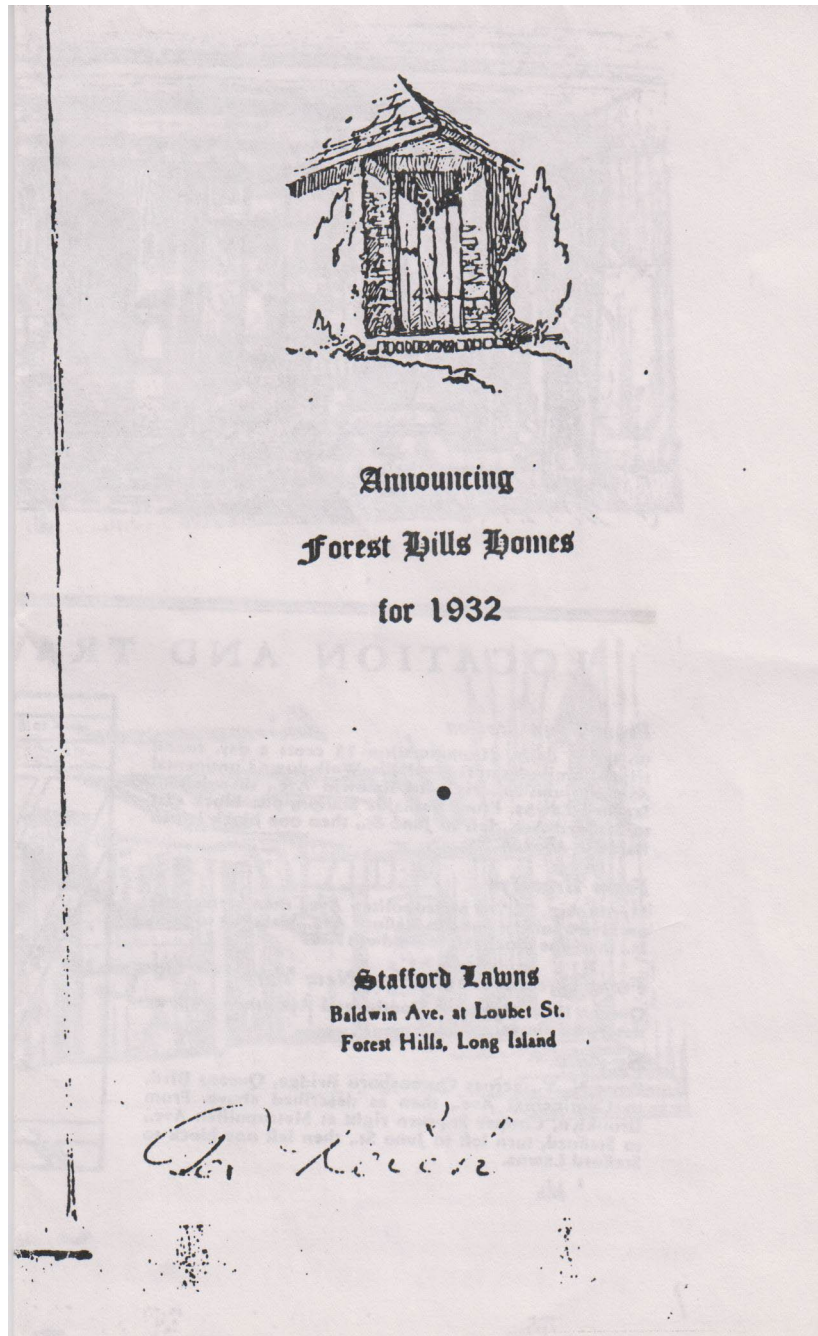


Figure 2-10 Front of Stafford Lawns brochure (Rego-Forest Preservation Photo Collection¹⁰³).

¹⁰³ "Stafford Lawns Homes by Wolosoff Brothers for 1932, Forest Hills, NY Promotional Booklet," Flickr, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/8095451@N08/sets/72157625971748106>.

PRICES AND TERMS


Price.....	\$9,550.00
Minimum Cash Payment.....	\$1,250.00
First Mortgage (Held by Title Co. 5 Yrs.)....	5,500.00
Second Mortgage.....	2,800.00
Total.....	\$9,550.00

Monthly Carrying Charges

First Five Years

Interest on First Mortgage.....	\$27.50
Taxes—(Approximate).....	12.00
Water.....	1.50
Insurance.....	.50
Reduction and Interest of Second Mortgage:	
For 60 Months	
{ Average Interest \$7.47	} 54.14
{ Average Reduction \$46.67	
Total.....	\$95.64

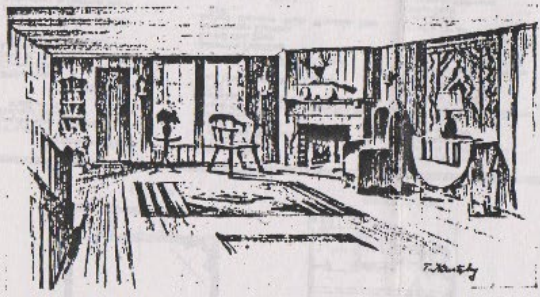
After 5 Years When the Second Mortgage is Paid
Off the Monthly Carrying Charge is Only.....\$41.50



Telephone: Boulevard 8-2012

Figure 2-11 Back of Stafford Lawns brochure (Rego-Forest Preservation Photo Collection¹⁰⁴).

¹⁰⁴ “Stafford Lawns Homes by Wolosoff Brothers for 1932, Forest Hills, NY Promotional Booklet.”

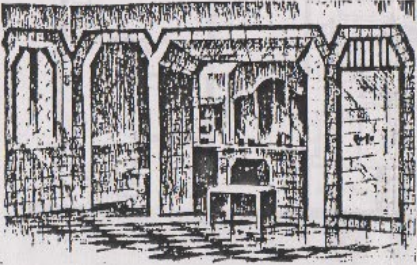


FINISHED RECREATION ROOM

Showing log-burning fireplace, book niche, large windows.

Outstanding Features

STUDIO LIVING ROOM; Recreation Room; Wood Panelled Gallery Dining Room; Outside Garage; Sewers and Paved Streets (in and paid for); Library Corner; China Closet; Automatic Refrigeration; Two Log-Burning Fireplaces; Built-in Kitchen Units; Flagstone Terrace leading to Rear Garden; Furnished Breakfast Room; Spacious Bedrooms; Vanity Fair Bathroom With Dressing Table; Extra Lavatory on Main Floor; Glazed Painting; Concealed Copper Radiation; Vestibule With Mirrored Door Cloak Closet; Solid Poured Concrete Foundations; Seven-Eighths-inch Oak Floors, Doubled; Brass Water Pipes; Extra Heavy Floor Beams; Two-inch Panelled Doors; Windows Metal Weather Stripped and Caulked; Window Sashes; Generous Number of Base Plugs; Metal Corner Guards; Slate Mansard Roof; Copper Leaders and Gutters.



BATHROOM

Showing individual shower with plate glass door; triple mirrored vanity dresser, and lavatory in arched recess. (Bathub niche on opposite side.)

STUDIO LIVING ROOM

Showing log-burning fireplace; leaded glass studio casement windows and high hand-beam beamed ceiling.

LOCATION AND TRAVELING INSTRUCTIONS

From Penn Station
96 trains daily. (Commutation 23 cents a day, round trip.) 11 minutes to Forest Hills. Walk down Continental Ave. to Juno St., right to Baldwin Ave., then left to Stafford Lawns. From Parkside Station, one block east to Stafford Ave., left to Juno St., then one block left to Baldwin Avenue.

From Brooklyn
Myrtle Ave. "L" to Metropolitan Ave., then surface car on Metropolitan Ave., to Stafford Ave., walk left to Juno St., then one block left to Baldwin Ave.

From Queensboro Bridge, New York
Queens Blvd. trolley to Continental Ave., then walk as described above.

By Auto
From N. Y., across Queensboro Bridge, Queens Blvd. to Continental Ave., then as described above. From Brooklyn, Cooper St., turn right at Metropolitan Ave., to Stafford, turn left to Juno St., then left one block to Stafford Lawns.

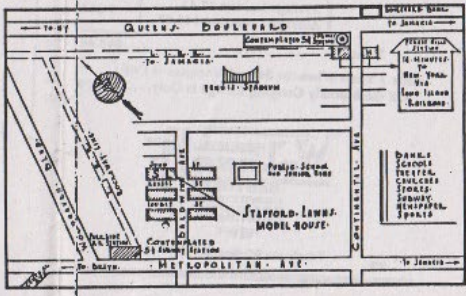


Figure 2-12 Stafford Lawns brochure showing sketches of rooms (Rego-Forest Preservation Council Photo Collection¹⁰⁵).

¹⁰⁵ "Stafford Lawns Homes by Wolosoff Brothers for 1932, Forest Hills, NY Promotional Booklet."

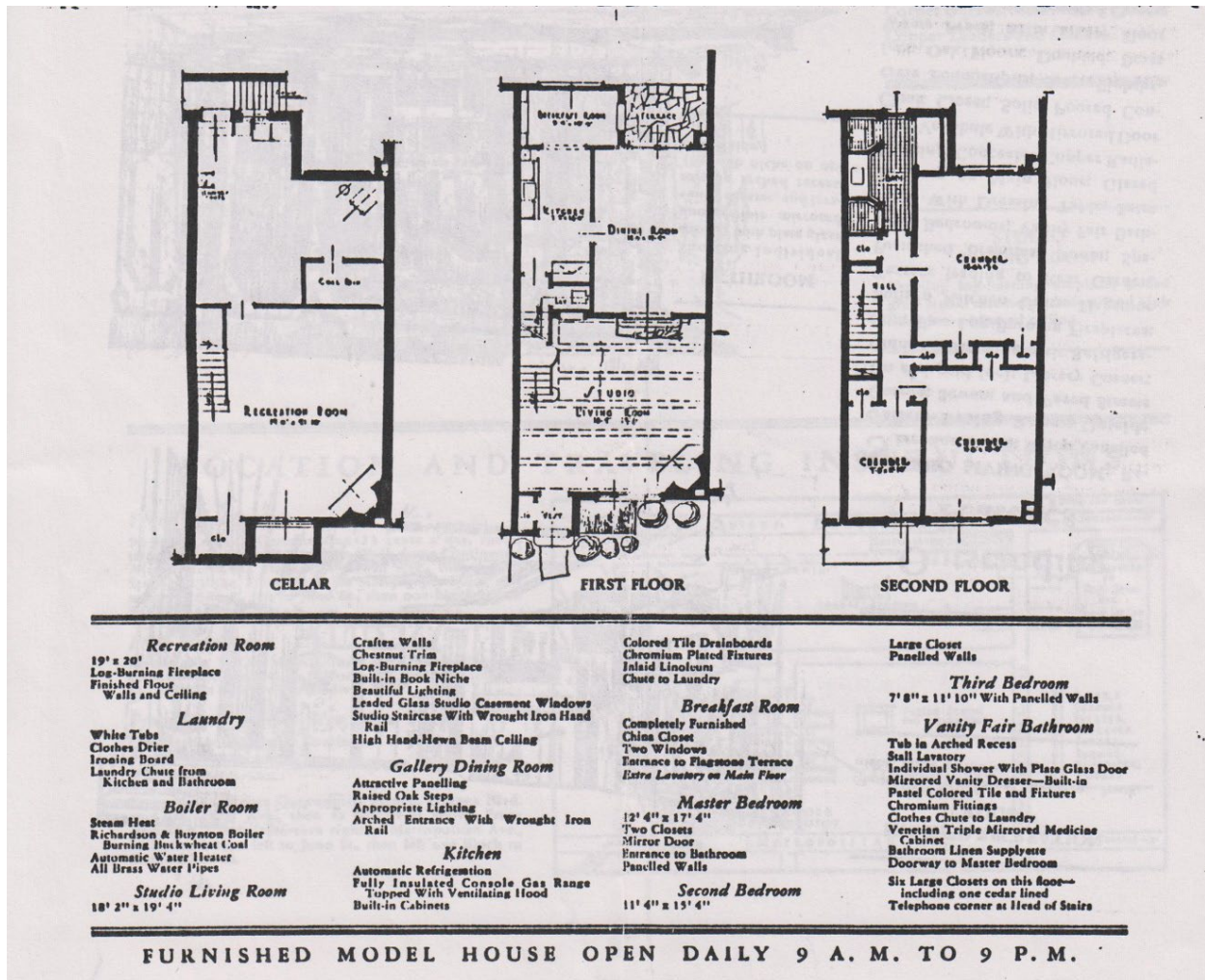


Figure 2-13 Stafford Lawns brochure showing floorplan (Rego-Forest Preservation Photo Collection¹⁰⁶).

¹⁰⁶ “Stafford Lawns Homes by Wolosoff Brothers for 1932, Forest Hills, NY Promotional Booklet.”



Figure 2-14 Homes on 68th Avenue between Kessel and Loubet Streets (personal photo).



Figure 2-15 Front facade of 91-04 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹⁰⁷).



Figure 2-16 Living room of 91-04 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹⁰⁸).

¹⁰⁷ Zillow, Inc., “91-04 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375,” Zillow, accessed December 14, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/91.dash.04-68th-Ave-Forest-Hills,-NY-11375_rb/.

¹⁰⁸ Zillow, Inc.



Figure 2-17 Living room and dining room of 91-04 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹⁰⁹).



Figure 2-18 Kitchen of 91-04 68th Avenue, note arch in the wall separating the kitchen from the breakfast nook (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁰).

¹⁰⁹ Zillow, Inc.

¹¹⁰ Zillow, Inc.



Figure 2-19 Breakfast room of 92-16 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹¹¹).



Figure 2-20 Stairs leading to the second floor of 91-16 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹¹²).

¹¹¹ Zillow, Inc., “9216 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375,” Zillow, accessed December 14, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/9216-68th-Ave-Forest-Hills,-NY-11375_rb/.

¹¹² Zillow, Inc., “9116 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375,” Zillow, accessed December 14, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/9116-68th-Ave-Forest-Hills,-NY-11375_rb/.



Figure 2-21 Second floor hallway of 92-17 68th Avenue; the bathroom has been remodeled (image from Zillow.com¹¹³).



Figure 2-22 Main bedroom of 92-16 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁴).

¹¹³ Zillow, Inc., “92-17 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375,” Zillow, accessed December 14, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/9217-68th-Ave-Forest-Hills,-NY-11375_rb/.

¹¹⁴ Zillow, Inc., “9216 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375.”



Figure 2-23 Bathroom vanity (potentially original) at 92-13 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁵).



Figure 2-24 Vanity (cabinet and sink are likely replacements) in the bathroom of 92-16 68th Avenue, tub alcove is visible on the left, and the toilet alcove is just barely discernible between the window and the vanity alcove (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁶).

¹¹⁵ Zillow, Inc., “9213 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375,” Zillow, accessed December 14, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/9213-68th-Ave-Forest-Hills,-NY-11375_rb/.

¹¹⁶ Zillow, Inc., “9216 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375.”



Figure 2-25 Bathroom of 91-04 68th Avenue taken from the window looking out the hallway. Note the grille above the shower door; this detail is discernible in the sketch of the bathroom in the developer's brochure (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁷).



Figure 2-26 Bathroom of 91-04 68th Avenue. The vanity and window are likely replacements; the shower door is visible to the left in the foreground, the tub alcove is on the right, and the toilet alcove is to the left of the window (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁸).

¹¹⁷ Zillow, Inc., "91-04 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375."

¹¹⁸ Zillow, Inc.



Figure 2-27 Bathtub and window in the bathroom of 92-16 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹¹⁹).



Figure 2-28 Basement recreation room at 91-04 68th Avenue (image from Zillow.com¹²⁰).

¹¹⁹ Zillow, Inc., “9216 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375.”

¹²⁰ Zillow, Inc., “91-04 68th Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375.”

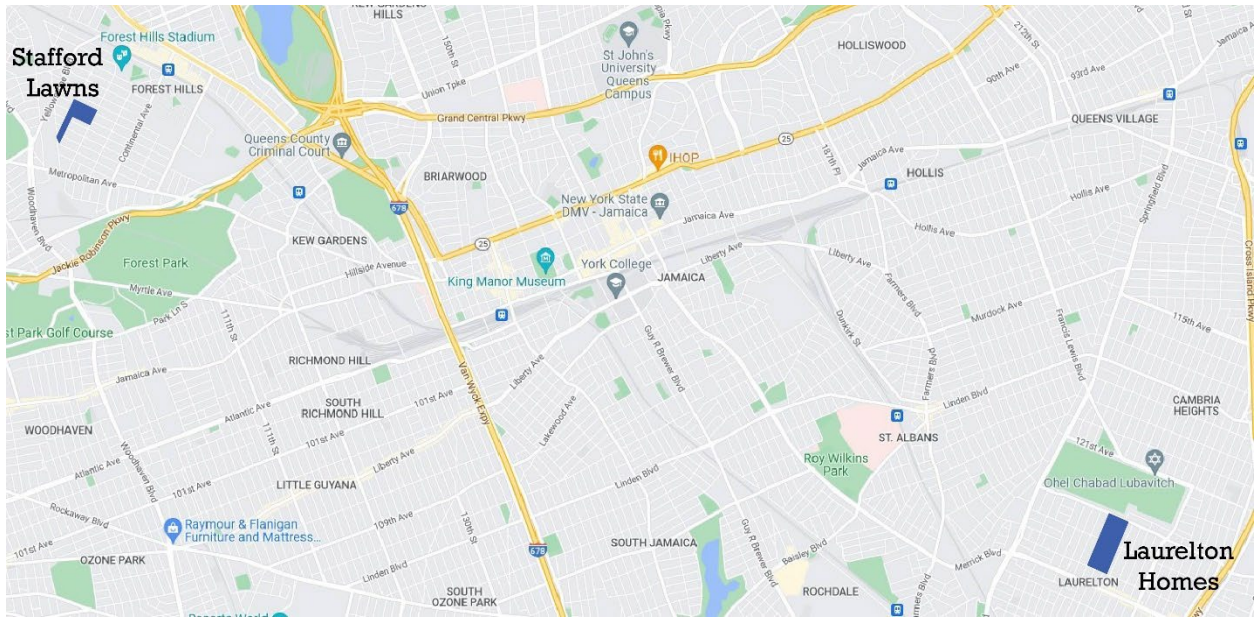


Figure 2-29 Map showing locations of Stafford Lawns and Laurelton Homes (screenshot from Google Maps, edited by the author).



Figure 2-30 Laurelton Homes houses on 226th Street, between 131st and 133rd Streets, Laurelton, NY (personal photo).

QUEENS. QUEENS.



STUDIO LIVING ROOM IN NEW LAURELTON HOMES

NEW BRICK STUDIO HOMES

With Separate Garage

THESE unusual homes contain 7 rooms, studio living room with high ceiling and heavy exposed cross beams, leaded glass studio windows and wood-burning open fireplace, furnished breakfast nook, Norge electric refrigerator, Library-Den in basement with solid wood panel walls and another wood-burning open fireplace; colored tile set 6 feet high in bathroom, large falence floor tile, separate stall for toilet and a Vanity Alcove with modernistic boudoir table, extra toilet downstairs and many other appointments complete the typical Laurelton Home.

\$7190

Includes Everything
\$395 on Contract
\$395 on Title
\$61.95 Monthly paye
all charges except 2d
Mtg.

WARNING! Laurelton Homes are built only by Laurelton Homes, Inc. They are located NORTH of Merrick Rd. The studio living room with beamed ceiling is in every genuine Laurelton Home. Be sure it is built by Laurelton Homes, Inc., and you will be sure of complete satisfaction.

Laurelton Homes, Inc.

A DIVISION OF THE INTERSTATE HOUSING CORP.
MERRICK RD. & 226th ST.—LAURELTON, L. I.

DIRECTIONS: Via L. I. R. R., 25 minutes from Penn. Sta., N. Y., or Flatbush Av., Bklyn., to Laurelton sta. Via auto, Merrick Rd. to 226th St., turn left; or Sunrise Highway to 226th St., turn left to Merrick Rd.; or Foch Blvd. to Springfield Blvd., turn right to Merrick Rd., turn left to 226th, then turn left.

Completely Furnished Model Home Open Today
OVER 2,400 LAURELTON HOMES SOLD

Figure 2-31 Laurelton Homes advertisement for attached studio homes (New York Times, May 17, 1931). Compare the image of the living room shown here with the living room sketch in the Stafford Lawns advertisement in Figure 2-32.

RIGHT IN Forest Hills



NEW STUDIO BRICK HOMES

THESE attractive homes contain 6 large rooms, furnished breakfast room, open porch, garage, extra lavatory on first floor, studio living room with high ceiling and heavy cross-beams, log-burning open fireplace, built-in bookcases, real wood panel dining room walls, Electrolux silent refrigerator, Magic Chef insulated gas range, custom built kitchen units and colored tile bathroom and standing shower with plate glass door, colored plumbing fixtures—in fact, every new and modern improvement usually offered, plus many features that can only be obtained here.

\$9550 including GARAGE \$500 CASH

On Contract \$750 On Title

\$97.64 Per month pays All Carrying Charges on this home and reduces the Second Mortgage an Average of \$46.67 Per Month.

\$43 Per Month will do the total carrying charges on your home at the end of 5 years, when the second mortgage has been paid off.

Only 14 minutes from Pennsylvania Station, New York, via L. I. R. R. The commutation fare is less than 12c.

Stafford Lawns



Sketch of Living Room

Ingram St., cor
Stafford Ave.
FOREST HILLS
N. Y.
Tel. Boulevard
4355 or 10408

DIRECTIONS—From Forest Hills Station walk south through Continental Ave to Fleet St., then turn right three blocks to Baldwin Ave., then left 2 short blocks to Model House. Or, from the Parkside Station, walk one block east to Stafford Ave., then turn left to Harrow St., then left one block to Model House. **BY AUTO**—From New York across Queensboro Bridge—along Queens Boulevard to Continental Ave., turn right to Fleet St., then right again three blocks to Baldwin Ave., then left two short blocks to Model House.

INQUIRE DIRECTLY AT BUILDERS' OFFICE ON PREMISES

Figure 2-32 Stafford Lawns advertisement with sketch of studio living room (New York Times, December 14, 1930). Compare the sketch of the living room shown here with the living room image in the Laurelton Homes advertisement in Figure 2-31.



Spanish Homes \$6990
on the
Laurelton Golf Course
in New York City

Fully detached stucco homes with six large rooms, sun parlor, furnished breakfast nook, tile kitchen, colored tile bath, separate shower room, extra toilet on first floor. Textured walls, parquet floors, steam heat, copper leaders and gutters and many other improvements.

**CONCRETE STREETS, GAS, WATER
 ELECTRICITY, SIDEWALKS**
 All street assessments, including the \$10,000,000 sewer assessment, are paid for by the builders.

Near Station, Stores, Schools and Churches
\$500 CASH | \$25 MONTHLY
 Gives You Title on Principal

[4 New Types Now Being Completed]
 Office and Model Home Open Till 9 P. M.

504 Sold
Since April First

27 Minutes to Penn Sta., N. Y., or Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn.

Directions
 L. I. R. R. to Roadside Sta. Our Office at Roadside Sta.
 Via Auto Merrick Road to property.

Laurelton Homes Inc.
 Merrick Road and 233rd Street

LAURELTON, L. I.
 "COME HOME"

TEL. LAURELTON 5602
 TO LAURELTON

NOTE: HOME MUST BE PAID FOR BY CASH OR BY CASH AND CASH PAID FOR

Figure 2-33 Laurelton Homes advertisement for Spanish-style homes (New York Times, June 17, 1928).

\$ 7,990



An Unequaled
Value!

**...A SOLID BRICK
DETACHED HOME**
on the
Laurelton Golf Course

Where we sold 935 Spanish homes in the past year—establishing a new record for unequalled value and bringing all buyers new records in the real estate history of New York.

THE HOUSE OF PROGRESS

SIX large rooms, sun parlor, furnished breakfast room, luxurious flooring in kitchen, built-in lavatory board, 12-in. built-in Hauler kitchen dresser, colored enameled gas range, linen closet and pantry, extra toilet on first floor, colored tile bath, separate tile shower room, built-in tub, linen closet in bathroom, wardrobe with cloak closet, laundry in cellar, clothes drier, real wood-burning open fireplace, 8-in. solid brick in all four walls, 12 in. poured concrete foundation, steel girder cedar beams, Purocta steel casement windows, double doors 1/4 in. oak throughout, three coats of plaster, natural walls, steam heat, brass plumbing, copper leaders and gutters, open attic, shade.

\$790 Cash

TITLE COMPANY FIRST MORTGAGE \$5,000 | SECOND MORTGAGE RUNS UNTIL PAID

\$25 Monthly on Principal

Make your selection from one of the six distinctive types and choose your location NOW for summer occupancy—the sales will exceed the construction schedule.

[COMPLETELY FURNISHED MODEL]
[HOME OPEN DAILY UNTIL 9 P.M.]

Laurelton Homes, Inc.

Merrick Road & 227th St., Laurelton, L. I.
441 Merrick Road, Queens, N. Y., or Elizabeth Ave., Springfield, La. Laurelton, N. Y., or by express—Merrick Road across Jamaica, or Justice High, 402 W. 114th St., near 104th St. Merrick Road

On Landscaped Plot 32x100—Private Driveway

Reinforced Concrete Streets Paved From Curb to Curb

FIVE MINUTES' RIDE TO FRESH WATER BATHING

15 Minutes Ride to Long Beach and the Rockaways. Near Schools, Churches and Stores

OUR PURCHASERS ARE FREE FROM SEWER ASSESSMENT No. 9256

That portion of the \$14,000,000 Queens Sewer Assessment affecting our property will be paid by Laurelton Homes, Inc.

Can You Afford To Delay Inspecting The Greatest Home Value Ever Offered?

"COME HOME TO LAURELTON"

Figure 2-34 Laurelton Homes advertisement for detached brick English homes (New York Times, May 5, 1929).

Chapter 3 Selected Advertisements

The earliest advertisements for Stafford Lawns were text-based classified ads which first appeared in 1926 (Figure 3-1). These advertisements appeared regularly in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and the *Brooklyn Daily Times* from June 1926 to March 1927.¹²¹ Stafford Lawns advertisements did not appear again until June 1930. As the cloud of the Great Depression descended on the housing industry, 1930 was not the ideal time to launch, or relaunch, a real estate enterprise. The number of new builds dropped precipitously, while the number of foreclosures skyrocketed.¹²² With multiple developers competing for a dwindling pool of customers, the Wolosoff brothers needed more than just a catchy name for their houses. The language used to describe the houses and the features that were singled out as selling points, e.g., name brands of appliances or building materials, design features, and technological advancements, etc., indicate what the developers thought their potential buyers deemed important. Details relating to the overall home price as well as the particulars of down payments and monthly costs are also of interest. Finally, how developers addressed transportation and commute concerns informs the reader what the developer thought of the ideal homeowner's transportation needs.

Two advertisements for attached homes with six rooms in Queens appeared in the *New York Times* on Sunday, October 26, 1930 (Figure 3-2). Both ads contain an image, and they appeared diagonally adjacent to each other on the page. The first advertisement is for the

¹²¹ “Stafford Lawns Classified Ad,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 23, 1926; “Stafford Lawns Classified Ad,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 1, 1927, <https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/59843920/>; “Stafford Lawns Classified Ad,” *Brooklyn Times Union*, March 4, 1927.

¹²² Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 193.

Wolosoff brothers' Stafford Lawns in Forest Hills (Figure 3-3). The second advertisement is for Laurelton Homes, located in eastern Queens (Figure 3-4).¹²³

The Stafford Lawns advertisement is 1/16 of a page. Most of the ad consists of words, with a line drawing creating a border around the print, and a small photo in the bottom right corner of the living room fireplace. The choice to use the hearth for the only picture in the ad shows that the Wolosoffs wanted to evoke thoughts of family, with the traditional symbolism of the hearth as the center of the home.¹²⁴

The largest type appearing in the ad is at the top, and it emphasizes the location of the homes "Right in Forest Hills." This wording is not only larger than everything else but also in different fonts than the rest of the verbiage. "Right in" appears in an italic stylized open block print, while "Forest Hills" is in an almost gothic style font, echoing the medieval influence on the Arts and Crafts movement that informs the Tudor Revival style of the exteriors of the homes and reminding potential homebuyers of nearby Forest Hills Gardens. The type choice here recalls the real estate mantra of "location, location, location." The Wolosoffs want potential buyers to know that they are not selling houses that are on the edge of the neighborhood, barely qualifying as being in Forest Hills. There was another developer active at this time who was building houses in Parkway Estates who frequently used the term "the Forest Hills of Jamaica" in his ads.¹²⁵ The Wolosoffs want buyers to know that their houses are in Forest Hills.

There are four statements made in the next largest size of type, and they are all in all caps. They will be discussed in the order that they appear in the ad from top to bottom. "NEW

¹²³ This chapter focuses on a comparison of ads that appeared next to each other on the same day. Additional advertisements for these developments can be found in the Appendix.

¹²⁴ Dell Upton, *American Architecture: A Thematic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 39.

¹²⁵ Parkway Gardens advertisement, *New York Times*, April, 21, 1929.

BRICK STUDIO HOMES” appears at the top, just under “Forest Hills.” This statement carries an incredible amount of weight with just four short words. The Wolosoffs are emphasizing that they are building and selling new houses. Potential buyers will not be taking up residence in someone else’s space; they will not have to worry about the stability of secret do-it-yourself improvements or the work of an unqualified handyman. The number of foreclosures should indicate a ready supply of previously owned homes; however, buyers might consider a previously foreclosed property to be stained with the prior inhabitant’s failure or be concerned that it portends bad luck for the next owner.

Brick is an enduring material, it lasts much longer than wood, and therefore, it symbolizes sturdiness. Thomas Jefferson once complained about people building houses of inferior materials rather than stone or brick.¹²⁶ Brick homes are homes that will last. A home with a brick exterior requires less maintenance than a home with wooden siding. Wood needs to be painted and weatherproofed, processes that are laborious and must be repeated regularly. Brick does not need to be painted. While the mortared joints may need to be repointed from time to time, that is a job that can be done spot-wise as needed, not an attic-to-basement endeavor. It is unlikely that the houses were built of solid brick. They were most likely wooden platform frames on the interior, with brick exterior walls.¹²⁷

The word studio typically describes a large room with an artistic purpose. It also denotes a one-room apartment; whether small or large, that one room serves multiple purposes. In contrast to a Georgian or Victorian home, which comprises many rooms that each serve a

¹²⁶ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1829), 163, http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/U0105108409/MOME?sid=gale_marc&xid=1882552f&pg=163.

¹²⁷ David Monteyne, “Framing the American Dream,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 58, no. 1 (2004): 24–33, <https://doi.org/10.1162/1046488041578194>.

specified purpose, a studio home has fewer rooms and a more open floorplan.¹²⁸ Technological advancements make this kind of design possible. With a central heating system, rooms do not need to be closed off from the rest of the house to conserve the heat provided by its fireplace or woodstove. The use of the word studio connotes openness. In an article for the Chamber of Commerce, Ernest Pratt explained that the studio home was invented in 1926 by local architect Guyon L. C. Earle. The defining characteristics of the studio home were “huge living room and studio window, steps up to the dining room, and the stairway down to the large basement taproom.”¹²⁹

Finally, by advertising that they are selling homes rather than houses, the Wolosoffs are again evoking a feeling, trying to get buyers to experience an emotional response. Just like the image of the fireplace, the word home is meant to invoke family, warmth, and comfort. “Home” is an idea, a nonphysical place, a feeling. It is not a commodity to be bought and sold. You have to make it.¹³⁰ The Wolosoffs are selling an idea. In the face of the economic uncertainty of 1930, would-be buyers are hopeful that they can buy certainty and stability. They want to buy “home.”

The readers’ eyes are next drawn to the right side of the advertisement. Just under the word “homes,” in type nearly the same height as “Forest Hills” is the cost of the house: \$9,550. The typeface matches that of the standard text in the ad, but it is printed with an outline and no fill. This lightens the number because of the negative space inside each numeral. If the number had been printed in standard type, i.e., filled, it would appear heavier. Another word for heavy is

¹²⁸ Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 244–45.

¹²⁹ Ernest L. Pratt, “Has the Perfect House Arrived?,” *Queensborough*, October 1931.

¹³⁰ Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Viking, 1986).

large. By lightening the font in which they declare the price of the house, they are making it seem smaller.

Just under the price is “Including,” in a small font size and italic face, letting the reader know that something important is coming. That important thing appears in all caps and with extra space between the letters: “GARAGE.” The Wolosoffs are communicating to their potential buyers not only that the house has a garage but the garage is included in the price of the house. Noticeably absent is the word “separate”; at Stafford Lawns, the garage is literally included in the house.¹³¹ The blocks were graded so that the houses had two floors above grade facing the street but all three floors were above grade facing the alley. The garage for each house is part of the basement. This was a cutting-edge advancement; most houses still had detached garages at this time.¹³² This could have been part of the Wolosoffs’ thought process when naming the development. Because the house incorporates the garage, the backyard is all lawn.

The next two lines deal with the upfront expense of the house. First, “\$500 CASH” indicates the payment required when signing the contract. Underneath that, in the standard type size for the ad’s text, the reader learns that \$750 cash is required “on title.” The Wolosoffs are luring in potential buyers with a low down payment amount and hiding a second, larger, cash payment in the fine print.

In the vertical center of the ad, the text is split into two columns providing details regarding the monthly payments. The dollar amounts of the payments are printed in a slightly larger type size than the “\$500” above and appear like drop caps. On the left, the initial monthly

¹³¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, some of the homes in Stafford Lawns had separate garages.

¹³² Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 251–53; Hubka, *How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900–1940*, 112–15.

cost of \$97.64 is explained. This covers the monthly carrying charges, and an average of \$46.67 of this goes toward paying off the second mortgage each month. The column to the right indicates monthly cost of \$43 after 5 years, or once the second mortgage is paid off.

Beneath the payment details, commuting information is provided. This text is in the standard text size, but it is printed as a single column with extra spacing between words to fill the width. The subway had not yet reached Forest Hills, but there were two Long Island Railroad stations within walking distance. This advertisement does not specify which station is used as a reference point, but the time to Pennsylvania Station, New York, is said to be 14 minutes. The fare is stated to be less than 12 cents.

Below the commute information, the name of the development, Stafford Lawns, appears in all caps and italic type. As discussed above, the name of the development emphasizes its location and land ownership. Purchasers do not just get a roof over their heads, they own land. In the same issue of the *New York Times* in which this ad appears, there was a report that developers Gleeson & Dolan acquired a tract of land in Mineola, Nassau County, called Mineola Lawns.¹³³ Looking at the satellite view of the area with Google Maps, the houses in this tract are standalone single-family homes located rather centrally on their lots, with no alleys. The use of “Lawns” in the name of the development refers solely to the land, not the arrangement of house and land. Additionally, just a year after the Wolosoff brothers introduced Stafford Lawns, they developed St. Albans Lawns in Jamaica and Freeport Lawns in Freeport, Long Island.¹³⁴

¹³³ “Buy Mineola Tract,” *New York Times*, October 26, 1930.

¹³⁴ “St. Albans Development”; “Long Island Realty,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1931; “Sales at Freeport Lawns”; “Twenty Homes Sold In St. Albans,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1931.

Appearing below Stafford Lawns, the location and phone number are printed in standard size but boldface type. The location is given as Ingram Street at the corner with Stafford Avenue in Forest Hills, NY. Directions to the development's model house are given first for those taking the Long Island Railroad and then walking, with directions from the Forest Hills station provided before those from the Parkside station. Finally, driving directions are provided for those coming from Manhattan via the Queensborough Bridge.

Details about the homes are provided in a long list punctuated as a single sentence. Aside from the drop cap, the details are all in the standard size type. Due to the formatting of the previously discussed parts of the advertisement, the reader gets to the home details last unless they skip over the directions on the first pass. The Wolosoffs make a point of mentioning rooms, features, and brands.

The Wolosoffs begin by mentioning that there are 6 large rooms. A 6-room house would typically have a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen along with a bathroom and 2 or 3 bedrooms, depending on whether the bathroom is being counted as a room.¹³⁵ Then they specifically identify a furnished breakfast room, an open porch, a garage, and an extra lavatory on the first floor. This is clearly a middle-class house, as it has not only a dedicated dining room but also a room specifically dedicated to a single meal: breakfast. In addition, the extra lavatory allows more privacy for the family. Visitors and domestic helpers who need the bathroom do not have to use the bathroom where the family bathes.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Thomas C. Hubka, *Houses Without Names*, Vernacular Architecture Studies Series, Architectural Nomenclature and the Classification of America's Common Houses (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 65.

¹³⁶ Hubka, *How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900–1940*, 61–69.

Next, attractive features are mentioned, including a high ceiling and heavy cross beams in the studio living room, open log-burning fireplace, built-in bookcases, “real wood panel dining room walls,” custom built kitchen units, colored tile in the bathroom, a standing shower with a plate glass door, colored plumbing fixtures, and “every new and modern improvement usually offered” plus many exclusive to this development. High ceilings require longer pieces of lumber to build, and longer pieces of lumber are more expensive. Furthermore, wood used for surface decoration, i.e., the cross beams in the living room and the paneled walls in the dining room, raises the cost without providing any added functionality.¹³⁷ The image of built-in and custom pieces belies the near assembly line-like quality that characterizes tract development. The three-piece bathroom was commonplace at this time, but the Wolosoffs have not settled for the bare minimum here. The full bathroom has four pieces: sink, toilet, tub, and shower. The shower has a glass door, and the bathroom is not the basic, sanitary white. Not only is the tile colored but so are the toilets, sinks, and other fixtures.¹³⁸

Only two brands are specifically mentioned. The kitchen has an Electrolux silent refrigerator and a Magic Chef insulated gas range. Notably absent from this ad is any discussion of laundry facilities or the manner of and fuel for heating the house. The kitchen stove is not an intentional heat source. The fireplace is not the heat source either, as it is an open fireplace.

The only image shown in the ad is that of the fireplace. There are knickknacks on the mantle, and the andirons and fireplace tools are in place. Unlike the wood paneling, and although it is not meant to fill a utilitarian role in heating the house, this decorative element has a purpose.

¹³⁷ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1991), 148–206; Ted Cavanagh, “On Permanence: Thoughts about a Historical Reconstruction of a Value Basic to Building,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 54, no. 1 (September 2000): 45–54, <https://doi.org/10.1162/104648800564725>; Monteyne, “Framing the American Dream.”

¹³⁸ Hubka, *How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900–1940*, 80–90.

The emphasis on the “open log-burning” nature of the fireplace communicates its symbolic role as the heart of the home. The fireplace is meant to be looked at and gathered around.

It is worth noting that the fireplace shown in the ad image differs from the fireplaces seen in the houses on 68th Avenue discussed in the previous chapter. The 68th Avenue fireplaces had a rectilinear opening with a brick surround and a massive chimneypiece that projected beyond the surround. The mantel was a small shelf mounted on the chimneypiece above the firebox. The fireplace shown here has an arched opening with a brick and stone surround. The chimneypiece has a more subdued and tailored appearance and is set back from the edge of the surround. The mantel is brick and runs across the top of the entire surround and firebox from one wall to the other. This style of fireplace is found in the houses on Ingram Street between 68th and 69th Avenues (formerly Baldwin and Stafford, respectively).

With a selection of well-chosen words, the Wolosoff brothers have conveyed an incredible amount of information to their prospective buyers. On the same page, Laurelton Homes, Inc., advertised very similar homes in Laurelton. This ad was also 1/16 page. There are only a few ads of this size on the page, and there are only a few ads that have pictures. The other ads with pictures are for detached homes. Since the Laurelton ad is the same size and both developments feature attached houses, the Laurelton ad makes a fair comparison piece.

Laurelton Homes was also a family affair. Brothers George and Alfred Gross and their brother-in-law Lawrence Morton formed the company along with Joseph Moss and Harry Sirkin. The Gross brothers and Morton had previously built frame houses in Forest Hills; Moss and Sirkin were experienced developers as well.¹³⁹ In 1927 they bought the land belonging to the

¹³⁹ Sherman and Brooklyn Biographical Society, *Building up Greater Queens Borough*, 144–48.

Laurelton Golf Club with plans to build 2,000 houses. They initially built houses that were Spanish style, and as tastes changed, they adapted and built English style homes.¹⁴⁰

The Laurelton ad from October 26, 1930, is an illustration of an unfurled scroll listing the many features of the house in two columns. The background behind the scroll has a light gray background. A picture of the house is at the bottom left, overlapping part of the scroll. The picture shows the front façade of the house. The image is cropped closely to zoom in on a single house because the houses are attached rowhouses. Enough of the neighboring houses peek through to make the house seem bigger than it is but not so much that it is clear that they are rowhouses. Just above the house image, illustrated details have been added to the background: a cloud just above the roofline and a plume of smoke billowing from the chimney. The chimney is at the extreme edge of the picture and could be overlooked were it not for the smoke. The chimney smoke leads the reader's eye to a text bubble proclaiming that 127 homes were sold in 2 months. This lets the reader know that this development has been around for a bit and is not brand new. This also indicates demonstrated demand for the builder's product while also raising concerns about supply. If buyers think that the builders could run out of houses to build, they may be more likely to put money down and buy one.

Again, the location of the development is put forth as the most important bit of information in the ad. "LAURELTON" is the largest word in the ad, and it is placed right at the top. "Solid Brick And Stone Homes With Separate GARAGE" follows, with garage being the

¹⁴⁰ "Laurelton Golf Club Sold," *Queensborough*, vol. XIII, no. 11 (November 1927): 609. "Laurelton Homes Sold," *New York Times*, April 29, 1928; "Laurelton Homes," *New York Times*, September 9, 1928; "Sell More Laurelton Homes"; "Building at Laurelton," *New York Times*, November 11, 1928; "Survey Laurelton Homes," *New York Times*, May 12, 1929; "2,500 Homes on Golf Links"; "Laurelton Facilities," *New York Times*, June 29, 1930; "Busy Centres in Queens Borough"; "Building Permits Rising in Queens," *New York Times*, May 11, 1930; "Housing Demand Spur to Building," *New York Times*, May 3, 1931; "Building 1,100 Homes on Laurelton Plots"; "Latest Laurelton Home Type."

largest of these words and given its own line.¹⁴¹ Like the Wolosoff brothers, the folks at Laurelton Homes are selling an idea and anchoring it with the sturdy materiality of brick and stone. In addition, this ad notes that the homes are made of solid brick and stone. While this is likely meant to indicate a construction method, it has the bonus effect of making the homes appear heavier and sturdier in the buyer's mind. Another word to note is the inclusion of the word "separate" before garage. On the one hand, this means there is a garage in the backyard taking up space, but it also indicates that there is more room in the basement.

Outsizing the location, though, is the price of the house: \$6990. Here, the price is printed in boldface. This ad has larger type overall than the Stafford Lawns ad, and there is less white space. This allows the price in bold to not come across as heavy.

The list of features contains many of the same items that appear in the Stafford Lawns ad: 6 rooms, a furnished breakfast room, colored tile and plumbing fixtures, 4-piece bathroom, log-burning fireplace, custom built kitchen cabinets, and heavy beams in the living room. Laurelton Homes provides information about features that the Wolosoffs failed to mention, such as an entrance vestibule with a coat closet, linoleum floors in the kitchen and breakfast room, a colored gas range (no brand mentioned), an electric refrigerator (no brand mentioned), a built-in ironing board, a built-in clothes hamper in the bathroom, porcelain laundry tubs, a Murray Hill clothes dryer,¹⁴² pantry, chromium-plated bath fittings, a chromium medicine cabinet with a Venetian mirror, panel decorations, chestnut wood trim on the first floor, oak flooring and stairs, metal weatherstrips, automatic water heater, brass plumbing, copper leaders and gutters, rear yard fence, landscaped plots, poured concrete foundations, concrete streets and driveways, steam heat,

¹⁴¹ Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 251–52.

¹⁴² The clothes dryer mentioned is not electric; it is a foldout wooden rack for hanging laundry to dry.

and a jacketed boiler. The Laurelton Homes do not have built-in bookshelves or high ceilings in the living room, wood paneling in the dining room, an open porch, or an extra lavatory on the first floor.

Under the left feature column, the initial down payment amount, \$350 cash, appears in larger type than the standard text but not as large as the details at the top of the ad. The fine print indicates that the \$350 cash is due on contract and that \$340 must be paid on title. Under the right feature column, monthly costs are broken down: "\$59.95 MONTH" is the same size as "\$350 CASH." The fine print states that this payment will carry the home and pay off the second mortgage. In this case, the second mortgage runs until it is paid off, and the length of time it should take is not mentioned.

The company name, Laurelton Homes, Inc., appears in all caps and at the same size as the payment amounts just above. The location of the development and transportation information are provided in the regular font size. The commute length on the Long Island Railroad is given as 26 minutes. Whereas Stafford Lawns was convenient to 2 Long Island Railroad stations, Laurelton commuters have two options at the other end of the railway line, traveling to/from Penn Station in Manhattan or the Flatbush Avenue station in Brooklyn. Driving directions via Merrick Road or Foch Boulevard are provided, followed by the company's phone number. At the very bottom of the ad, a quote enthusiastically proclaims, "*AT LAURELTON YOUR DOLLAR BUYS MORE,*" in a font size slightly smaller than that used for the name of the company.

The Wolosoff brothers and Laurelton Homes, Inc., built very similar houses, but their target audiences were slightly different, which could account for the differences in their ads. Stafford Lawns was located in an upper-middle-class area that would eventually be rated B by the HOLC, where the estimated annual family income was \$3,000 to \$6,000. The Laurelton

Homes were in a middle-class neighborhood with an estimated annual family income of \$1,800 to \$3,000. The HOLC gave it a C rating and noted that it was in a double-fare area and there were no sewers; it also shared a border with a cemetery, which was viewed negatively.¹⁴³

The class difference could account for the differences in the features promoted by the developers. The upper-middle-class residents of Forest Hills were more likely to have books or decorative items to display on built-in bookshelves. Laurelton residents have less money to spend, so rather than paneling the dining room, they opt for applied decoration and wood trim and settle for uniform ceiling heights. Laurelton residents have lower incomes and cannot afford the higher payments that come with the higher price and more ambitious repayment scheme of Stafford Lawns. To have a payment that they can afford, less money is applied to the principal and it takes longer to pay off. In the long run, they may pay more for their house, but they would not be able to afford the higher monthly payments or make the higher down payments.

The Wolosoff brothers focused their ad on the emotional connotations of the hearth and home as well as the practical details relating to financing, including commuting costs. Rather than trying to list every single feature and filling the whole ad with text, they used multiple type faces and sizes as well as negative space to direct the eyes of the reader to the items that were most important. Potential Stafford Lawns buyers were going to buy a house; they just needed to decide which house to buy.

Laurelton Homes focused on the novelty of the myriad features they could name and fit into their ad. The financial details were there, but the mechanics of the monthly payment were not fully explained. While they provided information about train stations, they neglected to

¹⁴³ Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality."

indicate the cost of taking the train. The potential Laurelton Homes buyers were likely renters who were trying to move up to home ownership. They needed to know whether they could afford to buy a home, and they needed to be convinced that it was worthwhile, hence, the very dense, detailed list of features.

Chapter 3 Figures

FOREST HILLS—Right near station, 14 minutes to New York, commutation \$7.15; last half of second group of 21—first group sold in last eight days; tap-estry brick houses, six rooms, heated garage, tiled kitchen and bath, built-in tub, seventh-eighth parquet, cedar closet, all improvements, living room 15x17, with fireplace; paved street, sewers, 26 feet front lawns, shrub trees, etc.; price \$8,950, cash \$895; good terms; reference required; walk three blocks south of station on Continental av to Groton st, then two blocks to right to Stafford av, direct to builder's office at Stafford Lawns, or phone Boulevard 6344-J. † 23-3*

Figure 3-1 Classified ad for Stafford Lawns (Brooklyn Daily Eagle, June 23, 1926).

RENTS AT THE ORIENTA AREN'T HIGH—

And they include all these privileges

We haven't made any additional charges for all these extra-ordinary privileges...

Looking with flowers, looking with flowers, and looking with flowers...

...the morning and evening bus stop to the station. And these extra rooms include modern kitchen with electric refrigerator and cement enameled electric appliances and showers. All outside rooms with views. We do make modern extra of these the best proof garage and maid service.

Weathered in Avenue colored room—come out and see the Orienta, Weather's only weathered apartments. Just show us the time you'll arrive and our big orange bus will be at the Lobby—more waiting. But in some cases.

The ORIENTA
Weathered with Good
Walker Ave. near Park Ave.
Manhattan 20th

MILMAN, N. Y.
Bedroom Guest
\$15, \$16, \$18
Bath—\$10
Bath—\$10
The Only 7-Block Complex

Wanted to Purchase a TAXPAYER

RAILROAD SIDING

100 WEST 25th

LIQUIDATION AUCTION
BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF SUPPLIES & SERVICES OF THE U. S. GOVERNMENT
Under and by direction of HON. DAVID GALEWSKI
Auctioneer at 100, 100 Broadway, N. Y. C.

Next Thurs., Oct. 30
BLOCK FRONT, E. & CLINTON ST., DIVISION ST.

A. W. COE STREET & JACKSON ST.
110 HENRY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.
100 BROADWAY ST.

LOUIS BRONCK, R. J.
100 West 25th St. and Avenue D, Upper E. Long Island Station.
Sales R. L. Bronck, or contact
200 Broadway, N. Y. C.

80% cash on arrangements

Joseph J. ...

FRED C. TRUMP, BUILDER
Warren Road Jamaica Estates
JAMAICA, N. Y. C. TEL. JAMAICA 1508
Specializes in building and remodeling

"LAURELTON"
Solid Brick and Stone Homes
With Separate GARAGE \$6990

137 SOLD IN 3 MONTHS

8500 CASH 8990 BOND

LAURELTON HOMES, INC.
100 West 25th St. N. Y. C.

RIGHT IN THE Forest Hills
NEW BRICK STUDIO HOMES
\$9,550
GARAGE \$500 CASH

107 64 St. 107 64 St. 107 64 St.

STAFFORD LAWNS

107 64 St. 107 64 St. 107 64 St.

Strathmore Homes
ROCKVILLE CENTER, L. I.

Make a choice of the finest homes in the country. The Strathmore Homes are the finest in the country. They are built with the finest materials and the finest workmanship. They are the only homes in the country that are built with the finest materials and the finest workmanship.

ROCKVILLE CENTER 4800 WASHINGTON ST.

135 West 27th 114 LOFTS

and Grand Room
Covering South High Street
Borough Park
O. D. & N. V. DIKE

PRIME BUSINESS LOCATION
650 MADISON AVE.

S. A. STERN
100 West 25th St.

71-79 W. 45th St. Store 10,000 sq. ft.
Manhattan, New York City.
Jesse H. Pines, Inc. - Harry Weiss

CANTERBURY Realty Corporation
100 West 25th St. N. Y. C.

Rockville Centre
100 West 25th St. N. Y. C.

100 West 25th

Byrne & Bowman
Bargains For Sale

Hess
100 West 25th St. N. Y. C.

BURBURY
100 West 25th St. N. Y. C.

Free Home in FREEPORT Long Island

Figure 3-2 New York Times real estate ads, October 26, 1930.

RIGHT IN

Forest Hills
NEW BRICK STUDIO HOMES

THESE attractive homes contain 8 large rooms, furnished breakfast room, open porch, garage, extra lavatory on first floor, studio living room with high ceiling and heavy cross beams, log-burning open fireplace, built-in bookcases, real wood panel dining room walls, Electrolux silent refrigerator, Magic Chef insulated gas range, custom built kitchen units and colored tile bathroom and standing shower with plate glass door, colored plumbing fixtures—in fact, every new and modern improvement usually offered, plus many features that can only be obtained here.

\$9,550
 Including
GARAGE
\$500 CASH
 on contract, \$750 on title

\$97.64 Per month pays All Carrying Charges on this home and reduces the Second Mortgage an Average of \$46.67 Per Month.

\$43 Per Month will be the total carrying charges on your home at the end of 5 years, when the second mortgage has been paid off.

Only 14 minutes from Pennsylvania Station, New York, L. I. R. R. The commutation fare is less than 12c.

STAFFORD LAWNS
 Ingram St., cor. Stafford Ave.
 FOREST HILLS, N. Y.
 Tel. ROllover 4353-16406

DIRECTIONS—From Forest Hills Station walk south through Continental Ave. to Groton St., then turn right two blocks to Stafford Lawns and follow our signs to model house. Or, from the Parkside Station, walk one block east to Stafford Ave., then turn left to Ingram St.

BY AUTO—From New York across Queensborough Bridge—along Queens Blvd. to Continental Ave., turn right to Groton St., then right again 2 blocks to Stafford Lawns and follow our signs to model house.



Figure 3-3 New York Times advertisement for Stafford Lawns, October 26, 1930.

AT LAURELTON

Solid Brick And Stone Homes
With Separate \$ **GARAGE 6990**



**127
SOLD
IN 2
MONTHS**

6 Large Rooms
Vestibule with Cloak
Closet
Furnished Breakfast
Room
Linoleum Flooring
(Kitchen and Breakfast
Room)
Colored Gas Range
Built-in Ironing Board
Panel Decorations
Chestnut Trim (1st Floor)
Colored Tile Bath
Chromium Plated Fit-
tings
Chromium Medicine Cab-
inet with Venetian
Mirror
Separate Tile Shower
with Chromium
Plate Glass
Door
Built-In Clothes
Hamper in Bath
Double Floors, 3/4"
Oak throughout
Oak Stairs

Electric Refrigerator
Metal Weatherstrips
Automatic Water
Heater
Custom-Built Kitch-
en Cabinets
Colored Plumbing
Fixtures
Log-Burning Open
Fireplace
Concrete Streets and
Driveways
Steam Heat
Jacketed Boiler
Porcelain Tubs in
Laundry
Murray Hill Clothes
Dryer
Extra Heavy Beams
Brass Plumbing
Copper Leaders and
Gutters
Pantry
Rear Yard Fence
Landscaped Plots-
Poured Concrete
Foundations



\$350 CASH **\$59.95 MONTH**

On contract Carries Home and Pays
\$340 on Title. Off 2nd Mortgage

Second Mortgage Runs T^h Paid

LAURELTON HOMES, Inc.

Merrick Rd. & 229th St., Laurelton, L. I.
20 min. L. I. R. R. from Penn. Sta.,
N. Y., or Flatbush Ave., B'klyn. to Laurel-
ton Sta. or by auto, Merrick Rd. to 226th
St. or Sunrise Highway to 224th St., follow
signs, or Foch Blvd. to Springfield Blvd.,
turn right to Merrick Rd., turn left to
226th St. Tel. LAURELTON 5600.

**"AT LAURELTON YOUR
DOLLAR BUYS MORE"**

Figure 3-4 New York Times advertisement for Laurelton Homes, October 26, 1930.

Chapter 4 Impact and Legacy

It is a truism that what sets the tone and sounds the key of any given locality is, primarily, the character of the builder who builds it. It is true as regards Manhattan; it is true in Brooklyn; and it is strikingly true in Queens.

That the shape into which a locality molds itself should depend so largely (sometimes completely) on the builder, this need not be startling, yet few realize it.

The builder determines the size, appearance and the manner of the structure; this is obvious. But it is not so obvious that he determines thereby the class of people who would seek to live on his property.¹⁴⁴

When Franklin Sherman made this statement in *Building Up Greater Queens Borough*, he was referencing Edward A. MacDougall and Cord Meyer and the work they had done to create distinctive developments in Jackson Heights and Forest Hills, respectively. This idea can be applied to other developers as well. While the Wolosoff brothers and Laurelton Homes, Inc., were not creating entire communities, they were actively determining the class of people who would live in the houses they built.

It is worth noting that the HOLC assessments of Queens were done in 1937, so they were based on the residents who purchased their homes from the Wolosoff brothers and Laurelton Homes. Stafford Lawns falls into two areas (Figure 1-4). The homes on Ingram and Juno Streets were in area B4, and the homes on 68th Avenue were in area C36. The homes of Stafford Lawns were in an awkward position, benefiting from being grouped in with the Van-Court area and a bit of the Gardens in area B4 while also feeling the detrimental effects of being grouped with houses

¹⁴⁴ Sherman and Brooklyn Biographical Society, *Building up Greater Queens Borough*, 62.

that bordered the railroad tracks and were in a double-fare zone in area C36. The houses of Stafford Lawns and their inhabitants were all similar, but some were regarded as upper middle class, with an annual income range of \$3,000 to \$6,000, while others were regarded as skilled workers, with an annual income range of \$500 to \$3,000. Both areas were considered to have a 20% foreign-born population, primarily of British and German background. Likewise, both areas had increasing populations with a projected upward desirability trend in the next 10 to 15 years. However, area C36 had a few families on relief, whereas area B4 had no families on relief.¹⁴⁵

The Laurelton Homes were located in area C93 (Figure 4-1). The detrimental factors here were the proximity to the cemetery and location in a double-fare zone. Also, the rate of foreclosures was comparatively high. Residents were considered middle class, with an annual income of \$1,800 to \$3,000. Demographically, the population was similar to that of Stafford Lawns, with a 19% foreign-born population, primarily of British and German background. The population was considered static, and many families were on relief. The assessors noted that the houses east of 224th Street, which includes the Laurelton Homes houses, were built of brick and generally in better condition than the frame houses in the area.¹⁴⁶

The ad for Stafford Lawns went into great detail about the financing involved in buying a house. The Wolosoffs also collected down payments totaling \$1250, or 13.09% of the purchase price of the house, leaving the homeowner with \$7700 to pay off, plus interest. The team at Laurelton Homes did not focus very much on finances. They collected \$690 in down payments, which was less than 10% of the \$6990 purchase price, and the homeowner had \$6300 to pay back, plus interest.

¹⁴⁵ Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality."

¹⁴⁶ Nelson et al.

The 1940 U.S. Census recorded home values and rents. The homes in Stafford Lawns had a value of \$8,000, whereas the homes in Laurelton were valued at \$4,700. The Stafford Lawns home lost 20% of its value but was still worth more than the initial loan amount by \$300. The Laurelton home lost 33% of its value and was worth \$1,600 less than the initial loan amount. Fast forwarding 82 years from the 1940 census, the differences in price have widened. The Laurelton homes have only gone up about 82 times their original prices, from \$6,990 to about \$580,000 (Figure 4-2). The values of homes in Stafford Lawns have increased roughly 105 times their original prices, from \$9,950 to \$1,050,000 (Figure 4-3).

The 1940s homeowners who rented out their homes instead of living in them also noticed disparities. A home in Stafford Lawns would have \$43 in monthly carrying charges because the second mortgage was paid off after 5 years. The rent charged for the home was \$75, netting the owner \$32 more than their expenses. For the home in Laurelton, the monthly carrying charges were \$59.95, with no indication of when the buyer could expect the second mortgage to be paid off. The rent for the home was only \$55 or \$60, so the owner may have just barely covered their expenses.¹⁴⁷

Looking at households in the census data, there are also differences in how people lived in Stafford Lawns and Laurelton. Overall, there was an average of 4 family members per household across both neighborhoods. The households in Stafford Lawns were more uniform, typically 4 family members and a domestic employee. There was more variation in household

¹⁴⁷ Bureau of the Census, "Queens County - ED 41-1746A"; Bureau of the Census, "Queens County - ED 41-1301," in *1940 Census Population Schedules - New York - Queens County - ED 41-1301*, File Unit: 1940 Census - New York - Queens County, 1940 - 1940 (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940).

composition among the families in Laurelton, including more outliers at each end of the spectrum.

Stafford Lawns residents on 68th Avenue between Kessel and Manse Streets were more likely to have a domestic employee. Out of 28 households enumerated, 16 employed a single domestic worker (15 maids and 1 houseman) and 2 employed 2 workers (a nurse and a maid in both cases). One household had taken in a boarder, and nine households had an extended family member with them. Households averaged 4.75 people, with 4 people being family members. Six households had 6 people, and six households had 3 people. Of the 112 people in these 28 households, 105 were white and 7 were Black, all of whom were domestic employees. Overall, 25% of the Stafford Lawns population was foreign born.

In Laurelton, there were 54 households enumerated on 225th Street between 130th and 131st Avenues. Only five of these households had a domestic employee (4 maids and 1 chauffeur); all of the domestic employees were white. Two households took in lodgers (2 lodgers each; one pair of lodgers was a young widowed father with an infant son), and 13 households had extended family members living with them. Overall, households averaged 4.2 people, with 3.98 being family. Seven households had 6 or more people, four households had only 2 people, and there was one household of 1 person. All 224 people in these 54 households were white, and 19% were foreign born.

In the 80 years between the 1940 U.S. Census and the 2020 U.S. Census, the ethnic demographics of these neighborhoods have changed dramatically, even bearing in mind the caveat that a direct comparison cannot be made because household-level census data is not released for 70 years due to privacy concerns and that race and ethnic classification practices and terminology have changed significantly as well. In 1940, the Laurelton Homes population (a

small sample compared to Laurelton as a whole) was 100% white. In 2020, Laurelton was 1.3% white (non-Hispanic), 83.7% Black (non-Hispanic), 0.9% Asian (non-Hispanic), 1.6% other race (non-Hispanic), 5% multiracial (non-Hispanic), and 7.4% Hispanic. In 1940, the Stafford Lawns population (a small sample compared to Forest Hills as a whole) was 93.75% white and 6.25% Black (all domestic employees). In 2020, the Forest Hills population was 46.7% white (non-Hispanic), 2.9% Black (non-Hispanic), 29.3% Asian (non-Hispanic), 1.3% other race (non-Hispanic), 4.6% multiracial (non-Hispanic), and 15.2% Hispanic.¹⁴⁸

Perhaps the most interesting bit of 1940 census data pertains not to the buyers of the homes but to the sellers. Leon Wolosoff lived at 68-50 Ingram Street, less than a block from Stafford Lawns; his house was valued at \$16,000. Alvin lived on West 57th Street in Manhattan in 1940; he paid \$130/month for rent. By 1950, he was living with his family in an apartment on Yellowstone Boulevard just north of Queens Boulevard. Alfred and George Gross, Lawrence Morton, and Joseph Moss all lived in Jamaica Estates. Moss' house was valued at \$16,000, but Morton and the Gross brothers had houses ranging from \$25,000 to \$35,000. By 1940, Harry Sirkin had moved to Miami, FL, and was living in a \$25,000 house.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ “2020 Census Data” (NYC Department of City Planning, 2020), https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/office/planning-level/nyc-population/census2020/nyc_decennialcensusdata_2010_2020_change.xlsx?r=3.

¹⁴⁹ Bureau of the Census, “Leon Wolosoff,” in *1940 United States Federal Census [New York, Queens, New York]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 1B (roll m-t0627-02753), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/8031234:2442>; Bureau of the Census, “Alvin Wolosoff,” in *1940 United States Federal Census [New York, New York, New York]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 10A (roll m-t0627-02656), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/9631306:2442>; Bureau of the Census, “H Sirkin,” in *1940 United States Federal Census [Miami Beach, Dade, Florida]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 64B (roll m-t0627-00581), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/129580196:2442>; Bureau of the Census, “Alfred Gross,” in *1940 United States Federal Census [New York, Queens, New York]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 1B (roll m-t0627-02739), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/15911085:2442>; Bureau of the Census, “George M. Gross,” in *1940 United States Federal Census [New York, Queens, New York]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 1B (roll m-t0627-02740), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/9880695:2442>; Bureau of the Census, “Lawrence Morton,” in *1940 United States Federal Census [New York, Queens, New York]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 64B (roll m-t0627-02739), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui->

The Wolossofs were clearly more invested in the neighborhood where they worked than the Laurelton Homes executives were. Living in Forest Hills gave them a vested interest in the development of the neighborhood. Their customers quite literally became their neighbors. They would not want their investment to underperform, so they were sure to target the class of homebuyer that they would want to see regularly. The Laurelton executives did not stick around Laurelton to see how things turned out. Once the last home was sold, they had no reason to see any of their buyers again.

Another consideration is that all of these developers were Jewish, so they did not have the freedom to live wherever they wanted. The Gross brothers had lived in Jamaica with their parents, so Jamaica Estates was a logical step up from their childhood home to a higher-class neighborhood.¹⁵⁰ The Wolossofs grew up in Brooklyn. They may have wished to live in Forest Hills Gardens, but due to the restrictive covenants, they could not. However, there were no such covenants outside the Gardens. Leon's house was in the Van-Court area (pictured in Figure 1-8); since the Wolossofs built houses in the Van-Court area, it is possible that he oversaw the construction of his own house.

The practice of targeting certain demographics when advertising housing have carried over into the present day. Builders offer the same floor plans in multiple developments but at different price points. A neighborhood's amenities may be used as the reason for the price

content/view/15880635:2442; Bureau of the Census, "Joseph Moss," in *1940 United States Federal Census [New York, Queens, New York]* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1940), 1A (roll m-t0627-02739), <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/15911054:2442>; Bureau of the Census, "George M. Gross," in *1950 United States Federal Census* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1950), https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/discoveryui-content/view/292696823:62308?_phsrc=Ngy46&_phstart=successSource&gsfn=george&gsln=gross&ml_rpos=3&qqueryId=fd5873f9480505e323bd7149f371d49d.

¹⁵⁰ Bureau of the Census, "Max Gross," in *1920 United States Federal Census* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1920), <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GRXJ-SLV?i=13&cc=1488411&personaUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AMVM7-LMW>.

differential, but the underlying reason is likely motivated by demographics, with one neighborhood having been deemed better than the other and therefore needing to attract a higher or lower class of buyer.

The other areas of Forest Hills have also experienced changes since 1940. The unwritten restrictions that once governed who could and could not live in Forest Hills Gardens are no longer enforced. The architectural guidelines and restrictions that shaped the neighborhood are still in full force, with homeowners reaffirming their agreement to abide by them every 20 years. Likewise, for the buffer zone Van-Court area, the existence of the architectural restrictions is put forth by realtors as a selling point whenever a house in the area goes up for sale.

The residents of the Cord Meyer tract continue to face challenges to their uncodified status quo. The most recent development arose after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Bukharian¹⁵¹ Jews from Central Asia and the former Soviet Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan settled in Forest Hills and adjacent Queens neighborhoods from Rego Park to Briarwood. In addition to Russian, they speak Bukhari, a language that blends Hebrew with Persian. In 2001, the *New York Times* dubbed the area “Queensistan.”¹⁵²

In the Cord Meyer tract, Bukharian Jews have been buying existing housing stock, tearing down the houses, and building new oversized McMansions that are out of sync with the neighborhood’s historic aesthetic (Figure 4-4 and Figure 4-5). Even as they multiply, the most noticeable of the new houses can stick out like sore thumbs. However, some of the homes

¹⁵¹ Also written Bukharan.

¹⁵² Sandee Brawarsky, “Central Asian Jews Create 'Queensistan',” *New York Times*, November 16, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/16/arts/central-asian-jews-create-queensistan.html>.

manage to fit in with the older homes, particularly if they are brick. The oldest rebuilds have begun to age and their accent landscaping has filled in, making them look less shiny and new.

The more established residents of the Cord Meyer tract fought once again for changes to zoning regulations to protect the aesthetics and image of their neighborhood. However, they are not the first or only neighbors to experience teardowns and rebuilds happening around them. A drive along the Grand Central Parkway provides glimpses of recently rebuilt homes and ongoing construction throughout Queens. Jack Nasar and colleagues have studied incidences of both infill and greenfield McMansions across the country. While advising that the houses should not be permitted to be too big, Nasar et al. contend that infill McMansions are a sound ecological choice, particularly since building on existing lots in cities cuts down on sprawl.¹⁵³

There are some characteristics that the McMansions have in common. The rebuilds do not have much, if any, lawn; brick, stone, or cement patios and parking areas fill the yards. The houses have larger footprints and are much taller than those that they replaced. Most of the new homes have a wall, fence, or combination of the two surrounding the lot. Some fences are built right at the edge of the sidewalk, and some are set back a few feet (Figure 4-6).

The Bukharians have cultural reasons for building the way they do. They like to keep their extended families together, with multiple generations living under one roof, thereby necessitating larger houses to accommodate everyone.¹⁵⁴ At a meeting of the Community Board to discuss proposed zoning changes, the spokesman for the Bukharian Jews said that they cannot

¹⁵³ Jack L. Nasar, Jennifer S. Evans-Cowley, and Vicente Mantero, "McMansions: The Extent and Regulation of Super-sized Houses," *Journal of Urban Design* 12, no. 3(2007):339-358, DOI:10.1080/13574800701602478; Jack L. Nasar and Arthur E. Stamps, III, "Infill McMansions: Style and the Psychophysics of Size," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29(2009):110-123.

¹⁵⁴ Ben Hogwood, "McMansions Needed to Accommodate Families," *Queens Chronicle*, March 26, 2009, https://www.qchron.com/editions/central/mcmansions-needed-to-accomodate-families/article_6c1b6395-d7a9-53df-af72-99890acff404.html.

fit a family in the houses that will conform to the proposed changes; one of the older residents suggested that the Bukharians just buy two houses if they need that much space.¹⁵⁵ Another man cited the age of the Cord Meyer houses as a reason to tear them down, saying that a new house is better than an old house; a local Bukharian realtor contended that it is easier to tear down and rebuild than to renovate due the amount of work needed to modernize the older houses (Figure 4-7).¹⁵⁶

Local realtors have also stated that the McMansions do not have a detrimental effect on property values of the homes around them.¹⁵⁷ If the older residents of the neighborhood will not suffer diminished property values, why are they so upset? The answer may be a matter of perceived decorum mixed with jealousy and rooted in differences in religious practice and timing. The established Jewish population of Forest Hills is Ashkenazic and descends from people who immigrated to America in the late-18th and early 19th centuries. Their forefathers faced rampant antisemitism, particularly in the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁵⁸ To build a better life for themselves and their families, they assimilated, possibly changing their surnames to fit in more easily.¹⁵⁹ For them to see more recent immigrants, refugees in some cases, flaunting their differences, it could rub them the wrong way.

¹⁵⁵ David Matz, "Forest Hills Rezone Has Racial Undertones," *Forest Hills Times*, March 17, 2009, http://www.foresthillstimes.com/printer_friendly/2091677.

¹⁵⁶ Kirk Semple, "Questions of Size and Taste for Queens Houses," *New York Times*, July 5, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/05/nyregion/05forest.html>.

¹⁵⁷ Ben Hogwood, "McMansions Causing Heartburn," *Queens Chronicle*, March 12, 2009, https://www.qchron.com/editions/central/mcmansions-causing-heartburn/article_a93ac591-2d93-5631-b400-d0f412913c0a.html.

¹⁵⁸ Chapman, 119.

¹⁵⁹ Kirsten Fermaglich, "'Too Long, Too Foreign ... Too Jewish': Jews, Name Changing, and Family Mobility in New York City, 1917-1942," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 3(Spring 2015):34-57, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jamerethnhist.34.3.0034>.

The ostentatious displays of wealth occasioned by some of the house designs may not sit well with neighbors either. One Bukharian community leader stated that the elaborately decorated houses were an exercise in the freedom to express themselves and show their wealth because that is why people come to America. Under Soviet rule they did not have that freedom, nor could they openly practice their religion.¹⁶⁰ Even before the Soviets came to power in Uzbekistan, the Bukharians were living in a repressed state under Muslim rule. They could not openly display their property or it might be taken by the amir.¹⁶¹

A Bukharian rabbi explained that the Bukharians do not like to have lawns because the lawn just creates more work. With a patio or terrace, there is no weekly upkeep. He also mentioned that the patio gives children a place to play.¹⁶² While not addressing the issue directly, this could be key to understanding the reason for the fences and walls. It could be a simple matter of privacy, but it may serve a more practical and important purpose. The houses in the Cord Meyer tract have some of the largest lots in Queens, but they are still not huge, particularly with a large house taking up most of the area. If children are playing outside the house, a fence or wall keeps them from accidentally ending up in the street. Traffic along Jewel Avenue and 69th Road can be rather intense, since those are the primary routes to get to and from Flushing Meadows and the various highways that intersect at the park.

Another explanation for the patios and walls may be comfort and familiarity. A quick look at a satellite view of Bukhara and Samarqand, Uzbekistan, shows that the houses there do not have lawns. They are built with patios and walls surrounding them. Some of the Bukharians

¹⁶⁰ Semple, *New York Times*, July 5, 2008.

¹⁶¹ Audrey Burton, "Bukharan Jews, Ancient and Modern," *Jewish Historical Studies* 34(1994-1996): 54-55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29779953>.

¹⁶² Semple, *New York Times*, July 5, 2008.

came here as children, but some had to have been adults. With all of the adjustments required of immigrants, a measure of familiarity can go a long way toward making a new place feel more like home.

The proposed zoning changes were approved in June 2009 and were based on similar measures passed for parts of North Flushing earlier that year. The previous zoning designation was R1-2, which was ambiguous and difficult to interpret and implement. The new zoning designation is R1-2A. The three issues addressed by the zoning change were floor area ratio, building height, and setback (minimum front yard depth).

Previously, the ground floor of the building was not included in the calculation of the floor area ratio if there was a garage on the ground floor. Under the new regulations, only the actual garage area is exempt from the floor area ratio calculation, with maximum allowances based on whether it is a single or double garage. Allowances are made for detached garages as well.¹⁶³

The R1-2 designation did not have a maximum building height. Height and size were restricted by the building envelope, as determined by the “sky exposure plane:”

A sky exposure plane is a virtual sloping plane that begins at a specified height above the street line and rises inward over the zoning lot at a ratio of vertical distance to horizontal distance set forth in district regulations. A building may not penetrate the sky exposure plane which is designed to provide light and air at street level, primarily in medium- and higher-density districts.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ “Cord Meyer-Forest Hills Rezoning,” NYC Department of Planning, accessed December 6, 2020, https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans/cord-meyer-forest-hills/cord_meyer.pdf.

¹⁶⁴ “Sky Exposure Plane,” Glossary of Planning Terms, NYC Department of Planning, accessed December 6, 2020, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/glossary.page>.

Under R1-2A zoning, there is a maximum building height of 35 feet and maximum perimeter height of 25 feet.

The minimum setback had been 20 feet, but the new regulation added the requirement that a house's setback match that of an adjacent neighbor. The maximum required setback is 25 feet. If one neighbor has a setback of 22 feet and the other neighbor has a setback of 25 feet, the new house can have a setback of either 22 or 25 feet. However, if both neighbors have setbacks of 30 feet, the house only has to have a setback of 25 feet.

Even with the approved zoning changes, not all residents are happy. Incidents of arson at construction sites still occur.¹⁶⁵ Not all owners of older houses maintain their homes (Figure 4-7), and this serves only to emphasize the contrast between the old and the new. The irony of the situation is that the Cord Meyer tract never had a master plan or any restrictions on building or design other than the city's zoning ordinances and a minimum house price at the time of original construction. Through the years, the residents of the Cord Meyer tract have been a bit like Goldilocks. They complain if their neighbors are too poor, in the case of potential apartment buildings or public housing projects, and they complain if their neighbors are too rich, in the case of the teardowns and McMansions.

Conclusion

Before the post-World War II housing boom turned the suburbs into a sea of identical boxes, real estate developers built tract housing with character. Stafford Lawns, a section of

¹⁶⁵ Kirk Semple, "Police Believe a Single Arsonist Is Behind a String of Fires in Queens," *New York Times*, December 7, 2015, sec. New York, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/07/nyregion/sunday-fire-is-fifth-to-demolish-bukharian-home-sites-in-queens.html>.

Forest Hills, is one such area of attractive mass-produced housing. These rowhouses look like the younger siblings of the highly sought after homes in the Gardens. Forest Hills residents may think these houses can only exist there, but there are pockets of these Tudor temptations scattered around eastern Queens. The Arts and Crafts movement was influential at the time, and the idea of living in a neighborhood that could pass for a little English village appealed to many people, not just those who could afford to live in Forest Hills Gardens.

One place to find these homes is Laurelton. These houses are nearly identical to those in Forest Hills, but the developer who built them marketed them to appeal to buyers in a lower economic bracket. Multiple factors may have come into play throughout the years to increase the disparity between home values for similar houses in Forest Hills and Laurelton. Economic cycles tend to disproportionately affect those on the lower rungs of the ladder, and these houses were built in the middle of the Great Depression. The financial implications of mortgages and home ownership were not as explicitly detailed by the builders of Laurelton Homes. Coupled with the C rating the neighborhood was given by the HOLC, homeowners who found themselves underwater with their mortgages may not have been able to refinance with favorable terms and subsequently lost their houses. The demographic changes in the neighborhood could have come about because of the lower cost of homes, but the demographic changes could have repressed real estate values in the area. Herein lies the problem with systemic and structural racism in the homeownership arena. It becomes impossible to unravel the threads to determine what is the cause and what is the effect.

As housing prices continue to increase in highly sought-after neighborhoods like Forest Hills, it may be only a matter of time before buyers looking for a Tudor rowhouse discover that they can be found for less money in neighborhoods like Laurelton. Coupled with the burgeoning

popularity of do-it-yourself home renovation inspired by social media and the related trendiness of “cheap old houses,”¹⁶⁶ neighborhoods like Laurelton may soon be at risk of gentrification.

¹⁶⁶ While \$500,000+ is not within the price range typically considered to be “cheap,” it is considerably cheaper than the \$1,000,000+ price tag associated with a similar house in Forest Hills.

Chapter 4 Figures

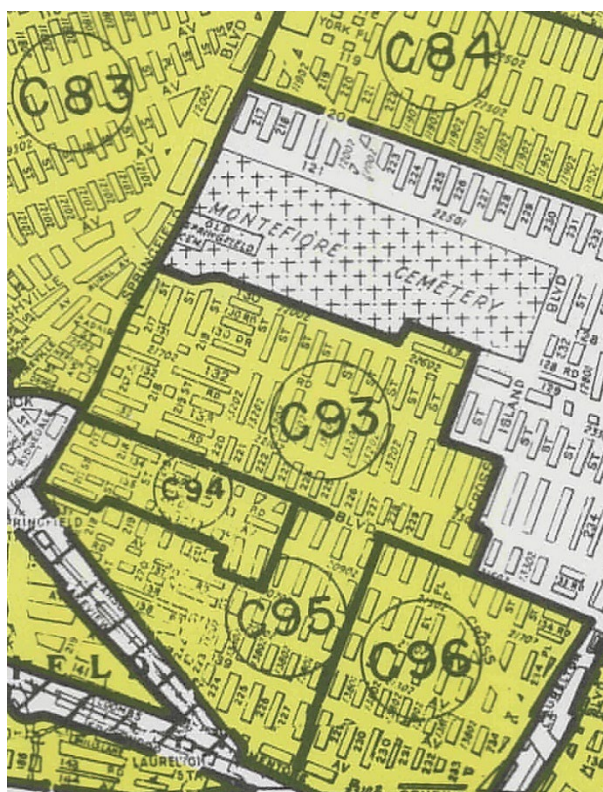


Figure 4-1 HOLC map for Laurelton (from Mapping Inequality).

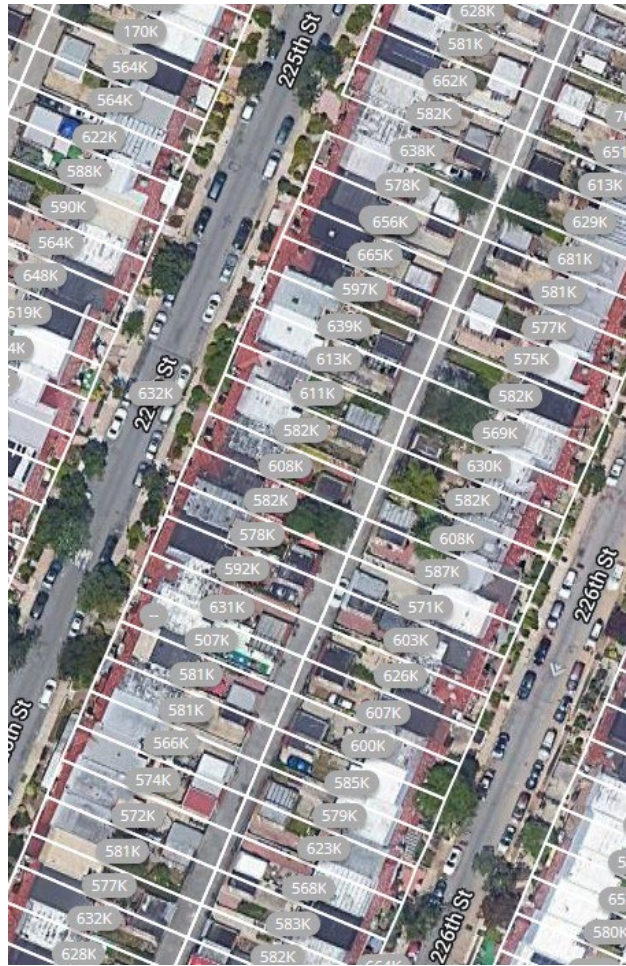


Figure 4-2 Zillow.com zestimates for houses in Laurelton (screenshot from Zillow.com).



Figure 4-3 Zillow.com zestimates for houses in Stafford Lawns (screenshot from Zillow.com).



Figure 4-4 McMansion under construction in the Cord Meyer tract dwarfing the older house to the left (personal photo).



Figure 4-5 An original home in the Cord Meyer tract surrounded by rebuilds (personal photo).



Figure 4-6 Cord Meyer McMansion wall built right on the edge of the sidewalk (personal photo).



Figure 4-7 An original home in the Cord Meyer tract in disrepair (personal photo).

Additional advertisements

The New York Times

SUNDAY, MAY 29, 1927

Motor out or come by train today.

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bath
and



**An English Home
"In the Right Place"**

On Half-Acre of Gardens
With a Woodland Setting
For Only \$22,500
Terms to suit you

Brick, Stone and Stucco. Slate roof, Steel Casement Windows,
Brass Plumbing, Hot Water, Oil Burning Heat. Spacious-
Living Quarters, 4 Master Chambers, 2 all-tiled Baths. Separate
Shower Room. House fully decorated. 2-car heated Garage. Many
Unusual Features. Near School, Station, Golf and Beach Clubs.

Harry R. Monroe
Opp. Station, White Plains, N. Y. "Realtor" White Plains Phones 3128-2996.
Open Saturdays and Holidays.

NEW YORK

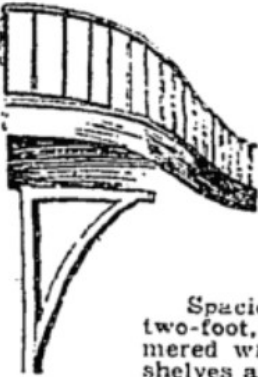
Lawn
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gate
bath

17

BRONXVILLE

A Real Bargain

Appendix Figure 1 New York Times, May 29, 1927



A Gentleman's Studio Home

JUST DIFFERENT

Spacious studio living room with mezzanine balcony, twenty-two-foot, and hand-hewn beamed ceiling, fieldstone fireplace, hammered wrought iron grillwork and electric fixtures. Built-in bookshelves and casement windows, arched doorways. Dining room has built-in china closet, leaded glass doors. Tiled kitchen with all modern labor-saving devices; electric refrigerating plant, "Frigidaire," Walker electric dishwashing machine, Standard combination tub and sink, white enamel Tappan gas range, bonded composition; black and white cork tile floor.

Billiard room and lounge with huge log-burning open fireplace. Four bedrooms, two colored; tile baths, standing built-in shower, adequate closet space; mirror doors, moth-proof cedar closet; interior decorating by Paul Caso, recently from Madrid, Spain.

Richardson & Boynton hot water heating plant with Honeywell generating system in dust-proof boiler room; Anaconda brass water pipes; cold storage room, attached garage, entrance from billiard room; $\frac{3}{8}$ " oak floors, hand scraped; hand-made antique front door; Colonial tapestry; brick front porch. Grounds landscaped and shrubbed by Lewis Brothers. Plot 60x100, Restricted locality.

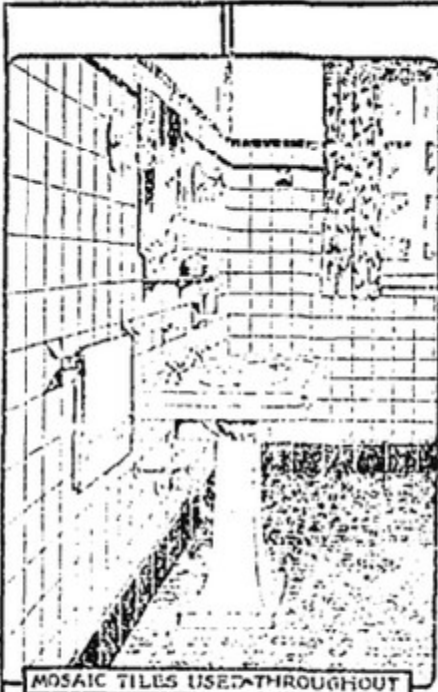
Price \$13,500—\$1,000 Cash. Other Models \$7,900 up.

BROCKETT TERRELL, Inc.
Builders of Gentlemen's Homes
MERRICK, L. I.
Telephone FREeport 4646

tion and materials, they placed first mortgages amounting to more than \$1,250,000 on the first 302 houses. buyer will erect stores and apartments. This is the first sale of the property in twenty-one years.

BUILDING MATERIAL.

BUILDING MATERIAL.



MOSAIC TILES USED THROUGHOUT

Make the Bathrooms Beautiful

NO PART of the modern house demands more serious attention from both owner and architect than the bathroom. Often the design and appearance of the bathroom determine whether the day shall begin with a duty or a delight. The indescribable luxury of a bathroom in beautiful colored Mosaic Tiles is well worth its cost. Moreover, the cost is probably less than you think. And, once installed, a bathroom of Mosaic Tiles will endure, impervious to wear, as long as the house itself.

Ask your architect to accompany you to the New York display of Mosaic Tiles at 327 W. 42nd Street.

MOSAIC TILES

MOSAIC TILES

Write for book. It's free. Address

THE MOSAIC TILE COMPANY

of ZANESVILLE, OHIO


327 West 42nd Street, New York City

New York DISPLAY

All colors and forms of fine Mosaic Tiles in room displays at 327 West 42nd St.

Appendix Figure 3 New York Times, April 29, 1928

Come Today to Parkway Gardens!
The Forest Hills of Jamaica. In the Heart of the Hillcrest Section.



**ENGLISH TUDOR TYPE
BRICK HOMES**

Only **\$9500** Terms Arranged to Suit

All Improvements, **PAVED STREETS, SEWERS:** No assessments.

PARKWAY GARDENS

168th St. and Grand Central P'way, Jamaica
Phone or write for beautifully illus. Bklt.
Tel. **REPublic 3378**

Appendix Figure 4 New York Times, April 21, 1929

BRONX.

BRONX.

Have you seen
**The 1931
 MIRACLE
 HOMES**

?



BRONX HEIGHTS

Overlooking the Beautiful Pelham Parkway

More than 100 Miracle Homes sold during the past year.

THRU sheer merit alone, Miracle Homes have won the reputation for being the best home investment that Bronx offers. When you buy a home in Bronx Heights you not only secure for yourself the finest construction that the price affords, but you are making an investment in the fastest growing and one of the most charming home sections in the Bronx.

A number of newly completed, fully detached homes of beautiful design, on 33x100 plots are available at slightly higher prices.

Haring & Blumenthal—Henry Sonn

640 Pelham Parkway South Bronx, N. Y.
 Tel. WESTchester 6116-7

DIRECTIONS: I. R. T. Lexington Avenue, White Plains Road Subway to Pelham Parkway station, or I. R. T. 7th Avenue West Side Subway to E. 177th Street. Change for White Plains Avenue division to Pelham Parkway Station. Or Jerome Avenue train to Fordham Road station. Walk one block east and take No. 12 bus to office.
BY AUTO: East along Pelham Parkway to White Plains Avenue.

FEATURES: Brick construction, fireproof garage, colored tiled bathroom with shower stall, and chromium fixtures; built-in bookcase in living room; Kitchenkraft, Domestic Science kitchen in colored tile; breakfast nook, Frigidalre, craftex wall finish; log-burning fireplace, tiled kitchen walls, cedar closet, white enamel wash-tubs, automatic self-feeding heating plant, brass piping, weather stripping, guaranteed slate and rubber roof.

PLOT 25x100.

\$12,500

**6 ROOMS, BATH
 AND GARAGE
 10% DOWN**

*Balance Easy Terms.
 Second Mortgage runs
 until paid.*

Appendix Figure 5 New York Times, October 5, 1930

QUEENS. QUEENS.

A Most Unusual Announcement

RIGHT IN Forest Hills

**A Georgian-English Type
Brick Home With Garage**

For \$9250



These attractive homes contain 6 large rooms, furnished breakfast room, open porch, garage, extra lavatory on first floor, log burning open fireplace, built-in bookcases, real wood panel dining room walls, Eectrlolux silent refrigerator, custom built kitchen units and colored tile double drain boards, colored tile bath room and standing shower, colored plumbing fixtures,—in fact every new and modern improvement for complete home comfort.



\$500 cash payment - is required when signing contract and \$750 when taking title, leaving house subject to a \$5500 First Mortgage and a \$2500 Second Mortgage. \$92.34 per month pays all carrying charges and reduces the second mortgage an average of \$41.67 per month


Only a short walk from either the Forest Hills or Parkside Station of the L. I. R. R.—14 minutes from Pennsylvania Station, New York.

The model house has just been completed. See it Today at

Stafford Lawns
JUNO ST., CORNER STAFFORD AVE.
Forest Hills, L. I.
TELEPHONE: BOULEVARD 4355-10406

Appendix Figure 6 Stafford Lawns ad, New York Times, June 8, 1930.

They Knew What They Wanted ~
and they found it
 RIGHT IN
Forest Hills
A Georgian English
BRICK HOME WITH GARAGE



Now Being Sold At The **\$9,250**
 Introductory Price of
WITH A CASH OUTLAY OF ONLY \$500
when signing contract and \$750 on Title

FOR MONTHS, Burt Wilson* and his wife had spent hours every week end in a vain effort to locate a home that would come up to their ideal and yet come within their financial means. They had reached that stage of discouragement where they felt that they would either have to abandon their hopes or accept a compromise with what they had in mind.

Then they saw **STAFFORD LAWNS**—a veritable little English suburb in lovely Forest Hills, with its paved streets, fine transit, splendid recreational facilities and within a convenient walking distance to tennis, golfing, beaches, public school and shopping centre. Set on attractively landscaped plots, these charming homes provide every new-day convenience,—a spacious living room with its cheery open fireplace,—a charming dining room with paneled wood walls,—the kitchen with its Electrolux silent refrigerator, Custom-built kitchen units, colored tile double drain boards and linoleum flooring—the cheerfully furnished breakfast room—the conveniently located extra lavatory on first floor—the colored tile bathroom with colored plumbing fixtures and fully tiled standing shower—a spacious master bedroom with 2 closets, two other good sized bedrooms—seven roomy closets, one cedar lined,—a laundry in the basement—chestnut trim and oak stairs—brass water pipes—seven-eighths inch oak flooring—a Spencer Automatic Feeding steam plant which burns Buckwheat, the most economical coal—slate mansard roof and numerous other quality features that made the Wilsons happy because

THEY FOUND WHAT THEY WANTED
 for just two thirds of what they expected to pay.

\$92.34 per month pays all carrying charges and reduces the second mortgage an average of \$41.67 per month.
\$43 a month is the total carrying charge on your home when the second mortgage is paid off at the end of 5 years.

Stafford Lawns is served by either the Forest Hills or Parkside Station of the L. I. R. R. only 14 minutes from Pennsylvania station, New York. The commutation fare is less than 12c.

COME OUT AND INSPECT SAMPLE HOMES
 BEFORE HIGHER PRICES GO IN EFFECT

Stafford Lawns
Builders on Premises
 JUNO ST. COR. STAFFORD AVE., FOREST HILLS, N. Y.
Telephones: Boulevard 4355-10406

DIRECTIONS—From Forest Hills Station walk south through Continental Ave. to Groton St., then turn right two blocks to Stafford Lawns. Or, from the Parkside Station, walk one block east to Stafford Ave., then turn left to Juno St. By Auto from New York across Queensborough Bridge—along Queens Blvd. to Continental Av., turn right to Groton St., then right again 2 blocks to Stafford Lawns.

*The theme of this advertisement was developed from an actual experience of a resident of Stafford Lawns.

Appendix Figure 7 Stafford Lawns ad, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, August 31, 1930.

QUEENS. QUEENS.



Georgian English
BRICK HOMES
With Garage

Now Being Sold at the
Introductory Price of
\$9250
With a Cash
Outlay of **ONLY \$500** On Contract and \$750 On Title.

*\$92.34 Per Month Pays
All Carrying Charges
on This Home and
Reduces the Second
Mortgage in Average
of \$41.67 Per Month.*



These attractive homes contain 6 large rooms, furnished breakfast room, open porch, garage, extra lavatory on first floor, log burning open fireplace, built-in bookcases, real wood panel dining room walls, Electrolux efficient refrigerator, custom built kitchen units and colored tile double drain boards, colored tile bath room and standing shower, colored plumbing fixtures—in fact, every new and modern improvement usually offered, plus many features that can only be obtained here. When the second mortgage is paid off at the end of 5 years the total carrying charge on your home will be \$43 per month.

Stafford Lawns is served by either the Forest Hills or Parkside Station of the L. I. E. R. only 14 minutes from Pennsylvanias station, New York. The commutation fare is less than 25c.

**COME OUT AND INSPECT SAMPLE HOMES
BEFORE HIGHER PRICES GO IN EFFECT**

Stafford Lawns

Builders on Premises

JUNO ST. COR. STAFFORD AVE., FOREST HILLS, N. Y.
Telephones: Boulevard 4355-10406

DIRECTIONS—From Forest Hills Station walk south through Continental Ave. to Croton St., then turn right two blocks to Stafford Lawns. Or from the Parkside Station, walk one block east to Stafford Ave., then turn left to Juno St. By Auto from New York across Queensborough Bridge—along Queens Blvd. to Continental Ave., turn right to Croton St., then right again 2 blocks to Stafford Lawns.

Appendix Figure 8 Stafford Lawns ad, New York Times, September 7, 1930.

QUEENS.



**RIGHT IN
Forest
Hills**

Now Ready

The New Group of
Georgian English
Brick Homes
with Garage
for **\$9550**

\$500 CASH On Contract
\$200 on Title

*Featuring New Improve-
ments — New Conven-
iences, New Beauty and a
New Standard of Values.*

THREE attractive homes con-
tain 6 large rooms, furnished
breakfast room, open porch,
garage, extra lavatory on first
floor, studio living room with
high ceiling and heavy cross
beams, ing burning open fire-
place, built-in bookcases, real
wood panel dining room walls,
Electrolux silent refrigerator,
custom built kitchen units and
colored tile double drain boards,
colored tile bathroom and stand-
ing shower with plate glass
door, colored plumbing fixtures
in fact, every new and modern
improvement usually offered,
plus many features that can
only be obtained here.

\$97.64 Per Month Pays
All Carrying
Charges on This Home and
Reduces the Net Cost of Mort-
gage an Average of \$46.61
Per Month.

\$43 per month will
be the total car-
rying charges on your home
at the end of 3 years, when
the second mortgage has
been paid off.
Only 15 minutes from Pennsyl-
vania Station, New York, L. I.
R. R. The commutation fare
is less than 15c.

See Furnished Home Today
Inquire Directly at
Builders Office on Premises

Stafford Lawns

Ingram St. cor. Stafford Ave.
FOREST HILLS, N. Y.
Tel. BUL 6666 483-1348

DIRECTIONS — From Forest
Hills Station walk south through
Continental Ave. to Gorton St.,
then turn right two blocks to
Stafford Lawns. Or, from the
Parkside Station, walk one
block east to Stafford Ave.,
then turn left to Ingram St.
BY AUTO — from New York
across Queensborough Bridge —
along Queens Blvd. to Continen-
tal Av., turn right to Gorton
St., then right again 2 blocks
to Stafford Lawns.

Appendix Figure 9 Stafford Lawns ad, New York Times, October 12, 1930.

QUEENS.

QUEENS.

RIGHT IN Forest Hills

NEW BRICK STUDIO HOMES

THESE attractive homes contain 6 large rooms, furnished breakfast room, open porch, garage, extra lavatory on first floor, studio living room with high ceiling and heavy cross beams, log-burning open fireplace, built-in bookcases, real wood panel dining room walls. Electrolux silent refrigerator. Magic Chef insulated gas range, custom built kitchen units and colored tile bathroom and standing shower with plate glass door, colored plumbing fixtures—in fact, every new and modern improvement usually offered, plus many features that can only be obtained here.

\$9,550

Including

**GARAGE
\$500 CASH**

\$97.64 Per month pays
All Carrying Charges on this home and reduces the Second Mortgage an Average of \$46.67 Per Month.

\$43

on contract, \$750 on title Per Month will be the total carrying charges on your home at the end of 5 years, when the Second Mortgage has been paid off.

Only 14 minutes from Pennsylvania Station, New York, L. I. R. R. The commutation fare is less than 12c.

STAFFORD LAWNS

Ingram St., cor. Stafford Ave.
FOREST HILLS, N. Y.
Tel. BOULEVARD 4355-10406

DIRECTIONS—From Forest Hills Station walk south through Continental Ave. to Groton St., then turn right two blocks to Stafford Lawns and follow our signs to model house. Or from the Parkside Station, walk one block east to Stafford Ave., then turn left to Ingram St.

BY AUTO—From New York cross Queensboro Bridge—along Queens Blvd. to Continental Ave., turn right to Groton St., then right again 2 blocks to Stafford Lawns and follow our signs to model house.



Appendix Figure 10 Stafford Lawns ad, New York Times, November 9, 1930.

35 Sold Last Week!

Solid Brick and Stone
LAURELTON HOMES
with Separate Garage



for \$6990

\$59.95 MONTHLY
Carries Home and Pays Off Second Mortgage

\$350 CASH
on Contract, \$340 on Title
Second Mortgage Runs Until Paid

OVER 1900
Laurelton Homes Have Been **SOLD**

Features That Mean GREATER VALUES

- Separate Rock-Face Garage
- Electric Refrigerator
- Custom-Built Kitchen Cabinets
- Colored Plumbing Fixtures
- Log Burning Open Fireplace
- Automatic Water Heater
- Metal Weatherstrips
- Concrete Streets and Driveways

4 Large Rooms	Built-in Clothes Hamper in Bathroom
Vestibule with Gleak Closet	Porch
Furnished Breakfast Room	Oak Stairs
Linoleum Flooring (Kitchen and Breakfast Room)	Built-in Ironing Board
Colored Enamel Gas Range	Steam Heat
Chestnut Trim (1st floor)	Jacketed Boiler
Double Floors 3/4-inch Oak Throughout	Pecanina Tubs in Laundry
Chromium Medicine Cabinet with Venetian Mirror	Murray Hill Clothes Dryer
Colored Tile Bath	Extra Heavy Floor Beams
Chromium Plated Fittings	Panel Decorations
Separate Tile Shower with Chromium Plated Glass Door	Brass Plumbing
	Copper Leaders and Gutters
	Ornamental Fence for Rear Yards
	Landscaped Plots
	Poured Concrete Foundations

See Furnished Model Home Today!

Laurelton Homes, Inc.
A DIVISION OF THE INTERSTATE HOUSING CORPORATION
Merrick Road and 229th St., Laurelton, L. I.

DIRECTIONS—26 minutes by L. I. R. R. from Penn. Station, N. Y., or Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, to Laurelton Station, or by auto Merrick Road to 229th St. or Sunrise Highway to 224th St., follow signs, or Foch Blvd. to Springfield Blvd., turn right to Merrick Rd., turn left to 229th St.
Telephone: LAurelton 5000.

"At Laurelton—Your Dollar Buys More"

Appendix Figure 11 Laurelton Homes ad, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, August 31, 1930.

**AT LAURELTON
YOUR DOLLAR
BUYS MORE**



**117 SOLD
LAST 6 WEEKS**

**SOLID BRICK
AND STONE HOMES**

With
Garage **\$6990**

Standard Specifications
 Colonial Style Exterior of Stone
 Colonial Style Interior
 All Building with Electric
 Heating, Gas, Drainage
 and Water Supply

Construction of Foundation
 1. L.A.S. 2. Stone 3. Brick 4. Concrete
 5. Foundation 6. Foundation
 7. Foundation 8. Foundation
 9. Foundation 10. Foundation
 11. Foundation 12. Foundation
 13. Foundation 14. Foundation
 15. Foundation 16. Foundation
 17. Foundation 18. Foundation
 19. Foundation 20. Foundation
 21. Foundation 22. Foundation
 23. Foundation 24. Foundation
 25. Foundation 26. Foundation
 27. Foundation 28. Foundation
 29. Foundation 30. Foundation
 31. Foundation 32. Foundation
 33. Foundation 34. Foundation
 35. Foundation 36. Foundation
 37. Foundation 38. Foundation
 39. Foundation 40. Foundation
 41. Foundation 42. Foundation
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 71. Foundation 72. Foundation
 73. Foundation 74. Foundation
 75. Foundation 76. Foundation
 77. Foundation 78. Foundation
 79. Foundation 80. Foundation
 81. Foundation 82. Foundation
 83. Foundation 84. Foundation
 85. Foundation 86. Foundation
 87. Foundation 88. Foundation
 89. Foundation 90. Foundation
 91. Foundation 92. Foundation
 93. Foundation 94. Foundation
 95. Foundation 96. Foundation
 97. Foundation 98. Foundation
 99. Foundation 100. Foundation

\$59.95 Monthly

Carries Home and Pays
 50% of Mortgage
 on Current, 10% on First
 Second Mortgage
 Runs Until Paid

**LAURELTON
HOMES INC**

A Division of the International
 Building Corp.
 2000 Broadway, N. Y. C.
 Larchmont, N. Y.

**OVER 1900
LAURELTON HOMES
HAVE BEEN SOLD**

Appendix Figure 12 Laurelton Homes ad, New York Times, October 5, 1930.

MOSS *Studio* HOMES



**TAPESTRY BRICK with SEPARATE GARAGE
in LAURELTON
Park Gardens**

\$7190

**5 Minutes' Walk from Laurelton
or Rosedale Station, L. I. R. R.**

**\$395 on Contract
and \$395 on Title
\$61.95 MONTHLY**

THE most outstanding 7-room model home of the season, with studio living room, two open fireplaces, built-in bookcases, lounge-room in basement, an elaborate colored tile bathroom, each fixture in separate compartment, vanity table with triplicate mirrors, electric refrigerator, custom-built kitchen units, furnished breakfast "Dinette" and all other present-day improvements. Paved street, concrete driveway, sidewalks and curbs.

Pays all carrying charges and reduces 2nd mortgage, which runs until paid.

Built by MOSS BROTHERS
Builders of Quality Homes for 26 Years
Sunrise Highway and 231st St.
Laurelton, L. I. Teis. LAurelton 8-8391-4078

**furnished
MODEL
HOME
open
until
9 P.M.**

GREATER COMFORTS — MORE VALUE

SOLID BRICK AND STONE STUDIO HOMES



\$7190
with Separate
GARAGE

\$395 CASH
on Contract, \$395 on Title

\$61.95 Monthly
pays all carrying charges and reduces second mortgage, which runs until paid.

More Features Now Than Ever Before

These unusual homes contain 7 rooms, studio living room with high ceiling and heavy exposed cross beams, leaded glass studio windows and wood-burning open fireplace, furnished breakfast nook, electric refrigerator. Library-Den in basement with solid wood panel walls and another wood-burning open fireplace. Colored tile set 6 feet high in bathroom, large falence floor tile, separate stall for toilet and a Vanity Alcove with modernistic boudoir table, extra toilet downstairs and many other appointments to complete the typical Laurelton Home.

Completely Furnished Model Home Open Till 9 P. M.

Laurelton Homes, Inc.

A Division of the Interstate Housing Corp.
MERRICK ROAD & 226th ST.—LAURELTON, L. I.

DIRECTIONS: Via L. I. R. R., 26 minutes from Penn. Sta., N. Y., or Flatbush Ave., B'klyn to Laurelton Sta. Via auto: Merrick Rd. to 226th St., turn left; or Sunrise Highway to 224th St., turn left to Merrick Rd.; or Foch Blvd., to Springfield Blvd., turn right to Merrick Rd., turn left to 226th St. Tel. LAurelton 8-5600.

OVER 2400 SOLD

Appendix Figure 13 Moss Brothers and Laurelton Homes ads, New York Times, May 3, 1931. Note the similarities between the picture in the Moss Brothers ad and pictures of the Stafford Lawns and Laurelton Homes houses.

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