

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Oak Hills Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by NW West Union Road, NW 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Cornell  not for publication  
Road and Bethany Blvd.

city or town Beaverton  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Washington code 067 zip code 97006

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Oak Hills Historic District  
 Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
 County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
510	124	buildings
		district
2		site
		structure
1		object
513	124	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

EDUCATION: School

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports Facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Outdoor Rec.

RELIGION: Religious Facility and Church School

TRANSPORTATION: Pedestrian Related

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

EDUCATION: School

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports Facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Outdoor Rec.

RELIGION: Religious Facility and Church School

TRANSPORTATION: Pedestrian Related

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN: Ranch Style

MODERN: Contemporary

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: Weatherboard, Plywood

BRICK, OTHER: Cementitious board

roof: ASPHALT

other: \_\_\_\_\_

Oak Hills Historic District  
Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
County and State

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### **Summary Paragraph**

The Oak Hills Historic District is a residential neighborhood, composed primarily of single-family, detached homes located in Beaverton, Oregon. It is roughly bounded to the north by NW West Union Road, to the east by NW 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, to the west by NW Bethany Boulevard, and to the south by NW Cornell Road. The section of the development which extends to NW Cornell Road is along NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and the remainder of the development is bound roughly by NW Oak Hills Drive. The district encompasses approximately 240 acres and consists of a single, master-planned community surrounded by newer suburban subdivisions as well as a nursery. The community includes 627 single-family, detached homes, four townhouse clusters, with a total of 24 units, an elementary school, church, former sewage plant building, community recreation center, an entrance sign, and two parks. The district's cohesively designed setting is characterized by a curvilinear road network, single-family residential clusters, townhouse blocks, as well as a centrally-located park that includes passive open space, recreational fields, and pedestrian walkways. The individual houses feature a diversified but intentionally limited set of design schemes. A majority of the houses were constructed between 1965 and 1974. A cluster of five lots were subdivided and developed in 1978 and an additional cluster of 27 lots were developed between 1994 and 1995. The majority of lot sizes for individual homes are between 0.18 and 0.23 acres with an average of 0.21 acres while the townhouses occupy either 0.04 or 0.05 of an acre. The average square footage of residences is approximately 2,459 square feet. House styles include several modest allusions to historic architectural revivals including Neo-French, Monterey, Tudor, Cape Cod, and Colonial. These styles are intermingled with house forms with a decidedly modern inspiration that include Contemporary, Ranch, Split-Level, and Split Entry types. The most common alterations to the buildings in the district are the application of vinyl siding, roof material changes, garage door replacements, minor additions, and the replacement of original windows. Changes to the overall development include the replacement of some streetlights, removal of the original sewage treatment ponds (but not the main plant building), and improvements to the recreation center that included enclosing a formerly open picnic pavilion to transform the space into a gymnasium. The scale and scope of these modifications, however, do not affect the district's overall condition or its ability to convey its significance as it retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### District Boundary, Site Characteristics and Setting

The Oak Hills Historic District encompasses approximately 240 acres between NW West Union Road, NW 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, NW Bethany Boulevard, and NW Cornell Road (see historic district map – Additional Information section). The community was developed as a planned unit development, or PUD, which is a development model, zoning classification and regulatory process that allows flexibility with zoning regulations, defined by or negotiated with a regulatory planning body, so that a proposed community may be designed to accomplish various goals. These goals included the grouping of both varied and compatible land uses, the clustering of buildings/lots to increase open space between them, and establishing a hierarchy of street types within the community.<sup>1</sup> The physical characteristics of Oak Hills, namely its boundaries, site characteristics, and overall setting, are an expression of a substantially intact PUD.

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<sup>1</sup> Byron R. Hanke, "Planned Unit Development and Land Use Intensity," *The University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 114: 1 (Nov. 1965): 18-19. See also George Sternlieb, et al., "Planned Unit Development Legislation: A Summary of Necessary Considerations," *Urban Law Annual; Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law*, 7 (1974): 74-75; and "Planned Unit Development", [www.wikipedia.com/pud/](http://www.wikipedia.com/pud/) edit, accessed December 26, 2012.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

The district boundary is reflective of a series of nine (9) subdivision plats filed by the neighborhood's original developers between 1964 and 1969 and 2 subsequent subdivision plats filed in 1978 and 1993.<sup>2</sup> While each side of the development borders major roads, it is largely surrounded by smaller residential subdivisions to the north, east, south, and west that date from the 1980s and 1990s. A large commercial plaza is situated just south of the main entrance on NW Cornell Road and Oak Hills' main entrance is only a few hundred feet away from U.S. 26.

In general, the topography of the development is relatively flat with slight topographic undulations. The lowest point of the development is situated in the area just south of NW Oak Hills Drive where Willow Creek runs beneath NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Following NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, the topography gradually ascends into the center of the subdivision property. The center part of the development is relatively flat and has been graded to allow for recreational playing fields as well as the Oak Hills Elementary School. Views of the West Hills dominate the east perspective from NW 153<sup>rd</sup> as the playing fields are ringed by large specimen oak trees, poplars, and assorted conifers. Most of the residential properties are differentiated from the open spaces by fencing. East of the playing fields, the topography of the open space becomes undulating once more and eventually intersects with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission line corridor and an oil pipeline right-of-way which also serves as a mowed greenway. In general, homes constructed during certain time periods are clustered together with the first homes being built in the southern end of the development in 1965-1967. Once the original homes were sold, the development grew northward and west in 1967-1969, and then east between 1969 and 197. In the northwest, a cluster of five lots were subdivided and developed in 1978 and an additional cluster of 27 lots were developed between 1994 and 1995 (See Figure 2, Construction Dates map – Additional Information section).

### Oak Hills' Suburban Characteristics and Physical Development

The character defining features of the Oak Hills Historic District are divided into four components: cluster development, open space, circulation patterns, and architectural types. These four components capture the principal elements of this suburban planned unit development and reveal that the combination of these features distinguishes Oak Hills as one of the most complete and cohesive master-planned communities from the 1960s in metropolitan Portland. They display how the developers actively used the existing topography and vegetation, focused institutional functions in the center of the development to accentuate the "village" concept, exploited the development's proximity to major roads to attract the attention of and influence the experience of prospective homeowners, made generous open space provisions for active and passive recreational purposes, and created an effective and safe network of pedestrian walkways and roads. The resulting designed landscape served multiple functions and conveyed multiple meanings, including real estate marketing, consumer appeal, domesticity, safety, recreational amenity, and relative seclusion.

#### A. Cluster Development

The Oak Hills subdivision epitomizes the notion of cluster development as it existed in the 1960s. Cluster development refers to the grouping of single family or multi-family housing, public facilities, and community buildings implemented to conserve open space while maintaining density. The residential clusters in Oak Hills, for example, are grouped into multi-family housing composed of four blocks of townhouses (24 units in all) and the single family detached housing that dominates much of the subdivision. The townhouses are clustered along a T-shaped site plan consisting of 2.833 acres facing NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and NW Norwich Street. The rectangular shaped plans of the "Regal French" style townhouses include a rear patio and hipped roof, two-car garage. A rear service road provides access to the garages. Paired concrete circles indicate the former locations of in-ground garbage cans that have since been filled in. Each individual townhouse is joined to a neighboring townhouse through a party-wall and only occupies 0.04 to 0.05 acres of land. The undeveloped, but landscaped and manicured grounds surrounding these buildings are commonly held by the

<sup>2</sup> Washington County (OR) Tax Assessors Office, Subdivision Plat Records, 1969 to 1993, Oak Hills Subdivision Plats #1 through #11.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

townhouse development's separate homeowners association. The townhouse blocks are separated by narrow, 20-foot-wide rights-of-way with smaller four-foot wide paved pedestrian walkways that extend from the service road around to the public sides of the buildings. The townhouses also exhibit a consistent setback from the roads that border them.

The single family residential lots predominantly occupy between 0.18 to 0.23 acres with lots concentrated along the main oval-shaped perimeter road, loop roads and/or cul-de-sacs within the development. Due to the construction of a development-specific wastewater treatment plant and no need for individual septic fields, the lots were kept relatively small and were largely rectangular or trapezoidal in shape. Most houses exhibit a central position within individual lots and are accessed via a walk that either extends from a driveway or from the sidewalk. Some house designs, such as the Neo-French version of the Spacemaster II, had to shift the orientation of the house and detach the garage in order to fit into the smaller lots of the development. For the most part, the front elevations of each residence face the street and exhibit consistent setbacks. Street side fencing is largely absent in the development, while rear yards are often enclosed by wood or chain link fences. In some instances, pedestrian rights-of-way and the open spaces spill onto private lots that lack fencing. Garages are largely attached to the individual residences, project from the home, and face the street.

The principal community-oriented buildings are prominently situated near the central recreational fields. Together, these buildings form a clustered institutional core of the "village concept" that the original designers intended. The Oak Hills Christian Church (2800 NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue; 1965), Oak Hills Elementary School (2625 NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue; 1967), and the Oak Hills Recreation Center, Pool, and Gym (2400 NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue; 1965). The spaces around these buildings are largely open and unimpeded by fencing (with the exception of the pool) with a well shaded and landscaped picnic area, playground, and tennis courts situated immediately north of the Recreation Center. All of these public-oriented buildings are situated in close proximity to the four detached blocks of townhouses that include 24 units. A protected service road that accesses a parking area is situated immediately between the townhouse block and NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

The Oak Hills Elementary School is situated on a larger parcel of open space but is also accompanied by a number of temporary classroom buildings. The Oak Hills Christian Church, situated across the street from the school, is set amidst a park-like setting that includes a number of large oak and pine trees. Located to the south of the school is the Oak Hills Recreation Center. This area includes the community pool, a gymnasium, playground, basketball court, picnic area, and tennis courts. The area is well shaded by a combination of conifers and deciduous trees including some oaks. The picnic area features metal grills and is circumscribed by a low, circular concrete curb. Landscaping in this area is focused in curvilinear planting beds rimmed by 6" concrete curbing. The pool area is fenced and, due to the topography, is elevated on a concrete base that is ringed by concrete walkways. The current gym and office exhibit elements of the International and Contemporary styles. The International Style office makes extensive use of plate glass panels topped by a flat roof interrupted by a metal louvered clerestory. The current gym, formerly a covered, open air picnic space, retains a shingle-covered hip roof topped by an enclosed clerestory. The roof features a character-defining deep overhang that permits views of cantilevered wood structural ties. The walls on the east side of the building formerly slid open to join the space with the adjoining outdoor picnic area. The interior of the building is currently used as a gymnasium.

One of the first buildings erected in the development, the Recreation Center was strategically positioned on a grassy hill overlooking the intersection of NW 153<sup>rd</sup> and Oak Hills Drive. The building's position in the landscape maximized its visibility to ensure that prospective homeowners entering from Cornell Road would have observed this prominent recreational amenity set amidst an open grassy expanse.

## B. Open Space: Aesthetics, Recreation, and Natural Features

The clustering of housing allowed for unfettered access to a larger area of commonly held open space throughout the development. Owned by the homeowners association, the recreational fields and informal

Oak Hills Historic District

Washington, Oregon

Name of Property

County and State

grassy spaces situated throughout the middle of the development emphasize aesthetics, recreation, and nature. From the central part of the development, the tree-lined fields focus views towards the West Hills that rise from the Tualatin River Valley. These views, if not all views throughout the development, are unhindered by utilities as all electric and gas service lines are buried (with the notable exception of the BPA transmission line). While the flat grassy playing fields invite recreational activities such as soccer and baseball/softball, the more informal open spaces to the east exhibit undulating land contours that invite other informal forms of recreational use. A 75-foot-wide BPA right-of-way and adjoining 25-foot right-of-way for a buried oil pipeline extend north to south and intersect this hilly area. Due to the generous provision of open space, one can walk from NW Bethany Boulevard east to NW 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue along this greenway.<sup>3</sup> All of the residential clusters are within 100-200 feet of open space – either to the large central fields or to small pocket parks, such as “Pooh Park” accessed via an unassuming walkway that extends north from the NW Forest Avenue cul-de-sac.

An additional green space is situated along the floodplain of Willow Creek. This area is periodically wet during rainy periods and features evidence of landscaping that preceded the development. A row of poplars that once formed a wind break was recently removed. An additional row of poplars is located on the east end of the development and is visible from NW 144<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A small park also appears in this area and is composed of two intersecting half circle walkways but does not exhibit planting beds. The main recreational space is centered on the Oak Hills Recreational Center located off of NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The Recreational Center and other institutional buildings are discussed in section D below.

### C. Circulation Patterns

Circulation patterns within Oak Hills consist of an internal hierarchy of pedestrian walkways and sidewalks as well as a road network of major roads, loop roads, and cul-de-sacs. Surrounded on all four sides by major arterials, the Oak Hills development intentionally limited automobile access to four entries with the main or ceremonial entrance on NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, marked by the development’s three-sided, thirty-foot- tall, convex sign visible from Cornell Road – the road closest to U.S. 26. The principal rationale behind limiting access was to reduce potential through trips by non-residents, decrease the speeds of autos traveling through the development, and to also create a more leisurely aesthetic.

The network of walkways within the development provides easy pedestrian access to all parts of the development while serving multiple functions (See Figure 7, map of proposed in the Additional Information section). Concrete sidewalks along major roads, for instance, were separated from roadways by grassy planting strips. Most sidewalks along major roads were constructed on only one side of the street. In addition to sidewalks, narrow pedestrian rights-of-way are positioned between house lots throughout the development to provide internal access to the main open space. These paths permit residents anywhere in the development easy access to the central open space. Within the rights-of-way as well as throughout the interior open space, are narrow four-to-five foot wide, paved walkways that facilitate pedestrian movement. These paths are situated along the edges of the recreational fields but often extend through the middle of the more informal grassy fields on the eastern end of the development. Large mature trees tend to ring much of the recreational fields and open space with most of the fields mowed but not irrigated.

The road network of Oak Hills is designed to be both processional and exclusive. While the community is not gated, three of the development’s four roads that lead to major exterior roads are short spans that terminate in a T-intersection within the development. Further, none of the interior roads head in a direct, cardinal direction but instead are composed of a curvilinear main perimeter road, loop roads, and an interesting hierarchy of cul-de-sacs that range from shallow circular refuges to a traditional cul-de-sac located at the end of a longer drive. The practical effect of this arrangement is that car speeds are reduced and trips through the development by non-residents are minimized. The most heavily traveled roads, such as Perimeter Road, feature 60-foot

<sup>3</sup> There are 26 acres of open space that are a part of Oak Hills, and an additional 14 acres of right-of-way associated with the Bonneville transmission line, for a total of 40 acres of open space (Darla Castagno, Personal Communication with Kirk Ranzetta, December 27, 2012). Note that one can walk throughout the development on paved paths.

Oak Hills Historic District

Washington, Oregon

Name of Property

County and State

rights-of-way with minor roads maintaining a 50-foot reservation and cul-de sacs featuring 25-to-50-foot radii. Most of the roads follow the natural contours of the landscape and tend to curve on inclines and declines. This system is emblematic of subdivision road networks predicated on minimizing through traffic while emphasizing car and pedestrian safety.

NW 153<sup>rd</sup> Avenue was designed to serve as the main processional road leading into the heart of the development. Accessed via a signalized intersection with Cornell Road, this entrance is marked by a vertical monument sign composed of three concave surfaces with a large attached lantern announcing the subdivision to passing motorists. The sign played an important role in signaling the primary entrance into the development. As one proceeds down NW 153<sup>rd</sup>, two loop roads, NW Arcadia Court and NW Albion Court provide initial indications as to the character of the development. NW Arcadia Court features the first set of model homes that were erected in the development in 1965 and were strategically placed on the right side of NW 153<sup>rd</sup> for ease of access. Further north on NW 153<sup>rd</sup>, the broad winding avenue gradually descends into a wide turn framed by a long curvilinear planting bed that frames a spacious grassy panel on the east side of the road. As it ascends back up a hill, the road immediately comes to an intersection at the Recreation Center. The main recreational amenity for the development, the Center was one of the first buildings erected to convey the stability of the development and its commitment to customers.

#### D. Architectural Styles, Types, and Materials: 1965-1974

The architecture of the neighborhood consists of an eclectic blend of traditional and modern designs. Approximately 81 percent of the homes within the subdivision appear to have been built from two home design catalogs created by the original developers. To demonstrate the choices open to consumers, two sets of ten model homes were erected, one set on NW Arcadia Court in 1965 and the other on NW Norwich Circle a few years later. The range of model homes and the designs in the catalogs discouraged monotony through its range of choices but nonetheless controlled the overall appearance and quality of home construction.

Table 1 provides a list of home types derived from the two surviving house catalogs to demonstrate the relative diversity of design and form types. The emphasis throughout the development was on simple geometric building forms with a horizontal emphasis. The overwhelming majority of residences were a single story, but the developers adopted a number of house designs that maximized square footage on that single floor. The Spacemaker II appears to have been one of the most popular home designs. Its unique square massing and three-room-deep plan afforded a significant amount of space on one floor. While featuring a common plan, the exterior could be manipulated in a number of ways to exhibit Neo-French, Cape Cod, as well as Ranch stylistic detailing. The Neo-French version exhibited a distinctive mansard roof that allowed for houses, such as the residence at 15480 NW Norwich Circle, to be a full two stories. The one-and-a-half story Cape Cod type, such as the house at 15700 NW Norwich Street, featured a relatively low-pitched, side gable roof with a gable roof over the entry porch. In some instances, the house featured a front façade with flat stone cladding. The other most popular home models in descending order included the Oakwood, Springwood II, Bridlewood, and Mercerwood – all one-story ranch style houses with attached two-car garages. One split level design (Manorwood) seemed to be the most popular of the multiple story houses. Indicative of the overall approach to multi-level houses in the development, the Manorwood featured a low-pitched hip roof, integrated two-car garage, and slightly recessed entry. Rummer houses, such as the house at 2720 NW Forest Avenue, represented the most popular modern design, but these homes deviated from the architectural conventions of other development homes. Strictly one story, these residences eschewed fenestration on street elevations that typically exhibited doors, ribbon windows under the eaves, and double car garages. These houses also exhibited open gable or flat roofs, an open interior courtyard plan, and large plate glass windows facing the courtyard and rear elevations.

While 151 homes feature unidentified types, these homes appeared to be derived from a restricted set of plans or models. Several ranch homes, for instance, exhibited a U-shaped massing with a central open courtyard and detached garage. An additional couple of houses (15495 NW Norwich Street and 15380 NW

Oak Hills Historic District  
 Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
 County and State

Perimeter Street) featured a bold, two-story, Neo-Colonial colonnade flanked by one-story wings. Another distinctive ranch-type variation (see 14672 Forestel Loop and 14525 NW Perimeter Drive) featured a recessed entry with open skylight. Lastly, at least two contemporary designed homes (15160 NW Oak Hills Drive and 15650 NW Barkton Street) feature a John Yeon-inspired front porch replete with plate glass windows and plywood paneling.<sup>4</sup> So while a model catalog for these unidentified types has not been found, they were nonetheless governed by a defined set of model options.

*Table I. Breakdown of House Models Found in Oak Hills (See two model catalogs in Additional Information section)*

Model Name	Style	Number of Homes	Percent of Total Homes (%)
Rummer (Modern)	International (Modern-Contemporary)	29	6% (8%)
The Spacemaker II	Cape Cod, Neo-French, Ranch, Colonial	120	25%
The Mercerwood	Ranch	38	8%
The Monterey	Ranch	22	4%
The Springwood II	Ranch	56	12%
The Carmel	Split Level	3	1%
The Oakwood	Ranch	62	13%
The Manorwood	Split Level	22	5%
The Bridlewood	Ranch	44	9%
The Tri-Master	Split Level	10	2%
The Spacemaker II	Contemporary	20	4%
The Gardenaire	Ranch	4	1%
The Classic	Contemporary, Split Level	3	1%
The Squirewood	Monterrey	15	3%
The Berkshire	Split Entry, Colonial	14	3%
The Denfield	Cape Cod	4	1%
The Meadowbrook	Split Entry	1	1%
The Royalwood	Tudor	2	1%
The Unitmaker	Ranch	7	1%
Unidentified Types <sup>5</sup>	Various	151	23%
<b>Total Number of Single Family Homes</b>		<b>627</b>	<b>100%</b>

As a reflection of the development's integrity, the overwhelming majority of the houses (91percent) retain their natural wood exterior sheathing. About 7 percent of the residences exhibit their original brick facing. Only 2 percent of the homes exhibit some type of synthetic siding materials, which is a testament to the continued vigilance of the homeowners association and its implementation of the development's CC&Rs that require architectural review. Due to the substantial retention of original form and building materials, 81 percent of the buildings within the development are contributing resources while 19 percent are not eligible either due to subsequent modifications or because they fall outside the district's period of significance.

Nearly all of the original homes were constructed of natural materials including roofs that were sheathed with shake or shingle roofs and horizontal clapboard or vertical flush boards providing the majority of exterior sheathing. Most homes featured modest architectural elaboration with a hint of stylistic applique. The Colonial style Berkshire model, for instance, featured a modern split entry design behind a two story colonnade replete with a broken pediment above the main entry. The Neo-French version of the Spacemaker II exhibited a modernistic interpretation of the mansard roof. An unidentified design projected its Neo-

<sup>4</sup> Both of these properties share many characteristics with John Yeon's Watzek House (NHL 7/25/2011). These include the low sloping gable roof with projecting portico which provides outdoor porch space, the slender and simple wood supports that extend from the gable to the ground without footings, and the use of exposed structural wood members.

<sup>5</sup> "Unidentified Types" include residences that are mostly ranch or contemporary in style but are not identified in the two surviving model home catalogs or the Rummer design catalogs. Many of the buildings feature common building forms and likely came from an additional catalog. Approximately nine of these buildings feature characteristics that are similar to Rummer Homes, but Mr. Rummer has confirmed that they were not built with his plans.



Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

Mediterranean or Spanish inspiration through an arcaded front and its double arched chimney while the Monterey-inspired Squirewood betrayed its stylistic attribution with a shallow porch with balustrade on the second floor of its primary facade.

Several trends in the exterior facades of the buildings reveal how architects created interesting variation even within a traditional house type. Bays, such as those found on the Denfield, were cantilevered from the exterior wall surface. Fenestration patterns were often enhanced by the use of narrow boards as additional framing elements and/or plywood panels below the sash. Garage doors were often clad in with horizontal clapboard or vertical flush boards that visually defied their real function and purpose. The flush boards then became an opportunity for additional trim in a variety of different patterns.

The Rummer homes were particularly notable for their use of internal open courtyards and extensive use of glass to optimize light in the houses. While attractive for their modern feel and ideological distance from the more traditional models, one of the most common modifications that owners of Rummer homes made was covering their courtyards. Robert Rummer of Rummer Homes, Inc. was one of the most unique of the builders at Oak Hills and often bucked tradition by constructing a number of houses with little-to-no fenestration on street facades. Slender ribbon windows were placed under the eaves to allow for modest illumination and to maximize privacy. The interiors, meanwhile, were open spaces filled with light from the extensive use of plate glass windows on non-public elevations of the house.

The overwhelming majority of the houses, however, reflect a proclivity towards the Ranch style. These one story gable roof, gable-on-hip, or hipped roof dwellings were often sheathed with wood clapboard or plywood and boasted a fenestration of large aluminum picture windows sometimes traditionally dressed with non-functional louvered shutters. Roofs were typically covered with wood shingles or shakes. Chimneys, such as those found on the Spacemaster II, sometimes received some degree of prominence on the primary elevation.

The public buildings situated within Oak Hills reflected a degree of homogeneity in order to convey an overall unity of impression. The recreational center and original sewage plant, for instance, both exhibited distinctive hipped roofs that linked the buildings to the overarching development themes. The Oak Hills Christian Church, set amidst a lot shaded with large oak trees, represented an important example of the Northwest Regional Style. Its simplicity of design and honest expression of natural building materials, inside and out, tied its architectural inspiration to religious buildings across the Portland metropolitan area. The interior and exterior of the church are honestly designed with the structural elements, such as the main scissor trusses for the gable roof and wood structural columns, left exposed. Even the Oak Hills Elementary School, built in 1967, exhibited a "unit plan" that relied on centrally placed common areas such as the gymnasium and cafeteria flanked by individual classroom "units". These types of plans were used to anticipate growth as sites were often chosen so that an additional unit could be incorporated into the overall layout without larger disruptions to the building's function. The one story school, largely constructed of brick, featured a distinctive flat roof with a prominent metal fascia and deep eave that cantilevers over the exterior wall. The low-slung appearance of the school comports with the overall scale of the institutional and residential buildings located in the center of the development.

The townhouses represented the most unique building form within the development for its time. Advertised as "Regal French" in style, the two-story, board-and-batten and brick-clad buildings, such as the block of units located at 15330 NW Norwich Street, emphasized their verticality through the use of bays marked by recessed bays that housed entries and patios. Plain brick chimneys arose from low-sloped hip roofs. Individual units were separated by a party wall that was deemphasized by the variation in building materials, as well as projecting and recessing entries and structural forms.

### Historical Integrity

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

The overall historical integrity of the Oak Hills development dating from the last large phase of improvements in 1974 has been retained. The architectural survey conducted by the Oregon State Historical Preservation Office found that the district exhibited a high percentage of contributing resources (N=514, 81%) with the remaining resources consisting of non-contributing resources that were either significantly modified (N=96, 15%) or that were not constructed during the period of significance (N=28, 4%). A concentration of non-contributing resources consisting of 27 residential properties are situated along NW Wooded Way were constructed in 1994 and 1995, but the loop road is confined to a corner of the development and does not significantly detract from the neighboring contributing resources. NW Wooded Way was kept within the boundaries of the district because the loop road was a part of the original master plan of Oak Hills. Some inappropriate additions have modified exterior elevations of houses. During the original survey by SHPO staff and subsequent reviews of the survey data several general trends emerged. The most common changes to buildings included removal of aluminum windows and replacement with vinyl. Roof sheathing was also modified as houses moved from wood shake shingle to asphalt. Due to the efforts of the homeowner association, a majority of exterior changes were conducted in the rear elevations. Inappropriate modifications could be observed by attempting to compare the existing house against the images in the two model catalogs. In only a handful of cases, an entire house was either engulfed in a massive campaign of alterations or was entirely demolished or replaced.

The overall street patterns, major public buildings, and main entrance sign have received modest alterations over time. These alterations included enclosing the former open air community center, which is now used as a gymnasium. The sewer plant was decommissioned resulting in the loss of the treatment pools, but the sewage plant building has been repurposed as a workshop. Lastly, the church building received a large but complementary community hall addition.

## **Summary**

The combination of house styles, residential types, public buildings, landscape features, circulation patterns, and open spaces create a harmonious overall design that is intact and clearly identifiable. The retention of these characteristics is indicative of an effectively and competently executed and managed 1960s Planned Unit Development replete with a homeowners association. From the lighting details and distinctive form of the entrance sign to the pedestrian walkways that lead to the contoured open spaces, the Oak Hills Historic District readily conveys its significance as a village concept that successfully integrated the domestic, recreation, education, and religious aspects of everyday life.

Oak Hills Historic District  
Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1965-1974

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1965 – date of initial construction

1974 – last year of initial construction

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Robert Rummer, Bud Oringdulph,

Commonwealth Inc., United Homes Corp., and

Century 21 Homes

**Period of Significance (justification)**

1965 is the date when construction began on Oak Hills and 1974 concludes the major building period in Oak Hills.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Oak Hills is a property that must meet Criteria Consideration G because it is a historic district in which all of the properties are less than fifty years old with a majority of homes constructed between 1965 and 1974. Exceptional significance is achieved in this instance for seven reasons.

- 1) Research has revealed that Oak Hills was a master-planned community that applied innovative planning principles such as cluster development and the integration of large usable open spaces and recreation areas that preceded the actual planned unit development (PUD) ordinance in Washington County by nine years.<sup>6</sup>
- 2) The original development team created a homeowners association (HOA) in 1966 that enforced conditions, covenants, and restrictions (CC&Rs) upon all privately owned properties within the development. As the second HOA created for this purpose in Oregon (and one of about 500 in the U.S. at the time), the Oak Hills HOA is an early example of an organization that oversaw the implementation of development-wide deed restrictions that are now found in over 200,000 communities across the United States. One scholar has noted that the "privatizing of the American neighborhood over the past 40 years represents a fundamental development in the history of local government and of property rights in the United States."<sup>7</sup>
- 3) Due to the HOA's management of the development through the CC&Rs, the development exhibits an exceptional level of historic integrity with 81% of the properties listed in the nomination as contributing resources to the historic district.
- 4) Oak Hills contains the earliest examples of FHA-approved townhouses in the state of Oregon. The FHA's approval was a key hurdle that assured the future financing of mortgages for the properties. The successful inclusion of the townhouse development at Oak Hills precipitated a subsequent building boom for this particular type of multi-family housing across the Portland metropolitan area.<sup>8</sup>
- 5) The townhouses were an early example of the cohesive integration of owner-occupied, multi-family housing into a larger single-family residential development in the state. For most multi-family housing in the Portland area up until that time and even after, multi-family units were situated in specific zones and usually on the perimeter of a development.<sup>9</sup>
- 6) Oak Hills served as an important precedent and model in terms of design, marketing, and amenity for future master planned suburban communities such as Mountain Park (1968) and Red Fox Hills (1968) in Lake Oswego as well as the Westbrook (1967), Four Seasons (1968) and Rock Creek (1968) in Beaverton. One of the original designers has noted that nothing built in the Portland area, either before or after Oak Hills, was as comprehensive, cohesive, or complete in its overall vision as a village.<sup>10</sup>
- 7) Oak Hills epitomizes how PUD's were a response to the sense of "anomie, alienation, and isolation fostered by post-World War II inner city deterioration and suburban development."<sup>11</sup> As a testament to the community's enduring social value, between 1973 and 2003, at least 80 families maintained residency in the development and by 2012, at least 40 second generation families had taken up occupancy within Oak Hills.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Interview between Amy Barton, Ed Lilly, Wayne Rembold, and Bud Oringdulph", Beaverton, Oregon, 2012. See also "Ingenious: The Way Planners are Now Developing (With Imagination and Forethought) Land to its Fullest and Best Use," *The Portland Realtor*, 40: 7 (September 1969): 7.

<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Nelson, "The Private Neighborhood," *Regulation*, Summer (2004): 40-46.

<sup>8</sup> Gerry Pratt, "Swank Row Houses Find Ready Market," *The Oregonian*, March 14, 1968, 3M; See also "Oak Hills Dwellings Slated for Opening," *The Press (Advertiser)*, March 30, 1967, np.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Pinterich, "Some Portland Suburbs Win Praise of Planners: New Planned Communities Believed Answer to Menace of 'Ticky Tacky,'" *The Sunday Oregonian*, October 8, 1967, 4F. Somerset West and Eastgate Estates are just two examples.

<sup>10</sup> *The Portland Realtor*, "Ingenious," 7; Heinz K. Rudolf, Personal Communication with Kirk Ranzetta, Leesa Gratrek, Martha Richards, and Anisa Becker, September 11, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Louis J. Kern, Review of "Community: Pursuing the Dream, Living the Reality," in *Utopian Studies*, 15: 2 (Winter 2004), 241. See also Suzanne Keller, *Community: Pursuing the Dream, Living the Reality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 56.

<sup>12</sup> Darla Castagno, Personal Communication with Kirk Ranzetta, December 27, 2012. Ms. Castagno reviewed a development directory from 1973 and 2003 and was able to confirm that at least 80 families remained in Oak Hills during that time period.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

These seven components of Oak Hills' exceptional significance are discussed more in depth below.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Oak Hills Historic District, located in Beaverton, Washington County, Oregon is significant locally under National Register Criteria A and C as an excellent example of a 1960s master-planned community. Oak Hills is significant under Criterion A due to its ties to larger societal and design response to 'ticky tacky' suburban development. With its "village" design concept that joined single and multi-family residences, as well as religious, educational, and recreational facilities into a cohesive whole, Oak Hills sought to address many of the negative environmental and social externalities of post-World War II housing developments. The Oak Hills community also reflects the impacts that homeowners associations (HOAs) and their implementation of Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&Rs) had upon the long term governance of developments across the United States. As an early example of a HOA-governed development, Oak Hills set an important precedent that was replicated elsewhere in the Portland area after 1966. The development is also significant under Criterion C as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that retains its character-defining circulation patterns, open space, landscape features, cluster development, aesthetic and recreational amenities, and its overall architectural composition and development pattern. The development represents one of the most complete, mixed-use, planned communities in the greater metropolitan Portland area that also successfully integrated owner-occupied townhouses with detached single-family residences. Furthermore, the development's architectural eclecticism and its limited traffic access and hierarchical circulation pattern reflected the intentions of developers as well as the aesthetic desires of suburbanites during the period. The period of significance begins in 1965 with the construction of the first houses and ends in 1974 when the construction of most residences was effectively completed.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

An early example of a Home Owners Association (HOA)-governed, master-planned community, Oak Hills is significant under National Register Criterion A. Originally designed and constructed beginning in 1965, the Oak Hills development was the second HOA-governed community in the state of Oregon. Differentiated from earlier efforts to restrict residential properties, the developers implemented Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&Rs) to effectively control the appearance of Oak Hills over the long term. Driven in large part by the efforts of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to insure residential property mortgages, HOA communities were developed as a way of reducing risk within sometimes volatile real estate markets. Following the first meeting of the Oak Hills HOA in 1966, the organization provided early leadership in self-governance by purchasing property within the development for open space, contesting a rezoning within the development for additional townhomes, and enforcing the CC&Rs through litigation. As one of only about 500 HOAs in the United States at the time, the Oak Hills HOA represents an early form of private community oversight that would grow to become one of the most significant trends in private residential governance. Created as a reaction to the banalities of post-World War II development, Oak Hills has endured with minimal change. The stability of the community is conveyed by the extended residency of large numbers of families. Between 1973 and 2003, for instance, at least 80 families maintained residency within the development.

Oak Hills is also significant under National Register Criterion C as an excellent example of a master-planned community that set an important precedent for other communities in the Portland metropolitan in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The coherent and harmonious combination of clustering residential lots, open space integration, circulation patterns that balanced the needs of pedestrians and cars alike, and the architectural eclecticism are emblematic of mid-1960s land use planning and architectural design. The development also reveals the first integration of FHA-approved townhouses into a mixed use development in the state of Oregon. Townhouses would subsequently become an important building type in the Portland area in the late 1960s and 1970s. Tightly controlled by the original development team, the available house types and styles for Oak Hills and their application on the loop roads and cul-de-sacs of the development reveal how the concepts behind a planned unit subdivision could be implement as a cohesive whole. The provision of open space, a

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

pedestrian oriented circulation network, and the amenities of the recreational center all illustrate how the Oak Hills developers actively pursued a public increasingly intolerant of sprawl and its associated negative social and environmental impacts. For these reasons, Oak Hills is significant under National Register Criterion C as a historic district and is significant at the local level.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

Satellite Cities, Neighborhoods, Villages, and Planned Unit Developments: A Brief History of Post-World War II Suburbia

The historiography of suburban development in the United States has reflected gradual shifts in focus and perspective over time. The attention of historians, however, has begun to shift increasingly towards the 1960s as a time when significant events associated with land use regulation, federal mortgage insurance programs, development patterns, residential housing forms, urban outmigration, and subdivision governance created communities that were increasingly distinguishable from their predecessors in the post-World War II period. This section briefly reviews these trends in order to place the current interest in the Oak Hills Historic District into a broader historical context. This section builds upon the National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* as well as the recently published *NCHRP Report 723: A Model for Identifying and Evaluating the Historic Significance of Post-World War II Housing* and demonstrates that sufficient historical perspective currently exists to determine that the Oak Hills Historic District is exceptionally significant.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of suburban development to post-war America has not been lost on historians who have written extensive critiques and narratives about ex-urban settlement patterns – mostly since the 1920s when there was a growing interest in understanding the social, scientific and environmental impact of suburbanization.<sup>14</sup> While the origins of the suburban ideal is often tied to Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1898), the desire to understand the trends in suburban development grew most significantly with the close of World War II in 1945.<sup>15</sup> The return of millions of soldiers to America brought the need to adequately house them and their families. The subsequent housing landscape would become largely focused upon single family, detached, residences of similar size located on curvilinear roads in a location distant from the central city. Many historians perpetuated this image, as suburbs were generally defined as based upon "function (non-farm residential), class (middle and upper status), separation (a daily journey to work), and density (low relative to older sections)."<sup>16</sup> While many residential subdivisions constructed in the 1960s would adhere to these generalized characteristics, developers, builders, financiers, planners, and regulators began to rethink the prevailing models of housing and land development at this time. These changes were prompted by larger social movements that argued for a more urbane existence predicated upon increased densities, provision of open space, as well as land and natural resource conservation.

Part of the motivation for this different suburban vision in the late 1950s and early 1960s was driven by historians who promoted their respective visions of civil society as rooted in city living in all its complexity. Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and Lewis Mumford's *The City in History*, for instance, lamented the loss of vitality and economic, social, and ethnic diversity in urban neighborhoods as Americans increasingly fled urban cores for the more bucolic suburban countryside.<sup>17</sup> Jacobs and Mumford

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<sup>13</sup> David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2002), *passim*; Emily Pettis, et al, *NCHRP Report 723: A Model for Identifying and Evaluating the Historic Significance of Post-World War II Housing*, Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 2012), *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Marsh, "Reconsidering the Suburbs: An Exploration of Suburban Historiography," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 112: 4 (October 1988): 580.

<sup>15</sup> For additional information on early ideas on the ideals of suburban development see Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1965 reprint of 1898 edition), *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992 reprint of 1961 edition), *passim*; Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1989 reprint of 1961 edition), *passim*.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

both found communal hope in urban cores as opposed to the isolation and ethnically homogeneous residential suburb. Even as they advocated for the value of city living, however, civil disturbances in urban areas appeared to justify the decision of urban dwellers to flee to the suburbs.

The aesthetic and environmental impacts from suburban-related infrastructure such as subdivisions, roads/highways, and utilities were also moving to the fore of public consciousness in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the post-war period, “the building industry came to be dominated by large builders who utilized mass-production techniques to transform tracts of hundreds or thousands of acres into new neighborhoods.”<sup>18</sup> The scale and magnitude of these changes alarmed many observers. Suburban critics such as William Whyte lamented the loss of arable farmland, open space, and the rural landscape that historically epitomized the American agrarian ideal.<sup>19</sup> In general, advocates argued for the protection of open space based upon its intrinsic natural resources, aesthetic amenity, and recreational opportunity.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, however, significant differences of opinion arose about how best to conserve land within private residential developments. While some, like William Whyte, remained optimistic that public acquisition programs and easements could be effective tools unto themselves, governments increasingly turned to comprehensive planning legislation at the regional, state, and local levels to compel developers and builders to integrate open space into subdivisions and “protect wetlands, streams, hillsides, and floodplains.”<sup>21</sup> In Oregon, the balance between private developer initiative and publicly imposed land use requirements found expression in the suburban landscape. Beginning in the early 1960s, developers in the Portland metropolitan area began to integrate a more comprehensive approach to suburban subdivision design that included a mixture of uses and building types, open space, innovative site-design techniques, self-sufficient utilities (namely water and sewer) and the integration of natural features into the overall development scheme.<sup>22</sup> The self-sufficient utilities were particularly important when developing more remote parcels, for independent sewer facilities obviated the need for large septic fields (and larger land consuming lots) and private wells allowed the development to occur without potentially expensive municipal utility hookups.

This local trend in modifying the underlying zoning was part of a larger land development mechanism called a planned unit development or “PUD”. A PUD was both a process as well as a land development type. PUDs afforded developers a number of ways to modify the underlying land use zones in order to increase open space, yet maintain density and introduce a mix of uses.<sup>23</sup> A fully-formed PUD was also referred to as a “satellite city” – a term that had its origins to Howard’s *Garden Cities of To-morrow* in addition to the “village” or “village square” idea promoted by the original developers Oak Hills.<sup>24</sup> The principal idea of the satellite city or village was that it was situated at some distance from the central city and yet tied, through transportation networks and economic necessity to that larger urban center.<sup>25</sup>

By the late 1960s, the PUD became an integral tool for neighborhood planners whether on the outskirts of, or in the city.<sup>26</sup> While the idea of a satellite city was not new to the lexicon of suburban development, the traditional suburban subdivision underwent a significant transformation beginning in the 1960s as calls for the conservation of open space and zoning flexibility emerged. Oak Hills represents one of the most complete

<sup>18</sup> Adam W. Rome. “William Whyte, Open Space, and Environmental Activism,” *Geographical Review* 88:2 (April 1998): 260.

<sup>19</sup> Rome, “William Whyte,” 259.

<sup>20</sup> Rome, “William Whyte,” 261.

<sup>21</sup> Rome, “William Whyte,” 266.

<sup>22</sup> From a review of development oriented articles and promotional advertisements that appear in *The Oregonian* during the 1950s and 1960s, these amenities were frequently mentioned. See also David Pinyerd, et al., *Modern Historic Resources of East Portland: A Reconnaissance Survey* (Portland, OR: City of Portland, 2011), *passim*.

<sup>23</sup> Hanke, “Planned Unit Development,” 18.

<sup>24</sup> Howard, *Garden Cities, passim*; Wayne Rembold, “Oak Hills’ Original Builders”: Interview between Amy Barton, Ed Lilly, Wayne Rembold, and Bud Oringdulph”, Beaverton, Oregon, 2012; and Hanke, “Planned Unit Development,” 18.

<sup>25</sup> Note that the term “satellite city” in England at this time referred to entire cities developed at a substantial distance from urban centers, with self-sufficient employment bases, in contrast to the smaller scale of these developments in the United States.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Pinterich. “Some Portland Suburbs Win Praise of Planners: New Planned Communities Believed Answer to Menace of “Ticky Tacky,” *The Sunday Oregonian*, October 8, 1967: 4F.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

versions of a suburban village built in the Portland metropolitan area – all prior to the imposition of land use regulations that specifically allowed for or even required such flexibility.

### The Federal Housing Administration, CC&Rs, and the Rise of Homeowners Associations

In addition to the integration of distinctive site design techniques, developers in the 1960s also increasingly relied upon a relatively unique form of self-governance to ensure the long term cohesiveness and value of the overall community. This was accomplished by requiring each property owner to adhere to a set of conditions, covenants, and restrictions (CC&Rs) that were placed on a property's deed and would act in perpetuity. The use of imposed deed restrictions is nothing new in the history of land development in Oregon or in the United States. Deed restrictions had frequently been used by developers beginning in the late nineteenth century to ensure a development's character was maintained until it was completed, at which time the restrictions would "sunset" or end.<sup>27</sup> Several neighborhoods in Portland, including Irvington (NRHD), Ladd's Addition (NRHD), as well as Laurelhurst all used deed restrictions over a given period of time to guarantee against incompatible development and ensure the maintenance of property values.

Following the Great Depression and the accompanying rise in housing development failures, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was created as a palliative to the volatile housing market. The FHA soon expanded its role in this regard to include a technical assistance division to provide developers with recommendations on the physical layout of large projects and a suitable set of neighborhood covenants.<sup>28</sup> The FHA had a highly significant role in the financial feasibility and overall design of subdivisions across the United States. Real estate developers and builders worked closely with the FHA to ensure that their project met with the agency's minimum design standards that often required curvilinear road and pedestrian networks, T-shaped intersections, cul-de-sacs and loop roads and thus avoided "through" arterials with high rates of traffic.<sup>29</sup> This provided a significant safety improvement over more conventional grid street patterns for communities.<sup>30</sup> The FHA also encouraged developers to follow the existing topography within the subdivision and to plan its transportation network and parklands accordingly. If a development met these standards, "potential homebuyers had a higher probability of securing an FHA loan, contributing to a greater chance of selling homes in a development."<sup>31</sup> The wide influence FHA had upon suburban form is readily demonstrated by the fact that by 1959, FHA mortgage insurance had assisted three out of every five families with purchasing a home.<sup>32</sup> The FHA found that by ensuring that the layouts of suburban developments met certain standards, the value of those developments were more apt to be maintained over time, thus minimizing the risks of lending to individual homeowners.

An additional mechanism that the FHA required to further minimize the risk of lending was the use of property covenants that ran-with-the-land in perpetuity and oversight by a private governing body called a homeowners association (HOA). With the publication of the FHA's *Planned-Unit Development With a Homes Association* (1961) as well as the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) *New Approaches to Residential Land Development: A Study of Concepts and Innovations*, a significant movement that affected national housing and municipal governance emerged.<sup>33</sup> Together, these two widely disseminated publications provided developers, banks, real estate interests, and planners with model ordinances, covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs), subdivision design recommendations, as well as financial guidance that would be replicated throughout the country's suburban landscape. Rather than having individual homeowners or even a developer ensure that

<sup>27</sup> Robert M. Fogelson. *Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia, 1870-1930* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Robert H. Nelson, "Collective Private Ownership of American Housing: A Social Revolution in Local Governance – Paper adapted from forthcoming book, *Privatizing the Neighborhood: A Social Revolution in America*" (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2000), 15

<sup>29</sup> Michael Southworth and Eran Ben Joseph. "Street Standards and the Shaping of Suburbia," *APA Journal*, (Winter 1995): 77.

<sup>30</sup> Southworth and Joseph, "Street Standards," 77.

<sup>31</sup> Pettis, et al., *NCHRP Report 723*, 79.

<sup>32</sup> Southworth and Joseph, "Street Standards," 73.

<sup>33</sup> Federal Housing Administration, *Planned-Unit Development With a Homes Association*, Land Planning Bulletin No. 6 (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1961), *passim*; Urban Land Institute, *New Approaches to Residential Land Development: A Study of Concepts and Innovations* (Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute, 1961), *passim*; Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (Binghamton: Vail-Ballou Press, 1994), 93.



Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

property owners adhered to deed covenants solely through legal mechanisms, a homeowners association was a private governing body that could oversee and legally enforce the CC&Rs if necessary.

By 1964, it has been estimated that only about 500 homeowners associations were in existence in the United States with less than one percent (1%) of the population occupying such communities.<sup>34</sup> Generally speaking, most of these early homeowners associations were poorly organized and did not reflect a standardized formation process or regulatory framework.<sup>35</sup> With the technical assistance of the FHA, ULI, trade organizations, state legislatures, and planners, however, the number of communities governed by a HOA increased dramatically. By 2000 the number of HOA communities had ballooned to 205,000 with approximately seventeen percent of Americans living in them by 2004.<sup>36</sup> As a consequence of this steep rise in HOAs, at least one legal scholar has described the rise of HOAs as a “social revolution” and asserted that

*The privatizing of the American neighborhood over the past 40 years represents a fundamental development in the history of local government and of property rights in the United States.*<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, homeowner associations would have a significant effect on the appearance of communities from their inception and would help to modulate the scope and magnitude of neighborhood changes over time.

#### Subdivision Design in the Portland Metropolitan Area: 1940-1960

During World War II, the prevailing pattern of land development dramatically changed in the Portland area, particularly with the construction of a series of public housing projects, most notably at Vanport and Columbia Villa in Portland and McLoughlin Heights in Vancouver, Washington in 1943. Expediently designed and quickly constructed, these three communities provided a stark juxtaposition against the regular grid planned Portland. All three communities reflected a comprehensive approach to community design. The 650-acre Vanport, for instance, was a city of 40,000 people with nearly 10,000 housing units, five grade schools, an administrative complex, movie theater and even a police station. Columbia Villa was much smaller (82 acres) but included 462 units of one and two story apartments situated on curvilinear streets that did not permit through access. Lastly, McLoughlin Heights contained 6,000 dwelling units, four schools, recreation and day care centers, a branch library, medical clinic, and two retail centers. Defense workers needed efficient access to public transportation as well as public services and the designs for these communities were required to satisfy these needs. All of the communities included open space and parks for residents, but the plans for parks at McLoughlin Heights were particularly similar to the park network at Oak Hills; internal open spaces situated between residential clusters.<sup>38</sup> While vastly different in terms of scale, the composition of different residential building types, and design of the development, these three communities set an important precedent for post-war housing and suburban development.

Throughout the 1940s and to the 1960s, the scale of residential suburban development on the outskirts of Portland was shaped by the size of parcels developed. The majority of housing developments on the east side of the city ranged in size from the 18-lot subdivision Twin Cedars, platted in 1954, to the larger assembly of subdivisions platted in 1957 through 1961 that came to be known as Argay Terrace and included several hundred lots.<sup>39</sup> A majority of the subdivisions exhibited typical components of site design for small scale

<sup>34</sup> Nelson, “Collective Private Ownership,” 15.

<sup>35</sup> Marc A. Weiss and John W. Watts, “Community Builders and Community Associations: The Role of Real Estate Developers in Private Residential Governance in Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Residential Community Associations: Private Governments in the Intergovernmental System” (Washington Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, May 1989), 101.

<sup>36</sup> Sheryll Cashin, “Privatized Communities and the “Secession of the Successful”: Democracy and Fairness Beyond the Gate,” *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 27 (2001): 1676; Nelson, “The Private Neighborhood,” 40.

<sup>37</sup> Nelson, “The Private Neighborhood,” 40-46.

<sup>38</sup> “Celebration Marks Completion of Vanport City....,” *The Oregonian* (August 12, 1943), 9. See also Greg Hise, “The Airplane and the Garden City: Regional Transformations during World War II in *World War II and the American Dream*, Donald Albrecht, ed. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 159-161.

<sup>39</sup> David Pinyerd, et al., *Modern Historic Resources of East Portland: A Reconnaissance Survey* (Portland, OR: City of Portland, 2011), 25-27.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

developments of the period; cul-de-sacs, loop roads, buried utilities, and a limited number of other amenities. Due to the small size of the developments, provisions for commonly held open space was minimal. The Ilex Hills subdivision that became part of the Argay Terrace neighborhood was a minor exception. Constructed to take advantage of a hillside site with views of Mt. Adams and Mt. St. Helens, the development featured buried utilities. Interior open spaces, nearly encircled by homes, were also integrated into the design of the neighborhood with small linear parks situated to the rear of several parts of the development. An additional ribbon of landscaped land along a main arterial further emphasized the development's aesthetics.<sup>40</sup>

To the west of Portland, however, the scale of development proved much more expansive and ambitious. This was in large part due to the large agricultural tracts that could be tapped for development by the completion of the Wolf Creek Highway (U.S. 26) in 1949, now called the "Sunset Highway." This major east-west route leading from the Coast and into Portland certainly had a role in the location of Cedar Hills, an 860-acre community that began construction in 1946. Located north of Beaverton, Cedar Hills was described as a "suburban city" envisioned to include 2,000 homes, elementary and high schools, churches, as well as a shopping area.<sup>41</sup> While significant in size and scale, the community appears to have lacked provisions for open space – perhaps relying on school play yards and fields instead. One of the precedent setting aspects of Cedar Hills, however, was that its developers, Commonwealth, Inc. and Equitable Savings and Loan, implemented deed restrictions on all properties and created what appears to be Oregon's first homeowner's association. The *Oregonian* noted that the association retained the "power to tax the land and disburse funds for the general improvement of the area."<sup>42</sup> The homeowners were also charged with enforcing the deed restrictions. In one enforcement action, the Cedar Hills homeowners association took a piano teacher to court for having a place of business in her home; a use specifically restricted on her home's deed.<sup>43</sup> Both Cedar Hills and the later homeowners association at Oak Hills (established in 1966) were noted as "the only ones of their kind in the Northwest" in 1967.<sup>44</sup>

Another notable west side development was Somerset West. Designed as a series of residential clusters around a centrally located golf course, the development was the first to be referred to as a "satellite city" in the Portland metropolitan area. Originally envisioned to be 6,000 acres, the initial stage of the development was to include a minimum of 500 homes when construction began in 1963.<sup>45</sup> Utilities would be buried, water would be drawn from on-site wells, and house sizes would range from 1,100 to 2,000 square feet with five basic plans and fourteen different exterior designs "to avoid the development look."<sup>46</sup> The principal open space of the development was the golf course, as well as the fields and playgrounds situated on the properties reserved for the schools.

Even as Somerset West and Cedar Hills were constructed and then gradually filled with homes, there were significant fears about the role these types of communities would have in the gradual loss of open space and fertile farmland as well as the stress they would place upon municipalities and utility infrastructure in rural Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah Counties.<sup>47</sup> In 1947, the legislature extended planning responsibilities beyond the City of Portland to all other jurisdictions in the state.<sup>48</sup> By the early 1960s, the calls for land use reform led many of the state's counties to produce plans called "Development Patterns" which attempted to anticipate future population and economic growth and outline strategies on how to channel that

<sup>40</sup> Pinyerd, et al., *Modern Historic Resources*, 26.

<sup>41</sup> "2000-Home Community Rising Here: Two Firms Launch \$25,000,000 Town in Beaverton Area," *The Oregonian* (April 28, 1946), 1 and Section 2, page 1.

<sup>42</sup> "2000-Home Community Rising Here," *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Larry Kurtz, "Cedar Hills Homeowners Ask Court to Ban Piano Classes Held in Home," *The Oregonian* (April 21, 1965), 16.

<sup>44</sup> Harry Bodine, "Self-Rule System Proves Unique for Unincorporated Cedar Hills," *The Oregonian* (April 2, 1967), 28.

<sup>45</sup> Gerry Pratt, "Texas Construction Firm Signs Contract To Develop Somerset West Project," *The Oregonian* (December 13, 1962), 25.

<sup>46</sup> "5 Somerset Models Due: Building Firm to Show Homes," *The Oregonian* (November 12, 1962), 6M.

<sup>47</sup> Frederick Arpke, "Land-Use Control in the Urban Fringe of Portland, Oregon," *The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics* 18: 4 (Nov. 1942): 475; Gerrit Knaap, "Land Use Politics in Oregon" in *Planning the Oregon Way: A Twenty-Year Evaluation*, Carl Abbott, Deborah Howe, and Sy Adler, eds. (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>48</sup> Carl Abbott, Deborah Howe, and Sy Adler, eds., "Introduction" in *Planning the Oregon Way: A Twenty-Year Evaluation*, Carl Abbott, Deborah Howe, and Sy Adler, eds. (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1994), xi.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

expansion.<sup>49</sup> Washington County, in coordination with other incorporated towns in the county such as Beaverton, drafted a *Development Patterns* document which was published in 1965 – the same year that construction was initiated at Oak Hills.

### The Story of the Oak Hills Neighborhood: An Early Planned Unit Development in Oregon

Even as Somerset West was being planned by Centex, the largest private residential developer in the United States at the time, another set of developers were eyeing agricultural fields to the north of U.S. 26 about halfway between Cedar Hills and Somerset West for another large subdivision of a different ilk. A combination of tracts that amounted to 262 acres of agricultural lands and woodland drew the attention of Harry Hawkins, then president of Commonwealth, Incorporated, a development firm in the Portland area.<sup>50</sup> Hawkins assembled an exceptionally talented team of architects, site designers, landscape architects, and planners to develop the parcels in a way that was very different than developments that had either been built or were being built in Oregon at the time. He also assembled a project management and financing team that included home builders United Homes Corporation as well as Equitable Savings and Loan.<sup>51</sup>

In the early stages of the project, a member of the development team, Wayne Rembold, noted that Hawkins retained William Kay Huntington and architect George Rockrise to develop the overall conceptual design for the master plan.<sup>52</sup> Huntington, a highly regarded landscape architect had been practicing landscape architecture since 1958 and was the third landscape architect to be licensed in the State of Oregon.<sup>53</sup> George Rockrise (1917-2000), was a prominent architect who designed communities in California and Oregon and whose career included work with the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the United Nations Headquarters Building project, on which he partnered with the renowned architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill.<sup>54</sup>

While Huntington and Rockrise established the overall conceptual master plan, the firm of Broome, Selig, and Oringdulph (the forerunner of BOORA Architects), was ultimately hired to implement the plan and do much of the design work. Bud Oringdulph was the lead architect for the project and Ed Lilly the lead planner. One of the main project managers for United Homes was Wayne Rembold. Oringdulph, Lilly, as well as Hawkins and Mike Lowell (of Commonwealth) traveled to California to study similar projects that were being developed there, including the immense development venture associated with the Irvine Ranch. This project attempted to strike a balance between suburban community design and open space preservation using a master planning concept. The group also drew inspiration from the conceptual plans for Reston, Virginia and Columbia, Maryland, two large, master planned community developed by the Rouse Group in the 1960s.<sup>55</sup>

All of these communities were developed as Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), but their scale covered several square miles and included town centers as well as multiple residential neighborhoods (also called villages) and other nonresidential development.<sup>56</sup> The PUD concept was meant to be a panacea for the failings of land use zoning that limited properties to single uses, which produced less-than-inspiring development – a chronic complaint that had emerged in Portland by the mid-1960s.<sup>57</sup> Communities, including Washington County, had adopted zoning ordinances with rules and regulations for land use that were applied without regard for place or differing conditions. PUDs, however, allowed for substantial flexibility, particularly in development at the neighborhood level because it allowed developers to mix land uses, cluster residential lots, and employ multiple types of housing such as single family homes as well as townhomes in the same

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Pratt, Gerry, "'Dream' Development Decorates Oak Hills," *The Oregonian* (April 20, 1966): 4M.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Wayne Rembold, Interview with Leesa Gratrek, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts, John Yeon Advisory Board, <http://aaa.uoregon.edu/yeon/board>, accessed December 26, 2012.

<sup>54</sup> N/A, "George Rockrise (1917-2000)," Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley, <http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/profiles/rockrise.htm>, accessed December 26, 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Wayne Rembold and Bud Oringdulph, Interview, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel R. Mandelker, "Legislation for Planned Unit Developments and Master-Planned Communities," *Urban Law*, 40 (2008): 422.

<sup>57</sup> Pintarich, "Some Portland Suburbs Win Praise of Planners," 4F.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

neighborhood.<sup>58</sup> The PUD also allowed for physical development to occur over a four-to-eight year period and hinged on a series of balances “- a balance in the use of land in terms of residential and nonresidential requirements; balances among public open space, commons to be used and maintained by groups and associations, and private land; variation in location and grouping of buildings to create a choice of physical environments; and balances among walkways, roads, and highways of different types to ensure safe and convenient movement of people and vehicles.”<sup>59</sup>

Washington County first adopted a zoning ordinance in 1959, which was amended in 1962 to make exceptions to lot area, setbacks, and other dimension requirements through the use of Exceptions.<sup>60</sup> The original developers worked closely with Ed Lilly, who had previously worked as a senior planner for Washington County during the time of the amendment, to creatively work within the existing ordinance for Washington County in order to develop Oak Hills in such a way that would allow for such flexibility.<sup>61</sup> The ordinance that Lilly drafted allowed the zoning of a series of three rural parcels containing about 262 acres to be modified to allow for increased residential density, the provision of open space, as well as lots for multi-family housing, in addition to a school, church, commercial enterprises, and a recreational center. Although the county would not adopt Article II of the Washington County Development Ordinance (which allowed for Planned Unit Developments) until 1974, the developers were able to design what on paper was basically a Planned Unit Development before the ordinance article even existed. Lilly’s efforts to develop a workable solution to the zoning problem were well ahead of their time in Oregon. Oak Hills helped lay the groundwork for the 1974 county zoning amendment and was the most unique development in the Portland Metropolitan area at that time.<sup>62</sup>

### Open Space, Mixed Use, Circulation Routes, Utilities, Residential Clusters, and Townhouses

The principal ways that Oak Hills differentiated itself from other metropolitan Portland subdivisions was the comprehensiveness of its planning. The overall site was slightly undulating with the small tributary called Willow Creek that ran from east to west across the property. The boundaries of the property ensured that residents could access four major roads situated in every cardinal direction. Given these site conditions, the development team adopted several circulation strategies that were typical of the period and that owe their origin to Federal Housing Authority guidance concerning road and sidewalk construction.<sup>63</sup> The development’s main thoroughfare was the aptly named Perimeter Road which formed a large loop around the majority of the property. Due to the Perimeter Road, no roadway through the development was necessarily direct. This roadway network was often referred to by planners during the period as a “disjointed system” that was employed to minimize potential through traffic while enhancing safety.<sup>64</sup>

The residences were clustered along the road network and also ringed the central open spaces. The idea of clustering residential units was central to the idea of a PUD as it eschewed the strict separation of uses synonymous with Euclidean type zoning; zoning restricted to singular uses. Clustering was advocated by planners in order to conserve open space.<sup>65</sup> The Project team seized upon this idea to conserve an internal network of open space that included informal parks, playing fields, and a utility right-of-way. The network

<sup>58</sup> Hanke, “Planned Unit Development,” 18-19. See also, Robert Burchell, *Planned Unit Development: New Communities American Style* (New Jersey: MacCrellish and Quigley, 1972),

<sup>59</sup> George Sternlieb, et al., “Planned Unit Development Legislation,” 74-75.

<sup>60</sup> This information comes from an email correspondence to the author on August 28, 2012 from Ross Vanloo from Washington County Planning and Development. See also Washington County, Oregon, Board of Commissioners, *Zoning Ordinance*, 1962 as well as Washington County City-County Joint Planning Advisory Board, *Patterns of Development*, 1965.

<sup>61</sup> Ed Lilly, Interview, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Ed Lilly, Interview, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Southworth and Joseph, “Street Standards,” 74-78.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* See also Richard K. Untermann, *Principles and Practices of Grading, Drainage, and Road Alignment: An Ecologic Approach* (Reston, VA: Reston Publishing Company, 1978), 201-202; and American Society of Planning Officials, *Planning Advisory Service Information Report No. 141: Neighborhood Boundaries* (December 1960): 2.

<sup>65</sup> American Society of Planning Officials. *Planning Advisory Service Information Report No. 135: Cluster Subdivisions* (June 1960), *passim*.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

provided safe recreational space for residents as well as children who could use the various walkways on their way to school.<sup>66</sup>

With the generous provision of open space, the developers designed the overwhelming majority of lots to be between 0.17 and 0.28 acres in size. While generously sized, they were actually considered somewhat small for rural subdivisions. The necessity for septic fields in rural subdivisions typically played a significant role in how large lots needed to be. In order to increase density, the design team integrated a wastewater treatment plant into the overall project design allowing Oak Hills to be independent from municipal utility service and obviating the need for individual homeowners to maintain septic systems the required expanses of property for the septic field.<sup>67</sup> The plant was eventually decommissioned, but the main sewage plant building remains as the development workshop.

The Oak Hills developers felt strongly that there should be a mix of uses. The original plans called for a school, church, pool and community center, picnic grounds and public playground, as well as a small commercial development. Only the commercial property was never developed. Situated near the middle of the development, the commercial property was sold to the homeowners association in the late 1960s as the association and the developers acknowledged the parcel's inadequate size for a commercial enterprise.<sup>68</sup> The site is now used for playing fields. The church proved to be an important component to the developer's overall vision for the community. The development team pre-screened ten denominations to find the right fit for the church and the new tenant was required to have both a Boy Scout troop and a kindergarten. The kindergarten was significant as Beaverton's school district did not have kindergartens at the time, and Oak Hills was one of the first private kindergartens in the area. Pastor Spaan, the original pastor of the church, remembers the early development of Oak Hills in his autobiography saying:

*"In the late summer of 1964 I was invited to meet with Commonwealth's screening committee's representative. In preparation for this encounter, I took with me pictures of the facilities of Christian Reformed church plants as well as a copy of the financial statement of the Board. Imagine my surprise when the first question put to me was, 'Are you liberal or conservative?' I was floored, but I did some quick thinking by responding, 'That depends on your definition. If you refer to the theology, then we are conservative. We do take the Bible very seriously. But if you refer to our behavior patterns (lifestyle), then I suppose you would call us liberal. We believe the Bible teaches Christian liberty. We do not forbid the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, movies, cosmetics, and the like.' I thought to myself, 'Well, that does it for our church.'"<sup>69</sup>*

Much to Spaan's surprise the developers thought the church the best fit for their intended community and brought the Pastor in during pre-development discussions to aid in the design of the church, which is in the Northwest Regional style.

Perhaps the most innovative site design component of Oak Hills was its unique mixture of housing options. With the construction of 24 units of townhouses, Oak Hills introduced multi-family housing in a new and distinct manner. As the first FHA-approved townhouses constructed in Oregon, these two story "Regal French" buildings greatly increased density as each unit only occupied between 0.04 and 0.05 acres but could offer residents 1,250 to 1,800 square feet of living space.<sup>70</sup> Heinz Rudolf and several other draftsmen who worked under Bud Oringdulph prepared the designs for the townhouses.<sup>71</sup> As a testament to the need for this type of housing, all 24 units sold in five weeks.<sup>72</sup> Almost immediately, many developers saw the townhouses as a lucrative way to attract new homebuyers, for unlike condominiums, residents of townhouses owned their

<sup>66</sup> Lilly, Interview, 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Lilly, Interview, 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Wayne Rembold, "Oak Hills Original Builders," 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Spaan, Howard. *The Shaping of My Life via Genes, Relationships, and Faith* (Beaverton, OR: Self-published, n.d), 175.

<sup>70</sup> "Oak Hills Dwellings Slated for Opening." *The Press (Advertiser)*, March 30, 1967, np.

<sup>71</sup> Rudolf, Personal Communication with Kirk Ranzetta, et al., September 11, 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Gerry Pratt, "Swank Row Houses Find Ready Market," *The Oregonian*, March 14, 1968, 3M.

Oak Hills Historic District

Washington, Oregon

Name of Property

County and State

properties in fee simple.<sup>73</sup> The construction of townhouses exploded across the United States in the late 1960s as the building form afforded an alternative to more transient multi-family housing options such as rental apartments and residential hotels.<sup>74</sup> In 1956, for instance, 93% of all housing starts were single-family residential, but by 1968 single family housing starts had dropped to 65% with multi-family units accounting for the remainder.<sup>75</sup> The popularity of the townhouse was in part due to an emerging demographic that included “unmarried or divorced singles, perhaps with children or partners, as well as other modern small households, such as couples with grown children or retirees.”<sup>76</sup> Recognizing the immediate popularity of the building form, Commonwealth soon applied the lessons from Oak Hills elsewhere as hundreds of units began to be constructed across the Portland metropolitan area. One of first townhouse developments Commonwealth erected after Oak Hills was the Red Fox Hills development located in Lake Oswego.<sup>77</sup>

### Architecture, Marketing, and Residents

The social composition of residents in Oak Hills included young professionals who were characterized by the original developers as “outsiders” who were able to secure loans and had good incomes.<sup>78</sup> Many worked for large corporations in the general vicinity which included Tektronix, Boise Cascade, Georgia Pacific, and IBM. During a review of the Polk Directories in the early 1970s, many of the residents were salesmen, managers, lawyers, business owners, research scientists, engineers, students, and physicians.<sup>79</sup>

In order to attract these residents, the development team composed a marketing strategy that appealed to families as opposed to other demographics. Unlike most advertisements for developments that appeared in the *Oregonian*, Oak Hills was described as a highly desirable place but was rarely actually pictured. The abstract images emphasized family and nature by juxtaposing images of children playing and even birds accompanied by catchy phrases throughout the mid-1960s.

At the actual development, the main entrance into Oak Hills was designed to grab the attention of passing motorists through a large wood frame sign that featured a prominent light fixture designed by Frederick Charles Baker, a noted lighting designer who designed many of the lights on the University of Oregon campus, including those which front the Art Museum and Knight Library.<sup>80</sup> The sign was the first part of a larger visual procession for visitors who traveled along a winding entrance road and into the heart of the development with the community center positioned strategically at the top of a small hill opposite the main entry road. A real estate publication noted that, “The developers feel strongly that greenbelt and recreation facilities should be constructed first. This is one key to the planned unit development that builds customer confidence.”<sup>81</sup> Also situated near the main entrance was a collection of model homes on NW Arcadia Court where customers could experience one version of each of the major floor plans and form types available in the development. After one part of the development was filled, the ten original model homes were sold and an additional set of ten homes were constructed in 1967 along NW Norwich Circle.<sup>82</sup> Up to two years later, it was noted that up to 200 families a day visited these newer models.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Matthew Gordon Lasner, “Hybrid Housing Types and the New Urban Form in Postwar Southern California,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 68: 3 (September 2009): 378.

<sup>75</sup> Pratt, “Swank Row Houses,” 3M. See also Linnea Caproni, Debbie Abele, and Don Meserve, “Historic Context for Scottsdale’s Postwar Townhouses,” (Scottsdale, AZ: City of Scottsdale, 2009), 1.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Pratt, “Swank Row Houses,” 3M; Nicole DeCosta, “Still Living Foxy,” *The Lake Oswego Review*, January 25, 2010, np.

<sup>78</sup> Wayne Rembold, Interview, 2012.

<sup>79</sup> Polk Directories for 1966 and 1968 do not list any of the streets for the Oak Hill development. No local libraries or repositories have the 1969 directory and the 1970 directory is currently being repaired. This left 1971 through 1974 directories to conduct research on individual property owners.

<sup>80</sup> Ed Lilly, Interview, 2012.

<sup>81</sup> “Ingenious: The Way Planners are Now Developing (With Imagination and Forethought) Land to its Fullest and Best Use,” *The Portland Realtor*, 40: 7 (September 1969): 7.

<sup>82</sup> “Oak Hills Dwellings,” n.p.

<sup>83</sup> “Ingenious,” 7.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

The development's amenities, including pedestrian friendly design and open space, created a distinctive sense of place and community. The neighborhood has long had the reputation of being socially and aesthetically cohesive. A review of Oak Hills directories for the years 1973 and 2003 revealed that 80 families had remained in the neighborhood for that 30 year period.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, in 2012, it was noted that 40 second generation families had taken root in the community.<sup>85</sup> Over the years the sense of community is heightened by the shared open spaces, elementary school, recreational center, and church. The Fourth of July fireworks display is one of the largest in the Portland area, with crowds of 10,000 to 12,000 attending.<sup>86</sup>

The architecture of the neighborhood utilizes a wide range of designs including "English Tudor, French Contemporary, American Colonial, Northwest Ranch, and Ultra Modern."<sup>87</sup> The development team felt strongly that the number of developers and the number of house model options should initially be limited to ensure adequate diversity and control over the overall appearance of the development. Builders included United Homes Corporation, Hallberg Homes, R.G. Peters, Modern Homes, Paddock Construction Company, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Homes, Douglas Lowell, Doerrie Construction Company, and Rummer Homes. United Homes Corporation and Hallberg Homes were two of the largest builders in the Portland metropolitan area at the time.

With catchy names that alluded to modernity and efficiency, the design choices were considered by real estate publications as up-scale housing choices.<sup>88</sup> The greatest number of design options appeared to be centered on one story Ranch style dwellings. Even the multi-floor homes with split levels are low to the ground and do not visually dominate any of the streets within the development. By far the most popular building type in the post-war period in Portland, the number of Ranch style residences in Oak Hills far surpassed alternative styles such as the "Ultra Modern" houses of Robert Rummer.

One of the most interesting house types included a series of one story houses that featured square massing and were three rooms deep. These broad residences often featured low sloping or flat roofs. Most previously recorded post-war buildings recorded in the Portland area were at most two rooms deep – a limitation largely dictated by the need for an adequately sloped roof. Several models, such as the Spacemaker II, Unitmaker, and Spacemaker II were notable for their depth as well as the limited pitch of their respective roofs. Several of the models featured different choices for exterior appearance while sharing a common plan. The Spacemaker II featured the most diversity in terms of choices. This model came in styles as diverse as Neo-French to a version of the Cape Cod. Nearly 25% of the residences in Oak Hills were of the Spacemaker type. In general, the one story ranch form type was the most popular style chosen by consumers between 1965 and 1974.

Nearly all of the original houses were constructed of natural materials including shake roofs and horizontal wood clapboard. Most dwellings featured modest architectural elaboration that provided a hint of stylistic attribution. The Colonial style Berkshire model found at 1835 NW Albion Court, for instance, exhibited two-story columns as well as a broken pediment above the main entry. The Neo-French version of the Spacemaker II exhibited a modernistic interpretation of the mansard roof. An unidentified design at 14850 NW Oak Hills Drive featured a Neo-Mediterranean or Spanish inspiration through an arcaded front and its double arched chimney.

Several trends in the exterior facades of the buildings reveal how architects created interesting variation in the design. Bays, such as those found on the Denfield design (1780 NW Arcadia Court), were cantilevered from the exterior wall surface. Fenestration patterns were often enhanced by the use of narrow boards as additional framing elements and/or plywood panels below the sash. Garage doors were often clad in horizontal clapboard or vertical flush boards that visually defied their real function and purpose. The flush boards then became an opportunity for additional trim in a variety of different patterns.

<sup>84</sup> Darla Castagno, Personal Communication with Kirk Ranzetta, December 27, 2012.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Darla Castagno, Personal Communication with Kirk Ranzetta, December 27, 2012.

<sup>87</sup> "Oak Hills Dwellings," n.p.

<sup>88</sup> "Ingenious," 7.

Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

Several of the house types featured entry courtyards as well as light wells. The Rummer Homes were particularly notable for their use of open courtyards and extensive use of glass to optimize light in the homes. While attractive for their modern feel and distance from the more traditional models, many of the Rummer homes were modified by covering over their courtyards. Robert Rummer, was one of the most unique of the builders at Oak Hills. Following a visit to California, Rummer became enamored by Joseph Eichler's signature designs that emphasized cost-effective and efficient construction techniques, post-and-beam construction, natural materials, extensive use of plate glass windows, and open courtyards. Rummer, in addition to Hallberg Homes, began to design Eichler-like modern homes beginning in 1956. Working with the firm Jones and Emmons, Rummer and Hallberg Homes would become two of the biggest proponents of applying Eichler's design ethic to the Portland metropolitan area.<sup>89</sup>

By 1974, most of the buildable lots in Oak Hills had been purchased and improved. By that point, the HOA had become increasingly autonomous. The developers eventually ceded oversight over the CC&Rs to the association which by then consisted entirely of property owners. In the late 1960s and 1970s, a number of events both within the development and just on its outskirts brought on a high level of social activism by the association and Oak Hills residents. In the late 1960s, when Commonwealth proposed rezoning 7.9 acres of land from single family residential to multi-family and introducing up to 150 apartments in the Oak Hills development, residents of Oak Hills objected to the change saying that it "contradicts promises made by the community's developers."<sup>90</sup> The Washington County Planning Commission denied the application and the proposal was never revived. When a Fred Meyer store was proposed immediately opposite the main entrance, the homeowners association vociferously objected. Construction related to clearing and grading on the site was curtailed when Washington County filed an injunction against work due to violations to the flood plain ordinance.<sup>91</sup> Following county efforts to pass a comprehensive plan and a rezoning as well as an extensive legal battle with Fred Meyer, Inc., a judge eventually prohibited the retailer from developing the site.<sup>92</sup> An additional conflict ensued about the construction of a nearby gas station as well.<sup>93</sup>

As these events attest, the significance of Oak Hills is intimately tied to its enduring value, both in terms of its cohesive and functional design as well as its residents. As an early, precedent setting development, Oak Hills has proven to be a window into the early environmental and social consciousness that has come to represent a lasting physical and social response to sprawl.

<sup>89</sup> Joe Barthlow, "Roots of the Eichler Gable: The Soaring Central Peak Took the Eichler Design to New Heights – With Drama and Greater Buyer Appeal," *Eichler Network*, 2012. See <http://www.eichlernet.com/articles/roots-eichler-gable> (accessed August 28, 2012).

<sup>90</sup> N.a., "Oak Hills Meeting Slated on Apartment Zone Plan," *The Oregonian*, July 16, 1968, 8.

<sup>91</sup> N.a., "Judge Delays Meyer Hearing," *The Oregonian*, November 23, 1974.

<sup>92</sup> N.a., "Court Says Zoning Can Stop Center," *The Oregonian*, December 4, 1975, 52.

<sup>93</sup> Lilly, Interview, 2012.



Oak Hills Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, Oregon

County and State

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Oak Hills Historic District

Washington, Oregon

Name of Property

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Washington, Oregon

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County and State

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Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
County and State

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Aerial Photos and Maps

Assorted Aerial Photos, 1956, 1970, 1998, 2000. Collection of Pastor Howard Spaan.

United States Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010.

Polk's City Directory, Washington County.

Washington County Tax Assessor and Subdivision Plat Records.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Multnomah Co. Library, Ore. Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

Oak Hills Historic District  
Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 240 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

UTM References (All coordinates were calculated using NAD 27.)

1. Zone 10 Easting 512867 Northing 5042235
2. Zone 10 Easting 512866 Northing 5041853
3. Zone 10 Easting 513044 Northing 5041847
4. Zone 10 Easting 513044 Northing 5042287
5. Zone 10 Easting 513687 Northing 5042351
6. Zone 10 Easting 513682 Northing 5042996
7. Zone 10 Easting 513174 Northing 5042994
8. Zone 10 Easting 513175 Northing 5043035
9. Zone 10 Easting 512868 Northing 5043086
10. Zone 10 Easting 512852 Northing 5042997
11. Zone 10 Easting 512680 Northing 5043132
12. Zone 10 Easting 512665 Northing 5042775
13. Zone 10 Easting 512476 Northing 5042778
14. Zone 10 Easting 512465 Northing 5042243
15. Zone 10 Easting 512867 Northing 5042235

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Oak Hills Historic District is bound by NW West Union Road to the north, NW 143rd Avenue to the east, Cornell Road to the south, and to the west by NW Bethany Boulevard. One additional extension occurs where 153rd Avenue extends past NW Oak Hills Drive to NW Cornell Road to the south. This section includes the original sign, landscaped entry, NW Arcadia Court, and NW Albion Court. In addition, a small subdivision in the northwest corner of NW Bethany Boulevard and NW West Union Road is not included within the boundary as this small area was not included in the original development of Oak Hills and is not associated with the community.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the entire development of Oak Hills, as it was originally platted in 11 subdivision plats from July 1964 through 1993.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk Ranzetta, Leesa Gratreak, Anisa Becker, Martha Richards, and Patience Stuart

organization URS Corporation date 12/28/2012

street & number 111 SW Columbia St. 1500 telephone (503) 478-1629

city or town Portland state OR zip code 97201

e-mail [kirk.ranzetta@urs.com](mailto:kirk.ranzetta@urs.com)

Oak Hills Historic District  
Name of Property

Washington, Oregon  
County and State

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Photographs:**

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See **Photographs continuation sheet**.

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**Property Owner:** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

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name Multiple property owners  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).  
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.