
Joseph Geeraert's Twinbrook:

**A comprehensive survey conducted by the graduate seminar in
Historic Preservation at the George Washington University,
Spring 2008.**

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Introduction

The Twin-brook (Twinbrook) subdivision represents a significant piece of a larger community planning phenomenon that began after World War II and continues on today, and it represents the transition of America from a renter to an owner society. Even before the end of the Second World War, the United States government recognized the imminent housing shortage the country faced when the armed forces returned, and it began to rely on private developers to help ease the crisis. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established in 1934 to alleviate the housing loan crisis caused by the Great Depression, but its goal of encouraging development by insuring long-term mortgages on housing that met certain qualifications was revitalized in the post-war era, and extended to include the creation of special incentives for returning veterans.

In 1944 the Veterans Association created the Veterans' Mortgage Guarantee Program, allowing veterans to borrow the appraised value of a house without a down payment and provided developers with the funding to build thousands of new houses. The program was under the management of the FHA who required the price of the houses to fall within \$6,000 to \$8,000 and their total size to be between 800 and 1,000 square feet. In order to ensure that these smaller-sized houses offered at least the basic amenities, the FHA further required builders to meet their standards with respect to the number and size of rooms, as well as the FHA standards for neighborhood and community planning. As a result, housing developments like Twinbrook, complete with schools, churches, shopping centers, and commuter lines, flourished on cheaper land outside of city centers, and expanded to

unparalleled extremes as the affordability of the FHA thirty-year mortgage allowed the renter population of the city to become the owner population of the suburbs.

The platting and development process of the land that would later become the six original subdivisions of Twinbrook began in 1946 when the four developers of Twin-brook Incorporated, President Joseph Geeraert, Roland Simmons, Wesley Sauter, and Donald Gingery, purchased the 202 acres that lie between Veirs Mill Road and the B&O Railroad to the southeast of Rockville, Maryland. The property was referred to Walnut Hill Farm, although the land had not been used for agricultural purposes since 1925, when Lillian Small of Washington, DC purchased the land for \$33,000. Small was a government worker in the District of Columbia and she used her land in Montgomery County as a healthful retreat from the nearby city. As it was not her primary residence, she sometimes leased the land for use by tenant wheat farmers. She made no attempt to improve or develop the property, thus, in 1946 when it was sold for \$94,000, there were only two nineteenth-century structures amid the overgrown wheat fields. Within the next ten years, Small's land and the rolling rural countryside just beyond the city of Rockville were transformed dramatically. Trees were felled, the earth was graded, roads were carved, and foundations were laid. The whole landscape was wiped clean, and then sculpted into the suburban dream of developer Joseph Geeraert.

Under the guidance of Dr. Richard Longstreth, director of the graduate program in Historic Preservation at the George Washington University, the spring 2008 graduate seminar has prepared an in-depth survey of Geeraert's Twinbrook neighborhoods. Research has been conducted on such topics as landscaping, platting and development, house

typologies and remodeling trends, the development of social institutions, and more. It is the purpose of this document to consolidate the research gathered and to convey the most seemingly significant elements in one written piece, with the objective being for our work to serve as a general resource on the architectural, social, and cultural history of the Twinbrook neighborhoods.

In recognition that each topic and paper contains great detail and to leave out any such piece of research would compromise the objective of this project, we have included completed papers in an appendix at the end of the document.

Levittown and the Inspiration behind Joseph Geeraert's Twinbrook

On October 18, 1946 Joseph Geeraert, Donald Gingery, Roland Simmons, and Wesley Sauter formed Twin-Brook Incorporated with Geeraert as president. Joseph Geeraert was born in 1909 in Belgium, and he attended arts school and graduated from St. Barbara College in Ghent where he was a member of the varsity rowing team, and later, a member of the 1928 Belgium Olympic Rowing Team.¹ Three years later, Geeraert moved to New York where he married his first wife. Geeraert's first development venture came to fruition at the 1938 World's Fair in New York. He built and operated "The Hunting Lodge," a restaurant and nightclub on the fairgrounds.² Following his success at the World's Fair, in 1940 Geeraert moved to Washington, DC to begin a career in the housing market.

In 1941, Joseph Geeraert began his first housing development with his business partner in Takoma Park, Maryland. The development project contained only one street, West Grant Avenue, and approximately thirty "tiny brick houses."³ During this time Geeraert also worked in Cheverly Manor and completed a development of approximately eighty homes.⁴

From there Geeraert moved to Chevy Chase and began building bigger houses on a horseshoe street called Coquelin Terrace; this development consisted of thirty-five houses and was the home to several prominent senators during their terms in office. Between 1944 and 1945, Geeraert worked on remodeling embassies in Bethesda and on Oakmont Avenue in DC.⁵ In 1945 Geeraert and his business partner Simmons inspected the tract of land in Rockville, Maryland that would later become the Twinbrook neighborhood.⁶ In the same year, Geeraert met Wesley Sauter and his business partner Donald Gingery at a Chicago real estate convention, thus forming a propitious relationship among the developers, and heralding the advent of the Twinbrook project.

By 1950, the real estate industry and federal government favored the building affordable houses. Although Levitt and Sons oversaw the construction of the largest housing tract communities on Long Island and in Pennsylvania, they were not alone in the real estate development business. The president of Tylon Real Estate Company in Queens, New York predicted in 1950 that “it will be a good year not only for the builder but for the buyer as well.”⁷ Geeraert was inspired by the “Levittowns” when platting and developing his Rockville subdivision at Twinbrook. By 1950, Twin-Brook Incorporated had begun promoting the sale of six hundred houses that were reminiscent of William Levitt’s ranch and Cape Cod models.

Although Twin-Brook Incorporated was dissolved later in 1950, Geeraert held onto his aspirations of not only building affordable housing, but also building a lasting community. Sauter and Simmons sold their shares to Gingery and Geeraert and retired to Virginia in 1951.⁸ In the same year, Geeraert visited Long Island to tour Levittown and see how Levitt and Sons developed planned communities. Geeraert was already adept at housing

construction from his previous experiences, but he wanted to learn how to incorporate shopping centers, schools, churches and other civic services within his development.⁹ Thus, Geeraert and Gingery continued to build and develop Twinbrook with the help of the Geeraert Construction Company, the Donley Construction Company, and the Levittown model.

Levittown was not, in the traditional sense, a planned community with a comprehensive vision; however, William Levitt exhibited awareness of the residents' needs by implementing solutions as the development progressed. Levitt noted that the number of children in Levittown, Long Island would exceed 6,000 in 1950.¹⁰ Anticipating the future needs of the residents, Levitt provided for school sites located at strategic points around the community.¹¹ In addition, Levitt and Sons paid to install six pools to serve the 1,000 families and included provisions in the original plans of Levittown to build playgrounds and softball fields.¹² By 1950, Levittown had six shopping centers, half of which were built by Levitt; three schools, with plans from the Board of Education to build an additional school for the following year; two churches and a Jewish community center.¹³ Similarly, Geeraert set aside land for schools, churches, and parks in his plans for Twinbrook.¹⁴

In their effort to build a complete community, Geeraert and Gingery made substantial financial contributions to encourage neighborhood growth. The Geeraert Construction Company donated \$500 for the recreation program, which included the construction and maintenance of a softball field, and provided finances for leasing a house to the swimming pool association. Gingery Construction Company gave \$1,000 to a recreation fund, and also donated \$300 to furnish the smoking lounge of the teen recreation center.¹⁵ Later, when it was discovered that three defective controls were causing Twinbrook Forest residents to have

higher than normal heating bills, a meeting was called between residents, Geeraert, and representatives from the gas company, furnace company, and control company. When the gas company representative was unable to promise refunds to alleviate the financial burden placed on the homeowners, Geeraert offered them from his own account.¹⁶

Geeraert also sought to help the City of Rockville with its building projects. For example, he offered to sell some of the Bullis Farm tract that he owned for a proposed civic and recreation center. The Bullis land was eventually used for seven hundred more homes and a shopping center.¹⁷ Geeraert also sold the city eight acres of the Bullis Tract for Twinbrook Forest Elementary and twenty acres for Rockville Junior High School.¹⁸

The pace of Rockville, Maryland was quickly changing as more young families moved into Twinbrook, and the rapid growth of the area transformed the social climate of the community. The first elementary school was built in 1952 and doubled its enrollment over the following year.¹⁹ Recreation for the youth in Rockville originally consisted of playing in parks or pick-up games in the field, but because of the growth in the area, the provision for a funded, annual recreational program was viewed as a necessity and was approved by the taxpayers of Rockville.²⁰ Twinbrook also contributed to the recreation of the area by building its own swimming pool with support from the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the homemaker's club, the Twinbrook Girl Scout and Boy Scout organizations, and the baseball league. By the time that the pool was dedicated, it earned the reputation as the largest area pool in Rockville.²¹

Inspired by the Levitt and Sons' Levittown on Long Island, Twinbrook became a well established community, complete with houses, places of worship, schools, shopping centers and recreation areas.

Platting, Development, and the Social Profile of Twinbrook

The platting and development process of the land that would later become the six original subdivisions of Twinbrook began in 1946, when four developers, Joseph Geeraert, Roland Simmons, Wesley Sauter, and Donald Gingery, purchased 202 acres between Veirs Mill Road and the B&O Railroad, southeast of Rockville, Maryland. The property was referred to as Walnut Hill Farm, although the land had not been used for agricultural purposes since 1925.²² Throughout the years little attempt had been made to improve or develop the property, thus, in 1946 when it was sold for \$94,000, there were only two nineteenth-century structures amid the overgrown wheat fields.²³

The team of four developers began platting the Twinbrook subdivision in January of 1947. The earliest lot sizes were 20,000 square feet because the land had no water and sewer systems and each lot needed to be large enough to accommodate a septic system.²⁴ Section one was re-platted in September of 1947 when the city of Rockville agreed that it would annex 2,000 acres to the south of the city (including Twinbrook) by 1949, and that it would begin to connect its water and sewer lines to the area.²⁵ This allowed for the developers to plan a larger number of houses on smaller and more irregular shaped lots while maintaining a relatively low density. With the new plan eliminating the need for individual septic systems, lot sizes ranged from 7,000-15,000 square feet – well above the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) requirement of 5,000-6,000 square feet.²⁶ In order to guarantee that the FHA would insure all of the Twinbrook mortgages, the developers needed to meet minimum standards for subdivision design as dictated by the FHA in its “Underwriting

Manual”. This guide included provisions for lot size, street width, minimum setbacks, house size, and racial homogeneity, among others.

Most streets in the Twinbrook subdivision were named for prominent World War II battles and generals in order to appeal to newly returned and patriotic-minded G.I.s and their new families.²⁷ In 1944, the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act allowed for the Federal Housing Administration to back veteran mortgages up to 100%, and extend the loan payment period to up to thirty years. The act also allowed returning veterans to purchase homes without a down-payment, however, the Twinbrook mortgages still required a \$50 down-payment from any returning veteran (considerably less than the 20% required by non-veterans).²⁸ By 1948, seventeen houses were completed and were put on the market; prices ranged from \$9,250-\$11,500, but were considered overpriced by the City of Rockville (the board believed \$7,500 was more appropriate).²⁹ City board members urged the FHA to step in and force the developers to construct less expensive and better quality houses in 1948, but this request was never granted.³⁰

The houses were small (typically 1,200-1,600 square feet), although considerably larger than the minimum 534 square feet required by the FHA.³¹ Although they varied little in their architectural design, the houses were considered “flexible” in that they were intended to be added to and altered – each house included an unfinished attic, and many had unfinished basements.³² Houses were centered on their lots and formed right angles to the curvilinear streets. The FHA required houses to be set back from the street at least twenty-five to thirty feet, and recommended varying this number to create visual interest and to enhance privacy.³³ The FHA also recommended four-foot sidewalks and eight-foot planting strips complete with permanent shade-producing trees (thus increasing the gross setback

twelve more feet). Streets were recommended to be planned in a curvilinear fashion to adapt to local topography and eliminate four-way intersections, and the FHA required minimum street widths. Thru-streets had to be a minimum of fifty feet wide; cul-de-sacs and non-thru-streets could be thirty feet wide; and paved strips of any kind had to be at least eighteen feet wide.

The platting and development of the six original subdivisions of Twinbrook was a relatively rapid process, lasting only about four years. In these four years, a large and complex residential neighborhood was constructed, and throughout the development process, the neighborhood became a nearly self-sufficient community with the addition of parks, schools, shopping centers, community centers, and commuter lines. Beginning in 1950, the subdivision expanded north across Veirs Mills Road, encompassing a 400-acre development that became known as Twinbrook Forest. The expansion was developed in much the same way as the earlier Twinbrook, mostly due to FHA requirements and Geeraert's tried-and-true practices.

The Federal Housing Administration's "Underwriting Manual" dictated all aspects of a suburban housing tract, but it also strongly influenced the social structure. In order to guarantee that the FHA would insure 100% of all housing mortgages, developers like Geeraert needed to create "economic stability" and "protection from adverse influences."³⁴ In the times, racial homogeneity played a crucial role in the perception of these neighborhood characteristics. Racially mixed neighborhoods were viewed as an adverse influence that would unquestionably lower property values, and the FHA would not insure mortgages if they were to be in neighborhoods that were even the slightest bit racially mixed, making all-white developments the most practical choice for developers, but also making it impossible

for a non-white family to secure a loan. New homes in the suburbs for white families were then the foreseeable outcome of the FHA housing program. As segregation was entrenched in much of society at this time, these restrictions may not have seemed out of the ordinary for many white homebuyers. Twinbrook, situated in Montgomery County, Maryland, at a good distance from DC, was a total package of FHA housing developments.

Often referred to simply as “veteran’s housing”, the social profile of Twinbrook was greatly impacted by its large numbers of recently-returned G.I.s.³⁵ An important set of data included in the 1960 census is a breakdown of the number of veterans from WWI, WWII, and the Korean War living in the area. The data provided in 1960 does not provide a specific breakdown of ages of the entire population, but does breakdown age of those in the labor force. Men over the age of eighteen and in the labor force number 6,318. If we assume that most veterans are in the labor force that means that approximately 67% of all men in the labor force over the age of eighteen were war veterans. We cannot know the number of veterans residing in Rockville in 1950, but it obviously would not include many Korean War veterans (a few served there before the “official” start in 1950). It would probably be a safe assumption that many of the WWII veterans were young and moved into many of the new homes in Twinbrook, and probably other nearby developments as well.

What we can definitively say about Rockville is that it had an extraordinary number of children, at 15% of the population in 1950 and 16% in 1960. Today, the number of children under the age of five constitutes only 6.2% of the population in Rockville. A number of factors influence such statistics, but to have over 16% of the total population under the age of five is very significant and indicative of the large number of young married couples. We can also say that in 1960 the majority of Rockville residents were not from Maryland, which

could imply that developers were advertising out-of-state, though no evidence indicating this has yet been found. Another significant change is in the education level, the number of high school graduates doubled in percentage from 1950 to 1960. Other significant changes over time concern the issue of race. In ten years the population increased by just over 19,000 people, of which just over 16,000 were white Americans, but still comprising about the same percentage of the population (+1.3%) . The total population of blacks only increased in ten years by 500 people, dropping this group from 15.6% of the population to only 6% (-9.6%). The remaining 8.3% difference was filled with foreign (out-of-country) born residents, the majority of whom were born in the UK, Canada, Germany, Asia, and Italy. It is unclear why the black population stagnated as it did, but most likely it was directly to do with aforementioned problem of housing that was actually available to black families.

Another interesting and important group in the Twinbrook social profile is women. The majority of women were unemployed stay-at-home housewives; however, some women were beginning to work outside of the home, which was indicative of a national trend. Women in the 1954 classified directory were listed under professions such as baby-sitting, bookkeeping, catering, china painting, cosmetics, piano musicians, nursing, secretarial services, sewing, and tutoring.³⁶ In addition, three of the seven notary publics listed were women, and the sole listing for real estate was a woman. The postwar period witnessed the slow but steady inclusion of females into professions formerly entirely filled by men.

Twinbrook had many social organizations devoted to familiarizing community residents with each other, and provided opportunities for citizens to participate in charity work. The strong presence of neighborhood and community organizations has had a lasting impact on the citizens of Twinbrook, and the Twinbrook Citizen's Association, formed in

1949, and remains an influential function of community voice to this day. The “Twinbrook Life” column that appeared regularly in Montgomery County’s newspaper “The Sentinel” reaffirms the notion that the Twinbrook community was a cohesive and well cared for entity that its citizens took time to build and cultivate.

Although the Twinbrook community was developed, constructed, and cultivated under the stringent and prejudiced auspices of the Federal Housing Administration, a cohesive and self-sufficient neighborhood emerged throughout the post-war era, shaping both the lives of the residents and the physical architecture of the subdivision. The feelings that came along with home ownership allowed Twinbrook residents a sense of control over their lives and futures during a time of great national uncertainty. Through the creation of social organizations as well as owning and altering their houses in their own way, residents of Twinbrook were able to create certainty in some aspects of their home and family lives.

The Houses of Twinbrook

After numerous weeks of study on the Twinbrook developments, the students of George Washington University have uncovered many interesting facts about the community, ranging from the platting of the land to some of the most intimate stories of its earliest residents. Unfortunately, one of the most elusive components of our research has been the uncovering of the original architectural designs and floor plans of the many house styles that were reported to have been built.³⁷ While we have been able to locate several of the original plans and photos through local newspapers and resources available at Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation, we regret that there may be gaps of missing information that need additional attention, perhaps only to be filled in once the location of drawings for all of the

original house types have been uncovered. In the interim, we provide below a summary of the information that we have compiled to date.

The typical house type prior to World War II offered two-stories and a basement with a living room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, one to two bathrooms, and two or more bedrooms. Houses prior to World War II were typically constructed by an architect for a specific family, with both parties deciding what rooms to include and where they should be placed. In order to produce affordable houses quickly, however, a standardized house type was needed; one that would provide for basic human and family needs within the house, but that could be developed without the input of the specific homebuyer prior to its design. In addition, in order to increase its affordability and speed of construction, the new house type would have to be reduced, including the possible elimination of some rooms and the reduction in size of others.

Based on space studies conducted by those in the house building industry, the FHA developed the four-room-plus-bath minimum house, which set the standard for small house design and influenced small house builders such as Levitt & Sons & Geeraert. The FHA prototype was a 624-square-foot house embodying the principles of efficiency in residential design, featuring a small kitchen with modern appliances, a bath, two bedrooms, a utility room, and a living room. Eating functions in the minimum house were to be conducted in the kitchen or living room while the utility room served as storage space in lieu of a basement and attic. The bathroom in the minimum house was adjacent to the kitchen in order to stack the plumbing and reduce material costs. Hallways were nearly eliminated with the exception of a small one separating the bedrooms and bath from the living room and kitchen. In the minimum house, all basic universal family activities were provided for with sleeping areas

(two bedrooms), bathing (one bathroom), cooking and eating (kitchen), and a space for the family to come together (living room). Every square foot within the house was also accounted for with the elimination of all unnecessary corners, hallways, and rooms. The minimum house was touted as efficient and affordable (Figure 1).

The reduced number of rooms and smaller sizes of postwar houses encouraged a new way of thinking in terms of interior layout. Pre-World War II houses traditionally featured their kitchens in the back of the house. Placing kitchens away from the front door and out-of-view from visitors in the public spaces in the front of the house is a two-hundred-year-old American tradition. In many postwar house designs, however, the kitchens were located in the front of the house and in some cases, served as the main point of entry. In later designs, the living room was moved to the back of the house, leaving the kitchen as the public space in the front. Allowing the kitchen to serve as the only public space in the front of the house was considered a radical move with some arguing that this placement recognized the transition of housework from private space to public space and the growing importance of the role of the housewife in keeping her own house.

The open floor plan, with the mother theoretically in the kitchen and the family in the living room, was viewed as a nostalgic nod to the colonial family hearth and was popular in post-war small houses. When early colonial houses consisted of one-room with an open hearth used for cooking and interior heating, the family gathered around it for the heat and light it provided. The transition from open hearth to cast-iron and then gas stoves in the 1800s, however, was met with controversy with some arguing that the disappearance of the hearth would undermine family unity.³⁸ The compromise was to separate the cooking tasks from interior heating by moving the stove to the kitchen and placing a fireplace in parlors and

sitting rooms. As a matter of tradition, fireplaces are still frequently found in later houses even after the availability and increased use of central heat. Levitt is credited with being the first to reintroduce the colonial hearth/open floor plan concept into the basic four-room house, which would influence Geeraert and other postwar builders looking to the Levitt houses as a model for success.³⁹

In designing and selling his Twinbrook houses, Geeraert took cues from the FHA, modern architects, trade magazines, and especially from the houses built by the enormously successful Levitt & Sons on Levittown, Long Island. In fact, Geeraert reportedly visited Levittown on several occasions in order to translate Levittown blueprints into Twinbrook models, altering them in order to meet Montgomery county codes and local taste.⁴⁰ While some local lore apparently disputes that Geeraert directly borrowed from Levittown models, the connection is directly linked in a 1949 article in *The Washington Post* (the *Post*). In the article, Roland Simon, an executive with Twinbrook, Inc. reports that he and other members of the firm “made a detailed study of the Levitt development, later incorporating some of what they saw into model houses at Twinbrook.”⁴¹ Best known for these Levittown-style Cape Cods (Figures 2-5), Twinbrook’s initial grouping of 54 Cape Cods, however, featured Colonial-style detailing (Figures 6-8). Later forms included a “rambler,” a low, rectangular ranch, multiple split level forms, and a raised ranch.⁴²

Over the years, a plethora of Levittown-style Cape Cods proliferated through Twinbrook. Multiple series of models were designed by Geeraert with his fellow builders, then on his own, and finally with architect John Samperton (Figures 9-16). Similar to Levitt, Geeraert experimented with size and amenities, graduating from smaller, minimum style “expandable” houses to larger, three and four bedroom houses with basements and carports.

Asymmetrical massing in many of these houses resulted in layered roof lines, which were two-story, two-bay central structures flanked by a one and one-half story wing and one story garage (Figures 17-19). Each model produced over the years, provided differences in form and street orientation, much like the approach taken by Levitt. For example, in one home the picture window may face the front yard, while in another the same model may have its picture window facing the backyard. Unlike Levitt, however, exterior cladding schemes were left to the discretion of the builder, which included rough sawn boards, asbestos shake shingles, and board and batten siding, among others. Also unlike Levitt, early Twinbrook houses featured joists in the foundation construction instead of a concrete slab.⁴³

By 1948, five different models of houses were available in the first Twinbrook development, including the single-level roof and the split-level roof forms (Figure 20). In these early models, the houses all featured one and one-half stories, with a finished first floor consisting of two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, bath, finished stairway, and an unfinished attic. As expected, the kitchen in these models also served as the family dining room and like the Levittown models, the attic was meant to be finished according to the owner's discretion, but was potentially large enough to accommodate two bedrooms, a storage room, and possibly even a bathroom.⁴⁴ In a floor plan featured in a 1949 edition of the *Post*, there appear to be a total of eight drywall partitions in the early Twinbrook models, with the floor plan layout nearly identical to both the FHA minimum house and a typical Levittown style Cape Cod offered in 1947 (Figure 21). Finally, based on renderings showing a chimney stack on the roof and an advertisement of a family in an early model, it appears that a brick fireplace separated the living room from the kitchen (with its opening at the living room) (Figure 21(a)).

Amenities of early models included knotty-pine paneling on the stairway (also featured in the Levittown models), plastic finishing on the bathroom walls, a gas warm-air heating system on the half story above, a Bendix washer in the kitchen (possibly abutting a ninth small partition wall at the fireplace), and a moveable floor-to-ceiling storage wall mounted on casters (adjacent to the brick fireplace) that separated a portion of the kitchen from the living room (Figure 22).⁴⁵ In a 1951 article, this storage wall is described as a limed oak cabinet containing bookshelves, mirror compartments for glassware and china, and a space to hang coats.⁴⁶ A knotty pine chest with three drawers and a set of shelves was featured in the sliding door closets in each bedroom. The closet doors were slatted and made of painted wood. There was also a bar for hanging clothes.⁴⁷

Kitchens in these houses were fully modernized with a double porcelain sink, refrigerator, a four burner range, and metal cabinetry.⁴⁸ The houses also featured large picture windows consisting of three rows of four rectangular-shaped panes of glass, separated by mullions both horizontally and vertically. The glass was presumably insulated and the overall picture window measured approximately eight feet by sixteen feet, as mentioned in a 1950 advertisement.⁴⁹ Also characteristic to these houses were the “toothpick” angled beams, connected at its widest portion to the underside of the eaves and at its narrowest portion to the siding, near the foundation. These “toothpick” beams, typically placed alongside windows, are borrowed from the Levittown houses and are purely ornamental, providing no structural support.

In late March 1952, a new section of Twinbrook was opened, boasting eight exterior house designs, all with larger square footage than the previous models. Like the previous models, these houses also offered two bedrooms with the expansible second floor, a knotty

pine paneled stairway, floor-to-ceiling picture window, Venetian blinds, and a fully equipped kitchen with an automatic washer. Also included with these houses were eight feet by four feet picture windows at either end of the second floor, capped heating ducts, pine sub-flooring, oak flooring, and hot and cold water.⁵⁰ A rendering in a *Post* article shows a split-level form similar to a 1949 model, only with larger picture windows in the front and on the sides of the house. In addition, the 1952 split-level features a raised center roof with a lower hanging roof on either side, where the 1949 rendering shows a split-level, with one raised half and one lowered half.⁵¹ Presumably, however, both of these split level forms were offered in each of these years.⁵²

In 1953, it was announced that Geeraert was offering an enlarged version of his basic house with the addition of a carport in Twinbrook Forest, his latest development. There were eight different elevations offered in fifteen different color schemes. Interestingly, while critics had long expressed concerns about the need for additional space in minimum houses, it was around this time that babies who once easily fit into small rooms were now of school-age and additional space for things like desks was needed. Responding to the need for more space, houses in Twinbrook Forest now included three to four bedrooms. In these latest models, the fireplace was moved from the middle of the living room to the corner, which afforded new views between the living room and kitchen. With the fireplace move, an additional ninety square feet of space became available, which Geeraert used to provide a new pantry. He placed the refrigerator into the pantry, which in turn opened up additional usable space in the kitchen. Sinks in the Twinbrook Forest models were upgraded from porcelain to stainless steel. Finally, Twinbrook Forest houses now featured a “completely unhampered second floor” allowing for full usage of the area for bedroom and bath space.⁵³

In an advertisement announcing Twinbrook Forest, Geeraert includes the following amenities: picture windows, Venetian blinds, storm doors, separate utility and tool room with a gas heating unit (ready for air conditioning), seven cubic foot refrigerator, Bendix washer, thirty inch oven gas range, knotty pine furniture in bedroom closets, insulation in the walls and roof, oak or hardwood floors, eight inch plastic tiles in the bathroom, a pantry closet in knotty pine, walls and ceilings finished in durable Plextone, concrete foundations, and a semi-finished second floor, with a knotty pine paneled stairway and completed landing hall.

A 1954 advertisement for Twinbrook Forest announced that six styles were available with fifteen different color variations. Houses in the latest models may now have offered three or four bedrooms along with a carport with storage area.⁵⁴ Advertisements also announce that models are still available with an expandable second floor and with or without a full basement. Amenities were similar to the 1953 version, only this announcement stated that Tracy steel cabinets and knotty pine kitchen storage cabinets were offered in the kitchen in addition to a Dishmaster dish washer. This was the first time a dishwasher appears in an advertisement for Twinbrook houses. There was also a four-foot medicine cabinet with full width mirror, believed to be located near the washing machine, given its listing after the washer and before the pantry closet descriptions, both of which were in the kitchen. Finally, Venetian blinds were said to be on every first floor window, with the exception of the picture window.

In terms of its exterior, a typical Twinbrook Forest house was an asymmetrical split-level, designed to be entirely three-dimensional in approach, with all four elevations that could be oriented street-wise (Figures 23-30). The rotation of the houses on their lot appears to be random, and though lot size was unaffected by this development, the result is a

designed, landscaped look. A brick under story girds the asymmetrical split level, with a board and batten upper story.

In October 1954, the “Anniversary Home” was featured in the *Post* as the new and improved Twinbrook Forest “Big House,” which the paper announced was the fourth modification of the original Twinbrook design.⁵⁵ In dramatic fashion, the model house was unveiled only after weeks of concealing the construction site behind a conspicuous fence and a patrolling armed guard. Once revealed, it was apparent that the side gabled, asymmetrically massed house was essentially a facsimile of the earlier Cape Cods offered. Like earlier styles, the contemporary Cape Cod featured a pitched roof, overhanging eaves, a central shed dormer, and a carport. The first floor offered a living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms and a bath. The second floor was apparently unfinished, but could still accommodate an additional two bedrooms. The *Post* called the design

pleasingly contemporary in design, with a brick and frame finish, a jaunty roof overhang designed to keep out the summer sun but let the winter sun in, and a carport with a sheltered front entranceGeeraert has completely restyled the kitchen in his Anniversary Home with the latest caloric counter top burners and now has a special brick wall in the kitchen with the oven recessed into it and a copper hood over it.⁵⁶

Recessing the oven into the wall has the appearance of providing additional floor space by removing the oven’s footprint on the floor and allowing unencumbered access to the formica-topped work space featured along one wall. The kitchen also features fluorescent lighting, twenty-five storage units, and birch cabinetry (Figure 31). The bathroom features a large built-in vanity and sliding glass shower doors.

In 1956, Geeraert offered three brick and frame houses as part of his Twinbrook Park development.⁵⁷ These houses were touted as incorporating all of the items discussed by the members of the 1956 Women’s Congress.⁵⁸ These latest models featured a utility room with

an entrance from the carport, allowing for children to remove muddy shoes before entering the house, separation of the sleeping areas from the public areas in order to maximize privacy, three “king-sized bedrooms,” and even a separate dining room. Additional amenities included a Western-Holly wall oven with a triple rotisserie, a raised hearth with a place for wood storage below, a living room and fireplace, wood paneled walls, tiled baths with deluxe vanities, and bay windows. One elevation even shows a desk in the kitchen.⁵⁹ In the Meadow Hall plan, the basement occupies the lowest level, the dining room and kitchen on the half level above, the living room on the next half level, and finally the bedrooms on the top floor (Figure 32).

According to elevations for Twinbrook Park houses, the exteriors featured multiple textures, including used brick, board and batten, wood shanks, surf planks, asbestos shingles or siding, and painted cinder block. Some houses may have featured several of these textures on their exteriors. The roof was made of asphalt shingles. Window walls were still used, but in a reduced scale, with three rows of three rectangular-shaped panes of glass.

In 1957, the latest model of the Anniversary House, presumably part of the new Twinbrook Park development, was released and although it was advertised and praised in *The Post* in the same manner as its earlier version, its design is awkward and out of step with natural forms and breaks with the arboreal feel of the Twinbrook Forest Homes (Figures 33-36). A pointed, front gable overhang extends the length of the front elevation, which is clad in metal siding and punctured with an octagonal accent window. Notably, the 1957 Anniversary House is described in positive terms as being associated with modern design norms.

A complete design for spacious and gracious living is provided on the first floor the kitchen is described as a housewife's dream, including for what is believed to be the first on the East Coast the famous Western Holly built-in gas range which has become so popular in the more modish houses along the West Coast.⁶⁰

The above represents a detailed summary of the information we have uncovered to date. We suspect that there is still a trove of information yet to locate, but the time afforded for a single semester project simply does not allow for it. Of course, the location of additional original construction documents would prove the most helpful, but detailed architectural surveys and homeowner pamphlets would also provide additional information. For additional details not included in this summarized form, please see the individual student papers included at the end of this report.

Landscaping in Twinbrook

As has been discussed, the development of the Twinbrook neighborhoods is a prime example of the suburban expansion endemic to the United States in the 1950s, when postwar tract housing subsidized the Federal Housing Administration was produced en masse to meet the demand of the burgeoning middle-class and sold as individual slices of American Pie. Shortly after 1948, the rolling rural countryside just beyond the city of Rockville was transformed dramatically. Trees were felled, the earth was graded, roads were carved, and foundations were laid. The whole landscape was wiped clean, and then sculpted into the suburban dream of developer Joseph Geeraert, with botanical plantings and utilities carefully placed to fit the new residential environment.

The landscape of suburbia represented a new frontier, primarily one of modernity. According to Abraham Levitt, one of the fathers of the post-war suburban tract housing development, no single feature of a suburban residential community contributed so much to the

character and beauty of the individual home and locality as well-kept lawns, and stabilized home values would most often be found in neighborhoods where lawns showed as green carpets and trees and shrubbery joined to “impart the sense of residential elegance.” In contrast, areas that possessed neglected lawns and landscape material would be publicly shunned. Furthermore, in one guide for homeowners, Levitt explained that the initial investment in proper landscaping would be large at the beginning, but unlike furniture, houses, and most material things that tend to depreciate with the years, the lawn, trees, and shrubs would become only more valuable over time.⁶¹

No matter how much anyone stressed the importance of maintaining the “residential elegance” of the suburban frontier, planting successful landscaping was no easy task. Historically, soil quality was a predicament faced by anyone in any suburban tract-housing development: the earth in these areas was primarily fill dirt, compacted by tractors, trucks, and building materials, with a thin layer of top soil that came from the sod thrown down by developers. Successful lawns and gardens required owners to condition the soil with sawdust, nitrogen fertilizer, water, and aeration.⁶² A gardening column that appeared in the Twinbrook newsletter offered tips for overcoming the dilemma of sub par suburban soil, gave advice on how to treat pests, suggestions on which perennials were the hardiest and most popular (daisies, lilies, phlox, chrysanthemums, and anemias), as well as tips for seasonal pruning. The newsletter also encouraged adventurous landscapers to plan before they planted, to use the advice in the gardening column, or even better, participate in workshops offered on home landscape design.⁶³

Some landscaping elements were planned by Geeraert to soften the rawness of the new development, and original landscape drawings on file at Peerless Rockville indicate that the

developers were to sod an area of ten feet around each home, planting grass seed throughout the rest of the lot, and planting a variety of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs of certain growth-heights at specific points around the homes. Plans vary slightly for different home-models, but commonalities seemed to be the inclusion of ever-green shrubbery at the corners of the homes, at entrances, and at property lines (Figure 37).

Since Twinbrook houses were positioned on small lots adjacent to one another, were situated towards streets, and often had large floor-to-ceiling family windows, plantings were used to provide screening and privacy. Today it is common to see mature Eastern red cedars, also known as red cedar junipers, planted at windows and property lines throughout Twinbrook. Mature Eastern hemlock is another ever-green that appears commonly throughout today's Twinbrook yardscapes. Both types of trees could be pruned to inhibit tall growth and encourage thick development as hedging, or allowed to grow in height as a single ornamental piece (Figures 38, 39).

Besides the distinctive use of hemlocks and cedars for privacy, another recognizable element that characterizes Twinbrook's landscape is the presence and quantity of mature street trees planted uniformly along both sides of the road (Figure 40). Mature sycamores, elms, and sweetgums were found occasionally as street trees, as well as in outcroppings within backyards, but out of all the street trees identified, the most frequently occurring were red maples. In continuation of the 1914 Roadside Tree Law, which supported the planting of shade-providing street trees, Montgomery County encouraged homeowners to plant street streets in the 1950s by providing them with lists of suggested varieties appropriate for the neighborhood.⁶⁴ Silver and Red Maples were some of the cheapest suggestions available, and they were planted by the thousands throughout the county.⁶⁵ The abundance of red maples in

Twinbrook can be linked to the encouragement of the county of homeowners to plant street trees, as well as the efforts of the Twinbrook Beautification Committee, which advertised red maples at an “exceptionally reasonable cost” in the neighborhood newsletter during February of 1955.⁶⁶

Unfortunately, Twinbrook has for years struggled with issues of disease and maintenance of their street trees. For the past decade or so, the region has battled with bacterial leaf scorch, a disease that threatens oak trees, sycamores, red maples, dogwoods, American elms, and other plantings, and Dutch elm disease.⁶⁷ The street tree battle reaches beyond the issues of disease and extends to the choice in specific plantings. For example - although the Red Maple is widespread throughout Twinbrook, it has been noted for its weak wood and a shallow root system that has the annoying habit of buckling side-walks and interfering with sewer lines. A Master Tree Plan was developed in 1998 by the city’s Recreation and Parks Department to set goals for the health and maintenance of Twinbrooks 4,500 street trees. Objectives of the plan included the removal blighted trees or trees causing damage to utilities and the diversification of tree species within neighborhoods to further avoid large-scale losses of trees due to disease.⁶⁸

The Development of Twinbrook Utilities

The development of the utility systems in Twinbrook portrays a picture of a small town struggling to respond to a massive influx of new citizens. Historically, the Federal House Administration regulated specifications for the installation of utilities such as electricity, telephone, sewage disposal and water service, but it was common practice for developers to comply with the rules of whatever jurisdiction they were working in. For

Joseph Geeraert's development Twinbrook, this meant following the utility specifications of Rockville.

With regard to electricity and telephone requirements, the regulations for the Federal Housing Administration necessitated that electricity be installed in all developments, and that, where feasible, electric and telephone poles and lines be installed along interior lot lines instead of in the streets.⁶⁹ Many utility companies and local governments did this already for cosmetic reasons, but in the case of Twinbrook, the electric and telephone poles and lines run along the streets, rather than behind houses. Since 1903, the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) supplied electricity in the city of Rockville, into which Twinbrook was incorporated. In 1959, a Twinbrook substation was built at the corner of Broadwood Drive and Burris Street to meet the demands of the increase in population. While efforts were not made to conceal telephone poles and lines from the streetscape, the power substation building was designed to be indistinguishable from its residential neighbors, complete with windows and a front porch.⁷⁰

Telephone service, like electrical service, came to the Rockville area long before the development of Twinbrook. Service in Rockville started in 1906 with forty customers. By 1933, telephone service was carried by the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (C&P) on a party line system. Dial telephones were introduced in late 1946 and early 1947.⁷¹ At this point there were approximately 1,600 phone lines in the Rockville area, and a new telephone company building was constructed on Jefferson Street. Demand outpaced supply and, in 1950, the council allowed C&P to install temporary phone poles and booths at Ardennes Avenue and LeMay Road until permanent systems could be installed.⁷² The telephone system grew as Twinbrook did; a 2-5 numbering plan was introduced in December

of 1953, and 1956 brought the elimination of the party line system, allowing users to directly dial between exchanges and make long distance calls to certain areas as well. Telephone service in Rockville switched to an electronic switching system in 1971, by which time C&P had approximately 16,000 customers.

The development of electric and telephone service to the citizens of Twinbrook is straightforward and relatively simple, particularly when compared to the creation of the water and sewer systems, both of which struggled greatly with the growing pains of the post-war housing boom. The Twinbrook developers originally planned for individual systems, with their homes sitting on half-acre lots with septic fields, but a public system, that which was most favored by the FHA, became the final water and sewer system.⁷³ The public system came into play after the State Board of Health approved plans for a sewer plant, and Rockville agreed to annex the development, and the loss of the septic fields meant a reduction in lot size, which in turn meant an increase in the number of houses that could be built. Traditionally, in the case of the city of Rockville and developments along its outskirts, a developer would approach the town council near the completion of construction, and in exchange for having the water and sewer mains extended to their development the developer would agree to annex the area to Rockville. The city would issue bonds to pay for the system extensions, and would in turn increase their tax base, as another requirement for the annexation was that each new home owner paid their local Rockville taxes at the full rate. This plan sounds solid on paper, but unfortunately did not work in the long term due to a lack of water and an abundance of sewerage.

Water in Rockville was supplied by several artesian wells, one built for every 200 houses. In Twinbrook, one such well stood at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Vandegrift

Avenue, and was primed every afternoon by a city worker.⁷⁴ This was a system that worked for a small town, but that would not be enough for the thousands of new residents who moved to the area between the 1940s and 1950s. Shortages were reported in Rockville in the summer of 1946, when a combination of a low water table and pumps on three of the town's ten wells breaking (plus an inability to get new pumps) created a water deficiency. To prevent this from reoccurring, the Mayor and Council dug new wells, so that by 1949 there were twenty-three wells in Rockville, with plans to dig three more, paid for with municipal bonds. Meanwhile, a lack of water was coupled with an increase in sewage, and the 1949 municipal bond to pay for new wells would also pay to construct an outfall sewer to the Cabin John disposal plant, which was run by the Washington Sewer and Sanitary Commission (WSSC). An agreement was made with the WSSC in 1950 to extend their line, which fed into the DC sewer line, to the Rockville corporate limits. This agreement became a formal contract in March 1951, but a trunk line would not be finished until early summer of 1952. That same year the Council and Mayor considered expanding Rockville's sewer plant to double or triple its capacity, and consulted with engineers and the State Board of Health as to the involved costs. There was a clear attempt to deal with this mounting problem, but it was never quite enough, nor did it focus on long term solutions.

The sewer and water situations came to a head in 1953, when crises with both utilities erupted. After the City of Rockville ran out of water for a few hours, a special meeting of the mayor and council met the next afternoon. The problem, explained city manager John McDonald, was lawn sprinklers in the newer subdivisions of the city, such as Twinbrook, which caused the water to be pumped out of storage tanks faster than it could be refilled.⁷⁵ Ordinances were passed to prohibit the use of water for sprinkling lawns, watering gardens,

washing cars, or filling pools (wading or otherwise), and members of the council contacted the WSSC, the Maryland Park and Planning Commission, and the Army Corps of Engineers to inquire as to the feasibility of tying in to their water systems. The council and the WSSC were in talks by late August to purchase water. The cost would be twenty-seven cents per thousand gallons, up to a million gallons per day, plus the cost of meter reading and a service charge of \$425 annually. The WSSC would bring a water line up from Waverly Sanitarium to the Rockville corporate line, and Rockville would be responsible for connecting the lines within the city.

The water situation was at least somewhat solved with the plans to purchase water from the WSSC, but Rockville would soon have another major utility problem. The sewage plant at Cabin John was overloaded and could barely support the population, let alone the 200 new households that new developments on the west-end of Rockville would bring. Effective January 31, 1954, no further sewer connections could be made in the Cabin John drainage area.⁷⁶ The solution to the crisis was the establishment of a temporary connection from 500 Rockville homes into the WSSC's Rock Creek line, with the cost paid for by the developers. Following the water and sewer crises of 1953, the residents of Rockville were ready for a change in political leadership. The Citizens for Good Government (CGG) was a new non-partisan political group launched before the local elections in the spring of 1954. Under the guidance of the CGG, working with the temporary plans already set in place, the water and sewer problems were met head on. An agreement was signed with the WSSC for town sewage disposal, whereby Rockville would bear the brunt of cost of building a sewer line through the Cabin John valley to connect into the WSSC's District of Columbia sewer plant, and there were plans in the works to build a line to the Potomac River for water.⁷⁷

The influx of people to Twinbrook and other subdivisions in Rockville greatly overtaxed the city's previous water and sewer systems, but also brought about a change in local government that was a necessary step on the city's journey from small town to All American city. With the sewer and water systems finally in place, Rockville continued to grow, and the city dealt with sewer and water problems in a more systematic manner. Young families flocked to Twinbrook following World War II, taking advantage of low-income, FHA insured mortgages, and expanding the community of Rockville.

The Remodeling of Twinbrook Homes

The homes in Twinbrook were designed with the expectation that they would be expanded to meet the needs of growing families. According to the developers, the homes in Twinbrook were “just what you have been looking for, room enough now for your present needs. May be easily and economically made into a three or four bedroom, or two bath house.”⁷⁸ The one and one-half story Levittown Ranch type featured an unfinished attic which was meant to be expanded (Figure 41). The Cape Cod, Ranch and Split Level types also easily lent themselves to expansion either through adding shed dormers, raising the roof, or through building one or two-story side or back additions.⁷⁹ While certain models included completed second floors (such as the homes in the Halpine Village area developed in 1957) homes with unfinished “expandable” attic space were being advertised as late as 1958 in the Twinbrook Forest subdivision.⁸⁰

Zoning regulations did not deter home expansion in Twinbrook. The single family residences in Twinbrook were (and remain) zoned R-60, which provides for a minimum lot size of 6,000 sq. ft., with maximum lot coverage of 35% including accessory buildings. The

front setback is twenty-five feet from the right-of-way, while the side and rear setbacks are eight and twenty feet respectively. The maximum height of the house is thirty-five feet, measured to the mid-point of the eaves and the peak. The combination of a large lot size and a relatively small house footprint (homes in the original sections of Twinbrook were typically under 1,000 square feet in size) means that there is plenty of room for horizontal and vertical expansion within the existing zoning parameters.⁸¹

By 1951 an active Homemakers Club was already established, with members providing advice on a wide range of “do-it-yourself” remodeling and decorating projects. Homeowners did not wait long to begin remodeling their “expandable” homes. The first reported building permits for additions to homes in Twinbrook were issued in August 1950, to erect a porch at 13200 Ardennes Avenue and for additions to two homes on Midway Avenue.⁸²

The interest in remodeling was reflected in the *Twinbrook Life* newsletter (published beginning in 1954) which included suggestions for home remodeling projects, or, as one “Design for Living” column put it, ideas of “what can be done with a Twinbrook house.”⁸³ Do-it-yourself projects showcased in *Twinbrook Life* included building partitions to separate kitchen and dining room areas, adding kitchen counter space, installing paneling and shelving, building wall cabinets, creating a split log mantel piece, constructing a built-in desk, outfitting a closet as a “phone room and study”, and recessing a television set under the living room staircase.⁸⁴ These projects point out some of the ways homeowners responded to the new design features of Twinbrook homes. By creating separations between functional spaces, finding creative ways to increase storage and create more efficient uses of limited kitchen counter space, Twinbrook residents adapted their homes to meet their needs.

Early issues of *Twinbrook Life* also featured outdoor projects, including building a pergola and patio, as well as advice on landscaping and yard maintenance; how-to advice (including exterior painting, cleaning a fireplace chimney, and even how to fix a television set, and other practical do-it-yourself advice). A March 1956 article in *Twinbrook Life* described an eight-session Civil Defense course offered for Twinbrook residents, the final class of which “involves the preparation of shelters for use in this area.”⁸⁵ Advertisers in *Twinbrook Life* included McIntyre Hardware, Abode Hardware (which advertised “do-it-yourself kits”) and from contractors such as Hearn Insulation and Improvement (offering insulation, replacement windows, awnings, patio covers and storm windows) which offered to provide “unique solutions to Twinbrook problems.”⁸⁶

Home remodeling was clearly a growth industry in Twinbrook. An advertisement in the *Montgomery County Sentinel* in March 1951 by Wilbur P. Davis, Building Contractor (formerly Engineer with U.S. Navy) boasted “Look What We Can Do” and listed a wide variety of repair and home improvement projects, as well as “chicken house” and “pig and pet pens” – “No job too small, just give us a call”.⁸⁷ Hardware stores, including McIntyre Hardware in the new Twinbrook Shopping Center (which opened in 1956), offered paint, wallpaper and tools to complete most home improvement projects. Others offered materials to create simple furniture. In one advertisement, Leland L. Fisher Inc. urged readers to “Make Your Own ‘MODERN FURNITURE’” by fixing wrought iron legs onto flush doors – “available in various sizes from our stock (Figure 42).⁸⁸ Hechinger’s, a new type of “do-it-yourself hardware supermarket” chain, opened on the new Rockville bypass in 1957.⁸⁹

Twinbrook homes served as models for “do-it-yourself” home improvement projects for the Montgomery County region. The house at 327 Broadwood Drive in Twinbrook was

featured as part of a decorating series – “Interiors with Ideas” in the October 13, 1955 issue of the *Montgomery County Sentinel*. Extolling the do-it-yourself ethic, the article reported that by using their own labor, ideas and inexpensive materials, the owners “have made their house look like the work of a high priced professional decorator”. Both husband and wife painted walls and their brick fireplace, built a divider to separate the dining room from the kitchen, built a “breakfast bar”, installed shelves for appliances, and created floor coverings and furniture for their home – “all done in their spare time.”⁹⁰

The homes in Twinbrook and the people who live in them have continued to change over the years. Twinbrook neighborhood housing statistics compiled in April 2005 indicate that there are 3,391 single family homes in Twinbrook. While 63% of homes are owned by married households, 23% are one-person households. The average household size is now 2.8. This represents a substantial demographic shift from the large families with young children that predominated in the 1950s. Despite these shrinking demographics, the size of Twinbrook homes continues to grow. Only 653 (19.25%) of the Twinbrook homes are under 1,000 square feet in size, while 632 (18.6%) are over 1,500 square feet. The majority of homes (62.15%) range between 1000 and 1500 square feet in size. During the period from 2000 to 2005, 270 (8%) of the homes in Twinbrook were expanded. The size of these additions ranged from under 100 square feet to over 3,000 square feet, with most falling in the 100 to 1,000 square foot range. One massive addition on Leahy Drive comprised 4,321 square feet. These additions run the gamut from decks and porches to substantial two-story additions.⁹¹ No longer can Twinbrook be described as a neighborhood “notable for its rhythmic rows of nearly identical houses”.⁹²

A review of real estate listings in the Twinbrook neighborhood gives a glimpse into the current state of interior spaces of Twinbrook homes. A survey of real estate listings available online in February and March 2008 identified thirty-five homes for sale in Twinbrook. Many of these listings include interior photographs. Most of the listed homes reflect substantial interior remodeling including painting (including painted brick fireplace mantels and painted paneling), finished second stories, second bathrooms, and remodeled kitchens (often with new cabinets, countertops and appliances). Some feature one or two-story additions. One particularly good example is the listing for 13313 Okinawa Avenue, a 1950 Cape Cod model, which includes a virtual tour on the interior and exterior. Another good listing is 6000 Lemay Road, a Levittown Ranch type built in 1952, with a virtual tour. The listing for 5908 Ridgeway provides a floor plan. The original four room first floor is readily discernable, as is the finished attic and expansive rear one story addition (Figure 43).

The Development of Twinbrook Shopping Centers

Previous to the two Twinbrook shopping centers, the community of Rockville had a small downtown shopping district that ran East-West along State Route 240. According to Rockville, Portrait of City, included on Main Street were shops, offices, homes, churches, manufacturing warehouses, places of assembly, an athletic field, a movie theater, a post office and firehouse.⁹³ Rockville was thought to be a pedestrian oriented downtown, but in order to help bring in shoppers from the Twinbrook subdivisions located a little farther a field, a “shopping bus” service was started in 1954.

In 1955 plans began to get underway for the addition of Twinbrook’s very own shopping center to compete with the growing retail outlets in the area. With the success of

the Rockville shopping bus, it was apparent that the need was great for more immediate shopping in the rapidly growing neighborhood. Early in 1955, Twinbrook developer Joseph Geeraert started seeking permission to annex new land to the city of Rockville in order to build two more Twinbrook subdivisions, Broadwood Manor and Twinbrook Forest.⁹⁴ Part of this annexed land, just above Veirs Mill Road and across from Atlantic Avenue, was to be set aside for the new shopping center. The April 21st 1955 issue of the Montgomery County Sentinel announced Geeraert's plans for a two-million-dollar "California style shopping center" to be built within a 1,200 by 175 foot area.⁹⁵

Shortly after the announcement of Geeraert's Twinbrook Shopping Center plans, work began on development of the competing Twinbrook Shopping Mart, to be located across Veirs Mill Road from the Shopping Center. Developed by Donald Gingery, one of the original Twinbrook builders, and his business partner William T. Hannon, the Shopping Mart opened an A&P supermarket on November 17, 1955. Announced that day in the Sentinel, visitors to the new supermarket applauded its easy walking distance from their homes, and the press compared the shopper's excitement to that of a Broadway show opening in New York City.⁹⁶

On April 17th, 1956 Geeraert's annexation to Rockville was unanimously approved by the city government and construction began on the Shopping Center shortly thereafter. Plans were completed by Bethesda architect John Samperton, and included a long, one story structure of modern design that would hold twenty to thirty stores in addition to a separate structure for a Safeway supermarket. Parking for 900 cars was anticipated in the large lot surrounding the Center (Figure 44).⁹⁷

In the meanwhile, stores were also added to the Twinbrook Shopping Mart across the road, a People's Drug store opened in February of 1957⁹⁸ and the Twinbrook Mart won the bid for the location of a Twinbrook branch of the U.S. Post Office, which was added in October of 1957.⁹⁹ In 1959 a much-anticipated Twinbrook Library was added to the Mart, and took up residence in the basement of the People's Drug store (Figure 45).¹⁰⁰

By November of 1957 most of Geeraert's shopping center was complete. The structure was built out of brick, with a stone foundation, and the redwood shingled roof alternated between flat and mansard style rooflines. A covered walkway in front of the stores protected shoppers from the elements, and large amounts of glazing allowed for prominent display of products (Figure 46).¹⁰¹ There were parking spots for 825 cars. The Shopping Center housed twenty-three stores, including the Safeway, three clothing stores, a jewelry store, shoe store, drug store, gift shop, hardware store, Music and Arts Center, hobby shop, TV sales and repair shop, men's and women's hair salons, a High's, a bakery, a restaurant, and a bowling alley (Figure 47).¹⁰² Both the Twinbrook shopping Center and Shopping Mart were also outfitted with their own competing gas stations.

The immediate response to the Shopping Center was a positive one, the variety of shops and their proximity to the neighborhood and made some Twinbrookers remark to the Sentinel that the Center, "might cancel Twinbrooks need for second cars."¹⁰³ However, there was some worry among those who lived closest to the two retail centers that congestion to the area might cause undue distress to the residents. To help those closest to the shopping centers, in January of 1958 a line of screening trees was added behind the retail properties to increase privacy for the housing that backed them.¹⁰⁴ Twinbrook residents also responded negatively to both the Shopping Center and Shopping Mart's bids for liquor licenses in order

to open liquor stores on their properties. After the bids were made public in 1957, residents immediately banded together to thwart the effort, and it took until 1958 for the licenses to get passed.¹⁰⁵

In light of the few negative responses, the majority of Twinbrook residents were proud of their community and its new modern Shopping Center. The Shopping Center started to show up as part of the selling point for the “All American” Twinbrook community in ads placed in both the Sentinel and the Washington Post.¹⁰⁶

Today the both the Twinbrook Shopping Center and Shopping Mart are still vibrant retail outlets; between the two centers there is only one vacant space. As the neighborhood populations have changed so have the nature of the stores, currently many of the restaurants and food markets cater to the growing Hispanic and Korean populations in the area (Figure 48). The Twinbrook Shopping Center now consists of the Safeway, eight restaurants and food stores, three beauty and hair salons, two discount stores, two technology supply stores, two fashion accessory shops, a Laundromat, uniform supplier, check’s cashed shop, music store, video store, furniture store, pet store, and liquor store (Figures 49).

Parks, Recreations, Civic Clubs, and Religious Institutions

The increase of the number of civic clubs or civic organizations in the Twinbrook community was a natural phenomenon upon the growth of its population. A variety of civic clubs, such as Homemaker’s club, 4-H Boys/Girls clubs, sewing clubs and Twinbrook Film Association, have been established since Twinbrook subdivision was first developed. Those civic activities have enriched the Twinbrook residents’ life and also have contributed for improvement of the Twinbrook community. To gather resident’s voices: what they need and

what they should do, civic activities and place where residents can discuss about their problems are necessary and therefore it is not too much to say that the civic clubs and their activities are key to building a well-organized community.

The weekly newspaper *Montgomery County Sentinel* is a great source for residents of Montgomery County to gather information about the events, clubs and meetings that will be held in next few weeks. Through this weekly news papers, residents could know and find activities which they want to join.

Although the trends in the activities will differ from time to time, the reason of why residents participate in the activity is always to make their life more comfortable. As the population of Twinbrook grew, the activities of the residents became more active. Since the Twinbrook subdivision is still growing and expanding its territory, the number of civic clubs will continue to increase. And consequently, this development of civic activities will improve not only life of families, but also Twinbrook community itself.

Along with the establishment of various civic clubs, the Twinbrook developers and its residents were also eager to build parks and recreation areas. Since their inception in the late nineteenth century, suburban communities have represented a park-like alternative to the urban environment. The appeal of suburbs came from their more “natural” environments than those of city neighborhoods. Although ideas about suburban development had changed much by the 1940s, the park ideal still influenced the development of Twinbrook. Through developer initiative, citizen activism, and city planning co-operation, the residents of Twinbrook created a system of parks and recreation that have consistently brought the community closer together even as time and demographic shifts have changed the neighborhood. In one promotional film for Twinbrook, a narrator’s voice is heard saying:

“This is Twinbrook Park—thick, dense, almost impenetrable. Out of this tangled mass we hope to produce the most outstanding community—the garden spot in metro Washington, D.C.”¹⁰⁷

Before 1946, the area that is now Twinbrook was a low-density residential area and its major residents were single families. However, after developers built more affordable houses for family groups, the number of family groups in Twinbrook increased. As a consequence of this, there were more children around the area. According to the statistical profile of Montgomery County, in 1960, approximately 96.1% of the total population of Montgomery County was in families and 35% of the total population was children under the age of fourteen. The average number of persons per family was 3.8. Because of the demographic change of the area, the Twinbrook residents became eager to build parks and recreation areas where their children can play.

The Twinbrook residents invested time, money, and labor to work with the city and the developers, and tackle “do-it-yourself” projects to build park amenities. As early as 1950 the city of Rockville was making plans to build a recreation center in Twinbrook.¹⁰⁸ A notice in the Twinbrook column of the *Montgomery County Sentinel* in June of 1952 announced a “work day” for men of Twinbrook to build “sandboxes, a wooden playhouse, and anything else that can be fashioned out of the scrap lumber.

Also another movement to build a playground for the children was started in 1953, by the Twinbrook children’s mothers. Since there was no playground around their houses, they formed a parents group to find a land for a playground. In 1954, fathers of the group gathered and had a meeting to discuss the necessity of a playground. Fortunately in 1954, Geeraert

donated a five-and-a-half-acre tract of land on Gladstone Drive in the western section of his subdivision that became Calvin Park.¹⁰⁹

Today, the parks in Twinbrook are still thriving. Though the original population of the neighborhood has aged, many young families still move in to what they consider their “starter homes” in Twinbrook. Their young children still actively patronize the playgrounds and recreation centers. In October 1999, the City of Rockville established Twinbrook Community and Recreation Center in Twinbrook Park. The building, which contains a gym, computer lab, multipurpose rooms, a fitness center, annex building, and a new outdoor playground, were again the results of lobbying by Twinbrook residents.¹¹⁰ The center receives over 70,000 user visits per year, almost all of which are from Twinbrook residents.¹¹¹ The Rockcrest recreation center has become a facility solely for ballet lessons, although the city has plans to renovate and expand it in 2009 to incorporate other uses. The city planning department produced a new neighborhood plan for Twinbrook in 2005, in which they note that “both senior citizens and teenagers appear to be underserved in the Twinbrook neighborhoods.”¹¹² That statement sums up both the continuum and the change in the parks and recreation situation in Twinbrook.

One of the major recreation facilities in Twinbrook is the Twinbrook swimming pool. In February 1955, the TCA kicked off a swimming pool fundraising drive to raise enough money to build a pool for Twinbrook by the end of that summer. By June, the “area’s largest pool” was dedicated in a ceremony at the site attended by 200, including city officials, scout troops, and representatives of the Archdiocese of Washington, who sold Twinbrook the 5.6 acre tract of land on which the pool would be built.¹¹³ Beset by financing problems, Hurricane Connie, and problems with the contractor all summer long, the pool did not

actually open until September 17, after a spirited “community do-it-yourself” effort. Men and older boys of the community sweated it out in the summer sun with picks and shovels, children on the playground cut wire for the pool walls, and the 4-H club landscaped.¹¹⁴

The pool, like all recreation facilities, was wildly popular. Although there were several difficulties to open the Twinbrook swimming pool, once it opened, the pool became the residents’ favorite leisure canter. On the fourth of July 1957, it saw 3,000 swimmers. The pool also hosted teen parties, neighborhood and regional swim meets, and a “Miss Twinbrook” pageant.¹¹⁵ The pool is still popular and well-used today, and it is still a private organization. Twinbrook families buy memberships, and it has remained a quintessential neighborhood institution.

Another important facility for a community is a religious institution. Religious institutions such as churches and places for worship are important for a community as a center of local activities. Not only to pray, but also to meet other members and to enrich their knowledge, people come to the congregation. The activities both held by civic clubs and held by religious organization promote interaction among residents of the community and consequently, those activities bind the community more tightly. Also often religious organizations support their neighborhood civic club’s activities by providing them a place to meet and have an activity. During 1996 and 1997, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission had researched places of worship and religious institutions within Montgomery County.¹¹⁶ According to the survey, 61% of the places of worship within the County offered their sites for various community activities such as Boys/ Girls Scouts.

Those religious institutions provide people educational, social and care giving programs. Within Montgomery County, approximately 282,400 persons join for community

activities per month. The average number of people attending each event is twenty to forty-nine. Also the result of the survey, it is clear that many places for worship in mid-Montgomery County, which includes Twinbrook subdivision, reflect a nature and density of development in the area. For example, there are more newly established congregations in mid-Montgomery County compare to the number of those in lower-Montgomery County and other rural areas. This may be because of the fact that mid-Montgomery County's cities such as Rockville were developed recently. In fact, in Twinbrook, many of the major churches were established after 1946, when developers started to build houses in Twinbrook. One of the oldest churches in Twinbrook is the Rockville Free Methodist Church that was established in 1904. Establishment of Churches were one of the urgent problems to support life of the residents and thus to improve the entire Twinbrook community. Today, there are over ten churches and religious organizations in Twinbrook. Most of those religious institutions were built by demands of the Twinbrook residents. One example is the Twinbrook Baptist Church. The necessity of this church was insisted by the members of the Bethesda First Baptist Church, who live in Twinbrook. As the number of the Baptists in Twinbrook increased, it was natural for them to demand a church within their residential area. In 1955, when their voices reached to the Rev. John Palmer Gates, who was the minister of the Bethesda Church, he began to seek some possibilities.

On March 4, 1956, the establishment of a new congregation was set as the Twinbrook Baptist Church. To implement the plan, the group formed by Rev. Gates started to seek a sponsorship of the Bethesda First Baptist Church to build a new church in Twinbrook. The group purchased the land of a two acre building site on Twinbrook Parkway at Old Baltimore Road in October 1956. The first church activity, which thirty six people attended, was held at

the Lone Oak Elementary School on March 4, 1956. Approximately thirty-seven adult members and 200 adults and children had attended at least one service during the Lone Oak Elementary School period. The average number of the attendance for a service was fifty-five people. After October 1957, the service place was moved to the Broome Junior High School which is now an adult education center. In June, 1959, the construction of the church was undertaken. A substantial part of the building cost came from the Baptist residents in Twinbrook.

The development of the parks, recreation areas, civic clubs and religious institutions in Twinbrook has been supported, encouraged, and facilitated by its residents, and the neighborhood has become an appealing residential area. In their 2005 study, the City of Rockville Planning Department asked the residents of Twinbrook what they liked most about their neighborhood. The fifth most popular answer was “neighbor relationship.” It is an inevitable step for a community to foster civic activities to achieve and keep relationships among residents. The residential activities have provided Twinbrook residents opportunities to establish a good neighborhood. The sixth most popular answer, what they liked most about Twinbrook, was “parks and trees.” The neighborhood’s wooded character and open spaces owe their existence to the shared suburban vision of Geeraert and the early Twinbrook residents. From playgrounds to pools, Boy Scouts to youth sports, the recreational legacy of Twinbrook lives on today.

Conclusion

The development of Twinbrook was a relatively rapid process, lasting only about ten years. In these ten years, a large and complex residential neighborhood was constructed, and throughout the development process, the subdivision became a nearly self-sufficient

community with the addition of parks, schools, shopping centers, community centers, and commuter lines. Although the developers were required to comply with the subdivision standards of the Federal Housing Administration in order to ensure government support, they still managed to create a unique and thriving suburban community that continues to offer affordable housing options to the residents of Rockville. Many people consider Twinbrook a special place, and although the collective memories may not portray the entire reality of what once was, the character and qualities of the subdivision proves to be an interesting sampling of the postwar American suburban housing boom, and it both complies with the common elements of the trend, as well as humanizes and lends subjectivity to the phenomena, which is often portrayed as being objectively contrived.

¹ Cross, Gladys, "The Spotlight," *Twinbrook Life*, March 18, 1955, vol. II, no. 3, pg 5.

² Ibid

³ Patterson interview.

⁴ Cross, Gladys, "The Spotlight," *Twinbrook Life*, March 18, 1955, vol. II, no. 3, pg 5.

⁵ Cross, Gladys, "The Spotlight," *Twinbrook Life*, March 18, 1955, vol. II, no. 3, pg 5.

⁶ Cross, Gladys, "This is Twinbrook," *Twinbrook Life*, January 27, 1955, vol. II, no. 1.

⁷ "Build Cheap Homes," *New York Times*, 5 February 1950, p. 201

⁸ Cross, Gladys, "This is Twinbrook," *Twinbrook Life*, January 27, 1955, vol. II, no. 1.

⁹ Patterson interview.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Class in Suburbia* edited by William M. Dobriner (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963) 87.

¹² "Six Swimming Pools are planned to serve Levittown Home Center on Long Island" *New York Times*, 18 August 1948, p. RI

¹³ "Levitts built and sold 4,604 houses For Total of \$42,195,000 During 1949," *New York Times*, 29, January, 1950 p. 175

¹⁴ Joseph Geeraert's plans for Twinbrook in the Peerless Rockville Archives

¹⁵ *The Montgomery Sentinel*, November 19, 1959, pg B7.

¹⁶ "Norris Promises Action to Locate More Twinbrook Classroom Space," *The Montgomery Sentinel*, January 13, 1955, pg 5.

¹⁷ "Rockville to Get Second Offer of Location for Civic Center, Geeraert Suggests Bullis Site," *The Montgomery Sentinel*, April 21, 1955.

¹⁸ "School Board Will Buy New Twinbrook Site," *The Montgomery Sentinel*, October 27, 1955, pg 4.

¹⁹ Eileen S. McGuckian, *Rockville: Portrait of A City* (Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 2001) 127.

²⁰ Ibid., 130.

²¹ "Area's biggest Pool Dedicated" *Twinbrook Life* 2 (June 1951)

²² City of Rockville. "Appendix 1: History of Twinbrook." *Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Rockville*. Rockville, MD. Adopted November 12, 2002.

²³ Ibid.

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- ²⁴ McGuckian, Eileen. "From Town to City: The Emergence of Modern Rockville 1945-1960." *Rockville: Portrait of a City*. Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 2001.
- ²⁵ "Twinbrook Included in Rockville Expansion." *Montgomery County Sentinel*. February 1949.
- ²⁶ Federal Housing Administration. "Underwriting Manual." Washington DC: The United States Government, 1938.
- ²⁷ Montgomery County Circuit Court Land Survey. "Plat 1875." Rockville, MD: Montgomery County, 1947. Montgomery County Circuit Court Land Survey. "Plat 2026." Rockville, MD: Montgomery County, 1947.
- ²⁸ Twinbrook Citizen's Association. "Twinbrook History"
[<http://208.58.9.39/Community/Twinbrook/history.asp>] Accessed February 2008.
- ²⁹ McGuckian, Eileen. "From Town to City: The Emergence of Modern Rockville 1945-1960." *Rockville: Portrait of a City*. Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 2001.
- ³⁰ "Rockville Urges FHA to Re-Examine Veirs Mill Development." *Montgomery County Sentinel*. June 1948.
- ³¹ Federal Housing Administration. "Underwriting Manual." Washington DC: The United States Government, 1938.
- ³² McGuckian, Eileen. "From Town to City: The Emergence of Modern Rockville 1945-1960." *Rockville: Portrait of a City*. Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 2001.
- ³³ Federal Housing Administration. "Underwriting Manual." Washington DC: The United States Government, 1938.
- ³⁴ Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier*. New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- ³⁵ *Washington Post* Display ad. May 9, 1948
- ³⁶ "1954 Twinbrook Community Guide", from the collection of John Tyner
- ³⁷ In at least one story on the Twinbrook Development in *The Washington Post*, for example, there is a reference to "a wide variety of housing styles." While we recognize that this may simply refer to the fact that one style was made to look like several depending upon which side of the house faced the street, we cannot be sure that the article's author was aware of this design technique. See "Twinbrook Plans 250 More Homes" *The Washington Post*, August 14, 1949, pg. R3.
- ³⁸ Brewer 1990, 1.
- ³⁹ Kelly 1993, 85.
- ⁴⁰ Patterson Interview
- ⁴¹ "Easier, Cheaper to Build in New York Than Here, Home Comparison Reveals." *The Washington Post*, December 18, 1949, pg. R1
- ⁴² McAlester, pp. 477-485
- ⁴³ "Easier, Cheaper to Build in New York Than Here, Home Comparison Reveals." *The Washington Post*, December 18, 1949, pg. R1
- ⁴⁴ "Builders Hasten Housing Effort." *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1952, pg. R1
- ⁴⁵ "Twinbrook Plans 520 More Homes." *The Washington Post*, August 14, 1949, pg. R3
- ⁴⁶ "Homes of '51' Have Eight Dwellings Listed." *The Washington Post*, July 29, 1951, pg. R1
- ⁴⁷ "There's a Place for Everything in Decorative Modern Closets." *The Washington Post*, September 18, 1949, pg. S3
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Karl Hixson, Twinbrook resident at 13310 Midway Avenue, in March 2008.
- ⁴⁹ "Camera Tour of Homes Under \$11,000." *The Washington Post*, February 19, 1950, pg. R1
- ⁵⁰ "New Section of Twinbrook Homes Opens Today." *The Washington Post*, March 30, 1952, pg. R13.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² A photo of what was presumably a new edition of a Twinbrook house, featuring a split level with one raised roof and one lower roof, was featured in "Our Smartest Numbers Lead Double Life." *The Washington Post*, September 7, 1951, pg. H25
- ⁵³ "Prospective Buyer Will Be 'King' During 'Homes of '53.'" *The Washington Post*, August 30, 1953, pg. R1.
- ⁵⁴ Some Twinbrook Forest floor plans in the Peerless Rockville archives show three and four bedroom houses, but it is unknown when these first additional bedrooms started to appear.
- ⁵⁵ "Twinbrook Exhibit Home Goes Into Hiding." *The Washington Post*, September 26, 1954, pg. R4.
- ⁵⁶ "'Anniversary Home' Unveiled Today." *The Washington Post*, October 10, 1954, pg. R2
- ⁵⁷ One model in Twinbrook Park was called the Meadow Hall and another was called the Country Squire.
- ⁵⁸ In 1956, the first Women's Congress on Housing was assembled by the Housing and Home Finance Agency for the purpose of learning what homemakers felt their families needed in a house. Of the housing types

examined during the Congress, the focus was heavily upon the postwar FHA-inspired minimum house. Among the many complaints, for example, were that the kitchens were too small.

⁵⁹ Information obtained from a display ad in the June 30, 1956 addition of *The Washington Post* and Twinbrook Park floor plans available at Peerless Rockville.

⁶⁰ *The Washington Post*, September 7, 1957

⁶¹ Levitt Abraham, *The Lawn and Its Upkeep*.

⁶² Twinbrook Life Vol 1 No 1. Sept 15th 1954. Page 5

⁶³ Twinbrook Life, Vol IV, No. 4 May 1957. Page 6; Twinbrook Life, Vol III, No 6- June 1956. *The Enemy in Your Garden* advised gardeners on aphids, spiders mites, leafhoppers, Japanese beetles, thrips, mealy bugs, Mexican bean beetles, and lace bugs that were plaguing the area; Twinbrook Life Vol 10. no 1 Jan 1963 Page 5

⁶⁴ Gazette Community News. Wednesday Sept 4th, 2002. Page A-4. Woman's Gum Tree is Root of her Worries.

⁶⁵ Ron Podell. MCS, February 10th, 1998. Disease taking toll on Rockville trees.

⁶⁶ Twinbrook Life Vol II, No 2. Page 6. Feb 15th 1955

⁶⁷ Official Site of the US Forestry Service. <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/bls/>. Bacterial Leaf Scorch.

⁶⁸ Ron Podell. MCS, February 10th, 1998. Disease taking toll on Rockville trees.

⁶⁹ U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1947), 1382.

⁷⁰ "Substation planned for Twinbrook," *Montgomery County Sentinel* October 1, 1959, p. A9.

⁷¹ "Officials inaugurate Rockville's dial telephone system last Saturday," *Montgomery County Sentinel* January 2, 1947.

⁷² Minutes of the Rockville, MD Mayor and Council 21 December, 1951.

⁷³ FHA, *Underwriting Manual*, 1380.

⁷⁴ Eileen S. McGuckian, *Rockville: Portrait of a City* (Franklin, Tenn.: Providence House Publishers), 2001.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ McDonald, John G., *Sewer Report: Cabin John Valley*, n.p., 1954

⁷⁷ "Moving Forward" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, March 29, 1956.

⁷⁸ *The Washington Post*, September __ 1948.

⁷⁹ For a summary of Twinbrook housing types, see *Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan (Draft), Appendix 3: Twinbrook Typologies*, City of Rockville, Department of Community Planning and Development Services, 2008.

⁸⁰ *Montgomery County Sentinel*, __ 1958.

⁸¹ The Cape Cod was advertised at 40' 6" by 23" 3" or about 950 square feet. *The Washington Post*, September __ 1948.

⁸² "Building Permits Issued", *Montgomery County Sentinel*, September 7, 1950, p. __. "Albert and Elizabeth ____, 13200 Ardennes Avenue, Twinbrook – to erect porch; Douglas C. Donley, 13207 Midway – to add to house; Thomas T. Pape, 13212 Midway – to add to house."

⁸³ *Twinbrook Life*, April 26, 1955, p. 4.

⁸⁴ See *Twinbrook Life*, January 27, 1955; February 25, 1955; and April 26, 1955.

⁸⁵ "CD Classes Begin", *Twinbrook Life*, March 1956, p. 6.

⁸⁶ *Twinbrook Life* February 25, 1955.

⁸⁷ *Montgomery County Sentinel*, March 29, 1951, p. __.

⁸⁸ *Montgomery County Sentinel*, March 18, 1954, p. 8.

⁸⁹ *Montgomery County Sentinel*, May 30, 1957.

⁹⁰ *Montgomery County Sentinel*, "Twinbrook Home Shows Fruit of Owners Talent", October 13, 1955, p. B1.

⁹¹ "Twinbrook Neighborhood Housing Statistics" and "Twinbrook Building Sizes from Tax Records April 2005" from *Twinbrook Neighborhood Study: Summary of Research Resources*, City of Rockville, provided by Cindy Kebba, Historic Preservation Planner, City of Rockville, February 5, 2008.

⁹² Barbara Kalabinski, *Twinbrook: The History* Goucher College, Frederick Maryland, 1998.

⁹³ McGuckian, Eileen. *Rockville, Portrait of a City*. (Franklin, Tennessee: Hillsboro Press, 2001, 125-157.)

⁹⁴ "Will sell 10 Acre Tract to City at Cost to Him" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 21 April 1955: A4

⁹⁵ "Will sell 10 Acre Tract to City at Cost to Him" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 21 April 1955: A4

⁹⁶ "Twinbrook enjoys Gala Premier of new Supermarket Tuesday" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 17 November 1955: A4

⁹⁷ "Twinbrook Park Tract Annexed to Rockville" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 17 April 1956: Front Page

⁹⁸ "Contractor's Rush Work on 30 Stores" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 26 September 1957

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- ⁹⁹ “P.O. Fete Saturday” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 21 November 1957: Front Page
- ¹⁰⁰ *Twinbrook Life*. February 1959
- ¹⁰¹ Twinbrook Community Association Directory, 1957
- ¹⁰² “Christmas Unofficial ‘Til Dec. 15” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 5 December 1957
- ¹⁰³ “Contractor’s Rush Work on 30 Stores” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 26 September 1957
- ¹⁰⁴ *Twinbrook Life*. January 1958
- ¹⁰⁵ “County Okays Beer Permit in Twinbrook” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 23 January 1957
- ¹⁰⁶ Ad, “Grand Opening Twinbrook Shopping Center.” *The Washington Post*, 30 November 1957: B12
- ¹⁰⁷ From promotional video made by Geeraert from the PR, Ltd. archives. Quoted in the unpublished paper by Barbara Kablinski, “Twinbrook: The History,” April, 1998.
- ¹⁰⁸ Christian L. Larsen and Richard D. Andrews, *The Government of Rockville*, (College Park, University of Maryland Press, 1950), 59-60.
- ¹⁰⁹ Mrs. Claud O. Cross, “Twinbrook Parents Join Forces in Recreation Area Plans; 5 ½ Acre Tract Given by Builder,” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 25 February 1954, 2.
- ¹¹⁰ Manju Subramanya, “New Twinbrook Community Center Opens its Doors”, *Gazette Community News*, 20 October 1999, A-14.
- ¹¹¹ City of Rockville, Department of Community Planning and Development Services, *Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan*, 2005, 73.
- ¹¹² City of Rockville, *Neighborhood Plan*, 74.
- ¹¹³ *Twinbrook Life*, 29 June 1955, 1.
- ¹¹⁴ *Twinbrook Life*, 14 September 1955, 1. Elaine Wojtanowski “Work on Swimming Pool is Twinbrook’s Reply to 90 Degrees,” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 7 July 1955, B8.
- ¹¹⁵ *Twinbrook Life*, July 1963, 1-4. “400 Watch Kids Vie in Swim Meet,” *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 31 July 1958, C2.
- ¹¹⁶ Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County, Department of Park and Planning, *Findings of the Survey of Places for Worship in Montgomery County*, 1996

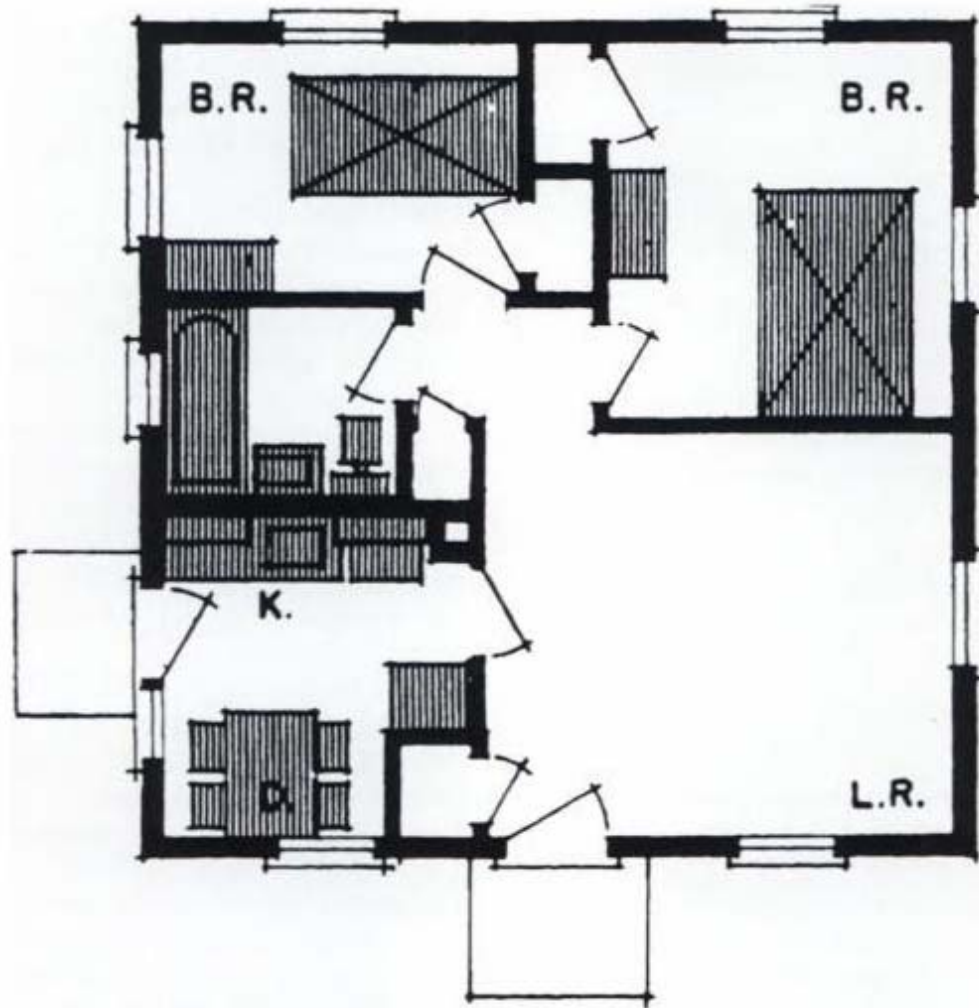


Fig. 1, FHA minimum house floor plan (*Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis*, p. 68)

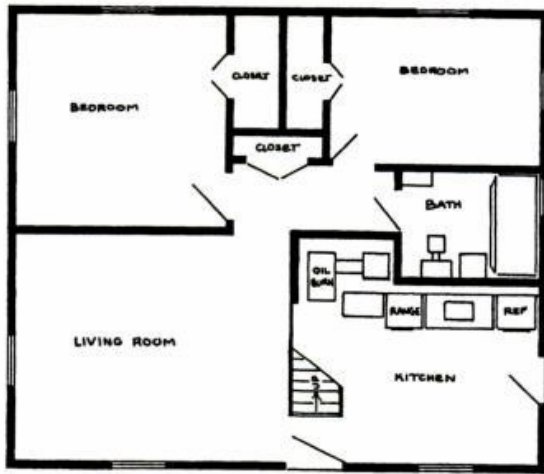


Fig. 21(a), Typical Levittown Cape Cod floor plan offered in 1947
(Expanding the American Dream: Building & Rebuilding Levittown, p. 66)

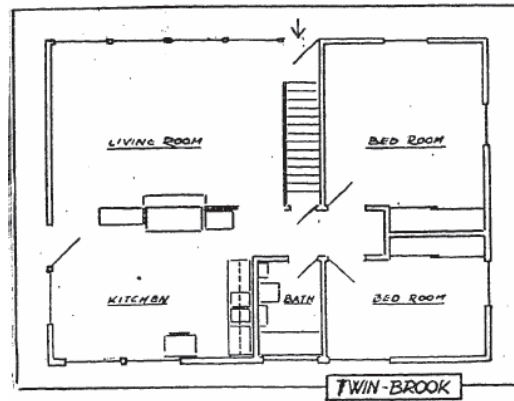


Fig. 21(b), Typical Twinbrook floor plan offered in 1949 (“Twinbrook Plans 520 More Homes,” *The Washington Post*, August 14, 1949, p. R3)

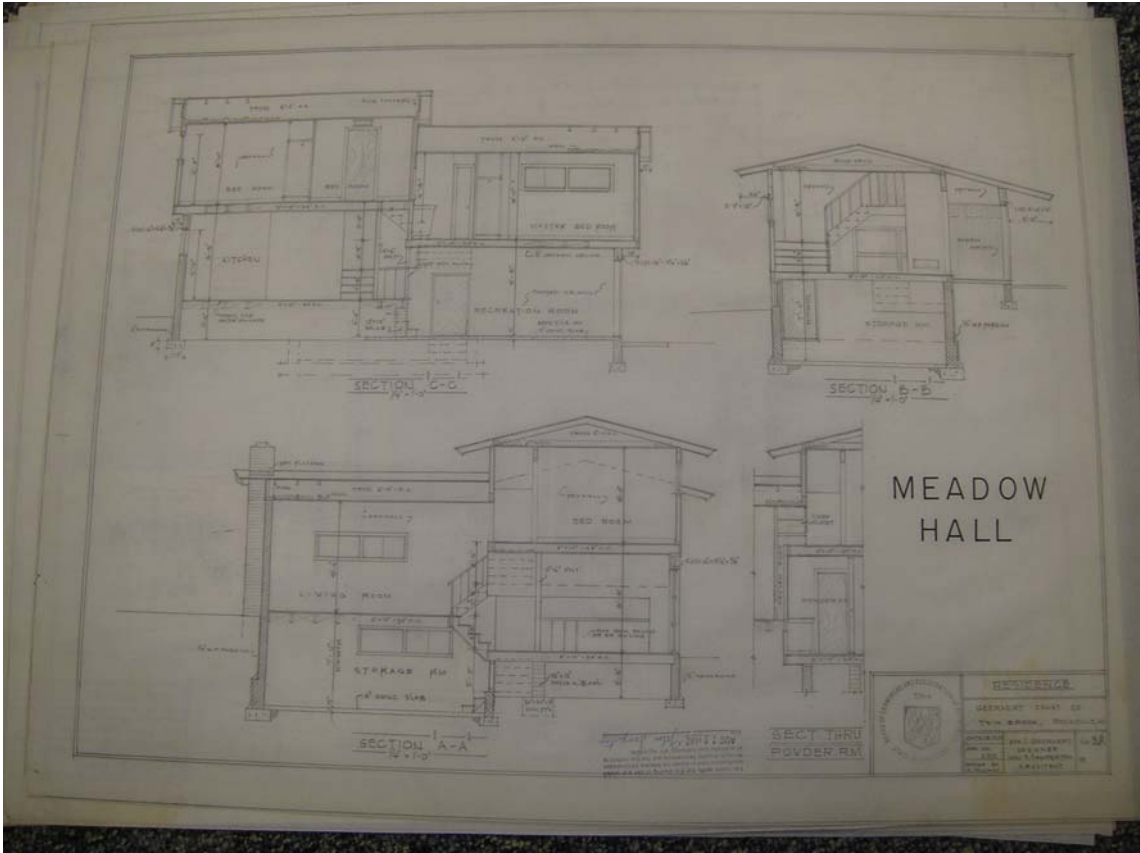


Fig. 32, Meadow Hall Floor Plan from the Twinbrook Archives at Peerless Rockville

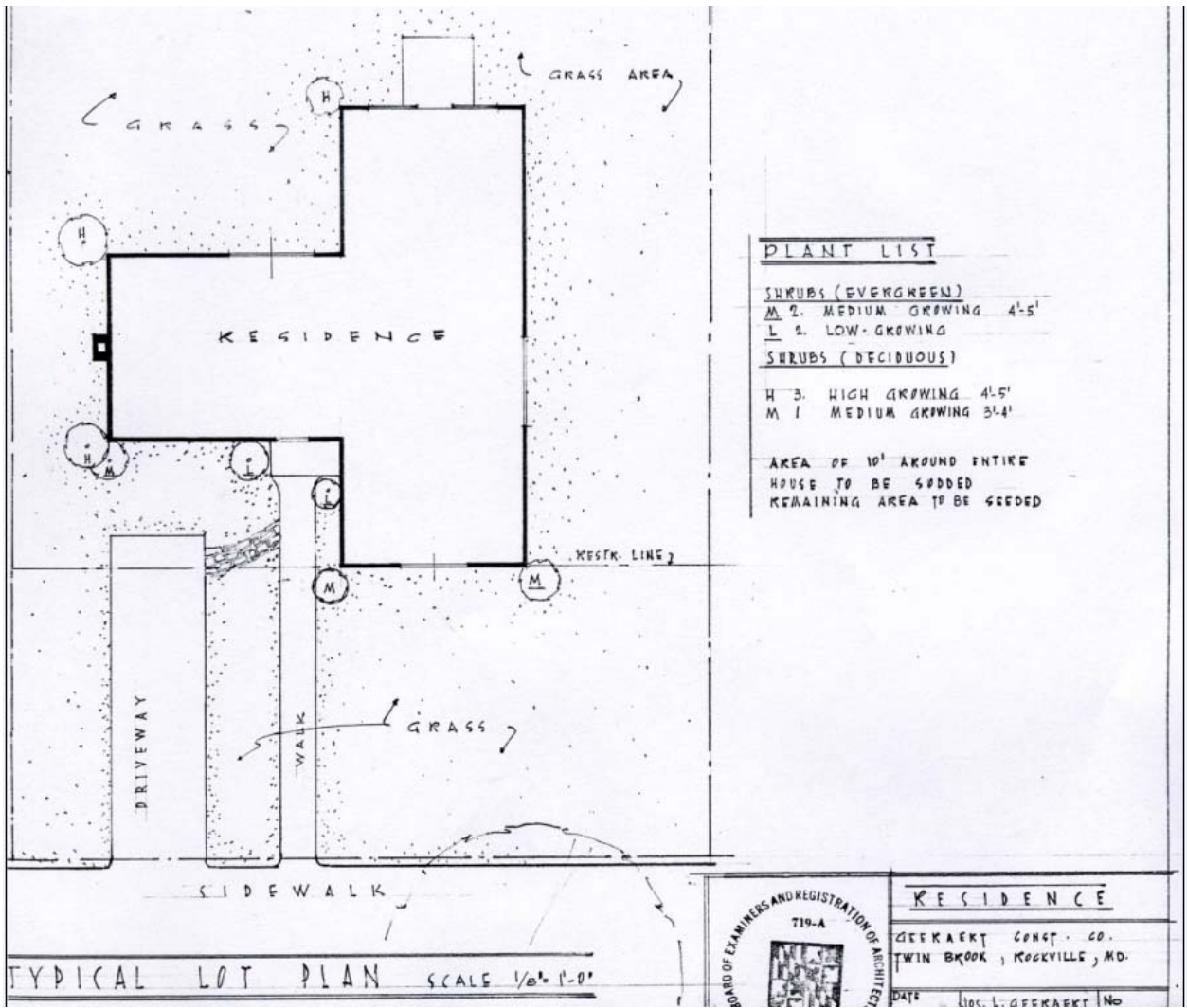


Fig. 37, "Plant List" for a typical Twinbrook lot plan, from Peerless Rockville Archives



Fig. 38, Twinbrook house, photo taken by Emily Burrows



Fig. 39, Twinbrook house, photo taken by Emily Burrows



Fig. 40, Twinbrook street, photo taken by Emily Burrows

LEVITTOWNER FLOOR PLAN
- THREE FINISHED BEDROOMS
WITH EXPANSION SPACE

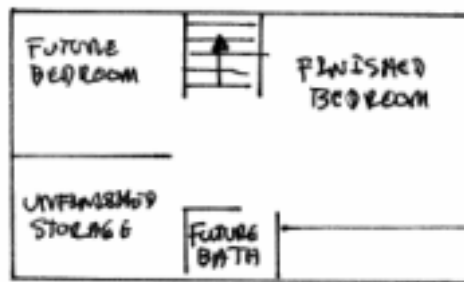
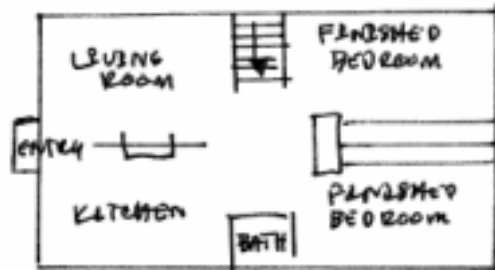


Fig. 41, Sketched Levittowner floor plan, Walter Lehman


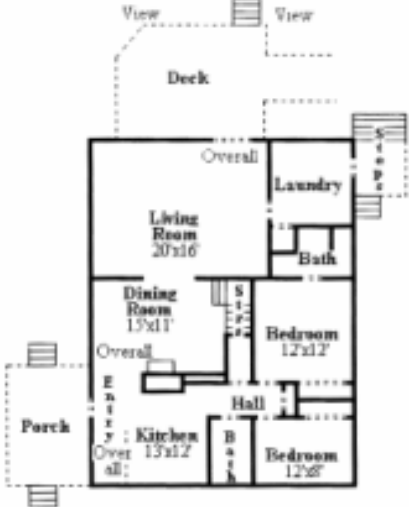

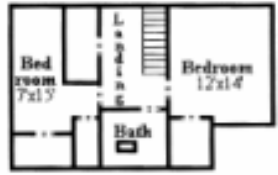
<p>Close Directions Mouse on House Exterior Interior Floor Plan</p> <p>Move mouse over room in floor plan to view picture. Click on blue label for large image.</p> <p>Property Information : Approximate Total Sq. Ft. 1,736</p>	
<p>Bedroom Main Level : Approximate Sq. Ft. 1,201 View Dimensions</p>	
	
<p>Back Elevation Upper Level : Approximate Sq. Ft. 535 View Dimensions</p>	
	

Fig. 43. Floor plan of remodeled Twinbrook house as shown on Mouse on House, a real estate property listing website.

and Read the Sentinel

Route 240

"51

DAY ONLY

3.99

5c each

iron

at Shop

Rockville, Md.

onomy Bundle

..... \$1.49

..... .09 ea.

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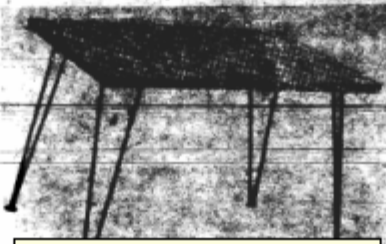
E

repkins, socks COM-ARGE.

tuffed dry and neatly

no extra finishing.

Make Your Own
'MODERN FURNITURE'



make_your_own_furniture_ad[1].jpg

Type: JPG File

Size: 1.95 MB

Dimension: 5017 x 6503 pixels

End with wrought iron table legs. Do it yourself, all you need is a screwdriver. Simply fasten legs to flush doors, available in various sizes from our stock.

6" Corner Legs	18" Corner Legs
set of 4 \$2.95	set of 4 \$4.95
12" Corner Legs	28" Corner Legs
set of 4 \$3.95	set of 4 \$7.95

THESE PRICES GOOD ROCKVILLE DAY ONLY

Leland L. Fisher Inc.

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FURNITURE
ROC
Don't De

LAMPS—Table and Chrome Breakfast S
Wrought Iron Dinin
Bedspreads
Smoking Stands (2
Metal Card Table, 2
Seats and Table
I—Metal Utility C.
I—Metal Utility Ta
I—Metal Step Sto
I—Metal High Sto
I—Youth Chair

Coffey's

ROUTE 240

Don't Forget
Rockville
March 2

Fig. 42, Display ad, *Montgomery County Sentinel*, March 18, 1954, p. 8

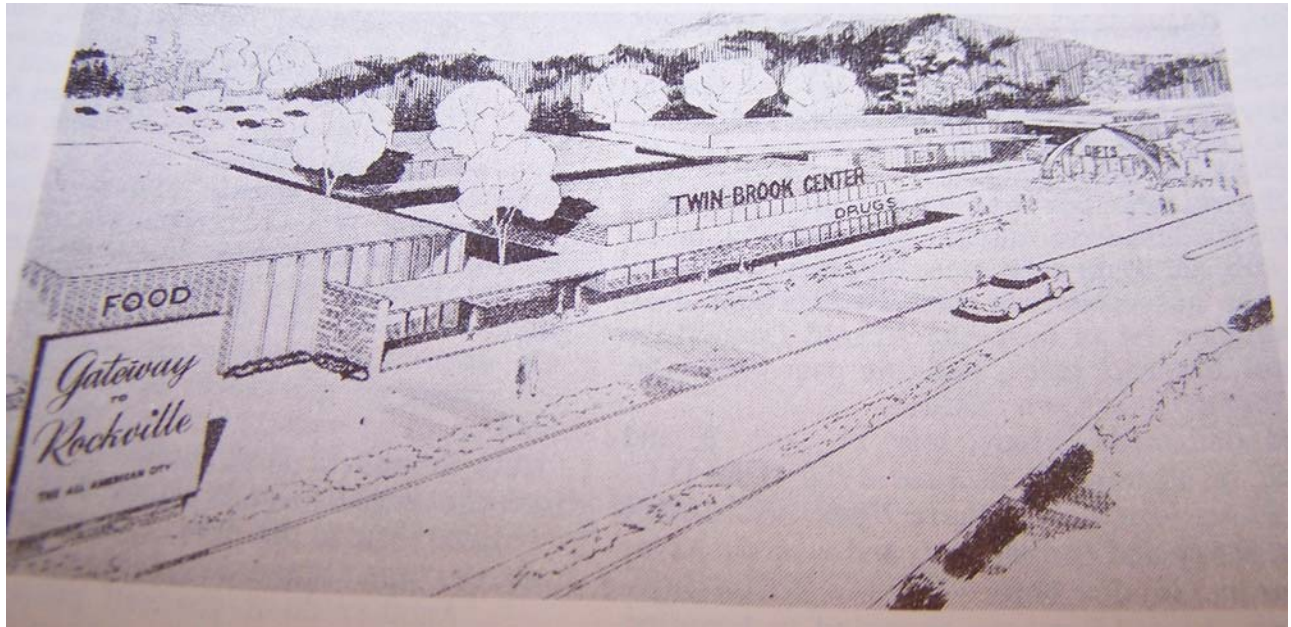


Fig. 44, Proposed Twinbrook Shopping Center, Rockville, Maryland; John Samperton, architect; Joseph Geerart, developer; 1956 rendering (Twinbrook Community Association Directory, 1956)

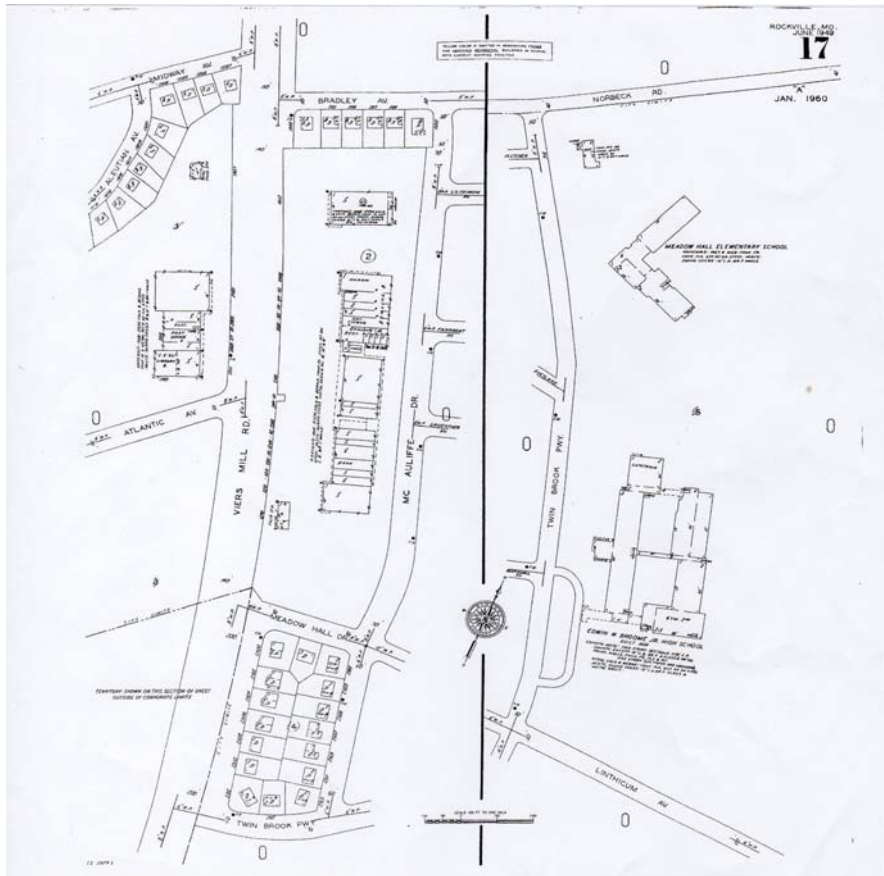


Figure 2. Twinbrook Shopping Center and Twinbrook Shopping Mart, Rockville, Maryland; Joseph Geerart and Donald Gingery, developers; 1960 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps)

Fig. 45, Twinbrook Shopping Center and Twinbrook Shopping Mart, Rockville, Maryland; Joseph Geerart and Donald Gingery, developers; 1960 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps)

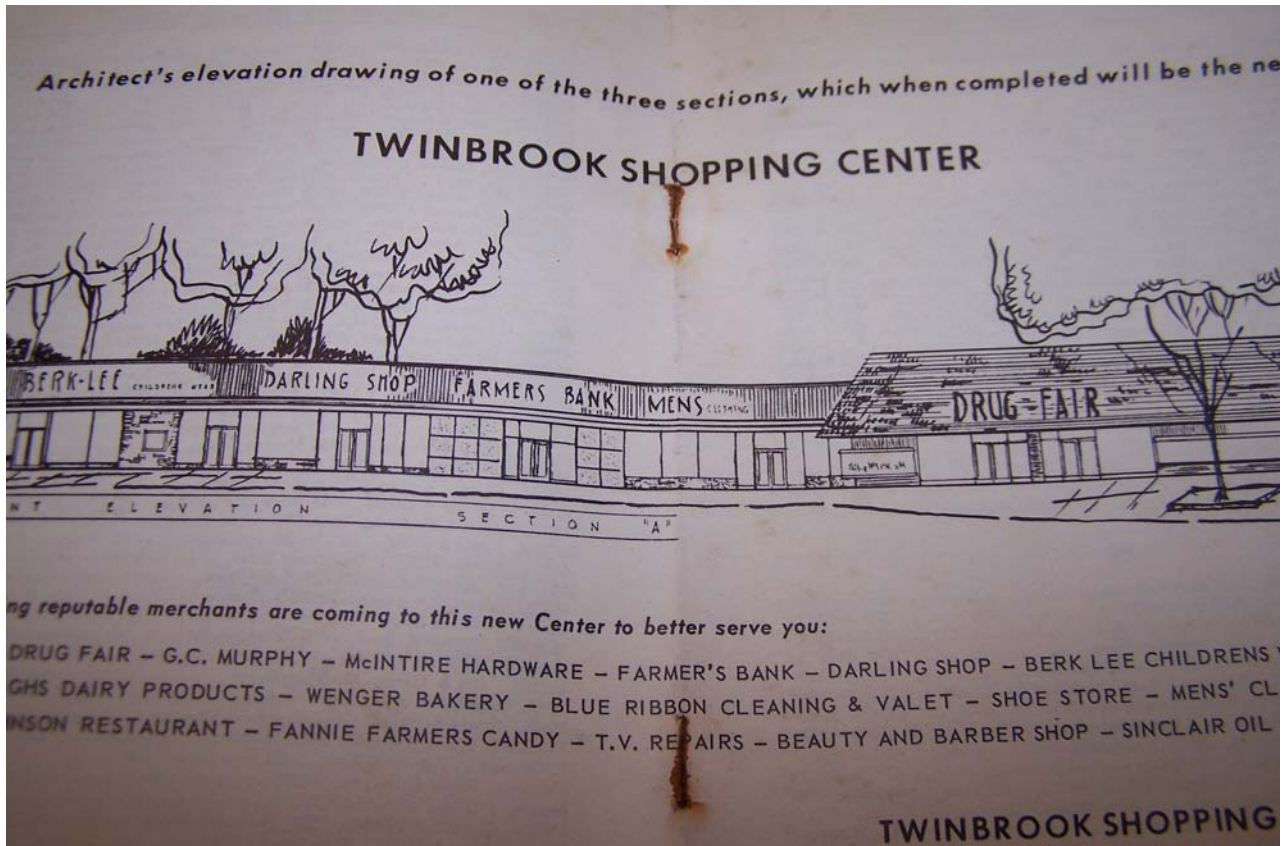


Fig. 46, Twinbrook Shopping Center, Rockville, Maryland; John Samperton, architect; Joseph Geerart, developer; 1957 rendering (Twinbrook Community Association Directory, 1957)

Twinbrook Shopping Center

Original stores:

Adeline Shops, Inc. (clothing store)
Blue Ribbon Valet (dry cleaners)
Drug Fair, Inc.
Farmers Bank and Trust
Fashion Aire Children's Wear
G.C. Murphy (department store)
Gifts & Gadgets
High's Dairy Products
Levey's Jewelry
McIntyre Hardware
Miles Shoes
Music and Arts Center
Safeway
Sinclair Petroleum (gas and car repair)
Sports & Hobby Center
Twinbrook Barber Shop
Twinbrook Beauty Shop
Twinbrook Lanes, Inc. (bowling alley)
Twinbrook Restaurant
Twinbrook TV
Wehger's Bakery

Twinbrook Shopping Mart

Original stores:

A&P Supermarket
Alberta's Dance Studio
Barber Shop
Beauty Shop
Montgomery Ward
People's Drug
Post Office
Princes Cleaners & Launderers
Sheffield's (clothing store)
Shell gas station

Current stores:

Asian Market
AT&T Store
Aurora's Hair Design
Bamboo Buffet
Beauty Supply
Café Shilla Bakery
Capitol Stores II (discount goods)
Checks Cashed
CVS Pharmacy
Dollar Land
Don Pollo Restaurant
Design Optical
DTV Store (technology goods)
Dunkin Donuts/Baskin Robbins
Flynn and O'Hara School uniforms
Ha Dong Oak Restaurant
Homeshine Furniture
Just Puppies (pet store)
Laundromat
MD Nails
Safeway
Sula & Musica II (music store)
Tomatillo Mexican Grill
Twinbrook Deli
Van Jewelry and Watch Repair
Video Town
Wine and Liquor

Current stores:

American Legion Post 86
Cash Depot
Denise Bakery
Friendly Cleaners
Latin Market
Lemoncello Italian Restaurant
Linn Uniforms
Ollie's Beer and Wine DC
Post Office
Tijuana Mexican Cafe

Fig. 47, List of original and current stores, Twinbrook Shopping Center and Twinbrook Shopping Mart. Original store data taken from the Montgomery County Sentinel, 1957 and Rockville Chamber of Commerce Map, 1962. Current data taken by Cindy Thompson, March 2008.



Figs. 48-49, Twinbrook Shopping Center, Rockville, Maryland; Joseph Geerart, developer; 1997 façade upgrade (Image taken by Cindy Thompson, March 2008)