

# Types of Suburban Developments

Land development in Indiana in the modern era can generally be subdivided into five distinct periods based on socioeconomic and cultural trends and resultant influences on the homebuilding industry:

- **1940-1945:** World War II period characterized largely by institutional-type developments constructed in response to military and industrial need, located either near associated facilities or with convenient access along major transportation routes;
- **1946-1949:** Readjustment period development characterized predominately by quickly constructed subdivisions of economical housing, commonly near the core of community or first-tier growth areas;
- **1950-1955:** First wave post-war suburbanization period characterized by pervasive construction and the development of hundreds of subdivisions of various sizes that expanded the footprint of communities across the state into the urban-rural fringe;
- **1956-1962:** Second wave post-war suburbanization period characterized by irregularities in the growth cycles of many communities across the state, marked by second- and third-tier expansion and an increase in apartment living; and
- **1963-1973:** Third wave post-war suburbanization period characterized by the juxtaposition of continued community build-out and reevaluation of post-war growth cycles during an era of increasing local regulation.

The housing of the World War II and post-war eras (1940-1973) can be divided into five subtypes that include the following:

## World War II-Era Housing Developments, c. 1940-1949

- Established in response to the need to house large numbers of military personnel, industry workers, and veterans.
- Size varied considerably depending on the local need, ranging from dozens of dwellings to more than 100 units.
- Typically established quickly to remedy an immediate shortage; employed a standardized housing model that could be repeated many times over with little to no variation. Prefabricated dwellings are common elements of this type of development.
- In military developments, housing often was of the demountable (movable) variety, with individual units that were indistinguishable from one another. In private developments, the American Small House & Compact Ranch house are common.



Aerial and sample houses from Crane Historic District, Crane, IN



## Transitional Developments, c. 1945-1955

- Located within/adjacent to the community core.
- Those platted prior to the war, either partially undeveloped until after 1945 or always intended to be finished later as consumer demand/available financing intersected; others were platted/built-out completely during the period of study.
- Grid plan and made use of existing plats, street layout, and municipal services; made for quick builds in the post-WWII era.
- Combination of traditional street networks with modern housing/emergent concepts of planning/subdivision design; often blurred the line between traditional developments of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the forthcoming development of the mid-1950s and beyond.
- Dwellings include American Small House and Ranch houses.



Plan and photos from Milwood Gateway Historic District, Columbus, IN

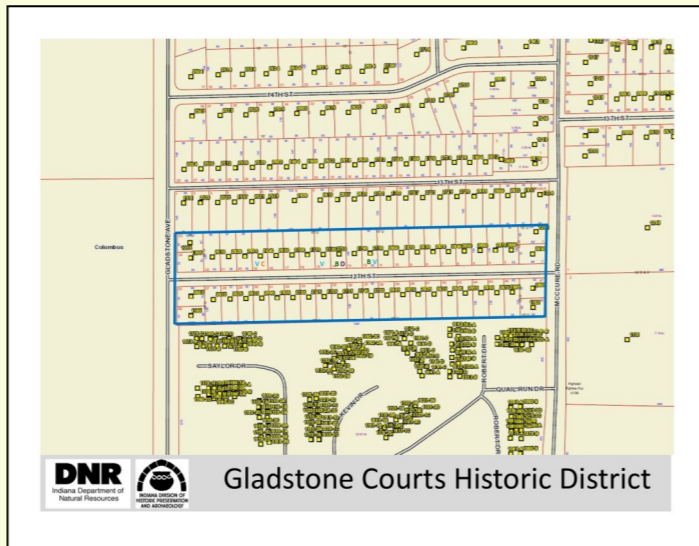


**DNR**  
Indiana Department  
of Natural Resources

INDIANA'S POST-WAR RESIDENTIAL HOUSING, 1940-1973  
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SUBURBS

### Tract Developments, c. 1945-1965

- Tract Developments were the primary mechanism of domestic development during the post-WWII era.
- Developed by operative or merchant builders.
- Range from a small linear row of dwellings to hundreds of houses along curvilinear/loop roads.
- Developed over time through multiple plats, typically by the same builder or developer.
- Set range of housing models (reinforced the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the development as a singular unit).
- Adhered to FHA requirements, including consistent setbacks/spatial relationship, hierarchical street development plans, minimization of intersections/corners, accommodation of local topography, and integration of community assets such as green space.
- Typically include American Small House and Ranch types, with some Split-levels and Bi-levels.

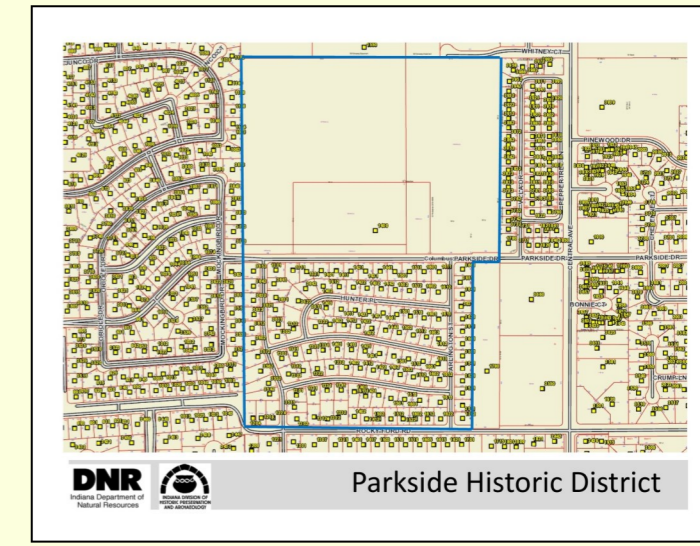


Plan and photos from Gladstone Courts Historic District, Columbus, IN



### Planned Developments, c. 1950-1973

- Cohesively designed enclaves that integrated housing & other amenities in coordinated master plan.
- Range of forms—mobile home parks, single/multi-family residential developments designed as a cohesive entity with interrelated components (e.g., townhouses & community center); in 1960s-1970s included cluster developments and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
- By a large developer, near major transportation corridor, & characterized by commercial nodes/community assets such as schools, parks, & churches.
- Grew substantially and often incorporated as independent communities or annexed into nearby metropolitan areas.
- Distinct sense of identity rooted in the self-sufficient nature of their design, likely reflected in the landscape by the inclusion of independent services such as fire stations, post offices, & civic buildings.



Plan and photos from Parkside Historic District, Columbus, IN

### Custom Developments, c. 1950-1973

- Tailored to meet a variety of needs and preferences of the homebuyer/sophisticated consumer.
- Distinguished in their design, layout, & configuration; Crafted to accommodate topography/natural settings/man-made features such as lakes/golf courses (critical selling points).
- Typically less than 100 houses; some larger multi-plot examples were developed; subsequent plats often had slight variations in design/layout/housing stock.
- Architect-designed/custom-designed by a builder; more variation than housing in Transitional and Tract Developments.
- Ranch houses, Split-levels, Bi-levels, & Massed two-story houses are common; also Contemporary, Builder Modern & Neo-Eclectic styles.



Plan and photos from Northlawn Historic District, Columbus, IN

