



*An Italian bronze, "Boy with Fish," on the St. Albans Way south of St. Dunstons Road. Photo courtesy of The Homeland Association.*

*There is something about Homeland that quietly infers that there is a place where problems that confront the home builder may be happily and permanently solved; where the obstacles to its revitalization may, by taking advantage of favorable natural and acquired advantages, be removed without much difficulty.*

# Homeland

*Olmsted*  
Friends of Maryland's Olmsted  
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**FMOPL Digest**

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This account is taken from a brochure published by the Roland Park Company in the late 1920s, championing the qualities of Baltimore's newest suburb: Homeland. In 1924 Homeland became the third Olmsted Brothers collaboration in Baltimore with the Roland Park Company.

Having previously served as the landscape architects and site planners for Roland Park and Guilford, the renowned firm known as the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects (OBLA), under the leadership of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and John Charles Olmsted, had developed a close working relation with Edward Bouton and the Roland Park Company.

Homeland, like its two predecessors, was created from a large country estate. The Perine fam-

ily had lived on and farmed the 391 acres since the early 19th century, and "Homeland" was the original name for their estate. There were orchards, meadows, forests, ponds, a mansion, a gatehouse, and various outbuildings. Today the old caretaker's house still stands and is a private residence at the corner of Upnor Road and St. Albans Way.

When the property became available for sale after the death of Elias Perine in 1922, the Roland Park Company saw the opportunity for its next project in the north Baltimore suburbs. The boundaries of the neighborhood then, as now, were Homeland Avenue on the south, Charles Street on the west, Melrose Avenue on the north, and Bellona Avenue and York Road on the east.

Because the boundaries enclosed a single intact estate and the acreage was relatively small, the Olmsted Brothers in their design were able to create a village-

like, almost insular quality to the new neighborhood. This quality is reinforced by the circumstance that Homeland is almost completely surrounded by acres of institutional land: the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Friends School, Notre Dame College, Grace Methodist Church, and the Church of the Redeemer. Only on its east side does the neighborhood come in contact with the grid of city streets.

Homeland illustrates several of the principles used by the Olmsteds in all of their residential projects: respect for the local characteristics and topography of the site; care for the pedestrian realm with a variety of public spaces; and a mixture of housing types and sizes.

Respecting the topography meant having roads and paths follow the natural contours of the land. What had been roadbeds for over a century remained so. Present-day St. Albans Way, St.









*View of St. Dunstons lakes, looking eastward in 1910. The fence in the background shows where present-day Springlake Way is located. The path to the right is now St. Dunstons Road.*

Photo from  
*Homeland: History & Heritage*  
by Barbara M. Stevens, 1976.

financial risk of building. Homeland was divided into individual lots and sold to private owners and contractors. This helps account for the wide variety of architectural types and materials.

When the first lots were offered for sale on October 11, 1924, eighty-nine were sold on the first day. After sixteen days, 248 had been sold. As a testament to the optimism of both the public and the Perine family regarding the development, the oldest Perine daughter built a house on Goodale Road and lived there until her death at age 90. Her son built a home

on Tilbury Way, and her daughter lived on Tunbridge Road.

Housing types in Homeland reflect both the individual tastes of the homeowner and the relative range of the targeted market. There are grand and elegant mansions, many of which line the Charles Street corridor and are similar to their Guilford cousins. There are numerous smaller but still spacious and comfortable homes which appealed then, as now, to the burgeoning professional class of city residents. And finally, there are more modest cottage types at moderate prices for younger families. Many of

the latter were located on a series of cul-de-sacs and mews along the already developed southern and eastern edges of the neighborhood. Middleton Court and St. Dunstons Court are examples. What keeps the architectural variety in visual balance is a combination of concerned oversight by the developer and the use of covenants, a legal device pioneered by the Roland Park Company.

Homeland demonstrates the natural progression and maturation of the design abilities and sensitivities of the Olmsted Brothers. They were attuned to the emerging demands of the au-

tomobile, but its presence was accommodated in a graceful, neighborly fashion by the provision of space for cars at the rear of homes. The Olmsted plan for Homeland also demonstrated their appreciation of well-designed and well-maintained public spaces, while allowing individual expression in house styles and types.

There is a sense in Homeland that the difficult balance between rural and urban, public and private, group and individual, has been struck with care, and that it is in large part due to the physical planning and foresight of Bouton and the Olmsteds.

— *Judith R. Smith, Landscape Architect, with appreciation to Barbara Stevens*

— *Publication Design & Editing by Sandra Sparks*