Boston Community

The Boston Community, also known as Boston-Thurmond, extends from Crossnore (formerly the Children’s Home) east to Richard Allen Lane, and from Northwest Boulevard north to Coliseum Drive/27th Street. The neighborhoods of Boston were developed for Black buyers and renters who wanted better housing away from the industrial and commercial downtown core. Boston’s identity developed later in the 20th century as these earlier, smaller neighborhoods grew together to form a new community. Boston is a community where lifelong friendships were born and thrived.

The oldest of these neighborhoods is Boston Cottages, where lots were first sold in 1893. Houses in Boston Cottages were mostly modest, one-story, wooden buildings that were affordable for factory workers and domestic servants, whether renters or buyers. The County Board of Education bought two lots for the two-room Boston Cottage School for Black children in 1901. John W. Paisley, the namesake of the neighborhood’s Paisley Junior-Senior High School, was the first principal of the school. Boston Cottage Episcopal Church was established in 1893 and bought a lot on Thumond Street in 1900. Today the church is known as Saints Home United Methodist Church.

Kimberley Park was developed beginning in 1913. Like those in Boston Cottages, the small wooden houses were marketed to African American factory workers, many of whom were employed by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. Many of Kimberley Park’s historic houses were lost during urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s and when the park was expanded in 1977.

The eastern part of Boston Cottages along North Cherry Street was subdivided in 1924. Development of a mixed-income neighborhood took hold shortly after, likely spurred by the 1925 construction of Kimberley Park School, where John...
W. Paisley was again the first principal. The school was rebuilt following a devastating fire in 1965. The North Cherry Street neighborhood mixes single-family houses, duplexes, and several locally-significant Y-stair apartment buildings. The larger houses in the neighborhood were developed for middle-income buyers and renters; modest worker housing is found on 17th Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Morewell was built beginning in 1926. Morewell is a combination of the Black developers’ last names, Morgan and Wellman. It was a mixed-income neighborhood that attracted professionals and working-class buyers and renters. The Gadson House at 2511 North Cherry Street was designed by Edward Jenkins, one of the first registered African American architects in North Carolina. After the Gadson House was built, Jenkins received several other commissions in the neighborhood. Charles Gadson, an electrical engineer, showcased his work in the living area’s lighting, sound system, and appliances.

Alta Vista was developed beginning in 1927. It was reportedly the first neighborhood in the South developed specifically for Black professionals. Many of the large houses have attached garages and are finely detailed with quality building materials, evidence of the economic resources of its early residents. Prominent residents included two assistant city managers and a founder of Safe Bus Co. After World War II, small, concrete block houses were built in the northwest corner of Alta Vista to ease the local housing shortage.

The newest neighborhood of Boston, Cherry Hills, was developed in 1958. The brick, ranch style houses with picture windows reflect the popular residential aesthetic of the mid-20th century. The houses had modern conveniences and qualified for Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration loans, making them more affordable for buyers.

This information is also available at the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission web site: www.ForsythCountyHRC.org