

Wesleyan Hills Gets National Recognition

MIDDLETOWN — Wesleyan Hills and Hill Development Corp. are the subject of an eight-page feature on housing growth in small cities in the March issue of "House & Home," the marketing and management publication of housing and light construction.

The magazine says the range of opportunity for housing expansion in the small city, particularly in Middletown, "is best exemplified by Hill Development Corp."

Wesleyan Hills is the 288-acre community currently taking shape in the southern section of Middletown. When completed in roughly six years, it will contain 1,100 single-family homes, garden apartments, townhouses, empty-nester condominiums, and a variety of commonly-held open space areas.

All except the custom-built houses are clustered in "mini-neighborhoods" around central "greens," and nearly one-third of Wesleyan Hills is left to open spaces, with 60 acres of woods and fields.

"That such a sophisticated project should be taking shape in what has up to now been a distinctly unsophisticated housing market," the magazine says, "is at the same time a logical consequence and a stroke of good fortune."

"The logical aspect grows out of the situation of the typical small city. Politically, they tend to be less-hedge bound than small towns, which have a history of fighting innovations, and more concerned than big suburban markets, which have had so much mediocre development that both local government and residents are numb. And, physically, the small city is usually blessed with more open land closer in than the big suburban market."

The good fortune, "House & Home" contends, stems from Hill Development's status with Wesleyan University (the developer was created and is wholly-owned by Wesleyan), its fine re-

lationship with local officials, and President James E. Lash's friendship with Emil Hanslin of Emil Hanslin Associates, "who turned New Seabury on Cape Cod into one of the best planned recreation projects in the country."

Lash engaged Hanslin, Hanslin assembled a planning and landscaping team which also included a housing economist and a sociologist, and the result was Wesleyan Hills.

Ground was broken for Wesleyan Hills in August 1968, and 43 homes have been built thus far, 12 "rustic contemporary" models by Designers-Builders, Inc. of Madison, and 31 traditional and contemporary homes by the LaCava Construction Co. of Hartford.

Most of the Wesleyan Hills homes available are ready for quick occupancy and are priced from the low 30's. The LaCava homes are designed by architect Claude Miquelle and Richard B. McCurdy is the Designers-Builders, Inc. architect.

Hill's excellence and position in the forefront of the current small city housing resurgence, according to the professional trade publication, can be attributed to "an unusually well-qualified management team" which includes Lash, Robert L. Williams and Chester A. Tibbetts, vice presidents, and George D. Edwards, assistant to the president.

Hill's relationship with Wesleyan and "especially the way the company has woven itself into the fabric of the city" are cited as additional success indicators by "House & Home."