

# Crafting Connection

By Meredith Horner

The 2017 Community of the Year succeeds by celebrating its historic neighbors

Raleigh, North Carolina, is on a fast-moving growth track. The City of Oaks has been no stranger to national “Best of” lists and

news stories claiming it to be one of the top places to move, work, and live. In 2014, Wake County reported more than 1 million residents in the county.

The once-sleepy downtown Raleigh has been reborn, and people once again want to live, work, eat, and play close to the

While Robuck Homes built all the homes in Oakdale at Mordecai, each home is so different from the next, it feels like a custom neighborhood. For this home, the buyers had a lighting allowance to choose a porch light fixture from anywhere in the world. The door and ceiling stain color and exterior trim paint colors are all reflections of the buyers’ personal tastes.

PHOTO BY MOTION PADS

FALL 2018

PAINTING BY MARGOT DEBARMORE



# Portfolio

The first home built in Oakdale was this model home of the 4-bedroom, 3-bath Bailey Plan. The plan offers five architecturally distinctive elevations and an optional rear screened porch and deck.



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS

city center and the N. Person Street corridor. Adjacent to N. Person Street, and just one mile from the epicenter, Raleigh's oldest neighborhood, Mordecai, was called out in 2016 as the new "Hot Hood" by *Money Magazine*.

These areas have been carefully reacting to the fast rate of transition, being mindful not to erase the rich history of the city during the redevelopment process. A move toward infill development is one example of the ways local developers are looking to grow in Raleigh's dense downtown core.

### A VISION FOR REVITALIZATION

In 2014, partners Community Properties and Robuck Homes purchased 71 post-World War II rental units near the growing Person Street District. Nicknamed "Tiny Town," the units were in extremely poor condition and heading toward condemnation.

"The existing communities adjacent to the rental units had beautiful and often historic homes, but it was my belief that the condition of the rental units was holding back the community reinvestment around the property,"

PHOTO BY MOTION PADS



**Above:** To encourage community, every home in Oakdale offers either front porch or back porch living areas.

To date, only one home in Oakdale features this front entry design. It aptly represents local community values in terms of elegance and stateliness.

PHOTO BY AERIAL LOOK



PHOTO BY AERIAL LOOK

Downtown Raleigh sits to the southwest from Oakdale at Mordecai. This aerial view shows the community's progress in 2016.

said Jack Morisey, president of Community Properties.

Tiny Town would soon be home to 56 single-family home buyers who were excited to experience modern living within walking distance to local shops and restaurants. This vision, paired with purposeful architecture and community connection, drove the success of what is now Oakdale at Mordecai, the Best in American Living 2017 Community of the Year.

The developer forged connections with the builder, architect, land planner, and interior designer to not only develop and build quality single-family homes, but also to care for buyers and the neighbors affected by the project. Having unity on the ultimate goal proved to be the solution time and time again, as the reality of navigating an infill neighborhood took front and center.



The 2,553-sq, 3-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath Walter Plan offers four elevations, including this inviting Craftsman version. The first floor features a wide open interior ideal for gatherings, plus a tucked-away “command center” perfect for a home office.

PHOTO BY MOTION PADS



### MEETING CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

The developers quickly encountered perception issues, small home site hassles, and construction headaches. The 7.5-acre site sits between the historic Oakwood and Mordecai neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are full of older homes with exceptional character and a diverse population that highly values the uniqueness of their communities. Advance

communication proved very effective at heading off undesirable press coverage about how the homes would look, how construction crews would interfere with daily life, and how Oakdale would ultimately fit into the neighborhood.

Morisey met with the Mordecai Citizens Advisory Council to explain architectural concepts for the homes, which were priced in the \$600,000 – \$800,000 range. He reinforced



Downtown Raleigh sits to the southwest from Oakdale at Mordecai. This aerial view shows the community's progress in 2016.

said Jack Morisey, president of Community Properties.

Tiny Town would soon be home to 56 single-family home buyers who were excited to experience modern living within walking distance to local shops and restaurants. This vision, paired with purposeful architecture and community connection, drove the success of what is now Oakdale at Mordecai, the Best in American Living 2017 Community of the Year.

The developer forged connections with the builder, architect, land planner, and interior designer to not only develop and build quality single-family homes, but also to care for buyers and the neighbors affected by the project. Having unity on the ultimate goal proved to be the solution time and time again, as the reality of navigating an infill neighborhood took front and center.



This roomy front porch features ample windows and a glass front door for welcoming in guests and light. Note the unique stain on the ceiling.

PHOTO BY MOTION PADS

### MEETING CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

The developers quickly encountered perception issues, small home site hassles, and construction headaches. The 7.5-acre site sits between the historic Oakwood and Mordecai neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are full of older homes with exceptional character and a diverse population that highly values the uniqueness of their communities. Advance

communication proved very effective at heading off undesirable press coverage about how the homes would look, how construction crews would interfere with daily life, and how Oakdale would ultimately fit into the neighborhood.

Morisey met with the Mordecai Citizens Advisory Council to explain architectural concepts for the homes, which were priced in the \$600,000 – \$800,000 range. He reinforced



Downtown Raleigh sits to the southwest from Oakdale at Mordecai. This aerial view shows the community's progress in 2016.

said Jack Morisey, president of Community Properties.

Tiny Town would soon be home to 56 single-family home buyers who were excited to experience modern living within walking distance to local shops and restaurants. This vision, paired with purposeful architecture and community connection, drove the success of what is now Oakdale at Mordecai, the Best in American Living 2017 Community of the Year.

The developer forged connections with the builder, architect, land planner, and interior designer to not only develop and build quality single-family homes, but also to care for buyers and the neighbors affected by the project. Having unity on the ultimate goal proved to be the solution time and time again, as the reality of navigating an infill neighborhood took front and center.



Builder Robuck Homes studied the character of the surrounding communities, with its Bungalow, Craftsman, and influences from Tudor Revival and Dutch Colonial styles, and applied this to the homes in Oakdale.

PHOTO BY TOUR FACTORY

### MEETING CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

The developers quickly encountered perception issues, small home site hassles, and construction headaches. The 7.5-acre site sits between the historic Oakwood and Mordecai neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are full of older homes with exceptional character and a diverse population that highly values the uniqueness of their communities. Advance

communication proved very effective at heading off undesirable press coverage about how the homes would look, how construction crews would interfere with daily life, and how Oakdale would ultimately fit into the neighborhood.

Morisey met with the Mordecai Citizens Advisory Council to explain architectural concepts for the homes, which were priced in the \$600,000 – \$800,000 range. He reinforced



Downtown Raleigh sits to the southwest from Oakdale at Mordecai. This aerial view shows the community's progress in 2016.

said Jack Morisey, president of Community Properties.

Tiny Town would soon be home to 56 single-family home buyers who were excited to experience modern living within walking distance to local shops and restaurants. This vision, paired with purposeful architecture and community connection, drove the success of what is now Oakdale at Mordecai, the Best in American Living 2017 Community of the Year.

The developer forged connections with the builder, architect, land planner, and interior designer to not only develop and build quality single-family homes, but also to care for buyers and the neighbors affected by the project. Having unity on the ultimate goal proved to be the solution time and time again, as the reality of navigating an infill neighborhood took front and center.

Several home sites and floor plans offer a one-car detached garage with service door. Many of these double as garden sheds, pottery studios, and extra storage.



PHOTO BY TOUR FACTORY

### MEETING CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

The developers quickly encountered perception issues, small home site hassles, and construction headaches. The 7.5-acre site sits between the historic Oakwood and Mordecai neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are full of older homes with exceptional character and a diverse population that highly values the uniqueness of their communities. Advance

communication proved very effective at heading off undesirable press coverage about how the homes would look, how construction crews would interfere with daily life, and how Oakdale would ultimately fit into the neighborhood.

Morisey met with the Mordecai Citizens Advisory Council to explain architectural concepts for the homes, which were priced in the \$600,000 – \$800,000 range. He reinforced



This plan features built-ins around the fireplace tucked under the small windows, a common feature in Raleigh's older homes.

PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS

Oakdale is just a six-minute walk to the North Person Street District, with its restaurants, eclectic locally owned shops, and the nonprofit urban Raleigh City Farm.

how Robuck Homes appreciated the character of the surrounding communities, with its Bungalow, Craftsman, and influences from Tudor Revival and Dutch Colonial styles, and would apply this to the homes in Oakdale. Thoughtful communication at the right times helped establish trust and goodwill with neighbors very early on in the project.

With tight streets and small home sites (the average site is .12 acre), the streetscape required making important choices about placement of garages and driveways. Robuck Homes paid close attention to the views from front to back of the house, as well as window placement along the sides of each home.

“The diversity of streetscape was a design challenge that we took very seriously,” said Chip Bishop, general manager of Robuck Homes. “Going through this exercise early on brought unprecedented solutions for congested living, such as rear detached garages, low-maintenance yards, custom storage sheds, and sidewalks: a must for modern downtown living.”



Small lot challenges dictate smaller spaces inside. This gourmet kitchen features all the amenities today's buyers desire without sacrificing the entire main floor.



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS

Oakdale is just a six-minute walk to the North Person Street District, with its restaurants, eclectic locally owned shops, and the nonprofit urban Raleigh City Farm.

how Robuck Homes appreciated the character of the surrounding communities, with its Bungalow, Craftsman, and influences from Tudor Revival and Dutch Colonial styles, and would apply this to the homes in Oakdale. Thoughtful communication at the right times helped establish trust and goodwill with neighbors very early on in the project.

With tight streets and small home sites (the average site is .12 acre), the streetscape required making important choices about placement of garages and driveways. Robuck Homes paid close attention to the views from front to back of the house, as well as window placement along the sides of each home.

“The diversity of streetscape was a design challenge that we took very seriously,” said Chip Bishop, general manager of Robuck Homes. “Going through this exercise early on brought unprecedented solutions for congested living, such as rear detached garages, low-maintenance yards, custom storage sheds, and sidewalks: a must for modern downtown living.”



The trim features on the accent wall and oversized windows add to the feeling of roominess of the master bedroom in this furnished model.



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS

Oakdale is just a six-minute walk to the North Person Street District, with its restaurants, eclectic locally owned shops, and the nonprofit urban Raleigh City Farm.

how Robuck Homes appreciated the character of the surrounding communities, with its Bungalow, Craftsman, and influences from Tudor Revival and Dutch Colonial styles, and would apply this to the homes in Oakdale. Thoughtful communication at the right times helped establish trust and goodwill with neighbors very early on in the project.

With tight streets and small home sites (the average site is .12 acre), the streetscape required making important choices about placement of garages and driveways. Robuck Homes paid close attention to the views from front to back of the house, as well as window placement along the sides of each home.

“The diversity of streetscape was a design challenge that we took very seriously,” said Chip Bishop, general manager of Robuck Homes. “Going through this exercise early on brought unprecedented solutions for congested living, such as rear detached garages, low-maintenance yards, custom storage sheds, and sidewalks: a must for modern downtown living.”

Several plans in Oakdale offer a loft or flex space on the second floor. This furnished model demonstrates the space as a quiet spot for doing homework.

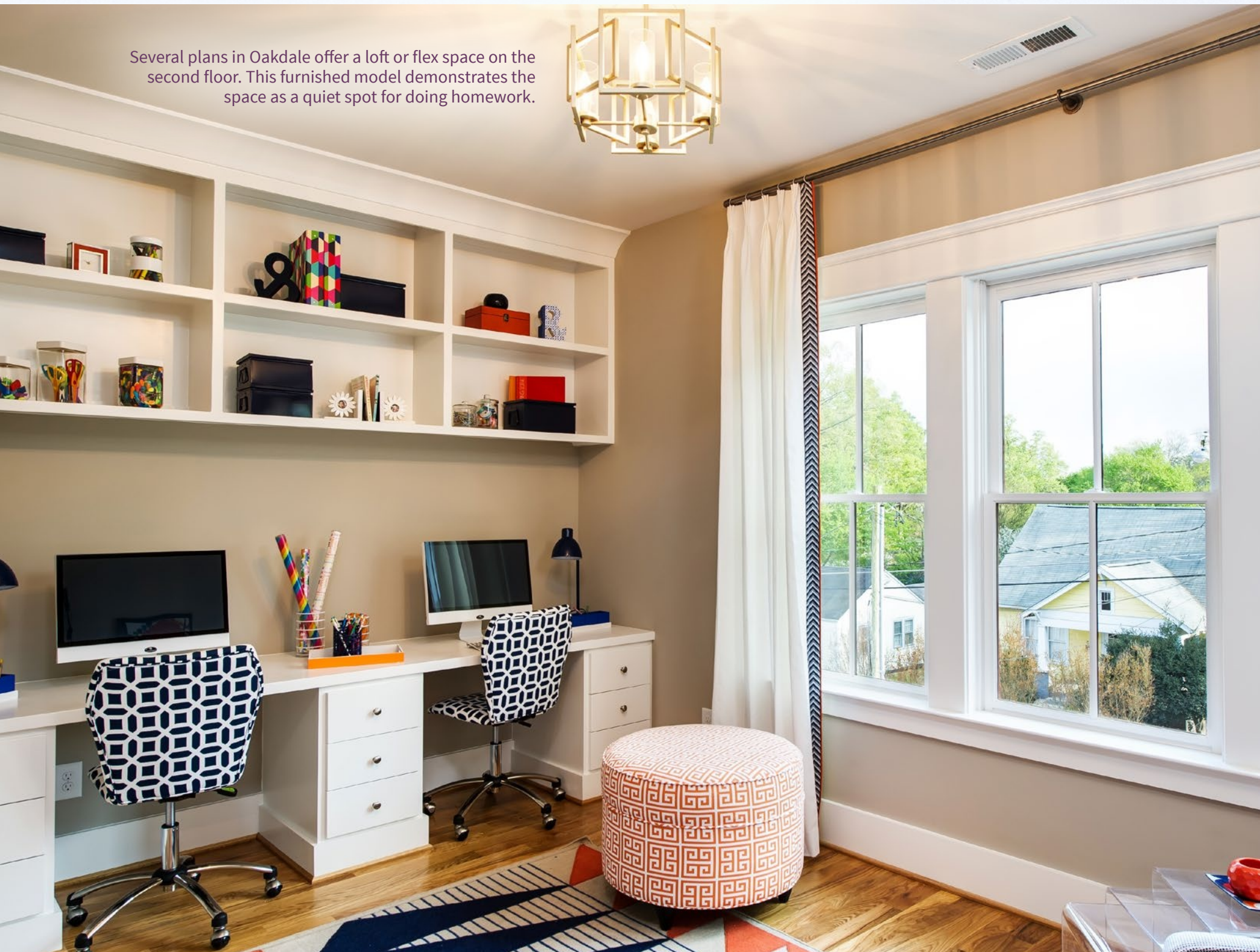


PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO BY MARTIN COMMUNICATIONS

Oakdale is just a six-minute walk to the North Person Street District, with its restaurants, eclectic locally owned shops, and the nonprofit urban Raleigh City Farm.

how Robuck Homes appreciated the character of the surrounding communities, with its Bungalow, Craftsman, and influences from Tudor Revival and Dutch Colonial styles, and would apply this to the homes in Oakdale. Thoughtful communication at the right times helped establish trust and goodwill with neighbors very early on in the project.

With tight streets and small home sites (the average site is .12 acre), the streetscape required making important choices about placement of garages and driveways. Robuck Homes paid close attention to the views from front to back of the house, as well as window placement along the sides of each home.

“The diversity of streetscape was a design challenge that we took very seriously,” said Chip Bishop, general manager of Robuck Homes. “Going through this exercise early on brought unprecedented solutions for congested living, such as rear detached garages, low-maintenance yards, custom storage sheds, and sidewalks: a must for modern downtown living.”



PHOTO BY AERIAL LOOK

to transcend tired expectations with custom features to provide a better flow for today's consumer. Home buyers were greeted with open kitchens, generous storage, and private, fenced backyards.

Oakdale at Mordecai is a modern formula for how to rebuild and sustain community in an existing urban setting. A drive through the neighborhood may reveal the work of a single home builder, but "each home is so different from the next, it feels like a custom neighborhood," Bishop said.

Oakdale is visually stunning and desirably located. Most importantly, it's a place for families who want to live in Raleigh, created by people who live in Raleigh. 🏡

Who would live in Oakdale at Mordecai? The team already knew most of that answer—the target buyers were young families, move-up buyers, and empty nesters—and was prepared to build homes for people who value community. Outside, it was all about fitting in with historical architecture. Inside the 2,300 – 3,000-sf homes, the goal was

**Meredith Horner** is marketing manager for Fonville Morisey Barefoot New Home Sales and Marketing in Raleigh, North Carolina.



DRAWING BY MARGOT DEBARMORE

OAKDALE AT MORDECAI 2014  
Robuck Homes & Community Properties

# Announcing, the 2018 Home of the Year...

NAHB  
BEST IN  
AMERICAN  
LIVING  
AWARDS

Be the first to find out who's the tops at the 2018 Best in American Living™ Awards Ceremony at the International Builders' Show® in Las Vegas, Nev.

Secure your seat today!

Thank you to the 2018 contributors!



Hall Quality Homes  
KEPHART

ID.ology Interiors & Design  
Mary DeWalt Design Group