

This just-outside-the-beltline district is experiencing stable home sales and new commercial and residential development.

Right, an artist's rendering of the development planned by Kane Realty Corporation at the Lassiter, formerly North Hills Plaza. The closed post office will be replaced with multi-level buildings featuring shops and boutiques on the first floor and upscale condominiums on the upper levels. RENDERING COURTESY KANE REALTY CORPORATION



# North Hills

the original North Raleigh

Right, the new shopping center across from North Hills Mall features stores such as Harris Teeter, Starbucks and Panera.



a fashion mall on that land.

Richards was founder and chairman of North Hills, Inc., which owned and developed most of the area. "Ed Richards was the prime mover of North Hills as well as other parts of Raleigh and the state," notes Paul Delacourt, retired president of North Hills Inc. (1972-1985) and a former pilot in the Strategic Air Command.

But while crediting Research Triangle Park (built in 1959) for bringing in blue-ribbon companies like IBM, Monsanto Chemical and Burroughs-Wellcome, Delacourt says Raleigh was destined to grow anyway.

"A lot of people came here and found that Raleigh was a good place to live and they in turn brought their friends here," explains Delacourt, who bought his first Raleigh home on North Hills Drive.

Today, 2,018 people live in North Hills, an area bounded by Leadmine and Six Forks Roads that includes Northbrook, Pamlico and North Hills Drives. They live in subdivisions that include Chestnut Hills, Kershaw Hills, and North Hills, in addition to Briarcliff and North Hills Estates.

The Wertises chose their five-bedroom Thayer Drive home in 1965 because it was on the bus route to Our Lady of Lourdes School. The couple, who raised eight children in that house, paid \$31,900 for the two-story 2,800 square-foot house with full basement and partial brick exterior. Included with the sale was one share of stock in the North Hills Swim and Tennis Club.

Today, the couple's home could be worth almost eight times as much, according to Raleigh appraiser Pete Myers who works for Realtor Laura Bromhal. In fact, Myers notes, for the past six years North Hills homes have appreciated six percent per year.

Re/Max One Realty agent Linda Craft points out the average sale price for a North Hills home in 2001 was \$184,142. So far this year, it has increased to \$199,861. "North Hills is a very stable great-selling area," says Craft, who sells homes in the district.

The fact that North Hills is just barely outside the beltline may be the big reason so many young homebuyers want to live there.

"In North Hills, you get the best of all worlds — including everything inside the beltline — but you don't have to pay the price," notes Bromhal of York Simpson Underwood, who has also sold a number of homes in the district.

By IRIS JUNE VINEGAR  
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They used to call it the Yankee ghetto. That was in the 1960's when droves of IBM employees and others who transferred from the North chose to live in Raleigh's North Hills neighborhood. Most found the natives friendly.

N.C. State University computer professor Ben O'Neal remembers the kindness he and his wife, Mary, experienced in 1967 after moving into their Pamlico Drive home one steamy August day. The house had no air conditioning. Two hours after they arrived, he recalls, "a neighbor brought us a floor fan and some plants, which we still have in our garden." The neighbor was a Southerner.

When Bob and Liz Dean moved into the Briarcliff subdivision, all eight homes on his street, Poland Place,

were occupied by IBM employees. Today, only three of the original owners live there. Still, says Dean, a retired IBM engineer who voluntarily teaches computer skills to senior citizens, "The neighborhood retains the same character — nice people who always say hello and don't seem to be terribly perturbed by my occasional comments in The News. (Dean informs present and former neighbors of community events and changes through a weekly newsletter posted on his Web site: [www.thepolandplaceneeds.com](http://www.thepolandplaceneeds.com)).

In the beginning, North Hills residents were subjected to wake-up calls every morning. Dorothy Wertis chuckles recalling how she and her husband Bob, an IBM engineer, would wake to the crowing of roosters for years after they moved into their home in the North Hills Estates subdivision. That was because most of the area had been farmland before North Carolina developer Edward N. Richards built several housing subdivisions and

Bob and Dorothy Wertis raised eight children in their North Hills home on Thayer Drive.

