

Area R - Six Moon Hill

Begun in 1947, Six Moon Hill was the first of Lexington's modern, communally-oriented neighborhoods. Set on a twenty-acre parcel of rocky upland, it was founded by the seven young architects who had joined with renowned Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius to form The Architects Collaborative (TAC) in Cambridge in 1945. From the beginning the neighborhood was conceived as an experiment in community living and embodied the principles of naturalistic siting, modern design, cooperative control/review, shared amenities and common land. The neighborhood took its name from the fact that the former owner had left a garage housing six automobiles manufactured by the Moon Motor Car Company (based in St. Louis and in business from about 1905 to 1930).



40 Moon Hill Road

Six Moon Hill includes homes on Moon Hill Road and Swan Lane. The neighborhood is notable for its architect-designed modern houses and for the radical nature of the vision of community it proposed. It is, both architecturally and historically, one of the most significant post-World War II suburban residential enclaves in the United States. Built almost entirely between 1947 and 1953, the neighborhood includes 26 TAC-designed residences, including all but one of the firm's founding partners' houses. Among the original architects (and residents) were Benjamin C. Thompson, Norman C. and Jean B. Fletcher, John and Sarah Harkness, Robert S. McMillan, Louis A. McMillen, and Richard S. Morehouse. Notable residents have included Nobel chemist Konrad Bloch, Nobel physicist Samuel C.C. Ting, Dr. Thomas Chalmers (past president of the Mount Sinai Medical Center) and John c. Sheehan, the first chemist to synthesize penicillin. Although of varied designs, the homes all reflect the influence of the International Style and display similar finishes such as cantilevered flat or shed roofs, vertical redwood or cypress siding and expanses of glass with large casement or fixed light steel windows.



34 Moon Hill Road

TAC was progressive in its choice of materials. For instance, several of the homes included skylights made of plexiglass custom-made by the company that produced World War II bomber noses and turrets.



35 Moon Hill Road

Inside, what might be considered small bedrooms and bathrooms surrounded large communal spaces, reflecting the architects' belief that such an arrangement would encourage social interaction.



38 Moon Hill Road

Within the neighborhood the houses blend in seamlessly with their hilly, leafy setting and the simple lines and materials largely echo the surrounding landscape.



39 Moon Hill Road

As part of the social objectives imbued in the original development, the architects set up a community organization, established architectural restrictions, and set aside four acres of common land. When the community's original bylaws, established in 1952, expired in 2002, they were put to a vote. The community overwhelmingly voted to reincorporate and only two families opted out. The remaining owners continue the bylaws, including the architectural covenants. Although many of the homes have been added onto, to date, Six Moon Hill has seen no tear-downs of the original houses. Moon Hill's most recent house was built on the last lot of the original subdivision in 2006. The so-called "Big Dig House" at 8 Bird Hill Road was constructed for Paul Pedini who worked for many years at Modern Continental Construction, a contractor for Boston's Big Dig highway project. It was designed by Cambridge architects Single Speed Design and utilizes over 600,000 pounds of salvaged material including steel and concrete from the construction project.



8 Bird Hill Road