

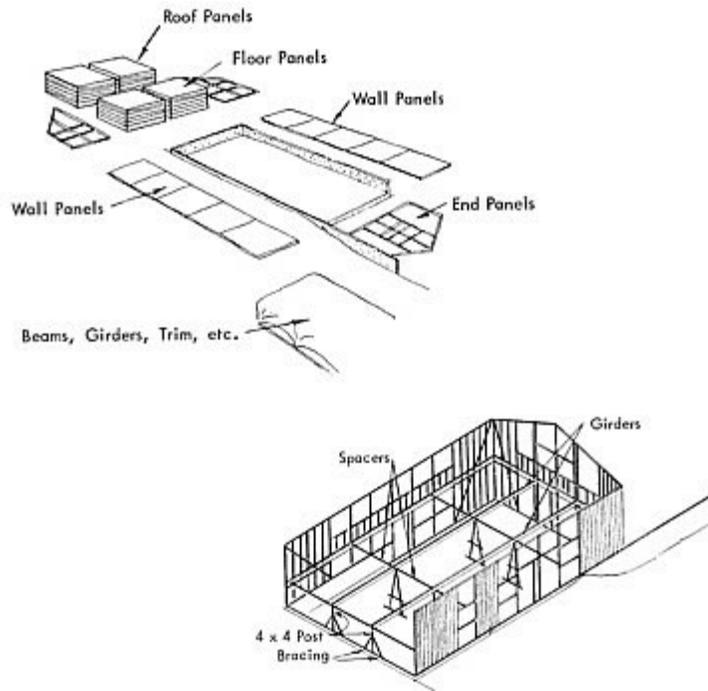
## Area I - Middle Ridge/Turning Mill

Located in North Lexington, Middle Ridge (also known as Turning Mill) is a development of approximately ninety-five contemporary style houses built north of Rt. 128 between 1956 and 1967. The subdivision was constructed in six distinct phases with most of the residences built between 1956 and 1963 and additional infill construction continuing into the late 1960s. The Middle Ridge development includes houses on Demar Road, Turning Mill Road, Partridge Road, and Jeffrey Terrace. Of the 95 homes in Middle Ridge, thirty-five are prefabricated "Techbuilt" homes.



*9 Demar Road  
Photograph by Paul Doherty*

Middle Ridge was originally conceived and designed in 1955 by architect Carl Koch as a neighborhood of "Techbuilt" homes. After receiving his architectural training at Harvard, Koch taught architecture at MIT and created the first planned community of modern houses in the region at Snake Hill Road in Belmont in 1941. Prior to building in Lexington, he also designed and constructed Conantum, Concord's first residential housing development (1951) and Kendal Common in Weston (1950). First introduced in 1953, the Techbuilt house was a low-cost, semi-factory-built modern style house which used modular construction.



*Source: Carl Koch, At Home with Tomorrow, 1958*

The Techbuilt house was based on a consistent four foot wide module for all major building components such as wall, floor, and roof panels. The pieces were delivered by truck and could be erected in a few days. The Techbuilt homes, which include both one and two-story models, are characterized by simplicity of shape, pitched roofs and overhanging eaves and the extensive use of glass, especially on the wide glazed gabled ends. The exteriors of the houses are typically clad in vertical cedar siding with panels between the stories. The Techbuilt houses incorporated various structural innovations including the use of modular prefabricated stressed skin panels rather than conventional framing and the use of steel posts and wooden beams for support rather than load bearing walls. In keeping with Techbuilt philosophy, the houses are typically set into a natural and wooded landscape. In some cases the owners also purchased carports or garages.



*8 Demar Road*

The Techbuilt House was featured in various national publications including Better Homes and Gardens and Parents Magazine and was awarded the American Institute of Architects "Best Development House" Award. By the end of 1957, Techbuilt homes had been constructed in thirty-two states.

Ultimately, due to financial difficulties, the Techbuilt Corporation was only involved in the construction of

the first two phases of Middle Ridge and these houses are found on Demar Road and the southern end of Turning Mill Road. Although many of the buildings have seen additions, collectively they are significant as one of the largest groups of this award-winning and innovative semi-prefabricated house in the Boston area.

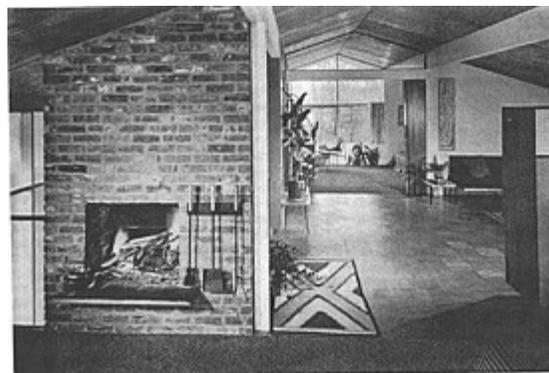


*11 Demar Road*  
*Photograph by Paul Doherty*

The house at 11 Demar Road is an especially fine example of the single-story Techbuilt prototype and dates to the first phase of the Middle Ridge development (1956). A good example of the two-story model is visible at 9 Demar Road which also dates to 1956. Although many of the buildings have seen additions, collectively they are significant as one of the largest groups of this award-winning and innovative semi-prefabricated house in the Boston area.



*21 Demar Road*





*Interiors of two Techbuilt Houses*  
*Source: Carl Koch, At Home with Tomorrow, 1958*