

Production Design

A new traditional neighborhood development in Warwick, NY, showcases the versatility of production houses.

PROJECT: EDENVILLE PRODUCTION HOUSE,
WARWICK GROVE, WARWICK, NY

ARCHITECT: DONALD POWERS ARCHITECTS,
PROVIDENCE, RI; DONALD POWERS, AIA,
PRINCIPAL IN CHARGE; DOUGLAS KALLFELZ, AIA,
PROJECT ARCHITECT

DEVELOPER: WARWICK GROVE COMPANY, LLC,
AN AFFILIATION OF LEYLANDALLIANCE LLC, TUXEDO,
NY, AND TARRAGON CORPORATION, NEW YORK, NY

Warwick Grove in Warwick, NY, is a new traditional neighborhood about 55 miles north of New York City. Designed for active older adults, the development is part of a village that already offers an array of shops, galleries, restaurants, walkable streets and a mix of architectural styles in the heart of the Hudson Valley.

The master plan for Warwick Grove, a New Urbanist Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), was created by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company of Miami, FL. It calls for approximately 215 units with a mix of styles and sizes, ranging from single-family homes to townhouses and elevator-served condominiums. Following TND guidelines, the development emphasizes the community as much as the individual home, with a village green, post office and community center.

A number of the new traditionally styled single-family production homes have been designed by Donald Powers Architects (DPA) of Providence, RI. The firm specializes in TND planning and moderately scaled traditional homes, and has designed other production models for the community.

DPA has, in fact, designed the majority of the homes in Warwick Grove. "There are eight different floor plans for the single-family detached homes of Warwick Grove, each with three or four renditions in different styles and different looks," says Powers. "A whole street often represents only three different floor plans, but there's a lot of variety because of the different options available with each plan. One of our challenges was how to achieve the variety you would see in a traditional neighborhood. We have been able to do that by designing several different styles for each of the floor-plan types.

"The Edenville represents one of the floor-plan types. Within that type, several styles are available: Georgian, Federal and something we call American Cottage. The simplest style is the Federal with stacked, often symmetrical windows, Classical columns and the more restrained



Designed by Donald Powers Architects (DPA) of Providence, RI, the 2,285-sq.-ft. Edenville is one of several single-family production design models at Warwick Grove, a new Traditional Neighborhood Development in Warwick, NY, approximately 55 miles north of New York City. All photos: Herbert Studios



Above: The side yard provides a private place for sitting or dining. The homes are arranged so that each has its own outdoor space.

Left: To meet the needs of the active older-adult market, garages at Warwick Grove are attached to the homes. In the Edenville plan, an optional room can be built over the garage.



Above: Located at the front of the house, the 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x19 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ft. living room reflects the attention to detail with its traditional wood mantel, millwork and built-in bookcase.

Left: The first floor of the Edenville incorporates living areas near the front of the house and a master bedroom and bathroom at the rear. The attached garage is also at the rear of the house. The house is designed around a side courtyard, instead of a traditional backyard, and also includes a generous front porch. Floor plan: courtesy of Donald Powers Architects

hallmarks of the style. The Georgian version employs more robust trim and columns. The American Cottage version offers a variety of different roof lines and materials and draws from the more casual and playful examples of Queen Anne and Shingle Styles seen in the area.”

Other single-family models DPA has designed for Warwick Grove include the York, the Warwick, the Bellvale and the Pine Cottage. At approximately 1,855 sq.ft., the Bellvale is the smallest of these single-family homes, and the 2,285-sq.ft. Edenville is mid-sized. Like all of the homes in Warwick Grove, the Edenville is smaller than typical new suburban homes. “The Edenville is about two-thirds the size of a typical new suburban home,” says Powers. “The rooms are all scaled exactly to what they need to be for the furnishings, and no larger. You can snug the room right up to the furniture and have a comfortable room that is not bigger than it needs to be.”

“This market is downsizing, but there are certain things they don’t want to lose — Grandma’s hutch, for example. So the dining rooms are sized for the table, chairs and a little extra room for that heirloom piece that no matter how much they downsize they would not want to give up.”

In accommodating the needs of an “active adult” market while maintaining a traditionally organized streetscape, DPA faced a number of design challenges. One of these was the market requirement of a first-floor master bedroom and bathroom instead of the more traditional second-floor bedrooms. Another was including an attached garage, instead of putting a

separate garage in the back of the house where it would typically be in an older neighborhood.

“The design of this house is an example of using traditional architectural language and syntax to solve a very contemporary problem,” says Powers. “With the older active market, you have certain constraints in the floor plan that you wouldn’t usually have in a traditional home.”

“We took that modern program and married it to a traditional neighborhood. The challenge was to create a building plan that solves the contemporary problems with a building form that can make a very satisfying neighborhood. The plan can never be thought of independently from the street. A typical development with typical architecture sells only the house, but in Warwick Grove, the biggest ‘feature’ of this is, in fact, its neighborhood.”

The compact, but open, floor plan carefully overlaps spaces to provide a balance of defined rooms and more open, flowing spaces. To balance public and private spaces, Powers put the public rooms — the living room, kitchen and dining room — at the front of the house, with the master bedroom and bath at the rear of the house. “We put the public rooms in the front of the house in all of our traditional neighborhood plans,” he says, “where the activity and lights are visible to people on the street.”

To solve the garage problem, DPA created a connective tail to the house. That generated a small courtyard off the side of the house, rather than the traditional backyard. This plan allows most of the living spaces — the



The open-plan kitchen/dining room at the center of the Edenville offers a view of the side courtyard.



The kitchen features a center island with a granite countertop.

A typical street in Warwick Grove shows the variety of houses and an active street life. An example of the Edenville is on the right.



kitchen/dining room as well as the master bedroom – to look out onto the side-courtyard space. “Our market may be downsizing, but they still want two or three bedrooms and an outdoor space, they just want them to be smaller,” says Powers. “So the plan is organized to defer to the intimate courtyard space on the side. We use the building volumes to create closure to that space and to define it as a private or semi-private space.”

Balancing the private space in the side yard is the public front porch. “This is a generous porch, almost 10 ft. deep,” Powers notes. “It is designed not just as an ornamental entrance to the house, but also as a place to sit. In a neighborhood like this, people like to sit on their porches. It seems to be a rule of compact neighborhoods that once you satisfy the need for private space with the courtyard, people are more willing to sit out in the public areas.”

Like the earlier models, the Edenville is designed to harmonize with other homes in the community and in the town and to fit on a small 45-ft.-wide lot. Powers explains that the volume presents a narrow frontage that is representative of traditional houses in small neighborhoods.

The Edenville features a flared gambrel roof, natural cedar siding and simple details to give the home a sense of history and permanence. The 2-ft.-deep rakes in the gambrel shape give the appearance of a one-story gambrel cottage with second-story shed dormers.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the Edenville is that it is a production house, designed to be built quickly and economically. “Architects typically don’t want to work in the production environment,” says Powers. “As a firm, we are philosophically interested in it. We really want to apply intelligence and good design to an area that is completely ignored by our profession. So we simplified details in the plans to make the house buildable within the constraints and segregated trades of a production process. We were able to get character into a house faced with those constraints. Construction costs are approximately \$120 per sq.ft., compared to the typical \$175 per sq.ft.”

Developer/builder, LeylandAlliance LLC, of Tuxedo, NY, is not a newcomer to TNDs. Warwick Grove is the firm’s third project, following East

Beach in Norfolk, VA, and Hammond’s Ferry in North Augusta, SC. “We are building new neighborhoods based on the principles of New Urbanism,” says Steve J. Maun, president. “We also want to build on a production basis. The way we handle this challenge is to offer each of our floor plans in 4 or 5 façade versions, which gives us enormous flexibility. If someone falls in love with a floor plan, we can build next door to a similar floor plan and have a completely different façade.”

In addition to focusing on traditional design, LeylandAlliance also uses traditional materials. “We use paintable materials – not vinyl – in our construction,” says Maun.

Another goal at LeylandAlliance is energy efficiency. “We work closely with consultants to design energy-efficient homes,” Maun says. “For example, we keep all of the air conditioning and heating chases within the conditioned envelope of the home. This has dramatically reduced energy use in the houses.”

Maun cites a number of trends that he has noticed among today’s homebuyers and that guide the work at LeylandAlliance. “First,” he says, “there is a general shift of moving in closer to the activity point. People want to be connected to the main street. Second, people want flexibility and a lot of choice in their house plans and they want a higher level of quality and finish. At the same time, they want the efficiencies of a green house – insulation, windows and systems to keep heating and cooling costs down. And, people want neighborhoods. They want public spaces, neighborhood centers and community buildings. So we put a lot of extra effort into those spaces.”

Opened in the spring of 2005, Warwick Grove is off to a strong start. Currently, approximately 100 homes are either sold or are under construction. Maun came to Warwick because it is a classic New England village with a beautiful main street. “We were looking for land within walking distance to that main street,” says Maun. The idea to make Warwick Grove into a community for active older adults was mandated by the town of Warwick, which is concerned about development and school issues. “We decided to go ahead with the project since the new neighborhood would be walkable to Main Street,” says Maun. “There has been a lot of interest from other cities and communities. We think it will become an example of how development can be managed.” – *Martha McDonald*



The design of the post office in Warwick Grove reflects Classical contributions to the style of the neighborhood. It is located off the town green. This building was designed by Jeff DeGraw of Middletown, NY-based DeGraw & DeHaan Architects.



Public spaces are an important part of a traditional neighborhood design. DPA designed the Community Center, shown here, as well as many of the model production homes.