

It's a beautiful day in your neighborhood

Established downtown, Mount Pleasant and Summerville communities

"Imagine what our real neighborhoods would be like if each of us offered, as a matter of course, just one kind word to another person." — Fred Rogers

BY BRIGITTE SURETTE

In a sellers' market, when property values are at a premium, buyers who seek more "established" neighborhoods are finding those homes are harder to come by these days.

Neighborhoods date back to the 1600s, meaning a cluster of homes built in one area, "people who live close together," with the origin of the word, neighborhood, meaning "neighborliness; neighborly acts," and the "state of being neighbors." Village-like settings where people, lived, worked and socialized comprised a neighborhood. Suburbia in the '50s and '60s removed some of those elements. One had to leave their community to get to work and play.

Large master-planned developments such as Carolina Park in Mount Pleasant, Nexton and Cane Bay in Summerville, and Daniel Island reflect a modern take on a village environment. Each are amenity rich, beautiful and hugely popular—answering the needs of buyers who want to walk to shops, dining and more. These communities are modern representations of the "state of being neighbors," with thousands of acres (and homes when some are complete) ribboning through them. Towns within themselves, and they too are in high demand.

Though new construction is springing up throughout the Lowcountry to answer the housing demand, buyers who want that reminiscent feel in a neighborhood



JA SURETTE

An ivy-covered cottage home near Alhambra Hall in the Old Village of Mount Pleasant looks as if it could be in the English countryside.

pounce on properties within them when they become available.

Downtown

English colonists established downtown Charleston in 1670 as Charles Town. It was the largest city in the state then. In 1783, Charles Town (named after King Charles II of England) became Charleston. By the mid-19th century, it was the largest in the country.

Downtown Charleston neighborhoods include South of Broad, Harleston Village, the French Quarter, Ansonborough, the Garden District, Eastside, Radcliffeborough, Cannonborough/Elliottborough, Westside, Hampton Park Terrace, North Central, East Central and Wagner Terrace. Though all flow into one another across the peninsula, each has their own unique vibe. The genteel elegance of South of Broad has a completely different



CARRIAGE PROPERTIES

An aerial view of a million-dollar-plus home in Wagner Terrace. Lush, tree-lined streets and proximity to the water are part of the lifestyle here.



PATRICK BRICKMAN

Homes such as this one on Darlington Avenue in Wagener Terrace are undergoing renovations while keeping their historic character.



PATRICK BRICKMAN

The interior of a renovated home on Maple Street in Wagener Terrace.

ambiance than the upper peninsula area of Wagener Terrace, where craft beer bars and live music are within walking and biking distance.

These neighborhoods and their historic significance define downtown Charleston. What was once up and coming has arrived. I reached out to two industry experts who know a lot about the peninsula's neighborhoods and two of those neighborhoods are realizing substantial growth and popularity—Wagener Terrace and Westside.

Wagener Terrace transformation

“Watching this area transition to a ‘destination’ over the last 10 years, and particularly over the last 5, has been amazing,” said **Charles Sullivan** of Carriage Properties.



Sullivan

Sullivan and his wife have lived in nearly every borough of downtown and as a member of the Historic District Community, he knows firsthand the importance of revitalizing Charleston's distinct neighborhoods, but also preserving the historic significance of each.

“What has mostly helped Wagener Terrace is the shift of restaurants and shops to that neighborhood,” said Sullivan. “As commercial rents escalated further south below the cross town, entrepreneurial types flocked to that part of the city, allowing them to buy and develop commercial buildings at a value and price point where businesses could locate and thrive.”



COASTAL REAL ESTATE PHOTOGRAPHY

Modern construction with a nod to Westside's historic charm on 293 Coming St. This Charleston single was designed by architect Julia Martin in 2010. The three-story home has nearly 1,300 square feet and lists for \$585,000.

Wagener Terrace, north of the Crosstown, and Hampton Park is bounded by the Ashley River. Hampton Park, the largest on the peninsula with 60 acres, borders The Citadel. Built by John Gibbes, in the mid-1700s, the park is just one of many amenities Wagener Terrace residents enjoy. The Rutledge Cab Co., Edmunds Oast in the Pacific Box and Crate and the Tattooed Moose are just a handful of hotspots Wagener Terrace residents frequent.

Homes here are architecturally diverse, with bungalows, cottage-style homes and fully restored ones such as the “Black House,” a 1950s cinder-block home that was transformed into a contemporary

home. The introduction of these types of modern elements interwoven into the historic significance of this neighborhood is a big draw for buyers.

Its roots date back to the 1800s, and its namesake from Frederick Wagener, a successful grocer. The main developer was James Sotille. What started as four homes in the early 1900s blossomed into 50 by the 1930s. In the early 70s, the Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association was established.

“The commercial transition sparked the residential renovation frenzy a little over five years ago,” said Sullivan. “Most of the homes tend to be brick, located on wide tree-lined streets, in a logical grid,

keeping traffic at a slower pace. Over the last three years, it became much easier to access fine dining, shopping and groceries with just a short walk or hop in the golf cart.”

Sullivan tracked homes sales over the past five years. The number of residential transactions were around 40 sales within a 12-month period with an average of price of \$400,000, with none trading over \$1 million.

“In the last 12 months running, over 77 homes closed with an average sale price of \$620,000 with five closing for well over \$1 million,” he said. “The 12 months prior to that saw around 60 closings, averaging \$515,000, with only one sale above \$1 million. It's pretty clear the Wagner Terrace neighborhood is on the move.”

According to Zillow on August 11, 2021, there were five single-family homes for sale in Wagener Terrace, with a price range of \$448,000 to \$1.275 million and two lots listed at \$425,000 and \$375,000.

A Westside story

The Westside neighborhood of downtown Charleston is on the “neck” of the peninsula, and was farm area 150 years ago. In 2019, Valerie Perry of the Historic Charleston Foundation interviewed Arthur Lawrence for an oral history program. According to the interview, Lawrence was once president of the neighborhood association for 20 years and worked with Mayor Joe Riley and the chief of the police to improve Westside. Lawrence said that when he grew up Westside was a village and “everyone knew each other and took care of each other.” To hear more of Lawrence's interview about the Westside community visit <https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/246474>.

mainstory

Lawrence, a veteran, has lived in the area for over 71 years. He has seen drastic changes since then and said that most of the homes were freedman cottages and shotgun houses. He grew up on 52 Kennedy in a large complex, with three families in the front, two families in the rear and a family upstairs. "Almost like a duplex" is how he described his childhood home. Most of the homes in Westside, Lawrence recounted, were freedman cottages and shotgun houses. Some of those remain, but others were demolished.

He called his neighborhood a place where the residents were "just like family," and said when he was growing up Westside was predominately an African American community. Lawrence talked about the improvements Westside has undergone throughout the years, with WestEdge's development, MUSC and others having a hand in its revitalization. Homes here date back to the 1920s. There are new construction homes and renovation of older ones. Cottages and Charleston single style homes, both old and new, give a nod to its origins.



Hanlin

Lynn Hanlin of Carriage Properties has owned and restored properties in the Charleston Historic District, and is the former president of the Preservation Society of Charleston. Hanlin became acquainted with

Westside in the early 80s when she worked with **J. Arthur Brown** and **Willi Glee**. Hanlin was just starting her real estate career and her work with these two gentlemen to improve the lives of Westside's residents was, as she recounted, "heady stuff."

Brown, president of the NAACP in 1955, served as Lyndon Johnson's race relation consultant in the 60s, and worked with Thurgood Marshall, Esau Jenkins and other civil rights leaders to improve the lives of African Americans. Before his passing in the late 80s, he was a community relations specialist for the City of Charleston.



Glee

Willi Glee, who is a church historian at Mother Emanuel Church, was the director of the Westside neighborhood initiative during that time. Because of his dedication and work, the current Charleston Area Urban League continues to advocate

for racial inclusion and programs that promote social equality and economic self-sufficiency for minorities and low-income individuals and families.

In 1982, Hanlin helped Brown consoli-



LYNN HANLIN/CARRIAGE PROPERTIES

One of two homes (198 and 200 Fishburn) were properties of J. Arthur Brown and his wife. Pictured here is 200 Fishburn. Lynn Hanlin sold these homes to the renters through the aid of the Westside neighborhood initiative and Willi Glee who was the director in the early 80s. The original tenants, Ronald Wine and James Wine, are still the owners of the homes.



LYNN HANLIN

The home at 198 Fishburn in the Westside community of downtown Charleston.

date their estate, (properties Brown and his wife owned on Fishburn and Kennedy Streets). She met Glee, and with his help and his organization's mission, they were able to sell these properties to the current rental tenants. "It was a win-win for everyone," Hanlin said.

Though Westside does still have some rental properties, the majority of the homes in Westside are now owner occupied, Hanlin said.

Westside's boundaries are from King Street to the Crosstown, Crosstown to the Ashley River, the Ashley River to Lockwood, and Lockwood back to Fishburn, Hagood to Congress Street, and Congress Street back to King, according to lifelong resident Lawrence.

Westside maintains its village-like



JA SURETTE

A jasmine-covered gate gives a nostalgic feel to this historic home in Mount Pleasant.



THE CASSINA GROUP

Modern farmhouse style home are being constructed in Old Mount Pleasant. This one is located at 638 Palmetto.

character, an urban microcosm, with a "just like family" appeal. Its proximity to Joe Riley Stadium, The Citadel football stadium, and the Arthur W. Christopher Community Center make it a one of those hidden gems gaining popularity. The gym and community center are built with sustainable materials and are LEED-certified. At 265 Fishburn Street, the facility has athletic fields, playgrounds and an array of fitness options and classes.

"I was very honored to have worked with J Arthur Brown and his wife in solidifying their estate to plan for their retirement," Hanlin said. "It was gratifying to work with the renters through Willi Glee to make them home owners. James and

Ronald Wine still own the properties [on Fishburn], mission accomplished. The Westside neighborhood is a vibrant, stable and centrally located neighborhood."

According to Zillow on August 11, 2021, there were 23 properties for sale in Westside, some of which were contingent. Prices range from \$257,900 to \$1.28 million. These include multifamily homes and lots.

Near a village in Mt. Pleasant

The neighborhood known as Old Mount Pleasant is separate from the Old Village — sort of, but it's close enough for residents to enjoy the parameters of the Old Village District —



JA SURETTE

A home in the Olde Park neighborhood in Mount Pleasant. Homes here range from \$1.6 million to \$3.7 million.

to walk, bike or golf cart to Alhambra Hall, the harbor or the main drag along Pitt Street.

Homes in Old Mount Pleasant date back to the 1950s, from small homes to large new construction, this lower Mount Pleasant community is very popular. Coleman and Ben Sawyer Boulevards border the neighborhood, as do Whilden Street and Royall Avenue. Once you pass this section of Old Mount Pleasant, you more into the Old Village Historic District.

The Old Village's history dates back to the 1800s, where wealthy Charlestonians summered. That tradition has remained, though most make homes in the Village their main ones now. Single-family properties in the Old Village can go well into the \$4 million plus mark.



Tyler

Old Mount Pleasant is a bit more affordable, but its single-family average home price is much higher than it was just five years ago. Renovated, single-family homes of nearly 1,000 square feet can command price points of \$600,000 plus.

"Old Mount Pleasant is centrally located between the Charleston Peninsula and Sullivan's Island," said **Owen Tyler** of The Cassina Group. "There is a mix of construction, from brick ranch homes to modern farmhouse styles of 2021."

According to Tyler, there are 12 properties for sale in Old Mount Pleasant, with prices ranging from \$600,000 to over \$2 million. The Old Village currently has five properties for sale.

Newer but established

For a completely different vibe, take Center Street to Ben Sawyer Blvd out of Old Mount Pleasant. Cross over to Rifle Range and take Bowman Road to Mathis Ferry. Head north on Mathias Ferry and you'll find the neighborhood of Olde Park on the right.



JANA BANTZ/BHHS

A home in the Legend Oaks neighborhood on Back Bay street.



JANA BANTZ/BHHS

There are a variety of homes in Legend Oaks. This one is a cottage style.

Olde Park was developed by Joseph Griffith and attorney Joseph Rice in the late 90s. Their vision was to "create a neighborhood that fully embraces the historic Lowcountry yet captures today's lifestyle."

The elegant neighborhood is 90 acres with approximately 114 homesites according to the Olde Park Homeowner's Association's website. Park-like with towering oaks, lush landscaping, sidewalks, parks, ponds, lakes and community green spaces, it is tucked away, private and feels as if it's been there forever.

"Olde Park has homes ranging in price from \$1.8 million to \$3.7 million," said Tyler. "The majority of the homes were built during the early to mid-2000s with some newer construction scattered throughout the neighborhood. The average home in Olde Park has approximately 4,800 square feet with five bedrooms and five baths."

The location of Olde Park is another draw for luxury buyers. It's near the I'On neighborhood with its shops and eateries, Towne Centre in Mount Pleasant, seven miles to Sullivan's Island and



JANA BANTZ/BHHS

Condos in Legend Oaks range from \$175,000 to \$220,000.

seven miles to downtown Charleston.

According to The Cassina Group's website on August 11, 2021, there are three properties for sale in Olde Park.

Scenic in Summerville

Development began in the sprawling, scenic neighborhood of Legend Oaks in Summerville in the 90s. The land was once a rice plantation. Thirty miles from downtown Charleston and on the outskirts of historic downtown Summerville, the community now has about 1,000 homes, according to **Jana Bantz** of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices South-



Bantz

ern Coast Real Estate. Near the end of the Ashley River Road Corridor, getting here is an experience, with 250-year-old oaks lining the roads. It is near Drayton Hall, Magnolia Plantation and Middleton Place. In Dorchester County, it draws buyers from every demographic.

The jewel of the neighborhood is its

clubhouse and the Scott Poole designed 18-hole golf course. Semi-private, it has accolades from Charleston Business Journals readers as one of the "Top Three Low Country" courses and Golf Magazine's travel editor Brian McCallen said that the golf is "more akin to Pinehurst No. 2 in its straightforward presentation of challenge."

Near the Ashley River, some of the homes are waterfront, others have golf course views. Bantz is very familiar with the Legend Oaks neighborhood.

"I've sold over 150 homes in Legend Oaks Plantation during my career to buyers looking for primary residents as well as second home buyers," she said. "The condominiums are especially great for golfers looking for a vacation getaway. With downtown Summerville nearby and downtown a half hour away, and landmark historic properties nearby, it's really a gem."

Bantz said the large neighborhood has been a favorite for Summerville residents. "There are homes that cater to every lifestyle—lock and leave condos, cozy one-story homes, Charleston single style homes, large executive homes and everything in between. This community truly caters to every season of life," she said.

Add all that to being in the Dorchester II school district, and within a bike ride to Beech Hill Elementary. Summerville's newest high school, Ashley Ridge, is nearby, and Rollings Middle School of the Arts is five miles from the community.

"A brand new state-of-the-art, middle school is currently under construction," said Bantz. "And, the price range for single-family homes ranges from \$250,000 to \$600,000. Condos range from \$175,000 to \$220,000."

Neighborhoods within include Willow Point, The Providence and Palmetto Forest, and the Pointe. Mungo Homes was the builder in the Whispering Fields section of Legend Oaks. Other builders in the community include Crescent Homes, D.R. Horton and True Homes. Semi-custom and new construction homes are within the gated section, The Club.

With a family-friendly clubhouse that has tennis courts and lessons, two outdoor pools and its own Bistro One18 serving lunch and dinner, Legend Oaks ticks many homebuyers' boxes for affordability, a town-like setting and a great place to call home.

According to Jana Bantz, on August 10, 2021, there were 11 homes for sale in Legend Oaks, all under contract.

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