



# West Church

**Project Name:** West Church

**Project Type:** Thirty-one high-quality, single-family homes set on a seven-acre site. Sixteen of its homes were designated for buyers who need financial assistance.

**Year Built:** Housing construction began in April 2003.

**Project Description:** By the late 1970s, Norfolk's two-mile Church Street corridor had become severely blighted. What had been a welcoming home to the city's African-American community and a source of civic pride for decades had deteriorated into a place of crime, violence and despair.

In 1979 Norfolk City Council and NRHA launched a redevelopment plan for the area, but it was slow to take hold. At that time a survey indicated that 273 buildings (67%) were structurally substandard and another 94 (24%) were considered a blighting influence. Then in the late '90s the transformation began to bear fruit. The Church Street thoroughfare was enhanced to

include new street lighting, a dedicated bike lane and landscaped medians. New businesses began opening and distinctive neighborhoods were planned.

West Church is one of those neighborhoods. Developed on a seven-acre site littered with blighted houses and apartment buildings, NRHA demolished those structures in the mid 1990s, and by 2002 new roads, water and sewer, as well as a pocket park had been completed.

To create an eclectic and distinctive neighborhood, NRHA recommended house plans for each lot.



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Selecting these plans was a cooperative process with area residents. This approach offered the builder and buyer a range of architecturally distinctive styles pre-tailored to each lot width and location, and in harmony with adjacent designs. Homes have three or four bedrooms and 2.5 or 3.5 baths. Square footage ranges from 1,688 to 2,477. For the 31-home development, 20 house plans were used. The new homes in West Church are traditional neighborhood designs created by nationally known architects.

In 2003, the average price for a single-family home in Norfolk was \$209,000. West Church homes were much more affordably priced, ranging from \$116,000 to \$165,000.

Both the City and NRHA have made substantial investments in the Church Street area to change it from a depressed, dangerous place to a charming, attractive community with lovely homes and a new commercial district. West Church has set the precedent – and the standard – for subsequent development in adjacent sections of the city.

