

'Quiet little valley' in midst of high-rises

Adriane B. Miller THE BALTIMORE SUN
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The high-rise apartments standing in a tight semi-circle around Tuscany-Canterbury have the unintended effect of insulating this small, city community.

Sounds of howling sirens and complaining car horns on nearby North Charles Street come muffled over the apartment penthouses and float down, as if wrapped in feathers, upon Tuscany-Canterbury's rowhouses and Tudor-style homes.

The community also seems to lack the city's speed; short, winding and narrow streets see to that, requiring drivers to crawl rather than race from place to place.

Neighborhood dogs know this. An old, golden-colored pooch with gimpy back legs can wander down the center of Cloverhill Road in no hurry to reach the sidewalk.

What is most memorable about Tuscany-Canterbury, a neighborhood across University Parkway from Johns Hopkins University, is the architecture: sprawling Tudor estates with low eaves and diamond-shaped window panes, formal nine-bay Colonials squarely facing the street, lines of rowhouses with dormer windows and grey-green tile roofs. Most were built in the 1920s and 1930s.

Tuscany-Canterbury is home to a mix of people, too. Hopkins professors live here, including the dean of deans and a retired Egyptologist.

Politicians live here, including the City Council president and a state delegate. Others who make their homes in the neighborhood are elderly people who have been here all their lives, students on their way elsewhere, lawyers, doctors and average folk raising children at home or working in the city.

"It's a quiet place, kind of tucked away," says Kathy Joslin, 28, who lives in a large Cloverhill Road rowhouse with her husband, Michael, 31. "The fact that the homes are so close to the street gives it a European feel. It reminded me of a European neighborhood when we first saw it."

The community has two parts. Rowhouses on the two parallel streets of Canterbury and Cloverhill roads make up the Canterbury part to the east. Single-family residences and townhouses on Overhill Road, Tuscany Road and other winding streets, make up the Tuscany part to the west.

Most of the rowhouses have four and five bedrooms. Bernard Dabrowski, a sales associate with W.H.C. Wilson & Co. in Baltimore, says they are bigger than some of the single-family houses in the neighborhood. Most of them have hardwood floors, all-brick construction and slate roofs. Each house has a grassy yard in front and patio garden in back.

The Canterbury rowhouses sell from \$170,000 to \$200,000, depending on how much they have been renovated, Mr. Dabrowski says.

"About a third of them have been renovated. Another third have been kept up all along. A third of them can use some work," he says.

The Joslins bought their house for \$130,000 in 1991. They replaced the electrical, plumbing and heating systems. They stripped off layers of old

wallpaper, uncovering sheets that had been signed by previous owners. They kept the polished wood floors intact.

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On the other side of the community, the Tuscany side, are more single-family homes, estates and unusual Tudor townhouses.

"They were not built in a conforming row," Mr. Dabrowski says of the townhouses. "They are all different, built at angles on the hills."

Most of the residences have features like hardwood floors, some with inlaid designs. Many of the houses have sunrooms with quarry tile, and outdoor decks added in recent years. Throughout Tuscany-Canterbury, the close presence of Johns Hopkins University looms large.

"It's a big deal that Hopkins is right there. It attracts professional types of residents," Mr. Dabrowski says. Several fraternity houses are in the area, but the community keeps a watchful eye on them. "The offensive ones are gone," he says.

"On Cloverhill in particular, there are a lot of professionals," he says. "The people who are looking for places to buy are often couples, both working, not necessarily with children."

Moving back to the city

Michael Kupritz of Kupritz Group, a Baltimore real estate firm, says newcomers to the neighborhood are often moving back to the city after experimenting with life in Baltimore's outlying counties.

"They moved out to the county, and felt too far away from the center of activity so they are moving back," says Mr. Kupritz, who owns a Canterbury Road row house.

"[Tuscany-Canterbury] has the feel of being away from the noise and you almost have a feeling of not being in the city," even though it's right in the middle of it, he says. The neighborhood is within walking distance of the Baltimore Museum of Art and is close to the Lyric Opera House and other cultural attractions.

Herb Witz, who lives on Stoney Ford Road in the Tuscany section, agrees with Mr. Kupritz. Mr. Witz says he enjoys the proximity to downtown and, at the same time, the feeling of distance from it.

"I'm a city person, but we do have the benefit of a lot of green shrubbery around us," he says. "Places like Bolton Hill -- living there would be too much concrete for me."

Mr. Witz serves as a co-president of the Tuscany-Canterbury neighborhood association. He says the community has its share of problems. "A lot of students who live in some of the apartments right across the street from the Hopkins campus makes for a very dense population," he says.

Crime is an ever-present concern.

"It's the same there as it is in Guilford or Roland Park," nearby communities, Mr. Witz says. "There are car thefts, there have been some violent crimes. But according to police who came to our last association meeting, crime in our area is down. A couple of years ago there were more street crimes, particularly against elderly people, but that seems to have subsided."

Mary Pat Clarke, Baltimore City Council president, raised a family of four in a rowhouse on Tuscany-Canterbury's Cloverhill Road. The children have grown and gone, but she still lives in the house, right across the street from her mother-in-law.

"We live in the smallest house on the block and had the biggest family," she jokes. "My family has lived there since 1967. We originally went there because it was a neighborhood where my aunt used to take walks when she was employed at Hopkins University. She said there's this lovely street called Cloverhill, and she showed it to us. We bought the house the day we saw "It's very much the way it was the day we moved in," Ms. Clarke says. What has changed, of course, is the price of houses. The Clarkes paid \$20,000 for their home 27 years ago. Houses around it are selling for 10 times that amount now.

To Ms. Clarke, as well as to other residents, Tuscany-Canterbury feels safe and sheltered, like an oasis.

"That's because of all the high-rises surrounding it," she says. "It's this quiet little valley in among mountains of high rises."

TUSCANY-CANTERBURY

Population: 2,868 (1990 Census)

Commuting time to downtown Baltimore: 15 minutes

Commuting time to Washington: 1 hour

Public schools: Roland Park Elementary School, Roland Park Middle School, Western High School

Shopping, nearest mall: Rotunda Shopping Center, about 5 minutes west

Points of interest: Loyola College, Notre Dame College of Maryland, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore Museum of Art, [Memorial Stadium](#).

Average price of single family house*: \$170,607 (7 sales) ZIP codes:
21210, 21218

* Average price for homes sold through the Central Maryland Multiple
Listing Service over the past 12 months.

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