

People In Piedmont Court Concerned About Community's Negative Image

By Joe Brown
Post Staff Writer

An area of low-income families packed and condensed on a 20-acre complex too overcrowded to include one more home-seeking family. The streets, more like alleys, are narrow strips of passageways that race throughout the complex which presents a mind-tampering maze. Brick houses are lined up in all directions of the compass and closer to a neighbor than one wants to be. The colors of blue and white catch the corner of your eyes as police patrol cars swerve in and out the nearby side streets. It is a neat for crime to run free and dictate the fear in the residents that call it home. From this brief report of living conditions in Piedmont Courts, one would say this is one of the worst places to live. The only disturbing problem is who said it.

Piedmont Courts has taken on the image as being one of the worst community problem spots in Charlotte and in the minds of the people living outside, that's all they know. The residents of the complex realize the negative images of the Courts, but the positive things carry a much heavier weight to them.

"It only got bad in the last two years. The police said five years, but it doesn't go back that far," defends Carie Kelly, a resident of Piedmont Courts.

"Back in the 1970s, we could sit in the back of the house until five o'clock at night and didn't have anything to worry about," Carie Kelly has been an occupant of Piedmont Courts for quite some time, 15 years to be exact, and seen life conditions change in the over-populated housing project.

"I am not going anywhere. I have lived her for 15 years and would another 15 years. This isn't the worst place to live. There are some places where the conditions are even worse," points out Ms. Kelly, leaning back in a yellow-flowered lounge chair.

The past drug-related shooting placed a label image on Piedmont Courts. On November 29, 1985, police reported seven persons wounded during a shooting spree among

suspected drug dealers. Since the incident, police have patrolled the area frequently to crack down on the crime problem.

"Most of the trouble comes from the people from the outside. There are people who live in Piedmont courts who are with these people," Ms. Kelly claims.

The climate of fear is one issue that hangs over the heads of the residents living in Piedmont Courts. Clarence Westbrook, a resident of 10 years, detects no such fear. The positive thoughts for a place pounded by negative media coverage over the years is his way of protecting his home.

"I am pretty much at ease like I always have been. We see a lot more police cars and we get a lot more attention," observes Mr. Westbrook, relaxing on a Sunday afternoon. "I think something positive will come from it. If you get a community frightened, a lot of things will happen."

"Everything is pleasant and so quiet. The police are doing a good job. It is nice now. They are going to fix the houses and it's going to be nicer," smiled Ms. Kelly.

Piedmont Courts is a 44-year-old housing project along Brookshire Freeway, east of downtown Charlotte. The public housing complex holds over 1,500 residents.

The scarred image of the targeted area tags along viciously to the adults and children of the Courts wherever they travel within the city. They encounter the responses and reactions of people's thoughts of their home.

"If someone told me they didn't want to visit me because I live in Piedmont Courts, I would tell them they don't have to come to my house at all," Ms. Kelly stated clearly.

"The perception of Piedmont Courts can be changed. We have programs directed to Piedmont Courts. We have a lot of good things going for Piedmont Courts," informs Mr. Westbrook who attends the neighborhood meetings.

The Housing Authority has planned a \$6 million federal grant for a major renovation of the project area. This plan will reduce the

apartments by a third and create more open space.

Clementine Springs works at the crime prevention aid office, 368 Siegle Avenue. She says the center offers programs such as High School Completion, Job Bank, Hot Lunch program, training with Urban League, Food Co-Op, and the Piedmont Courts Learning Center.

"We offer our services to help. We have different agencies to refer them to," advises Ms. Springs.

Ms. Kelly knows the label image placed on her and her two children, but letting people know abruptly is a personality trait that was forced upon her.

"People talked about the people in Piedmont Courts as being uneducated, but my son is in college," emphasized Ms. Kelly. "The place (Piedmont Courts) didn't influence him to do bad things."

The famous saying, "There is no place like home," applies to even the homes that have been outcast by and looked down on by others.

"If you're ashamed of where you live," Ms. Kelly explains, "you don't need to live there."

"I am never going to down where I live."

"I'm proud to live in Piedmont Courts. Compared to where I moved from, I'm grateful. I consider this apartment like a house," said a pleased Mr. Westbrook.

READ THE CHARLOTTE POST EACH WEEK

YOUR RIGHTS

Do you know...

1. Insurance Companies CANNOT discriminate against the services provided by a Chiropractic Physician. (GS 57-1) (GS 58-260)
2. Insurance Companies must recognize the Certification of Disability of a Chiropractic Physician. (GS 58-260)
3. You have heard it on the news and read it in the paper. Many Insurance Companies are trying to tell Patients and Doctors what treatment is needed. This is a decision that should be made by the Doctor and Patient.

If you have had a:

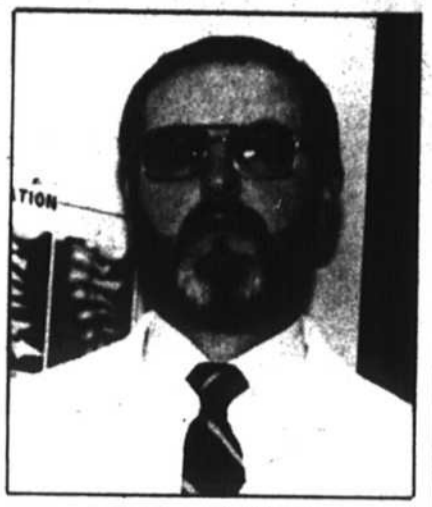
• Accident Injury • Back-Ache • Headache

CALL TODAY

DR. DENNIS WATTS
393-3333

2501 A Beatties Ford Rd.

Chiropractic has provided relief to millions without drugs or surgery
WE ACCEPT INSURANCE



Dr. Dennis Watts
Chiropractor

FEBRUARY

Fine Furniture for less during Haverty's February Sale!
The quality is unmistakable. The prices are unbelievable! Hurry!



A distinctive cherry grouping captures the spirit and grace of Colonial America

Low Sale Price includes the oval table, 3 side chairs and 1 armchair.

\$899

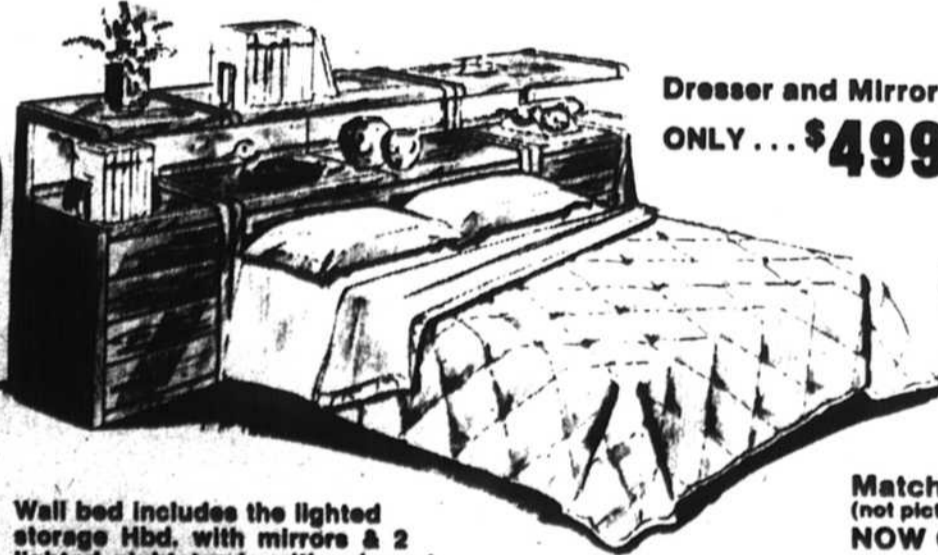
The tradition of elegant dining has been preserved for all time in this classic dining room from UNIVERSAL. Styled in warm cherry veneers, the "American Treasury" collection features reproduction fiddleback chairs, a tasteful oval table that extends to 84" banquet length plus a mirror back china cabinet with dentil molding and brass hardware. Extra side chairs, each \$149

2 pc. 57" China Cabinet
\$799

NO DOWN PAYMENT!
ON ANY PURCHASE USING YOUR CONVENIENT HAVERTY CHARGE. *WITH APPROVED CREDIT

King or Queen Contemporary Wall Bed!
\$799

Handsomely styled in ash solids and veneers, this contemporary wall bed from BROYHILL makes the most of your bedroom space. The unit includes a low profile headboard, two 4-drawer night stands and a lighted deck with mirror back. Double dresser and mirror \$499. * Bedding not included.



Dresser and Mirror ONLY... **\$499**

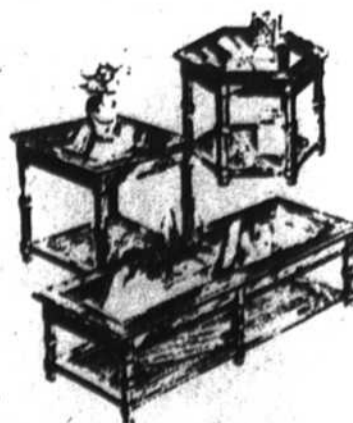
Wall bed includes the lighted storage hbd. with mirrors & 2 lighted nightstands with mirror!

Matching Mans-Chest (not pictured) NOW ONLY **\$399**



Rock, Recline or Swivel **\$299**

BROYHILL gives you a choice of 3 striking accent tables. Each is made of solid flamed wood with a light brown flamed finish and features a bowl edge glass top and woven lower shelf. Hexagon/Square and table or rectangular cocktail table. Any table **\$99**



Queen Anne Wing Chair **\$199**

This lovely Queen Ann chair is the perfect accent piece for any home. It features ornate legs and elegant, but durable velvet upholstery.



THE FATTEST TIRE DEAL IN TOWN IS AT BUFFALO TIRE

ANY SIZE IN STOCK **RADIAL RETREADS \$19**
BLACK OR WHITE

USED RADIALS \$5
MOUNTED FREE

BRAKES \$49⁹⁹ Lifetime Warranty
ALIGNMENT \$15⁹⁹ GAS SHOCKS \$24⁹⁹
LUBE, OIL, FILTER \$12⁹⁹

Call Store For Details Same Day Service

\$750 INSTANT CREDIT
NEVER A DOWN PAYMENT
90 DAYS LIKE CASH
PAY LOW AS 30 MO.
FREE ROTATION SERVICE WITH WHOLE BALANCE
EVERY STEEL RADIAL HAS A LIMITED MILEAGE WARRANTY

BUFFALO TIRE

2025 N. Tryon St. AT 57th St. 332-7111

4001 Monroe Rd. At Eastway 376-7481

2210 South Blvd. Near Tryon 523-1304

Special Hours: South Blvd. ONLY 8 AM - 5 PM - 5 P

Amity Gardens 3000 E. Independence Blvd. 536-5570

Free Delivery within 100 miles Mon. thru Fri. 10 to 9 Sat. 10 to 6, Sun. 1 to 6

Haverty's Revolving Charge 30 - 90 - 99 DAY SAME AS CASH



SINCE 1885 **HAVERTY'S**
Make it Home!