



Edward Hawkins, Developer/Designer

Developer, builder and designer Edward B. Hawkins was born in 1902 in Denver, Colorado. Edward grew up in Denver, graduating from East High School, and went on to study civil engineering for two years at Colorado State Agricultural College, now Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

In 1924, Hawkins moved to Chicago where he was hired as a building superintendent by Home Builders of America. Charlotte, Hawkins' future wife, worked at the same firm as a secretary.

During this period, Hawkins began to undertake small general contracting projects. His increasing interest in residential design led him to study first-hand the Chicago area work of architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

When the Depression stalled home building, Hawkins joined the Civilian Conservation Corps. In December of 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States entered World War II. In 1942, now married, Edward and Charlotte returned to Denver. For the duration of the war, Hawkins served in a civilian capacity at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a federal chemical weapons plant.

Hawkins also began to establish himself as a home designer and builder in Denver. He constructed his first house at 14th and Niagara next to his family home, continuing with homes in the 2500 to 3000 blocks of Race, Albion, Ash, Forest and Glencoe. Between 1942 and 1949, Hawkins built thirty-five modern homes in northeast Denver ranging in price from \$10,000 to \$23,000. He designed them himself, incorporating ideas about modern living and design from his work and studies in Chicago.

In August of 1949, Hawkins conceived of developing an entire subdivision, signing an option to purchase a thirty acre parcel in Englewood, a small community in Arapahoe County just south of the Denver city and county line. In November of 1949, he completed the purchase of the property.



Revere Quality House Program

The post-war construction industry raced to meet the housing demands of returning GI's. Wartime restrictions on the manufacture of consumer products and new construction were lifted. Raw material consumption and factory production, previously dedicated to the American war effort, now refocused on the domestic market.

To promote their products in this booming new market, the Revere Copper and Brass Company joined with the Southwest Research Institute, part of the Housing Research Institute, to create a national program to advance "better architect-builder relations and the general improvement of the quality of speculatively built houses." The program solicited proposals featuring quality modern design, which Revere considered more cost effective and livable than traditional residential design. Participants juried into the program would build ten or more economical, single family homes designed by a professional architect. Local and national publicity would promote the homes, architects, home builders and Revere Copper and Brass products throughout the country.

Hawkins realized that the Revere program could help him sell his new subdivision.

Returning veterans were taking advantage of GI home loans guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Under the plan, a veteran could borrow the full cost of a house with no downpayment, only a charge to cover fees and loan costs. But the program also included strict FHA housing design guidelines which shunned modern homes with flat roofs and plain, asymmetrical facades as a fad, not sound, long-term investments.

While traditional homes in large developments were readily financed in whole, Hawkins had already discovered that the FHA was willing to loan only 80% of the purchase price for one of his modern houses. By associating his new subdivision with the Revere Quality House Program, Hawkins undoubtedly hoped to garner more favorable FHA financing terms.

In order to participate, Hawkins set aside his own design ambitions and hired Eugene Sternberg, who had been recommended to him by the Revere Program. Sternberg, a board-certified architect and professor at the University of Denver School of Architecture and Planning, agreed to participate because of his interest in creating socially-conscious housing combining modern design and economical construction.