

KINGS OAK (40)

LOCATION

It is easy to see the origin of the Kings Oak neighborhood's name in its northern boundary, Oakland Avenue and its eastern edge, Kingshighway Boulevard. The neighborhood is further bounded by Manchester Avenue on the south and Macklind Avenue to the west.

CHARACTERISTICS

The northern perimeter, Oakland Avenue, is dominated by education institutions of various natures. Manchester Avenue on the south, in contrast, is strictly industrial and commercial in nature. These commercial and industrial businesses follow Macklind north along the western edge and seem to meet the education institutions somewhere in the middle. This pattern has kept the residential component of the neighborhood tightly cornered in the northeastern section of Kings Oak.



The Kings Oak neighborhood was built just after the 1904 World's Fair. The Arts and Crafts and Dutch Colonial styles of housing were popular at the turn of the century when Kings Oak developed, and the neighborhood reflects that popularity. Detailed woodwork, art glass, and decorative light fixtures reflect the special style. As a small neighborhood of only approximately 80 homes, Kings Oak offers young families a community in which they can get to know their neighbors.

The residential portion of Kings Oak is confined to the streets of Oakland Avenue, Lawn Place, Berthold, Wise Avenue, and Kingshighway Boulevard. Lawn Place and Kingshighway (between Oakland and Wise) are lined with larger, generally two-story, single-family brick homes with generous front yards. The housing along Berthold varies more but is still mostly owner-occupied, single-family homes. Along Wise, however, the neighborhood takes on a more transient feel with more two- and four-family rental units.

INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

On Kings Oak's northern edge, Saint Louis University High School was established in 1924 when the neighborhood was still in its formative years. The high school has always played a leading role in the area and continues to be active in the neighborhood today.

Currently the school is investing heavily in the neighborhood with purchases of several lots. The school's plans for the lots include some demolition of dilapidated housing and use of land for expansion of the school grounds.

The school will retain some of the houses that are still in good condition, though, for employee housing purposes.



More recently, the St. Louis Science Center also located on Oakland Avenue. Rounding out the educational focus on this perimeter is the St. Louis City magnet school, Compton-Drew Investigative Learning Center.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The City of St. Louis has designated Kings Oak one of its Operation ConServ areas, entitling it to concentrated support services. Through Operation ConServ, the King Oaks Community Housing Corporation has been established to monitor and enhance the area's housing. This housing corporation purchases and redevelops properties to market them to buyers who agree to be owner-occupants.