CLEVELAND PARK Voices

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CPHS Pushes Commercial Rezoning

By Tersh Boasberg
President
Cleveland Park Historical Society

Only about once every 30 years does a neighborhood get a chance to re-examine its zoning. We have that extraordinary opportunity now.

Zoning Hearing Set

Because the designation of Cleveland Park as an Historic District does not adequately protect the small-scale, low-rise commercial structures on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, the Cleveland Park Historical Society (along with ANC-3C and other neighborhood groups) initiated a rezoning action before the D.C. Zoning Commission in July. On October 1, 1987, the Zoning Commission agreed to hear the Connecticut Avenue petition (Case 86-26) and scheduled formal administrative proceedings for January-February 1988 (exact date still to be set). We expect the Zoning Commission will soon agree to hold similar hearings on Wisconsin.

These hearings will give us an excellent chance to change the *commercial* zoning on Connecticut and Wisconsin so that the character and integrity of our historic, neighborhood-serving businesses will be saved. (The *residential* areas of our Historic District between Connecticut and Wisconsin are not affected since they are already properly zoned.)

Key Points

The rezoning fact sheet included in this issue ("The Truth About Rezoning," page 4) should answer most of your questions. Here are the key points to remember:

First, the proposed rezoning does not deprive anyone of his property rights; the purpose of zoning is to benefit the *whole* community—not just commercial property owners.

Second, our present zoning, established 30 years ago in 1958, obviously did not take the new Historic District into account and, in any event, was designed by the Eisenhower Administration to allow the downtown to spread out in case of Soviet atomic attack!

Third, without a zoning change, current development pressures in Northwest Washington will rapidly turn both Connecticut and Wisconsin into high-rise office corridors—as a matter of right. This is exactly what has occurred further up on Connecticut (at Van Ness) and Wisconsin (at Van Ness and Friendship Heights). And witness the massive development proposal for the Park & Shop site at Connecticut and Ordway!

Fourth, all of us—as neighborhood residents—have a right to say what should happen to Cleveland Park. There is no reason for us to be dictated to by developers looking only for the fast buck.

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Park & Shop: Massive New 10-Story Proposal

In a letter from attorney Whayne Quin dated November 10, 1987, notifying adjacent property owners, Cafritz (as owner) and Patricia Daniels (as developer) announced plans to request the D.C. Zoning Commission to approve a huge, 10-story, 210,000 square foot office/retail/residential complex on the Park & Shop site. The plans would necessitate both a PUD and a rezoning of the area from the current C-2-A (5-story, 125,000 sq. ft. limit) to C-2-B or C-3-A, defined in the Zoning Code as appropriate only for "major business and employment centers." In all probability, however, the Zoning Commission will hear CPHS's rezoning petition for Connecticut Avenue before it tackles the Park & Shop request.

Commented Tersh Boasberg, CPHS President, "I think it's unfortunate that Cafritz and Daniels, without any prior consultation, have thrown down the gauntlet of a massive, downtown-style office complex in an area designated by the Comprehensive Plan as a 'low-density, local neighborhood center'—especially since we were just designated a D.C. and National Register Historic District." Boasberg added, "We are prepared to employ all our resources to fight this kind of senseless destruction of Cleveland Park."

Activists Successfully Replace Safeway

By Margaret Hare

All signs point to a big success for citizen activism in Cleveland Park. If all goes as planned, we will have a new grocery store, the Brookville Supermarket, at the Connecticut Avenue location vacated by Safeway on November 28th. This is good news for the many area residents who have come to depend on having a supermarket in that location. And it has resulted largely from local residents making themselves heard.

Safeway announced in September that it planned to close the store at 3427 Connecticut on October 17th. Its long-term lease had expired last year and been replaced by a month-to-month lease while the owners tried to sell the building. Shortly after the announcement, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) member Roger Burns initiated a petition drive. He also joined with Peggy Robin, Ward 3 ANC Chair, in calling a citizens meeting on September 12, 1987. Over 300 concerned residents gathered at the Cleveland Park library to protest the loss of this vitally needed service.

A number of those present agreed to organize a campaign to "Save Our Supermarket" (SOS). The short-term SOS goal was to convince Safeway to keep the store open until a replacement could be found. Long-term efforts would focus on putting together a package agreeable both to residents and the building owners. Over 200 people volunteered to work on the campaign. They immediately began an expanded petition drive and public awareness campaign. Supporters signed up at a great rate—over 2,500 the first weekend. They also wrote to Safeway and to Mayor Marion Barry. Meanwhile, SOS Chair Margaret Hare called Safeway officials both here and at corporate headquarters in California and talked daily with Mayor Barry's office.

The level of concern soon convinced Mayor Barry to intervene. He followed up D.C. Council member Jim Nathanson's call to Safeway officials with one of his own. This succeeded where the efforts of others had not. Safeway agreed to keep the store open at least until the Saturday after Thanksgiving. The short-term goal of buying time had been accomplished!

Early hopes that Safeway might stay were soon dashed. What the extension provided was time to find a buyer who would keep a grocery store there. A contract was signed by Anita Spain and Dolores Montgomery, two of the three owners, to sell the property to the three Shirazi brothers, who own and operate the Brookville Supermarket in Chevy Chase. And thanks primarily to the efforts of John Bonifaz in the Mayor's office and Tilford Dudley (see "Cleveland Park Personalities," spring issue of this newsletter), Mrs. Montgomery put a covenant in the sales contract requiring that a grocery operation be continued at the site.

The Shirazis indicated in a meeting with the SOS Steering Committee that they want to move in as Safeway moves out and provide uninterrupted grocery service. "The neighborhood has suffered enough," they said. "We don't want to lose any more business by being closed." With much renovation required, they are considering alternatives, such as doing the work at night, to avoid closing for even a few weeks. They committed to having a full range of goods in the new store and prices competitive with the chain stores. They also announced plans to institute delivery service.

The news couldn't be better for their prospective Cleveland Park and Woodley Park customers. However, at press time (late November) there were still hurdles to overcome before the SOS "long-term" goal could be assured. The biggest was Safeway's cooperation in a smooth transition. Safeway officials seemed unwilling to negotiate on the Shirazis' purchase of existing equipment and stock. The Shirazis proposed using a third-party appraisal or that Safeway donate the equipment to the Cleveland Park Historical Society, which could then lease it to the Shirazis. With less than a week left before the November 28th closing, SOS again asked Mayor Barry to intervene to ensure that the neighborhood would not be without a grocery store during the holidays.

The outcome will be known by the time you read this article. Meanwhile, we say goodbye to our Safeway friends and even if the store is closed for a short period, we can look forward to the community-oriented grocery operations the Shirazi brothers have planned.

Margaret Hare is Chair of the victorious "Save our Supermarket" campaign.

Rezoning Battle
Continued from preceding page

How You Can Help

Our hearings will cost a good deal for graphics, traffic experts, and other witnesses. However, the neighborhood is organizing. Ten of us have volunteered our time as attorneys. Thirty-seven of us have agreed to help with fundraising and scores more are working on organization and grassroots support. Many of you have already contributed substantial sums to this community effort. To all of you involved in this battle, I want to say a heartfelt "Thank you."

To those who have not become active as yet, give a call to Kathy Wood (244-1276) and learn how you can help. If you do nothing else, please write a one-paragraph letter supporting the CPHS rezoning in Case No. 86-26. Address it to: Chairman Lindsley Williams, D.C. Zoning Commission, District Building, Washington, D.C. 20004. Tell him (in your own words) why you want Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues in Cleveland Park rezoned, i.e., to preserve our historic buildings; to save the neighborhood businesses; to keep the area residential; to limit high-rise commercial office construction; to stop pollution, reduce traffic and parking congestion, etc. Be polite—but be firm!

We will be back in touch with each of you when an actual hearing date is set so you can join us in person before the Zoning Commission. And, if you haven't done so already, do join the Cleveland Park Historical Society now (and send us a contribution for the rezoning battle). Thanks.

Our Neighborhood Shopkeepers

Wally Valentini

By Rives Carroll

Walter Valentini, assistant manager at the departing Cleveland Park Safeway on Connecticut Avenue, was making arrangements with his Italian teacher when I arrived for my interview with him. He is reviving his facility with Italian, once his native language. Born in Rhode Island to Italian parents who immigrated to this country when they were children, Wally—as he is affectionately known to customers and colleagues alike—spoke only Italian until he attended elementary school in Providence. As a result, the language comes easily to him and has been useful on his recent trips to meet relatives in Southern Italy near Naples.

Sporting a bright red Safeway tie, secured in place by an American flag tie stud, Wally was "at home" being interviewed among the boxes and crates piled high in the basement of the Safeway where he has worked for the past 21 years. When he moved to Washington from Providence, Wally did not plan to work in the grocery or retail business. He came here to attend hotel school on the G.I. bill, following the Korean War. He worked for a restaurant chain, was maitre d' at fashionable Paul Young's, and managed a government cafeteria until 1963 when, on a friend's recommendation, he launched his Safeway career. Now a Safeway employee of 25 years, Wally began as a part-time apprentice meat cutter at the Park and Shop branch, before it replaced Kresge's at 3427 Connecticut Avenue.

Within his first year, Wally became a full-time employee, leaving the meat department for groceries, with a brief stint at the checkout counters. At that time, the Valentinis lived on 27th Street and Wally walked to work, a luxury he misses today as he waits in 6 a.m. traffic on Route 270. Soon he was promoted to assistant manager, his current position, which he will retain at the Van Ness Safeway Emporium, where he moves in November.

Wally has seen shifts in both the age of his customers and the selection of foods displayed. The clientele is primarily younger than it was, and the sale of canned goods has decreased in favor of frozen and fresh produce. Because of its limited space, this Safeway has never offered more than the basics. Wally has mixed feelings about this restriction. He prefers greater freedom of choice to meet customer requests, but he knows only a larger store affords that discretion. And it is the intimate size of this store that has been a large part of its appeal, and, unfortunately, the reason the Oakland, California, Safeway headquarters closed it permanently on November 28.

Of his quarter century at this Safeway, Wally recalls: "We've never had any problems. It's been so pleasurable to come in here and know what's ahead of you. When you're comfortable with something, you don't make a change. I've always been very comfortable here, so I figured, 'Just let me stay here.' " In doing so, Safeway has allowed Wally to touch the lives of hundreds of customers, their children, and their children's children. He knows them on sight, greets them by name, and welcomes them with a smile and appropriate comment as they enter the store. There is a noticeable hole at the Safeway when Wally has his day off; customers look forward to his light-hearted humor and personal attention.

A loyal core of employees has strengthened this Safeway by its decade or two of service and its familiarity with its customers and what they buy to eat. Wally explains: "Generally, employees don't stay this long in one store. They just left us here, so we got to know all our customers fairly well. I guess [Safeway] just forgot us." This oversight was fortunate for those who shopped there regularly and counted on being fed in more ways than one. Of the move, Wally says he will miss the customers most. Of that loss, he may not have to worry. Already, many customers plan to follow the 14 employees who will transfer up Connecticut Avenue.

The residents of Cleveland Park will miss the sense of community at their small neighborhood Safeway where some have shopped as much for conviviality as for food and where the children have been happily acknowledged when sent with a list of groceries and a blank check. But they are

Photo by Sally Halvorson

Wally Valentini

richer for their friendship with Wally Valentini, and as he philosophically responds, "It's sad that we're closing. I guess life has to go on."

Join the Cleveland Park Historical Society!

Founded in 1985, the Cleveland Park Historical Society has won its initial battle to have our neighborhood designated as an historic district. But much remains to be done to meet the CPHS's goals of promoting public interest in the history of Cleveland Park and encouraging preservation of its architectural heritage and character as a friendly neighborhood.

With the support of your $25, tax-deductible, annual membership dues, CPHS can pay for architects, traffic and economic experts, and printing to continue our fight against inappropriate commercial development along Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues.

And when you send in your membership, it's not too late to receive the handsome 1987 decal of a neighborhood landmark, designed by Cleveland Park artist Di Stovall.

Send checks for $25, or more, payable to Cleveland Park Historical Society, to:

Cleveland Park Historical Society
Membership
3224 Highland Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

We also need your *volunteer* help for our many activities. Phone Danny Ince (966-4622) if you can help, and for further information.

The Truth About Rezoning

Who is really harmed by rezoning?

The owners (not tenants) of the commercial properties on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues argue that their development rights are being restricted without compensation. But there is no constitutional right to existing zoning. Zoning laws, like other laws, are made for the benefit of *all* citizens—not just for commercial property owners. Every zoning law limits development to some extent; otherwise, we could have no parks, no single-family residences. Washington's building height limit of 130 feet (passed in 1910!) severely limits development. But it has made the city what it is today: spacious, open, livable.

Who is really helped by rezoning?

1. *Existing Tenants*—especially those serving the neighborhood, like shoe repair shops, dry cleaners, book stores. Because large-scale development is expensive, it requires much higher rents, which can be afforded only by bars, fast food parlors, banks, and similar users.
2. *The Elderly*—who depend on neighborhood services and low-rent apartments. Overdevelopment forces out people on fixed incomes by requiring higher rents which they can't afford.
3. *Everyone Else*—by reducing the inevitable noise, traffic congestion, and parking overcrowding which accompany high-rise development.

Can the property owners now get a decent return from their properties without further development?

Of course. Rents have escalated in recent years from $8 per square foot to $30. The owners of the Safeway building at 3427 Connecticut asked about $2 million for that property! No property owners on Connecticut or Wisconsin are hurting.

How much of a zoning reduction are we asking for?

Very little: on Connecticut, from C-2-A to about C-1. This means, in height, from 50 feet (4-5 stories) to 40 feet (3 stories); and in density, from 2.5 FAR to between 1.0 and 2.0. On Wisconsin, we're asking for 40 feet (3 stories) and 1.0 FAR—since there is no Metro station. The high-density residential portions on the east side of Wisconsin also should be rezoned.

Is a compromise possible?

Yes, we don't mind *appropriate* development. On Connecticut right now, 70% of the commercial buildings are only one story; we're agreeing that buildings can be 3 stories. The old Park & Shop is now 15,000 square feet and we agree to its adaptive use and a new adjoining 3-story building: total, 90,000 square feet! Compare this with the new Tenley Point Building (Wisconsin and Brandywine), which is only 33,000 square feet. And did you know that the *entire* two blocks from Macomb to Ordway on the west side of Connecticut contain only 79,000 square feet of commercial space!

Is rezoning really necessary?

Yes. Otherwise, there will always be an economic incentive to tear down the existing low-rise historic structures for new 5-story buildings. Further, to replace the Giant and other Wisconsin Avenue stores means even more office buildings. This will destroy the existing neighborhood and cause severe changes to the adjacent residential areas near both avenues. There will be greatly increased traffic, pollution, and parking congestion on the side streets, and gradually Cleveland Park will be squeezed between heavily commercial Wisconsin and Connecticut to the point where its livability and character are irreparably destroyed.

Are there other similar D.C. commercial areas that are zoned C-1?

Yes, many. For example, the Connecticut Avenue shopping strip between Livingston Street and Chevy Chase Circle; Connecticut at Nebraska; MacArthur Blvd. between Arizona and Dana Place; and just recently, Nebraska and Wisconsin at Tenley Circle was downzoned to C-1 by the Zoning Commission. Don't forget that our existing C-2-A zoning was put in place in 1958—30 years ago—at a time when significant crosstown highways were planned and the Eisenhower Administration, fearful of atomic attack, wanted to spread out the downtown.

Doesn't the presence of a METRO station warrant adjacent development?

The short answer is that we're not against *limited* development (3 stories, not 5 or 6). The long answer is that METRO was sold to the neighborhoods as a way of transporting people; not as a development tool. Besides, a METRO located in an historic district should not be an excuse for tearing down historic buildings: example, the Capitol South METRO stop on the boundary of the Capitol Hill Historic District. Also, the Ward 3 Draft Plan calls for development only at *appropriate* stops and we submit that Cleveland Park is definitely inappropriate. Lastly, we believe most of the new office workers in Northwest Washington commute by car, not METRO; that's another reason we're against high-rise office buildings in the neighborhood.

What does the city's Comprehensive Plan say?

The Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element, adopted as recently as 1985, provides that our shopping areas on Connecticut and Wisconsin should be "low-density" (1107(a)(1)) "local neighborhood centers" (1108(b)(1))—the lowest commercial designations in the Plan. C-1, not C-2-A, is the lowest zoning classification; and the Home Rule Act specifically provides that zoning "shall not be inconsistent" with the Plan.

How You Can Help CPHS's Rezoning Effort

1. Join the Cleveland Park Historical Society (see details, page 3) so we can keep you informed.
2. Make a tax-deductible contribution to CPHS for our rezoning battle and mail it to 3224 Highland Place N.W., Washington, DC 20008.
3. Send a one-paragraph letter supporting CPHS's rezoning petition on Connecticut and Wisconsin to: Chairman Lindsley Williams, D.C. Zoning Commission, District Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20004. Be polite, but firm. *Do it now!*
4. Attend our hearing when we let you know the date in early 1988.

How can I learn more?

Contact the following:

	For *Connecticut Avenue*	For *Wisconsin Avenue*
Fundraising	Danny Ince 966-4622	Margaret Lenzner 966-3272
Organizing	Monnie Peters 363-3049	David Marlin 363-6018
Legal	Tersh Boasberg 828-9600	Diane Olsson 362-7379

Photo by Christina Wood

Rives Carroll guides visiting preservationists on a CPHS tour of Cleveland Park (see page 8). Author of the interviews on pages 3 and 5, Rives is Enrichment Coordinator at John Eaton and Phoebe Hearst Schools and edited *Cleveland Park Voices: A Social History 1890-1984.*

Cleveland Park Personalities

Libby Rowe

By Rives Carroll

When Libby Rowe (Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr.), elegant and composed, testified before the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board in favor of Cleveland Park's designation as an historic district, the chairman interrupted the proceedings to welcome her. He acknowledged her as a practiced protector of her city and praised her as a respected and untiring Washington activist. The third recipient of the Columbia Historical Society's Renchard Prize for Historic Preservation, Libby is a life-long resident of Washington. From her mother, she learned to appreciate the beauty of the city's buildings, trees, and parks, which she has so successfully sought to preserve.

She grew up on 19th Street north of Dupont Circle, living among some of the city's most gracious buildings. She walked to Potomac School, then located on California Street in Adams Morgan, and later to Madeira, whose campus at that time was the alley between New Hampshire Avenue and 19th Street. Hockey classes were held on the Ellipse, and the senior club room was the coach house behind the Columbia Historical Society.

Libby's fondest school memories are of her preschool years at this country's first Montessori school, started by Dr. Maria Montessori for the grandchildren of Alexander Graham Bell. Bell, at that time, was living with his daughter's family south of Dupont Circle. During his work with the deaf, he had become an admirer of Dr. Montessori's methods of educating less advantaged children in Italy. Libby still has a vivid memory of the elderly gentleman who looked like Santa Claus and was the grandfather of her schoolmate. When the girls would appear in his fourth floor study in search of candy, they knew right where to look—behind the "B" volume of the encyclopedia. Once the girls had removed it from the shelf, Bell would turn to the entry bearing his name and read to them: "Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh. . . ."

Following her graduation from Bryn Mawr College during the Depression, Libby worked for the United Mine Workers until she married James Rowe, Jr. and was forced to resign because the UMW did not permit married women on its staff. When her late husband, a New Dealer, went overseas with the Navy in World War II, she worked in the Washington office of the International Labour Organisation, then part of the League of Nations and later continued under the United Nations. At this time the Rowes had only one child, but when Libby stopped working in the early 1950s, she was a full-time mother with two daughters and a son. In 1951 they moved to Cleveland Park, because they wanted to stay in the city but couldn't afford Georgetown.

Libby has personally demonstrated her affection for "all four quarters of the city. This is my hometown," she asserts in her deep voice. Through instinct, zeal, and a little chance, Libby became one of the District's most avid planners. As a member of the D.C. Auditorium Commission, later the Cultural Center Commission, and finally the Committee for the Kennedy Center, Libby was searching for a suitable site when, on a visit to the National Capital Planning Commission, she saw three-dimensional models of proposed freeways that could destroy a large part of the city. "In 1954," she explained, "I began to read everything I could get my hands on" about cities, urban renewal, and highways.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s with increased concern surrounding the hydrogen bomb, many planners supported dispersement of the federal government and the construction of freeways to provide easy access in and out of the city. By the time Libby became active in planning, the Southwest and Whitehurst Freeways were already in place; as an employee at Family and Child Services, she was alarmed by the social disruption they caused. In addition, the proliferation of freeway proposals was encouraged by the new Interstate Highway Program, which offered each community a dollar for every ten cents it raised. Truckers urged the construction of highways right through the city. "That," claimed Libby, "is why I got to be a planner."

Photo by Sally Halverson

Libby Rowe

By the late 1950s, Senator Alan Bible of Arizona was holding hearings on the proposed freeways and had revived an old plan for a subway as a preferable means of transporting people in a growing community without disrupting the city. During these hearings, a five-year freeze was placed on freeway development west of Rock Creek Park. Deeply committed to the issues by this time, Libby, in 1961, became one of five Kennedy appointees to the National Capital Planning Commission. She served as chairman until 1968.

In the early 1960s, few citizens groups were alarmed by the imminent freeway construction. Eight-lane expressways appeared innocent when seen as simple black lines on a developer's map. But Washington could have been strangled by concrete. For example, 270-S was slated to cross north Cleveland Park and join Rock Creek Parkway, a plan supported by Montgomery County developers. Also planned was a freeway from Virginia to cross the Potomac on the proposed Three Sisters Bridge, just upriver from Key Bridge, with one fork forming an inner loop that would have divided the city and burrowed under the White House lawn. Meanwhile, I-95 was cutting into the city from the northeast. Such a maze of criss-crossing, high-speed roads now seems mind-boggling, but at the time, even local newspapers and radio and television stations considered this progress!

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Libby Rowe

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The Committee of 100 on the Federal City, an old and respected citizens planning group, took the lead in protecting the city from this devastation. The National Capital Planning Commission, through which all such development plans must pass, used its judgment to prevent or delay renewal and freeway plans, "buying time" for citizens groups to organize. "By the end of my time on the Planning Commission," Libby said, "we had the most wonderful citizens groups—a whole alignment of retired colonels in Arlington, 'city beautiful' people, small merchants, black homeowners, and militant blacks in the Northeast—a real coalition of all kinds of citizens from all parts of the city." By the time home rule was established in 1974, the threat of disruptive renewal and freeways had ceased.

"Fighting the federal bulldozer" was not limited to opposing ruthless urban renewal and freeway construction; it included protecting historic buildings and areas as well. The Planning Commission sponsored a citywide survey to identify landmarks and historic districts and place them in one of three categories. Carl Feiss, a Cleveland Park resident, directed the survey, which designated Cleveland Park as a Category III Landmark. Subsequently, in 1964, Libby established the Joint Committee on Landmarks, a marriage of the Fine Arts Commission and the Planning Commission and the first preservation committee for the District of Columbia.

Through Libby Rowe's leadership and vision, our city was saved, preservation encouraged, and subway plans revived. Her interest continues today. An active member of the Friends of Tregaron, the White House Historical Association, and the Committee of 100, which she chaired from 1973 to 1980, Libby testified just recently in favor of a bill to return the Van Ness end of Glover Archbold Park to the Park Service.

It is with good reason that this gracious grandmother of five is still asked regularly to testify as an expert witness against proposals which threaten her city. She cares.

Wisconsin Avenue's Small-Town Shops

By Ellen Bates

Only yesterday, urban America was laced with small shopping strips not unlike the Wisconsin Avenue commercial area between Lowell and Norton Streets. Although across the Avenue from the Cleveland Park Historic District's western boundary, for several generations this group of stores has provided goods and services to Cleveland Park residents and the neighborhood at large. Many of the facades, though modest, are architecturally significant and if developers erode these blocks, a good piece of Cleveland Park's architectural as well as social history will be lost. And residents will waste time and gasoline driving in increasing traffic to suburban shopping centers for the basics of everyday living.

It is for all these reasons that the Cleveland Park Historical Society includes this shopping strip in the commercial areas for which we are seeking rezoning (see page 1).

How many Cleveland Park natives were fitted for their first shoes by the Mancari family, in business since 1926 at the Modern Shoe Shop on Macomb just west of Wisconsin? How many mothers have ordered individually decorated birthday cakes from University Pastry, which opened its doors at 3234 Wisconsin in 1927? And during the past 40 years, how many old and young have enjoyed the Tuesday and Thursday specials at the Zebra Room? This venerable landmark at Wisconsin and Macomb can claim international renown, for visiting scholars from afar at the College of Preachers have spread the word on other continents about the local pizza parlor.

An estimated 5,000 residents, plus 2,800 students from neighborhood schools, patronize the commercial strip weekly, and many shop daily. Indeed, it is a rite of passage when a child is first allowed "to run up to the Giant for milk and cat food," or spend his allowance at Sullivan's Toy Store. On Saturdays, these blocks are a vestige of small-town America, as neighbors chat in front of the flower vendor at Friendship Florists, which opened in 1943, buy school supplies at G.C. Murphy's, a neighborhood favorite since 1953, or purchase spirits for the weekend at Burka's Liquors, in business since 1936. Few can remember the long-gone University Hardware Company, Neam Brothers delicatessen, and D. Katz the shoemaker, but many wish similar businesses would return.

Photo by Kathy Wood

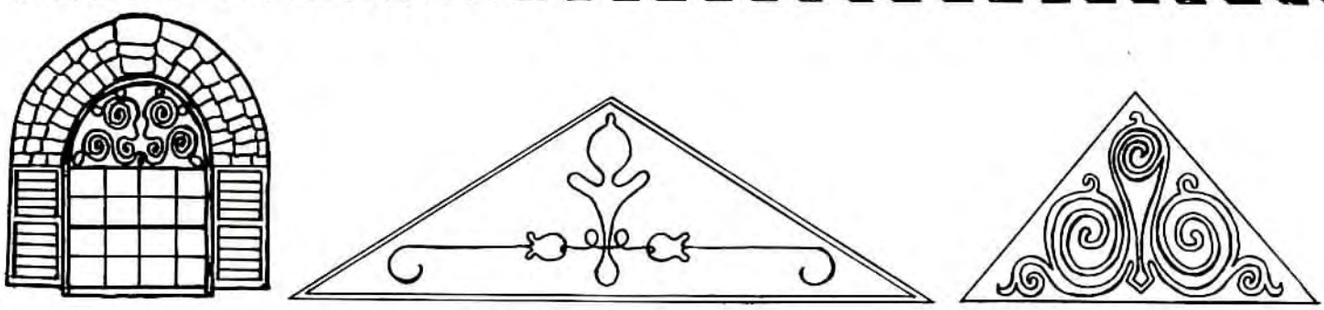
The Modern Shoe Shop on Macomb, just west of Wisconsin, opened in 1926.

These stores have long served the neighborhood well and residents have remained loyal. The businesses are small-scale operations, but they are on a human scale, and in this country today, neighborhood shopping strips are a vanishing act.

Ellen Bates serves on the Cleveland Park Historical Society's Wisconsin Avenue Task Force.

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Our handsome new three-inch Cleveland Park Historical Society button is available for $1 from Executive Director Kathy Wood (244-1276).



Rope designs on Cleveland Park houses created by (left to right) Waddy Wood, Ella Bennett Sherman, and Robert Thompson Head. Drawings by Christina Wood.

Architectural Corner

By Kathy Wood

Rope Designs on Cleveland Park Houses

Waddy Wood, a notable local Washington architect, designed Cleveland Park's first Shingle Style house, built at 3100 Newark Street in 1897. This house also was the first in Cleveland Park to incorporate a decoration formed from rope dipped in plaster, an ornamental design almost unique to Cleveland Park.

The Shingle Style is a uniquely American architectural style which originated after the celebration of our centennial in 1876 when American architects paused in their adherence to the latest European architectural fashions and focused on our earliest 17th century Colonial architecture. H.H. Richardson and his student Charles McKim, who developed this style, derived inspiration from the picturesque early New England Salt-Box houses. These frame houses, constructed of large half timbers and encapsulated in handhewn wood clapboards and shingles, called to mind the romantic image of pre-industrial medieval craftsmanship. A desire to emulate this period and recapture its spirit lay at the heart of the writings of William Morris and others in England who established the Arts and Crafts Movement. This movement revived many medieval crafts, which were exhibited at our centennial exposition and inspired Americans to turn back and celebrate their past.

Americans were also trying to establish their own distinctive American style. The creation of the Shingle Style shares with the English Arts and Crafts movement the enthusiasm for the preindustrial medieval emphasis on craftsmanship as opposed to standardized machine-made materials and the romantic view of the simple rural life. However, it is distinctively American in its use of materials that were prevalent in the architecture of 17th century New England.

It is fitting and significant that the first use in Cleveland Park of a curvilinear rope design placed prominently on the exterior of a house which has no other applied ornament is on one of these Shingle Style houses. This style was first developed for New England summer homes near the sea where the rope of the sailor and the fisherman would have a special significance.

Waddy Wood was an interesting architect because he did not go to one of the architectural schools of the period but was largely self taught, as was common in those days. Among his training methods was to study the latest styles publicized in architectural journals found in the Library of Congress. Designs for Shingle Style houses were featured in the 1880s and 1890s. Sketches by E. Eldon Deane of one of these by William Ralph Emerson, the Loring house at Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, appeared in the *American Architect* of 1884. Two of the sketches depict spiral rope designs on the side of a shed roof which look remarkably like the design used by Waddy Wood on his Cleveland Park Shingle Cottage (see left sketch above). Wood's design also subsequently appeared in an architectural journal.

Wood designed only one Shingle Style house in Cleveland Park and used a rope motif only once. Robert Thompson Head, another self-taught architect, also used this rope motif once, high up on a side gable of his largest and most varied Queen Anne Style house at 2941 Newark, built in 1904.

It was Ella Bennett Sherman who popularized the motif in Cleveland Park. She was the wife of John Sherman who was President of the Cleveland Park Company from 1895 to 1909. She often used the rope motif on the houses she designed for Cleveland Park between 1902 and 1909. She was an artist who studied at the Art Student's League in New York and then probably learned how to design and draft houses from Robert Thompson Head during the five years he was designing houses in Cleveland Park. Especially notable are her rope designs for houses on Newark (3121, 3042), on lower Macomb (2929, 3023), and at the northwest corner of Macomb and Ross Place.

Keep your eyes open for this detail on houses in other neighborhoods and please let me know if you find any. So far I have not seen this detail used elsewhere except in Manchester-by-the-Sea.

Architectural historian and CPHS Executive Director Kathy Wood's extensive work on Cleveland Park culminated in her preparation of the successful Cleveland Park Historic District nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. She is author of a chapter on Cleveland Park in Washington at Home: Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital, *edited by Kathryn S. Smith (forthcoming 1988), and also teaches American architectural history at local colleges.*

From the Executive Director

Architectural Review Committee

CPHS's Architectural Review Committee (ARC) has been meeting monthly since May to review exterior changes proposed for Cleveland Park houses and Connecticut Avenue shops. Meeting with us are Nancy Witherell and David Maloney of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) staff.

Only one of the some 30 cases we've reviewed so far has had to go before the HPRB. This was the new Uptown Cafe at Connecticut and Ordway, where a deck was built and windows altered without a proper building permit. The cafe owner is working with city officials to rectify the situation.

Currently, Cleveland Park's new status as an historic district is not causing delays, but a new zoning requirement affecting properties citywide is making it difficult for some, *not all*, homeowners to get a building permit quickly. To get the zoning desk to sign off on your building permit, you must have a subdivision (record lot), which costs about $100 and takes up to six weeks to process.

While you are waiting for zoning, you can easily satisfy the historic district requirements for a building permit by having your plans reviewed by the HPRB. Key things to remember are that your *plans*, with clear *photos* and *a drawing of your site with the location of your exterior alterations marked on it* must be filed with the Landmarks Office (Permit Processing Division, Room 205, 614 H Street N.W.) *by the last Friday of the month.*

The ARC has issued an instruction sheet to guide Cleveland Park home and business owners through the building permit process. Call Kathy Wood (244-1276) for a copy or information.

The 15-member ARC is led by Bryan Leithauser and Whit Peters and currently also includes: Kathy Wood (CPHS Executive Director), Peggy Robin (ANC), Cherrie Anderson, Rives Carroll, Ed Fleischman, John Fowler, Sally Halvorson, Ruth Montague, Eleanor Oliver (serving as secretary), Robin Roberts, Sue Ruff, Anneliese Sullivan, and Mary Beth West.

Other CPHS Activities

The major rezoning effort described by CPHS President Tersh Boasberg on page 1 will occupy us for the next few months. Then we will work with Mrs. Peggy Chen to plan a celebration of the centennial of Twin Oaks, our important neighborhood landmark built as the summer home of National Geographic Society cofounder Gardiner Greene Hubbard.

We are also planning another spectacular house tour for next spring. Cleveland Park artist Di Stoval is working on a banner we could all purchase to hang on our houses on special Cleveland Park days—the House Tour and Block Party days.

We unveiled our new Cleveland Park Historical Society buttons on Friday, October 16, when 150 visitors from cities around the country attending the 41st Annual Preservation Conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation elected to attend a special tour of Cleveland Park, followed by a seminar in the newly refurbished Hearst Hall of National Cathedral School. Tersh Boasberg led the seminar on how to preserve an historic neighborhood threatened by commercial overbuilding, with panelists Peggy Robin, Ward 3 ANC Chair, Charles Cassel of the Historic Preservation Review Board, Alvin McNeil from the D.C. Office of Planning, and Kirk White, noted Washington zoning lawyer. Rives Carroll, Judy Hubbard, and Nancy Witherell helped me guide our visitors on a driving and walking tour of the neighborhood prior to the seminar. Our visitors were enthusiastic about the entire morning.

Call me if you'd like to purchase (for $1) our beautiful new CPHS button (see page 6). We hope everyone will wear one as we descend on the Zoning Commission in January to let them know how determined we are to protect the commercial areas of our historic district.

—Kathy Wood
Executive Director

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