



Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

An Update on Development in Cleveland Park's Commercial Corridor

By Stephen Hansen

A majority of the commercial and purpose-built buildings along the commercial strip are important contributing resources to the Cleveland Park Historic District. This remarkable intact assemblage of iconic brick and stone buildings exemplifies typical 1920s linear and horizontal commercial strips, with a variety of small, low-scale, generally one- or two-story shops.

In 2022, the DC Office of Planning (OP) began its [Connecticut Avenue Development Guidelines](#) study, which was completed last year. In consultation with DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the study examined how building design and public space in Cleveland Park could be adapted to meet the new land use designations provided in the [2021 amended Comprehensive Plan](#), while also allowing for development that is compatible in character with the established historic district.

At community charrettes in Cleveland Park and Woodley Park, OP displayed 3D models of various development and design scenarios to test drive public reaction to the Comprehensive Plan's new zoning classifications, which allow for greater building heights and mass. The models included adding anywhere from five to seven floors to historic buildings along Connecticut Avenue and developing vacant or underutilized—infill—parcels.



Cleveland Park's low-scale retail buildings along the east side of Connecticut Avenue in the 1930s. Photo courtesy of DC History Center.

[Continues on page 6](#)

Mark Your Calendar for the CPHS 2023 Annual Meeting and Board Election!

CPHS's annual meeting and Board of Directors election will take place on Thursday, June 8, at 7:00 pm at the Cleveland Park Congregational UCC—3400 Lowell St. NW. Board President Bonne LePard will address the membership about 2022–2023 events and actions taken and what CPHS will be focusing on over the coming year. Bonnie will also introduce the new candidates for the Board of Directors and Board candidates up for re-election. Be prepared to vote by reviewing the candidate biographies on the CPHS website: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/>.

Two guest speakers—Steve Knight, President of the Art Deco Society of Washington (ADSW), and Deborah Chalfie, ADSW Preservation Chair—are joining us for what should be a most interesting talk about Cleveland Park's Art Deco heritage and future. They will also review the most current DC Office of Planning's recommendations regarding the commercial corridor and share their concerns with the proposed plans, particularly those regarding the historic district's Art Deco buildings.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- [On the Street Where You Live](#)
- [George Idelson Receives France's Highest Honor](#)
- [House Histories](#)
- [CPHS Embarks on a Study of Racially Restrictive Covenants](#)
- [It's All in the Details](#)
- [West Side \(of Connecticut Avenue\) Stories](#)
- [News from the ARC](#)

On the Street Where You Live *Side-by-Side Co-ops on Porter Street*

By Margaret Ainscough



As Porter Street rises west from Connecticut Avenue, an unusual cooperative apartment complex bridges the transition from Cleveland Park's busy commercial district to its leafy neighborhoods of historic houses. Built in 1924, the six buildings lining the south side of Porter Street, from 3018 to 3028, were among the city's first garden apartments and one of its early cooperative complexes.

Although known collectively as the Cleveland Park Apartments, each of the six buildings was sold and managed as a separate cooperative corporation, an arrangement that continues today. Sitting three stories high, with tall gabled roofs, landscaped lawns, and seating areas to the rear, the red-brick buildings designed by architect James E. Cooper blend easily with nearby single-family houses. Free-standing garages—a modern feature at the time—line up behind the complex, allotting one Model-T sized space for every two apartments.

Inside each building, 12 apartments—just four per floor—occupy each corner around a central staircase. The layout allows each apartment two orientations, according to former resident Nancy Skinkle, AIA LEED-AP, who lived at 3028 Porter Street from 1995 to 2005.

At approximately 600 to 700 square feet, the apartments were built with one or two bedrooms and galley kitchens equipped with dumbwaiters.

On the basement level, additional living space historically was set aside for the building's porter, who was responsible for maintenance, such as cleaning, snow clearing, and trash removal. When porters were employed, every Sunday they rang a bell at 7:00 p.m., signaling residents to place their household trash in the dumbwaiter for removal, Skinkle said.

[Continues on page 7](#)

George Idelson Receives France's Highest Honor

By Andrea Pedolsky



Last November 30, at the French Embassy in Washington, DC, French President Emmanuel Macron honored CPHS member George Idelson and four other American World War II veterans, for their part in liberating France. During the ceremony, President Macron said: "You came to fight 80 years ago from the other side of the Atlantic to ensure our shared ideals and faith in democracy would triumph. France will be eternally grateful." The four men were made knights of the Legion of Honor, France's highest honor.

You can [read about George's incredible World War II experiences](#), including fighting in the Battle of the Bulge, in the interview he had with the author of a biography of former Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Shalikashvili.

And to learn about George's post-war life, [enjoy his interview with former CPHS board member Abigail Porter](#).

CPHS Sets Its Table at the DC History Conference

By Andrea Pedolsky

The 49th DC History Conference took place on March 23–25 at the Martin Luther King Library. The Conference is an interdisciplinary, community conference that considers DC's past, present, and future through a variety of panels, roundtables, creative expressions, keynotes, and special features, including the History Network and Poster Session.

CPHS was one of over 50 local organizations across the DMV that participated in the History Network. Located in the library's Great Hall, the two-hour session offered conference attendees the opportunity to meet representatives and learn about their work. Executive Director Stephen Hansen and board secretary Andrea Pedolsky hosted CPHS's table displaying copies of *Voices* and other publications about Cleveland Park and information about membership.

House Histories *Locking in the Colors*

By Andrea Pedolsky, as told to by Leila Afzal



In 1992, when Leila Afzal and her husband, Malcolm Byrne, were house hunting, they were thrilled by the amazing use of color—greens, oranges, reds, purples, and yellows—that suffused a semi-detached, Wardman-style house on Ordway Street. And so, they purchased the home from Susan and Dit Talley, and became the fortunate inheritors of a show-stopping renovation by renowned DC and Cleveland Park-based architect Dickson Carroll. The Washington Post gave the renovation four-color coverage in 1986, highlighting the architect's use of form and color. As Dit Talley said to the Post reporter, "When you merge forms with color, what you get is a work of art."

But there is a story behind this story. Given the age of most Cleveland Park homes, many have extensive genealogies and enjoy some local lore. The Talleys bought the house in 1977 from K.T. Yang, the chef of the Yenching Palace restaurant. It was, to put it nicely, in disarray—especially the kitchen.

But most startling were the locks: attached to nearly every door, including the attic's, was a heavy-duty lock. One's imagination could go wild conjuring up the reason why they had been installed, but the reason was simple. Mr. Yang housed several Yenching Palace employees in his home—some say up to 17 lived there at a time. And so, the kitchen was used by many people (thus the grease build-up). And the locks provided each resident a modicum of privacy. According to the Talleys, their neighbors were happy to see the number of people living in the house reduced to two when they moved in.

Leila and her husband still enjoy being surrounded by Dickson Carroll's color scheme—and the lock remains on the attic door.

From the editor: if you have a house history that you would like to share, please contact Voices at: staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

CPHS Embarks on a Study of Racially Restrictive Covenants

By Stephen Hansen

CPHS is in the process of conducting a multi-part study of the history and impact of racially restrictive covenants in the Cleveland Park Historic District. We have completed a comprehensive survey of covenants in Cleveland Park from 1921 to 1948, when the Supreme Court ruled that racial covenants violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and made them unenforceable. The passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act finally outlawed covenants.

The next phase of the study will examine the earliest documented use of restrictive covenants in Cleveland Park to determine who were the actors and what were the factors that led to their use. We will also examine the implementation of covenants in some other neighborhoods in the city to help determine common practices that may help illuminate Cleveland Park's history.

Once the data have been processed and analyzed, CPHS will publish the results of the study.

West Side (of Connecticut Avenue) Stories

Returning at long last, after a pandemic-related hiatus, CPHS is hosting two walking tours in the historic district.

Newark Street Architecture June 17, 2023, 10:00 am–12:00 pm

Home to almost every American residential architecture style, Newark Street embodies the architectural history of the Cleveland Park Historic District. Join CPHS member Camilla Carpenter and Executive Director Stephen Hansen as they walk along Cleveland Park's iconic Newark Street and discuss its house styles and histories.

Sears Houses September 9, 2023, 10:00 am–12:00 pm

Led by CPHS member Dr. Barbara Porter, this tour will examine many of the documented Sears & Roebuck catalogue houses ("kit" houses) in Cleveland Park, dating between 1911 and 1929 and representing a multiplicity of architectural styles. There will also be a discussion about the economic and social aspects of this very American phenomenon.

Tours are free to CPHS members. Check our [website](https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org) for details and to register.

It's All in the Details

In CPHS's book, *Cleveland Park: A Guide to Architectural Styles & Building Types*, the authors explain that architectural styles are identified by external appearance and ornamentation, while building types refer to three-dimensional form and layout. In this new column, we will be exploring various architectural styles you can encounter on a casual stroll through the historic district.

The Columns of Cleveland Park

By Andrea Pedolsky

On nearly every street in the historic district there are homes fronted with columns. Although they are structural—holding up porch roofs and porticos—they are pleasing to the eye and ornamental.

While there are five types of columns in classical architecture—Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite, in Cleveland Park you will mainly find Tuscan, Doric, and Corinthian.

The Tuscan column, a simple, unadorned shaft, is the most used. As you wander the streets, you'll see it appears individually but also grouped in twos and threes. Some are tall and slender, others are more robust. Some rest on circular or square bases, others on brick or stone piers. While there may be



A Sherman Cottage with clusters of three Tuscan columns sitting on massive stone piers on the 2900 block of Macomb Street.



Singleton Tuscan columns sitting on massive, stone piers on a Bungalow on the 2900 block of Ordway.



Full-length Tuscan columns fronting a Four Square on the 3400 block of Porter Street.

some still made of wood, most are made of a tin/zinc composite, and are often hollow.

Doric columns also make an appearance in the neighborhood. The Doric column is fluted, with parallel channels running the length of the shaft.



Doric columns on a Queen Anne with a twist: instead of piers under the columns they are above, with decorative millwork in between. On the 3100 block of Newark Street.

The Corinthian column is a variation of the Tuscan, with a more decorative capital.



Two tall Corinthians on decorative, boxed piers frame out this Colonial Georgian Revival on the 3100 block of Ordway Street.



Squared off columns rest on brick piers on this Dutch Colonial Revival on the 2900 block of Newark Street.



Hefty, stone-covered, battered (tapered) columns on a Bungalow on the 2900 block of Macomb Street.



A Queen Anne with stylized, turned wood columns on the 3600 block of Newark Street.

And then to prove there are no rules to what type of column should be used, you don't have to look hard to find the outliers that are curvy or dowel-like.

News from the ARC

By Christine Hobbs, ARC co-chair

The signs of new construction and rehabilitation are all around the Cleveland Park Historic District. While a few new major projects, such as City Ridge and Upton Place, are just outside of the historic district—and so worthy to be aware of—significant construction is underway inside the historic district, including at the site of the Macklin Apartments at Connecticut Avenue and Newark Street and a multi-story development at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Macomb Street.

Also on Connecticut Avenue is the new pergola fronting Medium Rare. In its 2022 review, the ARC supported pulling the pergola away from the building, which is a contributing structure, and allowing for more pedestrian space.

Smaller residential renovations, typically rear additions that add a family room on the first floor and a larger owners' suite on the second floor, are ongoing. Neighbors appreciate owners who are respectful of the original house while updating and expanding their living space. You can read the ARC's March report on an approved renovation [here](#).

The ARC's review, as well as consideration by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), occurs very early in the

development process. Some projects are reviewed but never built, others change substantially as they move through the process and owners develop and refine their ideas about the project and receive input from the Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Preservation Review Board. For instance, the ARC first reviewed the multi-story development on the corner of Wisconsin and Macomb, which involved moving an existing single-family house from Wisconsin Avenue to facing Macomb Street, in spring 2019. And the ARC reviewed the Macklin project later in 2019. The ARC reviewed several residential projects currently undergoing renovation on Ordway and Highland Place in 2020.

With the recent redrawing of the ANC boundaries, the Cleveland Park Historic District is now in two ANCs: ANC 3C and ANC 3A. The bulk of the Historic District is housed in 3C, while the western edge is in 3A. ANC 3C has established two subcommittees tasked with reviewing historic preservation issues, one for single-family residential projects and the other for commercial, multi-family, and institutional properties. The ARC continues to share the results of its deliberations with the two ANCs and other involved parties.

ARC's Work

The ARC meets the second Monday of every month, except in August, and the public and neighbors are encouraged to attend and participate. Deliberations on individual projects are limited to ARC members. Results of the meetings are shared with the impacted Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, and the presenters. ARC reports are also posted on the CPHS website and are interesting reading.

Historic Preservation Review Process in a Nutshell

The work of the ARC is part of the city's larger historic preservation review process and is a vehicle for neighbors in all of the city's historic districts to offer input on historic preservation matters. The ANC's Planning and Zoning committee meets on the first Monday of the month. On the second Monday, the ARC meets to hear the project presentation. This is followed by the full ANC meeting, which typically happens on the third Monday of the month. And finally, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which is governed by the 1978 Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act, holds its meetings the last week of the month, typically on a Thursday. While the motions of the ANC "carry great weight," the HPRB makes the final determination on all historical preservation projects. The ARC, the relevant ANC, and neighbors can testify at the HPRB hearings.

Cleveland Park neighbors who are preparing for an exterior renovation will find many useful resources on our website here: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org>—as well as a wealth of information about the Cleveland Park Historic District. We look forward to seeing you at an ARC meeting.



Order a Historic Marker for Your Cleveland Park Home

CPHS offers historic house markers for contributing buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District—those built before 1941—and those individually landmarked. To order a marker, download the form at <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-house-markers/>. We will confirm the date of your house and get your order started.

Our high-quality plaques are forged to order by the family-owned Erie Landmark Company. We provide these to members at cost (\$175) as well as to non-members (\$225, the difference is the price of a one-year household membership).

Development Update , continued from page 1

Historic Preservation Concerns

Since the models do not reflect HPO's guidelines for the treatment of properties in historic districts—specifically for such important character-defining features as the buildings' height, mass, and scale—we have to await the release of OP's design guidelines from their 2022 study to learn how closely they adhered to HPO's own design guidelines and to what extent they may affect the nature of the historic district.

In terms of building height, HPO's design guidelines call for any additional height to be set back from the facades so that it does not alter the character and visual scale of the historic building, and hidden from view by pedestrians on the street; additional setbacks are often required for corner buildings. Taller additions with multiple floors should also be stepped



Model for a seven-story and penthouse replacement for the 1991 addition to Sam's Park & Shop. DC Office of Planning.

Review Board (HPRB) approved the design. OP's 3D modeling proposed replacing the 1991 addition with a five- to seven-story, mixed-use structure. Since Sam's is a contributing resource to the historic district, and a proposed new building will be abutting it, this should have a mitigating effect on the height and scale of what may be allowed to be built there.



An OP model for five-story and penthouse additions on the east side of Connecticut Avenue. DC Office of Planning.

back gradually to help mitigate their visual impact.

HPO's design guidelines for new construction adjacent to contributing buildings (for example, Sam's Park & Shop and the firehouse) call for such construction to be completed in a contextually sensitive manner, including with a scale that is compatible with existing buildings. It is important to note that the design of the 1991 addition to Sam's followed these guidelines by mirroring the existing structure in scale as closely as possible—as a result, the Historic Preservation



The newly completed Park & Shop on Connecticut Avenue in the 1930s. The southern end was intended to accommodate an addition, the first of which was a gas station. Photo: Cleveland Park Historical Society.



OP model for a 65-foot-high addition atop the former Yenching Palace restaurant building, immediately to the right of the historic firehouse. There is no setback until the top floor. DC Office of Planning.

Time Frame

OP's draft guidelines are due to be released in April for public comment. During the comment period, the plan will also go to HPRB for review—likely at its May meeting—where the focus will be on its compatibility with the historic corridor. As a result of its review, HPRB may accept the guidelines, accept with conditions, or ask for significant revisions. Once OP and HPRB have approved the guidelines, changes to existing zoning regulations will follow.

There will undoubtedly be little time to react to OP's draft guidelines—CPHS will need to be ready to comment in May. We will keep the membership informed about the release of the draft guidelines and provide an analysis of how well they address historic preservation concerns. We will also provide talking points for those who wish to provide feedback to OP.

CPHS is in the process of updating its architectural design guidelines to address future changes and additions in Cleveland Park's historic commercial corridor.

Planning Work on Your Home in the Cleveland Park Historic District?

Owners of homes and other buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District share responsibility for helping preserve the historic fabric of the neighborhood, the properties themselves, and their relationship to the whole streetscape and natural environment.

Visit our website, ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org, for guidance on the design review process in Cleveland Park and the permitting process in DC.

Side-by-Side Co-ops, continued from page 2

Originally priced from \$5,800 to \$7,500 per unit, and requiring a 20 percent down payment, sales at the newly built Cleveland Park Apartments “were brisk and highly successful,” according to James M. Goode’s *Best Addresses*. By comparison, recent sales range in the mid- to upper-\$300,000s.

The Cleveland Park Apartments were the first Washington cooperative projects to be heavily advertised in the local newspaper, providing prospective buyers with details of the advantages associated with co-op ownership, Goode noted.

The successful sales of the Cleveland Park Apartments, built by brothers R. Bates and Monroe Warren and marketed by the Edmund J. Flynn company, along with the success of their earlier cooperative apartment at 1705 Lanier Street NW., encouraged the Warren brothers to build three more co-ops. Two were built in 1925: Army-Navy at 2540 Massachusetts Ave., and 1661 Crescent Place. The third, and the largest, was Tilden Gardens, built in 1927 in Cleveland Park at Connecticut Avenue and Tilden/Sedgwick Streets, NW. These latter three co-ops were marketed as “luxury” projects featuring large lobbies, elevators, receptionists, switchboards, and large staffs—amenities not included in the Cleveland Park Apartments.

Although there were only two cooperative apartment buildings in Washington in 1920, by 1929 the city had more than 75 co-op complexes. By contrast, condominiums weren’t introduced locally until 1963, according to Goode.

Besides popularizing co-op living, the Cleveland Park Apartments were one of the city’s earliest garden apartments, preceded only by a 1921–22 complex on Webster Street NW in Petworth. Goode wrote that garden apartments became popular in the Washington area during the Depression, and from 1935–1942 more than 300 such complexes were built in the city and its suburbs.

The construction of the Cleveland Park Apartments as six separate buildings, rather than a single, large structure, their garden landscaping, and their sale as owner-occupied cooperatives, likely reflected another trend of the time—1920 zoning restrictions. According to Goode, that legal change restricted large apartment buildings in many residential neighborhoods to a single street, such as Cleveland Park’s Connecticut Avenue.

Sweet-tooth Delight

By Andrea Pedolsky

CPHS’s annual Gingerbread House Festival took place on Sunday, December 11, hosted once again by baker Robert Jenkins. Board member Rick Nash loaned his front porch for the event.



From 1:00 to 3:00 pm, eager decorators came by to pick up their pre-ordered cakes and scoop up into paper bags an enticing array of

fixings including icings, pretzels, Tootsie Rolls, candy canes, shredded coconut, Life Savers, graham crackers, marshmallows, and M&Ms. A fun time was had by all.



CPHS LINKS

CPHS Website: clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

Staff Email: staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

Membership: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/membership/>

Voices Archive: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/about-cphs/voices/>

Historic Preservation: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district/>

Help Increase Our Membership!

Do you have a new neighbor who doesn't know about CPHS? Do you know someone interested in historic districts and historic preservation? Why not share this link with them— they'll be pleased that you thought about them, and we'll be pleased to welcome them! ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/Membership.

HERE ARE SOME TALKING POINTS:

- **WE WORK TO PRESERVE CLEVELAND PARK'S HISTORY:** CPHS honors Cleveland Park's unique legacy of architectural and landscape design. We work with DC agencies and nonprofits on architectural and historic preservation issues that affect Cleveland Park and its historic district, which is designated on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **WE ADVOCATE FOR THOUGHTFUL GROWTH:** Thoughtful growth prioritizes good design and respect for Cleveland Park's historic architecture and streetscape while being mindful of the city's obligation to meet its future economic and housing needs.
- **WE SHARE OUR EXPERTISE:** CPHS is here to answer any questions you have about house history, neighborhood history, and architecture.
- **WE PROVIDE USEFUL INFORMATION:** CPHS will help guide you through DC's historic preservation review process for properties in the Cleveland Park Historic District.
- **WE ARE A COMMUNITY:** CPHS offers talks, tours, field trips, educational programs, and other activities that bring neighbors together to explore and celebrate our neighborhood and local history. We keep you informed about neighborhood issues via email, our website, and our newsletter, *Voices*.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



FACEBOOK:

facebook.com/ClevelandParkHistory



INSTAGRAM:

instagram.com/clepepkhistory



TWITTER:

twitter.com/clepepkhistory

Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

is published two times a year and is free to members.

Editor: Andrea Pedolsky

Design and layout: Kevin Kelso

Contributing writers: Margaret Ainscough,
Stephen Hansen, Andrea Pedolsky

Printer: Print 1 Printing & Copying

Have an idea for an article? Please send an email to:
staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org