



# Voices

## The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

### A Fond Farewell...

By Andrea Pedolsky

It is hard to believe it has been nearly three years since Stephen Hansen joined CPHS as Executive Director. And they have been notable years, for us and the historic district, because of the division of the historic district into two ANCs and the push by the Bowser administration for an increase in housing density in Cleveland Park and Woodley Park.

In addition to being an able manager and administrator of the day-to-day and month-to-month activities, Stephen has contributed to our well-being in so many other ways. He has given his time to lead architectural walking tours through the neighborhood, written for *Voices*, responded to member queries about their house issues, organized Architectural Review Committee (ARC) meetings, and managed programs and events. Perhaps Stephen's greatest contribution is *Design Guidelines for the Cleveland Park Historic Commercial Corridor*, which he developed and wrote (<http://bit.ly/CPHSGuidelines>). In *Guidelines*, Stephen applies the principles and practices of DC historic preservation law to preserving, adding to, or altering buildings in our historic commercial corridor. The Historic Preservation Office thought so highly of *Guidelines* that they posted it on their website. While Stephen is leaving CPHS as its Executive Director, he will continue contributing, now as a volunteer member of the ARC.

### ...And a Warm Welcome!

Meet Ellen Goldich, our new Executive Director! Ellen describes herself as someone who “feels passionately that it is more important than ever to invest in community building.” With over a decade in the for-profit and nonprofit education sectors, most recently Ellen was an executive with the Education Superhighway, whose original mission was to get 99 percent of the nation's public-school classrooms connected to broadband. Upon meeting that goal, the organization pivoted to closing the digital divide for the nearly 17 million households that lacked adequate home broadband. For both efforts, Ellen led the way in forming strategic partnerships, designing outreach strategies and programs, working with school districts, launching awareness campaigns, and meeting with policy leaders on the Hill. Ellen lives in North Cleveland Park with her husband and two children. She can often be found at the Cleveland Park Library with her children or sipping coffee at Saku Saku or Dolan.



### Save the Date! 2025 Annual Meeting and Board Elections

It's time to mark your calendars for CPHS's annual meeting and Board election on June 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cleveland Park Congregational UCC at 3400 Lowell Street. The following candidates will be running: Ana Evans (Secretary), Kevin Spence Kelso (Vice President), and Betsy Merritt. We hope to see you there—it's a great time to catch up with your neighbors! More details will come—watch for an email update.

### Get Involved with CPHS and Join a Committee!

By Ellen Goldich

CPHS is entering an exciting new era of community involvement, and we want our members to be a part of it. Ever wondered what happens behind the scenes at the Cleveland Park Historical Society? Now's your chance to make an impact! Join one of our dynamic working committees and help us celebrate and preserve Cleveland Park's rich history while building an even stronger, more connected community. Whether you're passionate about events and programs, communications, membership, or research and publications, there's a place for you to make a difference. Ready to get involved?

Email [staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org) to learn more and sign up!

## It's All in the Details Cleveland Park's Historic Porches

By MaryAnn Nash

Cleveland Park boasts an outstanding collection of porches that reflect the area's architectural diversity. As essential features of many homes, the porches create a connection between the built environment and the natural landscape, reinforcing the neighborhood's identity and making preservation efforts crucial.

Historically, residents have used their porches to maintain social ties and foster community. When the Walter Mondale family lived on Lowell Street in the 1970s, Joan Mondale organized a produce co-op, distributing vegetables from her front porch each week. Porches became even more vital during the COVID-19 pandemic, serving as spaces for socializing, remote work, and safe family gatherings.



*A wraparound porch with majestic columns. (Photograph by MaryAnn Nash.)*

Open front and side porches, including wraparound porches, are a key architectural element of Cleveland Park, reflecting early developers' appreciation of the neighborhood's mix of hills, ravines, and vistas. The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) recognizes these as character-defining features.



*An array of columns with balustrade decorate and protect this porch. (Photograph by MaryAnn Nash.)*

Before the introduction of air conditioning, screened porches, including sleeping porches, became popular in residential design, allowing residents to live and sleep comfortably in the back of the house. Many of those original sleeping porches have been converted for year-round use. HPRB typically does not object to enclosing rear sleeping porches, allowing homeowners

greater flexibility in utilizing these spaces.

Preserving the architectural features of porches is vital. Columns and railings define the character of each home and maintain the harmony with the surrounding landscape. HPRB requires that columns be replaced "in-kind," meaning replacements must closely match the originals in design, including thickness, style of the capital (the topmost part of the column), pedestal stand (the base of the column), fluting (decorative grooves), and entasis (the slight bulge that adds visual interest).

Railing styles also reflect Cleveland Park's architectural essence. Vertical balusters are most common, echoing the verticality of landscape elements, while other homes feature

## Covenants in Cleveland Park

By Stephen A. Hansen

There has been an increasing interest over the past several years in the history of discriminatory practices using racially restrictive covenants in D.C. Learning the history of covenants can shed light on a neighborhood's past and foster a deeper understanding of the forces that shaped it. Recently, CPHS conducted research to determine when these covenants were first used in the historic district and to what extent.

In the broadest sense, a covenant is a legally binding agreement or contract between two parties where they agree that certain conditions will be met and/or activities will or will not be carried out. Restrictive covenants were used to prohibit selling, leasing, use, or occupancy to anyone who was not white or Caucasian, as in this clause in a 1922 deed for a Cleveland Park lot:

ing or mercantile purposes, nor shall the real estate herein described, or any part thereof, be sold or leased to persons of African descent.

Covenants could "run with the land," meaning that they were tied to the property in perpetuity and remained enforceable, with subsequent owners bound by them as well. Anyone (either the buyer or the seller) who attempted to ignore a covenant risked forfeiting their claim to the property. Titles for subsequent sales of a property might not include the specific covenant language but might simply recognize that prior covenants existed and require that they be adhered to as well.

Covenants came into wide use around 1900, as new housing subdivisions developed in northwest D.C., including Mount Pleasant, Dupont Circle, Woodley Park, Cleveland Park, and Chevy Chase. But covenants were employed all over the city as well.

Developers built neighborhoods using restrictive covenants to shape their demographics by attracting a certain type of buyer. While many real estate advertisements at the time proudly referred to "restricted neighborhoods," they would never say publicly what some of those restrictions were. A 1903 advertisement in *The Washington Post* for the early Cleveland Park area tacitly implies the use of restrictive covenants.

Restrictive covenants were recognized in the 1930s by the Federal Housing Administration, created in 1934, which offered loans under more favorable terms to neighborhoods with covenants, or "redlining." While this was a practice in certain larger cities, there are no known redlining maps for DC. This practice ended because of the landmark 1948 Supreme Court case, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, which held that racially restrictive covenants in property deeds were unconstitutional. And in 1968, the Fair Housing Act formally banned housing discrimination.

### What We Know about Covenants in Cleveland Park:

In 2022, CPHS hired consultant Mara Cherkasky of Prologue DC to conduct a survey of deeds with covenants in the historic district. She provided a dataset of covenants found in deeds that were scanned and are currently available online on the DC Archives website, which only go back to 1921. That year is the cutoff date for chain of title searches that show the sequence of historical transfers of title to a property from the current owner all the way

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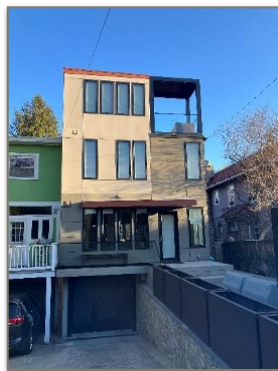
## On The Street Where You Live

### Alleyway Life

By Andrea Pedolsky



*The first net-zero ADU in DC. (Photographs by Andrea Pedolsky.)*



*Back of home addition.*

You might have noticed a nondescript driveway entrance off either Porter or Rodman streets, just a few steps west of Connecticut Avenue. Walk up the slight incline from either side and perpendicular to the driveways is a very long alley, along which is an unusual collection of homes, garages, and intriguing empty stone ceiling-less cubicles.

This quiet back alleyway was once owned by one family, mainly comprising garages built of stone harvested in the 1920s from the quarry behind the Uptown Theater. Over the years, Rodman Street residents have used the area to add on to their homes and have purchased the abandoned stone garages to repurpose them. These changes come as the result of new zoning rules for alley dwellings enacted in 2016, which, among other changes, allow for the construction and/or retrofitting of accessory apartments and alley dwellings.

A standout in the alley is a contemporary accessory dwelling unit, commonly referred to as an ADU. As *The Washington Post* reported last year, the ADU was constructed with Corten steel, also known as weathering steel, and incorporates the remnants of the garage's historic stone walls. The ADU was designated DC's first net-zero ADU, which was a goal of the owner. This means that the apartment produces more energy than it consumes, which the owner achieved, in part, by using solar panels, double-glazed fiberglass windows, and more than the usual amount of insulation.

### *It's All in the Details, continued from page 2*

more elaborate diamond and crossing patterns that emphasize decorative craftsmanship and connect to other design features. HPRB often approves fiberglass replacements as alternatives to wood, ensuring visual continuity amid material challenges.

Homeowners frequently inquire about enclosing open porches or adding new ones. Enclosing a rear porch typically poses no issues. Side porches are more complex because they sometimes “appear” as subordinate to the main house and therefore may be easier to enclose. However, if a side porch resembles a front porch aesthetically, gaining approval for enclosure may be more challenging.

Front porches present the greatest challenges for modification as they are central to the neighborhood's character. Enclosing them can disrupt the connection between indoors and outdoors and upset the architectural balance of the house. Because of the importance of this feature, HPRB has approved projects where homeowners restored altered front porches or recreated ones that were once there.

All this work, of course, requires applying for a building permit and review by the HPRB and CPHS's Architectural Review Committee. And these requirements are important: by maintaining the neighborhood's historic porches, we do more than preserve the area's original appearance, we safeguard the connection between our homes and the natural world. Paying attention to the details of columns, railings, and the rhythms they create ensures that these porches will remain a distinguishing part of Cleveland Park.

## In Memoriam

By Judy Hubbard

Roslyn (Roz) Beitler, a founding member of CPHS, died at home after a short illness on September 5, 2024. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors, Roz was on the committee to restore the 15 police and fire call boxes around the neighborhood and led CPHS's Save the Uptown Committee, which was charged with developing creative alternative uses of the Uptown's space. A librarian by training, Roz worked for many years in the Arlington school system. Prior to that, Roz organized children's education programs at the Smithsonian, including an overnight for children at one of the museums. Among Roz's many interests were children's literature and literacy, the visual arts, music, and dance. Roz served as an usher at Arena Stage and a docent at the Kreeger Museum. She traveled widely with her fellow Kreeger docents and with Road Scholar. A long-time resident of the Broadmoor Cooperative Apartments, Roz helped organize a longstanding book club and the resident lecture series. Roz will be missed.

## Policy Corner

By Ellen Goldich

### Proposed Bill Seeks to Curb Historic Preservation Review Board's Authority

At the start of the year, Ward 1 Councilmember Brianne Nadeau introduced the Housing Capacity Preservation Amendment Act of 2025, a bill that would limit the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board's (HPRB) authority over new construction in historic districts. The bill prohibits the HPRB from requiring reductions in housing units, density, or floor area ratio beyond what zoning laws allow—regardless of historic compatibility. This means the board cannot mandate changes that would lower housing capacity, shifting the balance in favor of development over preservation concerns. This latest effort follows Nadeau's unsuccessful 2024 version of the bill, which failed to gain traction. With housing needs at the forefront of policy debates, this renewed push will continue to spark discussion over the future of historic preservation and urban growth in the District.

## News from the ARC

By Christine Hobbs, ARC co-chair

A change in home ownership often brings with it a house update, rehab, or renovation. In the past few months, several houses on Newark Street, all contributing structures to the Cleveland Park Historic District, have changed owners and have come before the ARC with design proposals. The new owner of a 1907 house, designed by the noted Cleveland Park architect Frederick Pyle, presented a proposal for a substantial rear addition. As the addition will not be visible from the street, and no changes to the house's front façade were planned, the ARC had no objections to this proposal.

The proposal for a house built in 1912 but substantially modified in the 1970s with both front and rear additions was for a major restoration. This included removing the 1970s additions; restoring the front façade; and recreating the original front porch—a substantial change to the front of the house. The ARC appreciated the new owner's effort to restore the original front façade and supported the replication of the original details.

Another proposal reviewed by the ARC was from a current Newark Street homeowner. The plan included several practical upgrades focused on widening a shared driveway, with no structural changes to the house.

All of this activity on Newark Street alone illustrates that historic districts can accommodate a variety of changes.

The ARC also considered a proposal for one of three companion houses on Lowell Street that included a new two-story rear addition and the construction of a covered roof over the existing front terrace. As the other two houses have a covered roof on the front of the house, the ARC considered the proposal for a covered roof in keeping with the character and scale of the Historic District. Elsewhere in Cleveland Park, plans were presented to the ARC for the construction of a two-unit building with side, rear, and roof additions to an existing duplex, also a contributing structure.

### 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 and informative reading.

## Invite a Neighbor to Join CPHS!

Do you have a neighbor who is interested in historic districts and historic preservation? Why not ask them to join us? And remember to tell them their first year will be free! Please share this link with them: <http://bit.ly/CPHSMembership>

## It Happened in...2001

### A Spy on Macomb Street

By Andrea Pedolsky



She was a secret agent for Cuba, living in an apartment at 3039 Macomb Street. Just ten days after the 9/11 attacks, Ana Montes, the top Cuban analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), was arrested for providing the Cuban government with the names of undercover U.S.

agents, details on current and planned covert operations in Cuba and other countries, and the existence of a stealth satellite the U.S. used to spy on Russia, China, and Iran.

As reported on the FBI's website (<https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/ana-montes-cuba-spy>), Montes was working in a clerical job at the Department of Justice in 1984 when she was recruited by Cuban officials. Despite making public complaints about U.S. policies toward Central America, Montes applied for and was hired by the DIA in 1985. According to the FBI, Montes memorized details from defense documents at work, then typed them up at home on her laptop and transferred them onto encrypted disks. Communicating with her handlers on short-wave radio, she would arrange to meet with them to give them the disks.

DIA security officials knew about her dislike of U.S. foreign policy, but they never thought she was sharing secrets, and she had passed a polygraph test. It wasn't until 1996 that suspicions grew that there was a mole inside the government, and a DIA colleague shared his concerns about Montes being under the influence of Cuban intelligence. It took four more years for the FBI to open an investigation, but they soon had a strong case against Montes. Because they hoped to identify her Cuban handler, they held off on arresting Montes. However, because of the 9/11 attacks, they decided they couldn't wait any longer, as Montes was going to be assigned work related to U.S. war plans.

Montes was arrested on September 21, 2001. In addition to her arrest, the FBI obtained warrants to search her apartment, car, office, and a safe deposit box at what was the Riggs Bank at 4249 Wisconsin Avenue. Montes pleaded guilty in 2002 and was sentenced to 25 years in prison. She was released early, on January 6, 2023, for good behavior. She now lives in Puerto Rico.

Several books have been written about this infamous spy, including Jim Popkin's *Code Name Blue Wren: The True Story of America's Most Dangerous Spy—and the Sister She Betrayed*; *True Believer: Inside the Investigation and Capture of Ana Montes, Cuba's Master Spy*, by Scott W. Carmichael; and *Queen of Cuba: An FBI Agent's Insider Account of the Spy Who Evaded Detection for 17 Years*, by Peter J. Lapp.

## CPHS Hosts House Histories Research 101 Workshop

Living in a historic district means that most of us are in homes that were built decades ago and were inhabited by people from the distant past. This compels many of us to want to learn about our home's history: who was the architect, when was it built and by whom, who were the original occupants, and what changes have occurred over time? So it was no surprise that on February 25, a number of Cleveland Parkers gathered at the library to attend the workshop, House Histories Research 101, led by Jim Buchanan, a local historian and a CPHS member. Attendees learned about using such resources as maps, land and tax databases, census records, city directories, and newspaper archives. It was a great evening, made all the better by the attendees' participation in sharing their experiences in conducting their own house history research. You can find Jim PowerPoint presentation here: <http://bit.ly/CPHSHouseHistories>.

## The Gingerbread House Festival Works Its Wonders Again!

Last December 15th was a chilly and rainy afternoon, but inside the Cleveland Park Club it was bright and cheery with lively Christmas lighting. Long tables were covered with dozens of bowls and plates filled with sweets and savories. A tub of icing was filled to the brim. And some 50 gingerbread houses were lined up in a row, awaiting the youngest members of the CPHS to decorate them to their hearts' content. Throughout the afternoon, families with children and friends streamed in, picked up their cakes, chose their preferred decorations, and settled into creative mode. This wonderful day was once again due to the generosity of two CPHS members: Casey Aboulafia, who paid for the room rental, and Robert Jenkins, who hand-builds and bakes the delicious gingerbread houses and donates all the tasty decorations. We're looking forward to seeing more of you at the 2025 Gingerbread House Festival this coming December. We will post the date on the CPHS website later this year.

## Covenants in Cleveland Park, continued from page 2



A 1903 advertisement in *The Washington Post*

span of years surveyed.

Fortunately, Mara provided CPHS with data she had from previous projects, some of which date to 1907. These data provide a clearer picture of what was happening in Cleveland Park before 1921 in at least one subdivision, then called Richmond Park. That subdivision ran between Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, and Ordway and Rodman Streets. Beginning in 1907, William F. Matteson, a suburban real estate developer, began selling only vacant lots, and every lot sale included affirmative and restrictive covenants, showing a strong determination to keep at least this one development White.

### Researching Covenants in Your Own Deed

If you are Interested in researching your home's deed you can find deeds for 1921 and after on the Recorder of Deeds website (<http://bit.ly/RecorderDeeds>). For earlier deeds you will have to go to the DC Archives and manually search for them by square and lot number, book by book, and page by page. There are no specific groupings for deeds of any kind, nor any type of index—each deed was simply recorded chronologically by square and lot number in the order it was received. Also remember that covenants can run with the land, so if you find a reference to prior covenants, you will have to continue to look for earlier deeds for that property to see what those covenants might have been.

## Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society is published two times a year and is free to members.

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