



# Voices

## The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

### Q & A with Stephen Hansen, New Executive Director

### 2022 Local Election Results



In August 2022, Stephen Hansen took over from Camilla Carpenter as Executive Director of CPHS. Please meet Stephen in his own words.

**Editor: A warm welcome to you! Given your impressive background in historical preservation, this seems like the perfect partnership between you and the CPHS.**

**What about the society compelled you to apply for the job?**

**Stephen:** I am fascinated by DC’s historic neighborhoods: how and why they developed and how they fit into the overall history of the city. As a result, I ended up writing books on the development and architectural history of two historic neighborhoods: Kalorama Triangle and Dupont Circle. As an historian and preservationist, I have always been intrigued by Cleveland Park, with its awareness of its history and architecture—and because it has its own historical society!

I would have loved to have taken this position years ago, but circumstances did not allow. I became involved instead with the Committee of 100 on the Federal City (C100)—an organization that advocates for responsible planning, land use, and historic preservation—and eventually became its president. As a preservationist, I have always felt that it is on the neighborhood level where the rubber hits the road on historic preservation issues. This feeling was reinforced when Cleveland Park was facing redistricting, as a result of the 2020 Census, and the possible breakup of the historic district over multiple ANCs and I saw CPHS take a strong

Throughout 2022, CPHS has kept membership informed of how the 2020 Census and the Redistricting Task Force could change the make-up of the Cleveland Park Historic District. While the Task Force tried to drastically divide the historic district into numerous Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs), working with other organizations, CPHS fought hard to keep the historic district intact. In the end, we find ourselves divided into two ANCs—ANC 3A and ANC 3C.

The two ANC 3C commissioners will likely be Sauleh Siddiqui, representing ANC 3C05 (he beat Nick Ide by just over 40 votes), and Richard Nash, who won his ANC 3C08 seat with over 64 percent of the vote. Rick Nash is a former CPHS president and currently serves as one of the society’s vice-presidents. Hans Miller was elected commissioner to ANC 3A03 to represent the remainder of the Cleveland Park Historic District.

To learn who will be your SMD commissioner in 2023, please visit: [https://electionresults.dcboe.org/election\\_results/2022-General-Election](https://electionresults.dcboe.org/election_results/2022-General-Election).

Also of note, Matt Frumin is Ward 3’s new representative on the City Council.

While the Cleveland Park Historic District’s interests in and concerns with historic preservation have been served well by one ANC—and ably represented by Commissioner Nancy MacWood, who is stepping down after 22 years of tremendous service—CPHS looks forward to working with all the new and re-elected commissioners in ANC 3A and 3C.

*Continues on page 6*

## On the Street Where We Live

### *The Sibling Houses of Rodman Street*

By Cathy Newman

Unlike the exuberant turn-of-the-century Victorians of Newark Street, Macomb Street, and Highland Place, the houses on the 3400 block of Rodman Street NW, with carbon copy footprints (there are four more like houses around the corner on 35<sup>th</sup> Street), are modest. They were built on speculation in 1915 by Hight & Co. Inc., as part of the Richmond Hill development. It's likely the company

hoped to sell to the civil servants working at the nearby National Bureau of Standards. In fact, the first owner of 3404 Rodman Street, Charles S. Laubly, was a physicist at the Bureau.

#### No Rivalries Here

The houses are charmingly unfussy: wedding cake flordid yields to modified foursquare-style lean, reflecting Cleveland Park's evolution from an enclave of large country estates (the last was built in 1914) to a residential subdivision with an eclectic mix of houses and apartment

buildings. But each sibling has a decorative variation, as if the architect, John M. Donn, wished to counterbalance the commonality of each with an architectural grace note. Cedar shingles as siding on one house (3410 Rodman). Half-shingles or no shingles on 3412 and 3408, respectively. An oculus attic window surveys the street at 3410; a half moon attic window winks from the house around the corner at 3713 35<sup>th</sup> St. A gable roof at 3414. A hip roof next door at 3416.

The sibling houses are compact—the original footprint was 20 feet by 30 feet, with a porch in front, a bay window on one side, and a sleeping porch in back. Lots are narrow: most are 40 feet wide, with a swath of garden in back. A story on the “improvements” to come on Rodman and 35<sup>th</sup> Streets in the *The Washington Post* from December 5, 1915, notes: “Each [house] will contain seven or eight rooms, with hardwood floors and every

*Continues on page 4*

## CPHS's 2022 Annual Meeting

After a two-year hiatus, on June 22, CPHS held its annual meeting at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church on Lowell Street. President Bonnie LePard addressed the membership—over 30 attended, all masked—providing an overview of the society's activities and highlighting its fight to keep all of the historic district in a single ANC. While the western side of the Cleveland Park Historic District will be in a new ANC, the Redistricting Task Force's effort to more drastically divide the historic district failed.

#### Thanks to Those Who Have Served

In recognition of Executive Director Camilla Carpenter's departure (from her job, not CPHS), Bonnie highlighted the invaluable knowledge and expertise Camilla brought to the society. Bonnie also thanked retiring board members Christine Hobbs, Shaun Jones, Shannon Penberthy, Frank Swain, Ron Ngaim, and Polly Ghazi for their generous service.

#### New Members of the Board

Attending members were asked to approve the Board of Directors slate of six candidates. Approval was unanimous. For board member biographies, please follow this link:

<https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/about-cphs/board/>.

#### Officers:

- Bonnie LePard, President (1st term exp. 2023)
- Leila Afzal, Vice President (2nd term exp. 2024)
- Rick Nash, Vice President (2nd term exp. 2023)
- Julia Rogers, Treasurer (2nd term exp. 2024)
- Karen Lightfoot, Secretary (1st exp. 2023)

#### First Three-Year Term:

- Ana Evans (1st term exp. 2025)
- Patricia Franco (1st term exp. 2025)
- Kevin Kelso (1st term exp. 2025)
- Pamela Kurland (1st term exp. 2025)
- Elisabeth Merritt (1st term exp. 2025)
- Pat Norris (1st term exp. 2025)



*The Washington Herald,*  
October 14, 1922

## House Histories *A Dusty Old Satchel in the Attic*

By Barbara Zadina



Each of us fortunate to call Cleveland Park home knows that every house in our community has its own story. Some are just more hidden than others. I discovered my house's story by chance.

I purchased my 1925 brick townhouse on Norton Place in late 2017. One day, a contractor working in the attic told me that he "left the gym bag alone in the eaves." Gym bag? I went up to see what he was talking about. There in the shadows was an old leather satchel covered in dust. I couldn't believe it. "Let's open it and see if there's a pile of money!" I said excitedly. Well, it wasn't money, but the contents were much more interesting than I could have imagined.

### A Peak into the Past

Inside the satchel were old travel items, including perfectly folded road maps in a AAA envelope, little soaps and shaving items, matchbooks from Miami Beach motels, and golf scorecards and tees. Lots of golf tees—some in the shape of naked women. Clearly this was a gentleman's trip getaway bag.

There were other personal items: little black-and-white photos of the golfer in action, of two small girls with the names Sue and Mary Jo written on the backs, and a portrait of a man with a nameplate—Joseph F. English. There also was a letter typed on a manual typewriter to Mr. English at my address, giving regards to his two girls. Who was this family whose home I now owned? I was eager to know.

The internet yielded nothing, so I turned to the trusty Cleveland Park Listserv! Within minutes, I had messages telling me about the English family. And one respondent knew that Mary Jo lives in southern Virginia. I found her phone number and nervously called. "I promise I'm not crazy—but I own your old house and..."



### Connecting the Dots

Mary Jo, now in her early 80s, couldn't believe it either. We talked for an hour, and she told me how her family lived with her grandmother, who owned the house with her sister. How the two women took the streetcar down Massachusetts Avenue to work at Garfinkel's department store. Joseph worked for the government and then taught at Georgetown University. Suddenly the English became my family too, and I promised Mary Jo that I would take care of her family home. I also sent her the satchel's contents.

Sometimes late at night in my living room I get a whiff of a cigarette. I like to think it's Mr. English taking a last puff in his reading chair before joining his family upstairs at the end of a long day. And I smile. I love my old house.

*Voices welcomes members to share their house stories for publication in Voices. Please contact us.*

## It's Time to Put the Icing on the Cake!



The annual Cleveland Park Historical Society holiday gingerbread house festival returns Sunday, December 11, 2022, from 1:00 to 3:00pm, to benefit the society.

You will be provided with a fully assembled, home-baked gingerbread house and your choice of decorations (candy, frosting, and other treats) to take home. Making your house a unique creation is a lot of fun.

Cleveland Park resident Robert Jenkins will host the event on a CPHS member's front porch. Thank you, Robert, for keeping this tradition going! To order, go to the "Calling All Decorators" email you received from CPHS on November 18, and click on the link provided.

## Expand Your Historic Preservation Vocabulary

By Andrea Pedolsky

It's been 35 years since Cleveland Park was designated an historic district, added to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The designation also recognizes as historic those buildings and sites within the district that fit within a discrete chronological period called the *period of significance*. Cleveland Park's period of significance is 1880 to 1941.

### How It Works

Buildings constructed during those 61 years are referred to as contributing resources and so are protected and are rarely torn down. The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) is key to this protection, reviewing each contributing building remodeling project for its impact on the building's historic fabric and design integrity, as well as for the impact it might have on the historic district. Of the 1,000 buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District, 938 are considered contributing buildings.

Buildings built outside the period of significance are called noncontributing resource. Alterations to a noncontributing building are reviewed only for how they would affect the historic ensemble of the historic district. They can completely change a building's character and there may be no significant obstacles to tearing one down.

### The Consequences

Cleveland Park experienced the razing of a noncontributing resource when the original Cleveland Park Public Library, built in 1952–1953, was torn down and replaced. Fortunately, intense community interest and involvement in its design resulted in an award-winning building. The expansion of the Macklin apartments, at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Newark Street, is an example of the challenges we will continue to face in trying to protect a contributing resource.

With likely changes in density proposed in the recent updates to the Comprehensive Plan for Cleveland Park and the continuing desire of homeowners to improve and upgrade their homes, the work of CPHS and its Architectural Review Committee (for an update on the committee's work, see the article on page 5) is crucial to maintaining the integrity of the historic district.

### *Sibling Houses, continued from page 1*

heating, lighting and cooking convenience.” The dwellings, it noted, “will sell for from \$7,000 to \$7,500.”

All had front porches featuring Tuscan style columns. Historically, at least, back fences tended toward low and open. This, says Ann Loikow, a Rodman Street resident for 43 years, encouraged a chatting-over-the-fence sensibility, making it the kind of place where you comfortably hand over your key to a neighbor for lock-out contingencies. Over the decades, to adapt to contemporary living, many have been added on to with respect and restraint—thanks to Historic District guidelines.

There is a grim, ugly side to this story. Some of the houses, and others in Cleveland Park, as well as in Bloomingdale, Brookland, and Mount Pleasant, included covenants in their deeds prescribing that the property not be “sold or leased to persons of African American descent.” Such covenants could be found on the books in nearly every state in the U.S. Though the Supreme Court ruled that racially restrictive covenants were unconstitutional to enforce in 1948 and made them illegal in 1968, their impact reverberated for years to come.

### What's in a Name?

Rodman Street, which marks the northeastern boundary of the Cleveland Park Historic District, is named for Thomas Jackson Rodman (1816–1871), an army officer, ordinance expert, and inventor of the Rodman gun, a large-bore cannon used during the Civil War. After the war, Rodman was investigated by a Congressional committee for excessive spending on quarters for the commanding officer at the Watertown, Massachusetts Arsenal—which happened to be him. He refuted the charges, and the findings were never released. The government sent Rodman off to supervise construction of a new arsenal and even larger commander's residence: a 20,000 square foot Italianate style villa at the Rock Island Arsenal on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River.

Rodman Street's graceful curve, which unfurls at Connecticut Avenue then straightens before ending where it meets Hearst Park, reflects the influence of the nineteenth century American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who proposed that streets follow the natural contours of the land. (Olmsted's firm, which influenced the street plan north of Newark Street, was at that time run by his son Frederick Olmsted, Jr., and stepson John Charles Olmsted.) The understated simplicity of the sibling houses is arguably in synchrony with one of Olmsted's well-known principles: “... never too much, hardly enough.”

## News from the ARC

By Christine Hobbs, ARC co-chair

On March 9, 2020, CPHS's Architectural Review Committee (ARC) held its last in-person meeting as the COVID-19 quarantine began to take hold of daily life. The ARC quickly switched to holding Zoom meetings and the work of supporting the historic district continued. Since then, the ARC has held 18 meetings and heard 38 presentations, with some projects being presented more than once as they became more defined. You can read ARC's reports on specific properties on CPHS's website here: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/category/arc-mtg-reports/>.

### A Constant Cycle of Home Improvements

Over the past few years, homeowners on almost every street in the Cleveland Park Historic District have presented to the ARC. Woodley Road, Lowell, Macomb, Newark, Ordway, Porter, Quebec, and Rodman Streets, Ross Place, Highland Place, 31st Street, 34<sup>th</sup> Street, 35<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue have all seen rehabilitation and experienced change.

Proposals ranged from small, but impactful, improvements for individual homeowners to larger rear additions, multifamily buildings including Tilden Gardens, and institutional projects, such as the Washington International School. While most of the proposals involved structures that contribute to the historic fabric of the district (contributing structures), the ARC also heard presentations involving what are considered noncontributing structures. (Please see the article on page 4 about contributing and noncontributing structures.) Two-story rear additions continued to be a popular undertaking. This often involves removing previous additions, porches, or sleeping porches; using materials that are sympathetic to the original structure; and an indentation to differentiate the addition from the original structure. Homeowners also sought to rehabilitate their garages or convert them into an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).

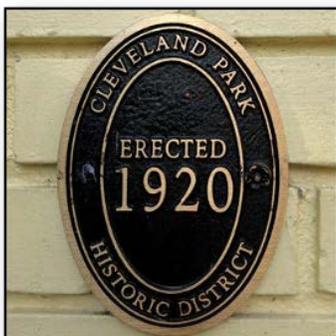
### ARC's Work

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).

*Hansen, continued from page 1*

stand. That inspired me to get C100 involved, providing testimony before the DC Council against the breakup. Then, when the executive director position was announced, the timing was right finally for me. The position is a perfect blend of my interests and experience in historic preservation, history, and administration and will allow me to focus on a neighborhood level once again.

**Editor:** *It would be great to hear your thoughts on the challenges for historic preservation today.*

**Stephen:** The work of an urban preservationist is no longer just about saving an old building here or there or preserving the historic character of a neighborhood. Today, preservationists must be alert to policy changes and engaged in the development process to promote ways for neighborhoods to best adapt while still retaining their history and sense of community. It is unfortunate that we seem to be living in a polarized world where preservation is often seen as an obstacle to development. Our challenge is to be heard and understood in order to promote preservation as part of the solution to many of today's urban challenges.

**Editor:** *This year has been a stressful one for Cleveland Park because of the redistricting. CPHS and other local organizations fought hard to keep the historic district whole, but starting in January, it will be divided into two ANCs. Will this change or redirect any aspect of the society's work?*

**Stephen:** DC's historic districts are overseen and protected by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), not ANCs. While the HPRB gives "great weight" to ANCs, it is governed by the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978 and its own regulations and guidelines, which do not always align with what ANCs support or oppose. The purview of the HPRB should continue to extend uniformly over the Cleveland Park Historic District, regardless of intra-ANC district politics.

The biggest challenges to the historic district now are external. The Comprehensive Plan Act of 2021 updated land-use designations along Connecticut Avenue to allow for infill, increased density, and higher buildings. To

implement these changes, the DC Office of Planning (OP) is working on the *Connecticut Avenue Development Guidelines*, focused on Cleveland Park and Woodley Park. This will entail implementing the Plan's call for additional

*"I am fascinated by DC's historic neighborhoods: how and why they developed and how they fit into the overall history of the city."*

—Stephen Hansen

housing, particularly affordable housing, while allowing for development that is compatible in character with the historic district. CPHS is the sole historic preservation organization in Cleveland Park, and we will work hard, along with other organizations, to make sure that our interests in and concerns about protecting the integrity of the

historic district are heard and addressed.

**Editor:** *On your website, Washington Chronicles, you observe that there is more to the story of a building than the era in which it was built, its style, and its architect. Can you expand on this idea—what's the "more"?*

**Stephen:** Buildings are the result of processes that often include the physical expansion of a city, economic development, politics, and most interestingly, the personalities of the developers, builders, and original owners. Taken together, these aspects often best explain how any given building got to be where it is and why it ended up looking like it does. While my true passion will always be architectural history, I find delving into these aspects makes for a much more interesting read than just describing the architectural details of any given building.

Follow this link to read more about Stephen on the CPHS website: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/about-cphs/board/>

## 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](http://ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org), for guidance on the design review process in Cleveland Park and the permitting process in DC.

# 2023 MEMBERSHIP - RENEW TODAY!

It's time to RENEW your Cleveland Park Historical Society membership. You may either renew online at [ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/Membership](http://ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/Membership), or fill out the form below.

## WHY RENEW?

- **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*.

Join or renew online at [ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/Membership](http://ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/Membership) or complete the following form and send it with a check payable to CPHS to:

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 4862, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note!** Please be sure we have your current email address so that you do not miss important announcements. We will not spam you with too many emails, but we are now conducting most of our routine communications electronically.

Membership level:

\$35 Apartment Resident       \$50 Single-family Household       \$100 Sponsor

\$250 Patron       \$500 Angel       Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*All levels give membership benefits to everyone in the household. CPHS is a member-supported, 501c3 not-for-profit organization. Membership dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Members receive discounts and priority registration for public events, invitations to member-only tours, and discounts on event fees, house markers, and CPHS publications. Thank you for your support!*

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

Voices 2022

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