



Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

Historic Preservation Review Board Approves Office of Planning's Connecticut Avenue Development Guidelines

By Stephen Hansen

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) met on September 28 to hear two informational presentations: the DC Office of Planning's (OP) *Connecticut Avenue Development Guidelines*, and CPHS's *Design Guidelines for Cleveland Park's Historic Commercial Corridor*. Usually, informational presentations to HPRB are just that—a

status update, an opportunity to receive comments/feedback from them, and sometimes also allowing public testimony. For informational items, the HPRB normally does not act or vote to approve or deny them.

As news got out ahead of the hearing that OP was going to ask HPRB to officially adopt their guidelines, the CPHS board geared up to testify about their concerns before HPRB and encouraged members to either send in comments or speak at the meeting (remotely via WebEx). A number of members participated. In addition, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and the Art Deco Society of Washington testified, expressing their concerns about the guidelines.

Despite these efforts, HPRB voted 5-0 to support the guidelines as a nonbinding framework, or

“tool,” in helping to make decisions on historic compatibility, while supporting the call for additional density in the Cleveland Park historic district. HPRB did clarify that they would continue to exercise their independent evaluation of projects as they are governed by the city's historic preservation laws and will continue to review each case on its merits.

Because the meeting went long—many people testified—HPRB postponed consideration of CPHS's *Design Guidelines for Cleveland Park's Historic Commercial Corridor* to the October 26 HPRB hearing. (An article about CPHS's design guidelines is on page 3.)

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2023 Annual Members Meeting and Election

By Andrea Pedolsky

Nearly 100 CPHS members gathered on June 8 at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church for the annual meeting and election. The highlight of the evening was a talk and slide show by Steve Knight and Deborah Chalfie from the Art Deco Society of Washington about the many examples of Art Deco one can find throughout the district, as well as in the Cleveland Park Historic District. They also warned how some Art Deco buildings in the historic district are being threatened by the proposed new Office of Planning (OP) design guidelines.

Following the presentation, President Bonnie LePard gave an overview of CPHS's activities in the last year, including its efforts to urge the OP to revise its proposed Cleveland Park and Woodley Park Design Guidelines; the new design guidelines for the commercial corridor drafted by CPHS Executive Director Stephen Hansen; Camilla Carpenter's standing-room-only presentation at the Cleveland Park Library about the historic architecture along Connecticut Avenue; and our very successful annual Gingerbread House event. The membership then voted unanimously for the proposed slate of new Board of Directors members: Jeff Berman, Mary Jane Glass (Treasurer), Amanda Hodgdon, Nancy MacWood, MaryAnn Nash, and Katherine Slick.

On the Street Where You Live

Introducing the Classic Modern

By Andrea Pedolsky

Queen Anne. Shingle. Free Classic. Sherman Cottage. Dutch Colonial Revival. Georgian Revival. Tudor Revival. Four Square. Bungalow. Old English Cottage. These are some of the architectural styles that characterize most of the homes in the Cleveland Park Historic District. Sprinkled throughout the neighborhood, however, are several contemporary houses, classified as Classic Modern, which incorporate basic geometric units, and flat or nearly flat roofs. They are constructed of smooth surfaces of stucco, plywood, and/or painted brick. Large panels of glass are also used as part of the surface display.



A Greco-Deco Home

According to CPHS's publication, *Cleveland Park: A Guide to Architectural Styles & Building Types*, the first modern house in Cleveland Park is 3415 36th Street, just south of Ordway Street. Designed by renowned architect Waldron Faulkner in 1936, it is described as Greco-Deco: take a look at its front door embellishments and you will understand why. The third edition of the *AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, DC*, considers it a "superb modernist urban villa," and "one of the finest houses of its time in America."

Waldron's sons, Winthrop and Avery, followed in their father's footsteps, becoming architects and equally renowned. In 1978, Winthrop designed a trio of contemporary townhouses at 3603, 3407, and 3411 36th Street that sit on former parts of Rosedale, the property once owned by Faulkner's wife's family, the Coonleys. As described in the November 4, 1979, issue of *The Washington Star*, the houses share slanted roofs; pie-shaped gardens; and beige, gray, and white facades. They were solar-paneled, an uncommon feature at the time, in response to the 1970s energy crisis.



One of the triplets at 3407 36th Street

CPHS member Graham Hacche has lived at 3407 36th Street since 1996. He told *Voices* that Winthrop Faulker lived in 3403 with his wife Jeanne until 2000.

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House Histories

There's Been a Village in Our House

By Mary Jane Glass

When my husband, Robert, and I moved to DC from the Caribbean (in January 1992 with two dogs, two guinea pigs, a baby, a toddler, two teenagers, and no winter clothes), I wasn't thinking that our new home had been a long-time group house that had contained multitudes. I was more concerned that its partial renovation was barely partial.

Group house, you ask? Cleveland Park used to be loaded with rundown houses whose owners collected rent from groups of young people who had come to DC for an adventure and/or a first job. Let's just say these adorable young people weren't too fixated on home repairs or (sadly) cleanliness. As near as I can tell, ours was a rental or a group house starting during World War II.

One Saturday, I was working in the garden when a couple came walking up the driveway. She lived in our house during the war when her father was an artist for the War Department. She and one of her sisters shared the front bedroom that our two older daughters shared, and their beds were placed as our daughters' were. Her parents slept in the same bedroom as Robert and I--and their bed was where ours is now. The little kids in their family shared the back, closed-in sleeping porch, and a single man rented the small front

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2024 Membership Renewal

It's time to continue your commitment to preserving our historic district's legacy of architectural and landscape design. For the first time in many years, and because of increases in the cost of doing business, CPHS has changed the categories and fee structure for membership:

- ◆ Individual: \$65 ◆ Family (for 2 or more): \$100 ◆ Sponsor: \$250
- ◆ Benefactor: \$500 ◆ Patron: \$1,000

You can renew by typing this link into your web browser: <https://tinyurl.com/2cy9chys>

We are also pleased to announce another change: New members will be welcomed at no charge for their first year of membership. And so, if you have a neighbor who doesn't know about CPHS, or if you know someone interested in historic districts and historic preservation, please share the above link with them.

Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

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Have an idea for an article?

Please send an email to:
staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

News from the ARC

By Christine Hobbs, ARC co-chair

An internationally recognized institution. A new multi-family building. New additions. The replacement of existing additions. These are all projects that appeared before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the Cleveland Park Historical Society in the past six months.

The original Washington School of Ballet building was the home of Mary Day, the school's founder. Its first floor served as the company's first dance studios, while Ms. Day lived on the upper level.

Located at the corner of Porter Street and Wisconsin Avenue, the Washington School of Ballet is known not just locally but internationally as well. Embarking on a project that will reconfigure their interior space to be more functional and coherent, the school is also proposing to reimagine the exterior. The plan is to demolish an existing building, no longer deemed a contributing structure to the historic district, and replace it with a similar, but slightly larger building. The original Washington School of Ballet building was the home of Mary Day, the

school's founder. Its first floor served as the company's first dance studios, while Ms. Day lived on the upper level. The redesigned and built complex will be re-clad and large, second-story windows will face both Wisconsin Avenue and Porter Street. The curb cut on Porter Street will be moved and the heritage tree on the corner preserved.

A proposed multi-family building at 3427 Wisconsin Avenue spans the block between Norton Place and Ordway Street. Development proposals for this location have been considered over several years. A previous proposal for a condominium building came before the ARC in January and April 2022. Currently, four contributing structures occupy the lot: two houses and two garages. Both past and current plans include relocating the houses and the garages so that one faces Norton Place and the other faces Ordway Street. The current proposal also calls for building a four-story apartment rental with a lower level and a penthouse on what will be a vacant lot. The building will contain 23 rentals, primarily three-bedroom units. The developer is still deciding on building details. (Relocating another contributing house around the corner to create a Wisconsin Avenue lot also occurred at the corner of Wisconsin and Macomb Streets. The construction of the new multi-family building at this site is almost complete.)

Rear additions remain a popular Cleveland Park construction project. Over the past several months, the ARC has considered four proposals that involve rear additions, two would replace existing additions, and two are new additions to the houses. The owners of a 1904 farmhouse-style home propose to replace an existing one-story addition with another one-story addition to create a more functional first floor. Their plan includes the use of compatible materials, and the owners are mindful of the relationship of their proposed addition to the neighboring structure. In another case, a two-story rear addition replaces an existing two-story addition, with the second story pulled back on the three exterior sides to defer to the original house. The proposed roofing materials and windows match those on the existing house. A proposed addition to a Sears bungalow is being developed with the aim of it being compatible with the historic district. And the most recent proposal includes a three-story addition to a small brick house from the 1940s, which is on a deep lot.

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.

Design Guidelines for Cleveland Park's Historic Commercial Corridor

By Stephen Hansen

As the Office of Planning (OP) was developing its *Connecticut Avenue Development Guidelines* over the past few years, the CPHS board quickly understood that the guidelines were going to be a planning and zoning document rather than providing the specific and detailed guidance needed to address the historic and architectural compatibility of projects in Cleveland Park's commercial corridor. And so, the board determined that it would be up to us to develop focused and preservation-specific guidelines addressing the corridor's unique character. The result is CPHS's *Design Guidelines for Cleveland Park's Historic Commercial Corridor*, which is posted on our website.

The guidelines are based on and informed by national and local historic preservation principles and laws, regulations, and standards—all of which the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) applies when evaluating projects. The focus of CPHS's guidelines is on maintaining the sense of the historic character, scale, and features that are most fundamental to the commercial corridor. They also enable flexibility in the application of design principles for future development, including efforts to develop affordable housing, that remain appropriate to the historic corridor.

We hope that these guidelines will provide the needed information and specific details for property owners, the community, and developers. We will use them to supplement our extant design guidelines, which do not address the commercial corridor; serve as a framework for CPHS's Architectural Review Committee (ARC) in evaluating projects; and be a basis for CPHS to comment on projects affecting the historic commercial corridor more broadly.

The guidelines were scheduled to be presented immediately following the presentation of OP's guidelines at the September 28 HPRB hearing. They will now be presented and discussed at HPRB's October 26 hearing.

It's All in the Details

One-of-a-Kind Ornamentation on Cleveland Park Homes

By MaryAnn Nash

Look closely on strolls through Cleveland Park and you will notice distinctive plaster ornamentation adorning the upper exteriors of several historic homes. The motifs are unique in that they were designed and applied by hand, using a rope-dipped-in-plaster technique, borrowed from the Arts & Crafts movement, before the houses were painted.



*Waddy Butler Wood's innovation at
3100 Newark Street*

Street, the windows of the central gable feature side panels with curved rope designs. The east gable above the door includes a curved rope design with a tall central feature that highlights the shape of the gable. At 3121 Newark Street there is a curved rope design above its central gable. And the home at 3042 Newark features an elaborate curved design in the central second floor gable and two smaller, but complementary designs over the second-story windows. The cottage at 3415 Ashby Terrace

Architect Waddy Butler Wood was the first to use this technique. His 1897 design for 3100 Newark Street, the first shingle-style home in the neighborhood, features a spiraled design over its west gable.

John Sherman and his wife Ella Bennett Sherman adopted the technique for many of their eponymous Sherman Cottages. They wanted the cottages to be less elaborate than earlier home designs, and so applied the roped motifs as a simpler form of ornamentation. On the house at 2929 Macomb



*Curves within a triangle enhance the
gable*

includes a rope design on a panel between the two second story windows.

Rope designs don't just adorn the fronts of Cleveland Park houses. The Robert Head-designed home at 2941 Newark Street features a rope design on the gable on the west side of the house. It is especially prominent because it is painted in black, contrasting with the color of the gable.

Take a minute to look up and enjoy these details on your next walk!



A display of black spirals

Two CPHS Walking Tours Entertain and Inform

By Andrea Pedolsky

Newark Street's architecture was the focus of the CPHS walking tour on June 17, led by CPHS member Camilla Carpenter and Executive Director Stephen Hansen. This remarkable street is home to almost every type of American residential architecture and so embodies the historic district's architectural history. The day was particularly special because many neighbors were enjoying the fine weather outside their homes and happily shared wonderful stories about their homes.



*A stop on the Newark Street walking
tour*

On September 9, CPHS member Dr. Barbara Porter and Stephen Hansen led a group of 25 members on a lively, informative, and sold-out tour of several Sears & Roebuck catalog houses ("kit" houses) on Macomb Street. Dating to between 1911 and 1929, no two houses look the same, as buyers were able to choose a variety of architectural details. Our two tour leaders also discussed the economic and social aspects of the Sears houses, which were a very American phenomenon.

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 design guidelines and for guidance on the design review process in Cleveland Park and the permitting process in DC.

House Histories, continued from page 2

bedroom. (A note about accommodations during the war: They were tight. My mother lived in an apartment in Cleveland Park and she shared a bed with one of her housemates. They each had a yardstick to measure their sides, which they would whip out during the night to check that the other was keeping to her side of the bed.)



The Giant Borrower's escape route

We also met two people who lived in our house during the action-packed Sixties. One resident showed up when our oldest daughter was alone and asked her to let him in. She did. Sigh. He had slept in the master bedroom, and yes, his bed was where ours is. The other resident mostly spent her time protesting on the Mall. She and her housemates got up to a lot of mischief, about which I should probably not go into here.

When we were preparing for our oldest daughter's wedding breakfast in 2012, the caterer looked around the house, and said, "Gosh, I used to live here." Then she asked her son, who worked for her, "Do you want to see where you were born?" Of course, the delivery room was the master bedroom, with the bed in its proper place.

We were so surprised to learn that David, one of our daughter's closest friends, lived here in the 1980s as a preteen, after his family's house was damaged in a serious fire. David told us about an unexpected "housemate." One day his mother awakened from a nap when the attic door swung open, and a stranger emerged down the stairs. Terrified, she began screaming, which so terrified him that he ran out of the house, never to be seen again. They found all sorts of their belongings that had disappeared into the attic. Ever read *The Borrowers*? I think of this uninvited guest as a giant Borrower.

That closes our house's bit of history. I wonder what the future holds for it. I hope people will love it and be happy here. We have been.

On the Street Where You Live, continued from page 2



3403 36th Street

Faulkner died in 2004 (you can read more about him in *The Washington Post* obituary: <https://tinyurl.com/yrrhz3f4>).

The front views of the triplets have a similar look, and all have large back windows overlooking their respective back gardens and Rosedale. But according to Graham, they are quite different from each other inside as they were designed partly to the specifications of the first owners. Since the houses were built, together they have had only seven owners. "With an average tenure of 19 years (and rising)," Graham observed, "it seems that the owners have been quite happy living here."

In addition to the stretch of father and son Faulkner houses on 36th Street (which also includes Winthrop's 3419), around the corner on Ordway Street, you will find another group of Faulkner houses at 3530 and 3540. Taken together, *The AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, DC*, describes the enclave as "a body of work whose excellence of line and sureness of massing can hold its own with any grouping of similar scale in the District."

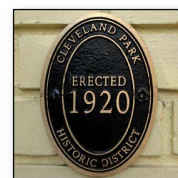


3411 36th Street

CPHS Contributes to the DC History Center

In 2004, CPHS donated a massive amount of historic society documents to the DC History Center, forming a core collection. At nearly 28 cubic feet, the collection includes oral history tapes; material relating to a history of the John Eaton School; paper models; records of community meetings; records of board meetings; drafts of a mid-1990s *Guide to Cleveland Park Merchants*; documentation relating to the nomination for historic district status; and loads of additional information.

This summer, the Archive Committee has been readying a second trove of documents to donate to the Center. Committee members Judy Hubbard, Vicki Marchand, and Andrea Pedolsky have sorted and organized hundreds of documents, publications, banners, and other ephemeral that have been stored in the home of board member Lois Orr for several years. Lois has been a gracious host for the material—and we heartily thank her. It is now time to return to Lois the full use of her basement and ensure these historical documents are accessible to DC researchers and scholars.



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://tinyurl.com/3w6chkvs>. 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 (\$225) as well as to non-members (\$275).

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Voices 2023

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