

*(Reception at the Indian Ambassador's Residence, continued from p. 1)*

It is one of the last of the estate properties remaining in Cleveland Park, along with Tregaron and the preserved portions of Rosedale. The Homestead is unusual in that it was built in 1914, when the large estates in the area were already being sold off for the development of Cleveland Park as a streetcar suburb. The house in its wooded grounds has been largely closed to the public for the last sixty-plus years. Guests at the Ambassador's reception were thrilled to find it both a splendid historic architectural treasure in a lovely setting, and a comfortable family home.

In 1930, Walter Schoellkopf and his wife Anna Johnston Schoellkopf bought The Homestead from its original owner and commissioned architect Ward Brown to expand the house and turn it into a Georgian-style mansion. As was the fashion at the time, they imported parts of rooms from Europe: the house features a marble mantelpiece from Verdun; 200-year-old parquet flooring from a French chateau; and a fireplace from Dorchester House, London, which stood on the site of the present Dorchester Hotel. The current ambassador has filled the house with art representing not only India itself, but other countries where she has served. In her welcoming remarks, Ambassador Rao observed,



"Our residence has witnessed the growth of the India-US relationship over six decades now, and welcomed to its portals so many key players in that relationship. This lovely house has weathered the years well – its walls have taken on a beautiful patina with age, and it has stayed that wonderful home on a hill, with its cloak of beautiful, strong, upright trees."

The Ambassador further noted on her blog, "As our cities grow and overflow, the preservation of the old, particularly buildings of artistic and architectural value, is an issue that should concern us all. The Cleveland Park Historical Society is clearly aware of the need of such preservation. They are setting an example that is worthy of emulation."

CPHS President Danny Ince promised Ambassador Rao a Cleveland Park Historical Society Historic House Marker dated 1914 for The Homestead.

Gwen Wright, CPHS board member and co-chair of the Architectural Review Committee, spoke about the history of the estate and its relationship to the natural landscape:

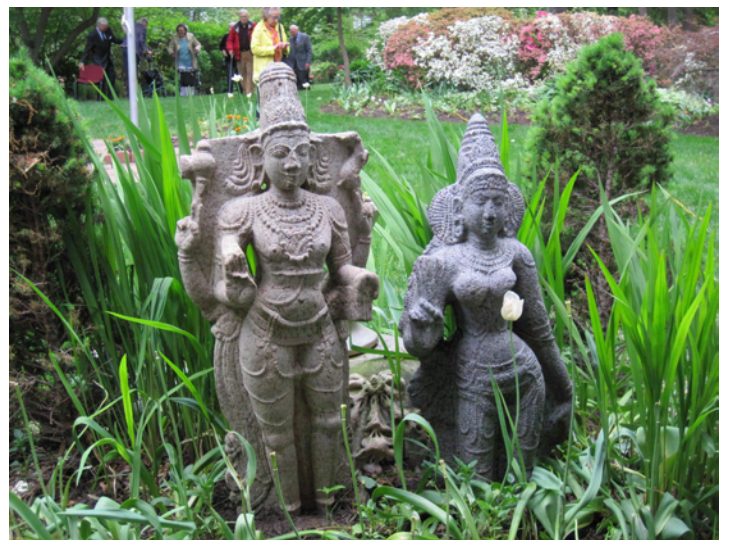
*So much of Cleveland Park's history is interrelated with the natural landscape. This historic neighborhood is special not only for its fine collection of turn-of-the-century architect-designed homes, but also for how the suburban development of the area that began in the 1890s was superimposed on a number of significant estates with rolling hills and beautiful grounds. A number of these estates still exist: Rosedale, dating from 1794; Twin Oaks, built in 1888; and Tregaron, which is 100 years old in 2012. The last of the great estates to be built was The Homestead, which was designed in 1914, with renovations in 1930. The Homestead was built on a five acre tract overlooking Rock Creek Park. It was originally the home of merchant and philanthropist David Joseph Kaufman and his wife Clara J.*

*Luchs Kaufman. The architect, Frederick Pyle, was regionally prominent. Some of his more notable buildings include the Equitable Cooperative Building Association at 915 F Street, NW, the clubhouse for the Columbia Country Club in Chevy Chase, the southern end of the Woodward and Lothrop building on F Street, and numerous homes in the Cleveland Park area. One of his most famous protégés was Arthur Heaton (architect of the Park and Shop) who started his architectural career as a draftsman in Pyle's office.*

*Unlike some of the other estates of the same period, the Homestead has remained relatively untouched by surrounding development. Thanks to the stewardship of the Indian government, we are able to step back in time and experience our neighborhood as it was nearly 100 years ago. The house's relationship and orientation to Rock Creek remain as originally planned. The gardens and open space around the house recall the earlier rural character of Cleveland Park. It is a very special place and a perfect site to celebrate not only the 25th anniversary of the Cleveland Park Historic District, but also the very characteristics that make Cleveland Park the historic jewel that it is.*



*A special surprise was the presence of Henry and Ann Schoellkopf, grandchildren of Walter Schoellkopf, The Homestead's former owner.*



*Statues in the Residence's garden*

CPHS looks forward to a closer relationship with the Embassy in the years to come, and we hope more Cleveland Park residents will have a chance to visit this beautiful property.