

What Draws People to Cleveland Park?

by Jennifer Hamilton and Mary Anderson Cooper

Those of us who have lived in Cleveland Park for a long time have fairly well developed ideas about what keeps us here, but the authors of this piece thought it would be interesting to find out what it is that draws new people to the community that we enjoy so much. So we conducted a completely unscientific survey of a handful of recent arrivals that we know to see what had attracted them to this neighborhood.

Perhaps not surprisingly, we found that many of the things that draw new people to Cleveland Park are similar to those that have kept us here. The single thing mentioned the most in this admittedly limited survey was natural beauty – trees, greenery, and park land. A close second was a grouping of items in the general category of “livability” – safety, quiet, walkability – although the need for improvement in pedestrian crossings on Wisconsin Avenue was noted. Following are comments from some of those interviewed.

Jeremy and Dena Sher live in a duplex on Macomb Street. They came to Cleveland Park seeking something less urban than Adams Morgan but not suburban, where they could enjoy long walks with their dog. The proximity to Metro and the neighborhood shops and restaurants is a big plus. They enjoy having a front porch and the big beech tree in their garden.

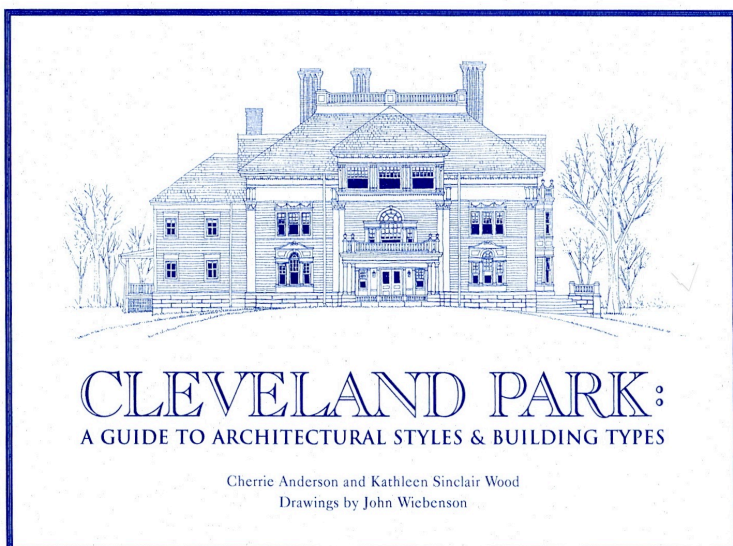
Pam King Sams, a Newark Street resident, moved here from Columbia to escape the long commute to and from her job at Children’s Hospital. She, too, mentioned the greenery, safety, shops and restaurants as particular attractions, along with the friendly people. She likes to entertain and enjoys having a place to display her art and furniture.

Elizabeth and Martin Ferenczi are recent arrivals on Newark Street, along with their son and Elizabeth’s mother. Before moving to Washington, they lived in Paris. They feel that housing in Cleveland Park is a good investment and expect the Giant development to increase property values. Elizabeth cited their proximity to Tregaron and public transportation as attractions.

Peter and Cathy Toren have recently returned to Cleveland Park. Previously residents of Lowell Street, they have come back from New York to a home on Newark Street. Cathy said that when they moved from the neighborhood years ago, she left “kicking and screaming” because she loved Cleveland Park so much. The quiet and the greenery in the area are things they particularly appreciate.

Richard Townend and Alexandra Wisotsky moved to their home on 34th Street from Adams Morgan. As parents of two small children, they were in search of a community with good school and playground opportunities. They did not have a car when they arrived in the neighborhood and so developed the custom of walking as much as possible and using public transit, something they particularly appreciate. Closeness to the Zoo and Rock Creek Park are also advantages, along with easy access to excellent shops and eating places.

Taken together, the favorable aspects of the neighborhood mentioned by these recent arrivals seem to suggest that Cleveland Park is a comfortable place to come home to, and that is a characteristic that only gains in value over time.



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