UPCOMING EVENTS

CPHS BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, November 14
8 p.m.
Cleveland Park Congregational Church
Contact Judy Hubbard Saul
(202)363-6358.

WALKING TOUR OF CLEVELAND PARK’S HISTORIC COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE
Sunday, December 3
2-3:30 p.m.
$10 for CPHS members
Contact Judy Hubbard Saul,
(202)363-6358.

ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP
January 2000
For more information,
call Judy Hubbard Saul
(202)363-6358.

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HISTORIC ROSEDALE FOR SALE: CPHS WILL DEFEND NEIGHBORHOOD TREASURE
by Rachel S. Cox

A T A SPECIAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 24TH, THE BOARD OF THE Cleveland Park Historical Society (CPHS) committed the organization to protecting Rosedale, the historic site bordering Newark Street between 34th Place and 36th Street now owned by Youth for Understanding. The international exchange program has made known its intention of selling the 6-acre property to stabilize its finances.

Noting that Rosedale “ranks as one of the two or three most significant properties in the Historic District,” the CPHS board resolved, among other things, “to support or participate in appropriate steps to ensure that . . . any sale, development, or change in use . . . will not have significant adverse effects on the historic character of Rosedale itself, on the nearby properties, or on the larger Historic District, in terms of destruction or degradation of historic structures and landscaping, increased traffic or noise, or loss of vistas and open spaces.”

Valued by many neighbors as a grassy oasis of dog-walking, game-playing, and winter sledding (and briefly notorious as the D.C. home of Cuban castaway Elian Gonzalez), Rosedale also embodies more than two centuries of District and national history. The old house at its heart dates back at least to the 1790s, and the immediate grounds still show the traces of years of

(continues on page 2)
cultivation as a self-sufficient farmstead as the Federal City grew up to its south.

Rosedale’s first owner was a central player in the city’s development. Merchant, landowner, and politician Uriah Forrest fought under Washington in the Revolution, served as a delegate to the Maryland Assembly and to the Continental Congress, and was elected mayor of Georgetown, where he kept a townhouse at what is now M and 34th streets.

His bride preferred country life, however, and in 1793 Forrest settled his family on a vast tract of rural countryside, then known as Pretty Prospects, that he owned with two partners. The stone cottage where they passed their first summer is now believed to have predated their arrival, and tradition dates its construction as 1740—making it the oldest extant house in the District. Forrest soon erected a larger, wood frame house with porch and veranda which he named Rosedale. Wood-frame wings connected it to the stone cottage, which would serve for kitchen and servants’ quarters. While the surrounding countryside has long since been sold off for development, the house itself looks today much as it did originally, making it a rare surviving example of an 18th-century vernacular farmhouse.

Rosedale remained in the Forrest family until 1920, when it was purchased by Mrs. Avery Coonley, formerly of Chicago. Earlier, Mr. and Mrs. Coonley had made architectural history when they commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to build them a prairie-style house in Riverside, Ill. The great American architect would visit them at Rosedale. Asked by Mrs. Coonley to pass judgment on its quite different architecture, he pronounced it “honest” and “good for its time.”

In 1959 the Coonleys’ daughter, Mrs. Waldron Faulkner, sold Rosedale and 6.7 acres to the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation to be used as a boarding facility for the National Cathedral School. For the first time, neighbors organized to assure the historic house’s survival. The Cathedral-Rosedale Neighborhood Committee obtained an agreement from the purchasers to protect the house and its open setting in return for an uncontested zoning variance. The three modern brick residences erected by the Cathedral were positioned at respectful intervals around the back of the historic property.

A similar agreement accompanied Rosedale’s 1977 sale to Youth for Understanding (YFU). Because the Rosedale property is zoned for single-family residences, any other use requires approval by the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment. Neighbors successfully fought off a proposal by the Bulgarian Socialist Republic to use the property for an embassy, and in exchange for supporting YFU’s ownership and nonconforming use of the property, they obtained a legal covenant limiting YFU’s activities on the property and requiring YFU to preserve and maintain the building and grounds and to allow public access.

Rosedale was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. It also is listed as a landmark in the District of Columbia and is within the boundaries of the Cleveland Park Historic District. As such, any demolition or construction on the property must be reviewed by the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board and would almost certainly be reviewed by the Architectural Review Committee of CPHS.

In adopting the October 24th resolution, however, CPHS adopted a pro-active stance. Pledging “to consult and work closely with Friends of Rosedale and other interested residents and groups,” the resolution also established the Rosedale Historic Preservation Fund. The fund will accept donations to be applied exclusively toward preservation of Rosedale. “One priority is underwriting additional research needed to better document the historical significance of Rosedale’s house and landscape,” said CPHS president Steve Cohen. “We welcome neighborhood support and will keep all our members informed as plans develop.”

A blue granite millstone in a brick pathway at Rosedale dates from the early 18th century.


**President’s Note**

Once again, the year ahead looks like an active one for the Cleveland Park Historical Society. The CPHS-sponsored landscape survey of Tregaron (Washington International School) is nearing completion. The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) will continue to review construction projects affecting our historic district. Last spring we sponsored a community forum where Giant representatives presented their plans for redeveloping the property at Newark Street and Wisconsin Avenue. In October, the ARC reviewed the architectural elements of the project. (See page 7.) We will continue to monitor the situation as the project moves through the city’s approval process.

This fall brings a major challenge with the potential sale of Rosedale. A community group, Friends of Rosedale, has formed to respond to the threat, and CPHS will act with them to ensure that this important landmark and its historic grounds are preserved. (See page 1.)

As always, CPHS will sponsor a garden tour in the spring. Co-chair Mary Jane Glass will lead the charge, but a second co-chair is still needed to help organize this popular event. Any potential volunteers should call her at (202) 686-3082.

This spring also will mark the roll out of Cleveland Park’s historic marker program. Owners of structures of historical significance in the Cleveland Park Historic District will be able to purchase handsome bronze plaques commemorating the year of their home’s construction. Displaying the plaques on our house fronts will educate the public about the age of the neighborhood and help instill a sense of pride and respect for the historic district. Complete program information and application forms will be mailed out early next year.

Volunteers are always needed. Whether to maintain the flowerbeds along Connecticut Avenue, to support Rosedale, or to assist with the Spring Garden Tour, we can never have enough helpers. If you are interested, please give us a call at (202) 363-6358.

In addition, Frank Stowieck, our newest board member, has volunteered to monitor the Cleveland Park e-groups chat room. To add your voice to the discussion, send e-mails to cleveland-park@eGroups.com. It seems strangely appropriate that CPHS should use this modern form of communication to keep in touch with the concerns of our historic community.

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**CPHS Welcomes New Officers**

Two historical society stalwarts have generously agreed to expand their duties this year. Porter Street resident Nancy Skinkle has contributed her expertise to the Architectural Review Committee since 1997, serving as co-chair since early 1999. An architect with Chatelain Architects downtown, she moved to Cleveland Park five years ago. She joined the CPHS board this year as membership coordinator, hoping to update and improve the data base and bolster membership.

The new secretary, Barbara Stout has lived in Cleveland Park since 1965. She and her late husband raised their four children in the same Quebec Street house where her daughter and son-in-law now are raising their family. An English professor at Montgomery College in Rockville, Ms. Stout joined the Historical Society at its founding in 1985. “We were very concerned about development on Wisconsin Avenue, at McLean Gardens, and at the Park & Shop,” she recalls. In 1994 she joined the board and from 1996 to 1999 served as membership chair.

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**Improvements Continue at Macomb Playground**

Heartfelt thanks go to neighbors and friends whose contributions enable Cleveland Park’s playground and green space to grow in fun and beauty.

The Committee for the Renovation of Macomb Playground (ROMP) planted five new crepe myrtle trees this summer, the tree’s light purple blossoms complementing the gazebo’s playful colors.

Young children soon will have a new train car to journey in following the generous individual donation of a colorful addition to the playground’s unique Kompan play engine.

Interested contributors can contact ROMP by calling Stephen Turow, (202) 364-5379.

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Comments, suggestions, questions, compliments, and criticism are all welcome. Please send them to the Editor at P.O. Box 4862, Washington, D.C. 20008.
A TROVE OF CONTACTS

For the public spirited and the research minded, the 1999 edition of the D.C. Preservation League’s Preservation Directory is a gold mine. The 24-page booklet lists addresses, phone and fax numbers, and web sites for preservation-related organizations from neighborhood to national levels, for government offices with similarly varied purviews, for city and neighborhood newspapers, and for museums, libraries, and research collections tracing on the historic and built environment of the District.

You can pick up a copy free from the DCPL office, 1815 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, suite 200, DC 20006, or send $3 to cover postage and handling. For more information, call DCPL at (202)955-5616 or e-mail dcpreserv@aol.com.

THE KLINGLE VALLEY BRIDGE:
A MODEL OF ELEGANCE AND ADAPTATION

The Cleveland Park Historical Society and its members have pressured the city for years to repair the unique, but sadly neglected Art Deco-style bridge that carries Connecticut Avenue over verdant Klingel Valley—the gateway to Cleveland Park. As part of that effort, the Art Deco Society of Washington has been documenting the bridge’s historical significance. Tony Wilmer, chair of the society’s preservation committee, here offers a summary of their findings so far, along with an update on the bridge’s current status.

The bridges spanning the rivers and valleys of Washington, D.C., are numerous and varied in style and purpose. Many notable architects with engineering experience were commissioned to design bridges for the nation’s capital that would eclectically combine form with function and facilitate transportation with aesthetic appeal.

As automobile travel became more popular during the 1920s and 1930s, major roadways were expanded outward from the city center into outlying suburban areas. With streetcars also in use, some bridges were configured for both vehicular and streetcar traffic.

Designed in 1930 by Paul Phillippe Cret (1876-1945), a noted architect of the day, the Klingel Valley Bridge is a surviving example of these historical trends. It spans the Klingel Valley branch of Rock Creek, connecting Woodley Park and Cleveland Park via Connecticut Avenue. It was designed to carry both modes of transportation to the distant and largely undeveloped end of a major avenue while blending harmoniously into its surrounding natural environment.

Unlike other bridges in the city that are older, longer, and more elaborate, the Klingel Valley Bridge was not designed on a grand scale. With slightly less than 500 feet to work with (not very long by any bridge standard), Cret designed a structure that would provide a seamless link across the deep ford below and minimize visual disruption of the beauty of its surroundings. The bridge’s support structure is entirely below the roadway, out of view as one passes over it. It was intended to blend in with the surrounding streetscape of apartment buildings and commercial shops as well as with the trees below (many rising past deck level); hence the light green color of the Art Deco-style railing balusters and the patina-green bronze-capped concrete urn lanterns at each corner. Wide sidewalks on both sides, with bench seats at the ends, clearly indicate how well suited it is to the pedestrian character of residential neighborhoods so close to a commercial area.

In his study Bridges and the City of Washington (1974), Donald Beekman Myer hailed the Klingel Valley Bridge as a “study in neutral adaptation to a specific situation.” Myer further commented that it played a significant role in the extension of Connecticut Avenue as part of developing the L’Enfant Plan of the city.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

In response to the Commission of Fine Arts’ preference for a bridge that would intrude minimally into the wooded valley below, the Klingel Valley Bridge is a single arch supported by (continues on page 5)
THE KLINGLE VALLEY BRIDGE (continued from page 4)

four steel ribs, each having open spandrels, that are double-hinged into stone-faced abutments left in place from the original span built in 1891. Natural stone was selected to further minimize visual impact on the surrounding area. The present structure has a roadway 60 feet wide, with 10-foot sidewalks, making a total width of 80 feet. The center of the span is 50 feet above the valley floor. The span is 250 feet long with 123-foot abutments on each end, making a total length of 496 feet. It was designed to carry a load of 20 tons, much more than the six-ton capacity of the original bridge. The deck is reinforced concrete with an asphalt surface.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The original Klingele Valley Bridge dates back to 1891, when a span composed of steel deck truss structures with railroad tracks running down the middle was built by the Edgemere Bridge Company for the Rock Creek Railway Company at a cost of $35,000. It was built during the time of Senator Newland’s real estate development venture that extended Connecticut Avenue northward into Chevy Chase. The large fountain on Connecticut Avenue at Chevy Chase Circle commemorates this initiative.

Due to age and obsolescence, the original bridge was replaced with one that could carry a higher volume of vehicular and streetcar traffic. In December 1930 the Committee on Fine Arts had approved a design, but recommended lightening the deck level by using balusters instead of a continuous parapet. During construction, a temporary roadway was built and part of the old bridge accommodated traffic, a convenience that would cost an extra $4,800. The bridge was built in three sections, allowing the road to remain open. The abutments of the old bridge were left in place and used as supports for the new abutments. Construction was directed by district highway engineers C.R. White and Captain Herbert C. Whitehurst, for whom the Whitehurst Freeway would be named.

The present bridge was designed by the noted and prolific architect Paul Philippe Cret in collaboration with the engineering firm Modjeski, Masters, and Chase and construction contractor W.P. Thurston Company of Richmond, Va. Thurston’s winning bid was the lowest of nine submitted. The bridge was completed on January 27, 1932 at a cost of $458,951. In 1935 Cret would work again with the same firm to design the new Calvert Street Bridge (now the Ellington Bridge) less than a mile south on Connecticut Avenue. For this bridge too he proposed a steel arch design, although a masonry-arch design was finally approved. Like the first Klingele Valley Bridge, the first Calvert Street Bridge was built in 1891 to facilitate real estate development in Chevy Chase sponsored by the Rock Creek Railway.

CURRENT CONDITION

Unfortunately, the Klingele Valley Bridge is currently in a very neglected state. While there are no concerns for its structural integrity, several cosmetic concerns could in time affect its stability. D.C. Public Works is well aware of the bridge’s condition; however, with other bridges in the city having higher priority because they require structural attention, this one will have to wait. The Art Deco Society has contacted D.C. Public Works and discussed our concern for restoring the bridge to its original splendor, including electrification of the urn lanterns, replacement of the missing lamp poles, repainting of the balusters, and repair of the masonry. We will keep the Cleveland Park Historical Society apprised of significant developments as they arise.

For more information about the effort to restore the Klingele Valley Bridge, contact Tony Wilner at (410)255-4960.
ARCHITECTURAL CORNER
NEWS OF THE ARC

by Nancy L. Skinkle, ARC cochair

Since early spring, members of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of CPHS have had the pleasure of reviewing about a dozen projects, many of them now under construction. Most were minor additions and alterations to existing houses in the historic district. A few significant commercial projects, however, have excited much local public interest.

Two notable residential projects were the Kennedy Warren apartment building in Woodley Park and a house on Ordway Street that was designed by I.M. Pei, the renowned modern architect who also designed the East Wing of the National Gallery. The city asked the ARC to review the Kennedy Warren proposal because the Art Deco-style towers border so closely the Cleveland Park Historic District. The proposal was for the addition of through-wall air conditioning units under most windows on north, east, and south elevations. Because of the impact such a change would have on the architectural integrity of the structure, which is a designated National Historic Landmark, the ARC rejected the proposal. The city concurred.

On a much smaller scale, the proposal for the I.M. Pei-designed house on Ordway Street added a garage, pool, and pavilion to the property. The intent of the owner was to respect the integrity of the house while extending the original vision of the architect. The ARC approved the proposal unanimously.

Among the notable commercial projects, the Starwood property in the 3500 block of Connecticut Avenue (north of Ordway Street) first came before the ARC in April, and the ARC has reviewed the rehabilitation project three times in all. The ARC requested that Starwood maintain the simple, symmetrical design of the original structures and restore the second-story windows to their original multipane configuration. Starwood also will implement two-story bays with shallow balconies, allowing greater headroom for the first-floor tenants while bringing more light into the retail spaces. The ARC is quite encouraged by the final plans that Starwood presented in September, and we commend the developer for working closely with us over the last several months.

In October the ARC reviewed Giant Food Store’s proposal for their Wisconsin Avenue property at Newark Street. The local Advisory Neighborhood Commission requested an ARC review to assist them in their own deliberations. The ARC findings are printed below.

Finally, the ARC welcomes enthusiastically recent improvements in communication with our local Advisory Neighborhood Commission. We endorse wholeheartedly the continued participation of the Cleveland Park Historical Society and its Architectural Review Committee in the significant issues affecting the neighborhood.

ARC COMMENTS ON GIANT FOOD STORES PROPOSAL

Giant Food Stores (GFS) is currently seeking governmental approval to redevelop their existing Wisconsin and Newark site into a larger facility, which would include a pharmacy, a parking garage, and several other retail spaces in addition to the grocery store. This site is outside of the Cleveland Park Historic District and is not subject to Historic Preservation Review Board approval. However, the redevelopment plans have generated significant community comments.

On September 19, 2000, the Cleveland Park Historical Society Board of Directors passed a resolution regarding the redevelopment of the Giant supermarket site on Wisconsin Avenue.
NEWS OF THE ARC (continued from page 6)

CPHS took the position that GFS should follow the mandated legal procedures in applying for approval for this project. CPHS also took the position that a case has not yet been made for a structure larger than that allowed under existing zoning. Beyond this, the Board did not take a position either for or against the development.

Subsequently the Cleveland Park Historical Society Architectural Review Committee was requested by the ANC to provide input on the architectural merits of the project. Although the project is not in the Historic District, the ARC reviewed the project in an advisory capacity only. The ARC focused its review on the project’s architectural impact including scale, massing, height, compatibility, materials, fenestration, and streetscape articulation. The ARC did not directly address issues of zoning and traffic. These particular issues are beyond the ARC’s purview. We understand, however, that these issues are still being reviewed by local community organizations and are normally addressed during the zoning review process.

Even though the ARC acknowledges that the project is in the early stages of design and that all of the details have yet to be illustrated, we believe that the overall height, scale and massing of the project is compatible to the surrounding neighborhood. The ARC considered the impact of the design on all sides of the property, including its impact on immediately adjacent properties to the south and deemed it compatible with the existing architectural fabric of the community. However, the ARC has the following recommendations that we encourage GFS to consider:

➢ The use of multiple brick types to further break down the facades of Wisconsin Avenue would be desirable. In general the color rendition of the brick concerns us. We understand that this may be a limitation of the drawings and photographs; however, this is all the more reason why we want to have an opportunity to provide input on the brick selections.
➢ The center bay of the Giant store on Newark Street should take its aesthetic cues from the Wisconsin Avenue entry to appear less monumental in scale.
➢ The Giant store facade on Newark Street should be more articulated to have greater appeal to the pedestrian while being more consistent with the Wisconsin Avenue facade. We encourage the use of simple patterned brick inset panels or the stucco panels indicated if additional brick detailing could be added to further break down the scale of the panels.
➢ The hip/gable features of the tower roofs should be eliminated to be more compatible with the scale of the adjacent structures.
➢ The use of the traffic circle at Newark and Idaho Avenues should be downplayed in design since this intersection is not an important element in the overall plan.
➢ The ARC encourages the use of streetscape furniture.
➢ The ARC appreciates Giant’s presentation of the project to this committee and is encouraged by the thought and quality of the design. Since the project borders the Historic District, the ARC would be interested in an additional presentation to review material selection and final details as they relate to the overall streetscape.

The Architectural Review Committee of the Cleveland Park Historical Society meets regularly on the second Monday of every month at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church. Meetings are open to the public, but ARC determinations are made privately. To hear the monthly listing of projects to be reviewed, call CPHS at the beginning of each month at (202)363-6358.

STOP ILLEGAL ALTERATIONS OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

To report any construction activity in Cleveland Park that may not have the appropriate building permits or appears not to comply with approved plans, call Inspector Toni Cherry at (202)442-4570 or send an e-mail to HP_Inspector@hotmail.com. After business hours, you can leave a message at (202)442-4535.

WEB SITES WORTH A VISIT

WWW.dcpreservation.org, the new D.C. Preservation League (DCPL) web site, gives information about the private, nonprofit organization that advocates for preservation citywide. Other offerings include:

✓ Descriptions of all D.C. historic districts
✓ Answers to frequently asked questions about owning property in D.C. historic districts
✓ DCPL’s annual list of Most Endangered Places
✓ Details of preservation issues being monitored by DCPL
✓ The agenda for the next monthly meeting of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board
✓ A calendar of events.
Join the Cleveland Park Historical Society

Cleveland Park Historical Society (CPHS) was founded in 1985 by concerned residents seeking to prevent overdevelopment of Cleveland Park's commercial corridors and to preserve the character of this historic neighborhood. It continues to be active in preservation, beautification, public education, and community betterment. To join us in this work, please send this coupon, along with a tax-deductible contribution, to:

Nancy Skinkle, Membership Chair
Cleveland Park Historical Society
P.O. Box 4862
Washington, DC 20008

Please make checks payable to the Cleveland Park Historical Society. All but $4.00 is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

YES! I wish to become a member of CPHS at the following level:

- $35 Individual
- $50 Household
- $100 Sponsor
- $250 Patron
- $500 Angel

Name (please print)

Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Daytime Phone   Evening Phone

I would like to volunteer to help with:

- Tree planting
- Fund raising
- Neighborhood beautification
- Architectural Review Committee
- Special event planning
- Clerical/mailings
- Photography/graphic arts
- Macomb Playground rehabilitation
- Newsletter
- Other__________________________

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