

The Guilford News

GUILFORDASSOCIATION.ORG

SUMMER 2020

The York Road Guilford Wall

TOM HOBBS

STRETCHING FROM UNDERWOOD ROAD TO OLD COLD SPRING LANE, A GREAT DEAL OF MYSTERY HAS SURROUNDED THE STONE WALL.

There has been much speculation about the stone wall that extends parallel to York Road from north of Underwood Road to Old Cold Spring Lane — when it was built, why it was built, who owns it. We have researched land records, Roland Park Company documents and newspaper articles to answer those questions.

When Guilford was conceived the tract on which it is developed was partially in Baltimore City and partially in Baltimore County. Until the 1918 annexation by the City the city-county line extended from the rear of Underwood Road properties on the east to the west boundary of Guilford cutting across the south of Sherwood Gardens to approximately Charles Street and Millbrook Road on the west.

As originally conceived and as shown on the 1913 plat of Guilford, the Guilford land north of Underwood Road facing York Road was to be developed for residential use as is the case of Guilford properties facing Greenmount Avenue south of Underwood Road. However, there were several conditions in the Baltimore County portion of the Guilford site that impacted that plan.

See **GUILFORD WALL**, page 8



The Guilford stone wall at York Road and Northway. The wall was constructed in the early 1920s.

A Crepe Myrtle is in full bloom at Sherwood Gardens. The spring bulbs were left in the ground this year and summer flowers were planted in a few beds on each side of the park.

In this time when the pandemic is affecting our lives and concerning to all of us it is more than ever comforting to experience and appreciate the unique and privileged environment of Guilford. As we leave the enclosure of our homes many more of us are walking our streets, visiting our parks and Sherwood Gardens for exercise, relief and renewal. You may have met new neighbors and more new dogs than you knew lived here. Also there are walkers visiting from other nearby neighborhoods seeking to vary their walking routine and experience a new appreciation for Guilford. Some of us have ventured in walks to Homeland and Roland Park and beyond and gained a new pedestrian perspective, delight and appreciation there as well.

The peak of Sherwood Gardens tulip bloom happened a bit early this year and the tulips were splendid. Because we were in “lock down” visitors were far fewer. To share the bloom we’ve included photos that capture some of the experience, together with an update on the use of the Gardens.

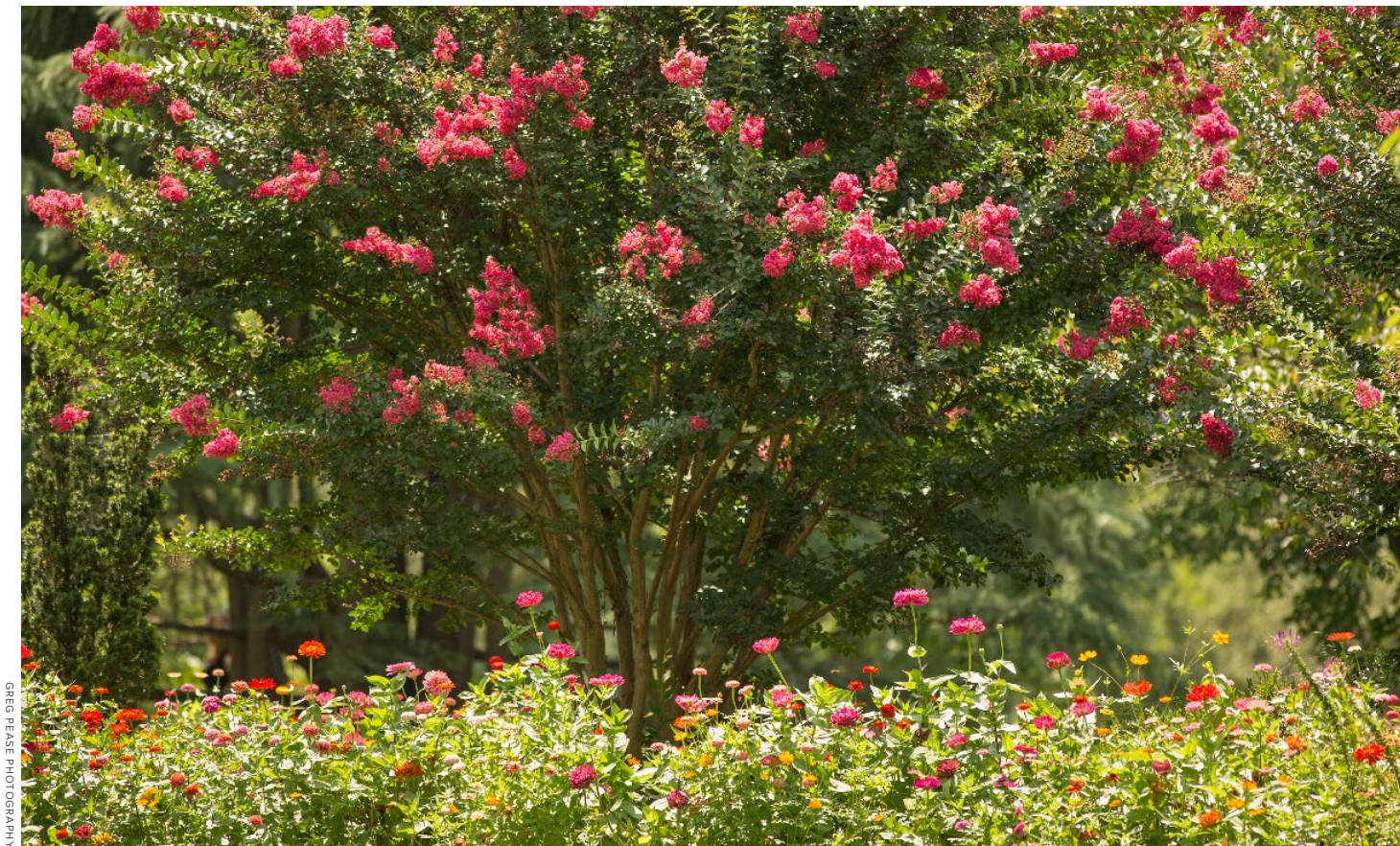
Even in these uncertain times our Guilford Association Office has managed to continue to function, handling our obligations and responding to the needs of residents thanks to Amethyst Spivak. However, because of child care demands Amethyst has had to become a full time mom and is no longer able to be Office Manager after July 31st. In response to a community email search we were fortunate to receive two actionable candidates. We hired Patrick Nolan as the Office Manager and Elizabeth Nguyen as Assistant Office Manager who will primarily concentrate on accounting responsibilities. Both Pat and Elizabeth are Guilford residents. Kellie Comberiate, Assistant Office Manager, who has worked part time with us, also returned from her maternity leave in August.

Each member of the team works part time hours and will together provide service to the community.

Because of resignations creating unexpected vacancies on the Board of Managers the continuing Board Members elected to fill the vacancies. We welcome and introduce the new Board members elsewhere in the newsletter. I thank Anthony Gill and Lynda Riley, both of whom resigned because of moves from Guilford, for their many years of service on the Board and commitment to our community. Curtis Campbell also has resigned because of the stress the pandemic has created on his business and the need to focus his attention.

39th Street. The Board has had a full agenda. Finally after years of negotiation by the Association, the City has put in place the traffic calming measures on 39th Street, channeling vehicles, providing designated turn lanes, improving signage and crosswalk designations and creating bike lanes. It appears to be working. There is another traffic related issue affecting Greenmount Avenue. Both traffic disruption and resident disturbance is resulting from construction of the trenching for conduit and water line replacement there. It has continued for months and more work remains. We’ve been in frequent contact with the responsible City departments and Councilwoman Clarke in an attempt to minimize noise, access and parking issues.

Security Cameras. The installation of security cameras in test locations has continued to be an effort. As we’ve discussed in the past, there have been financial, logistical and technical constraints. We believe that we now have identified a feasible option that we will be shortly testing. More information about this will be provided in the near future.



GREG PEASE PHOTOGRAPHY

Verizon 5G. The proposal by Verizon to install small cells and expand 5G service to Guilford is a matter of current concern. Some months ago you may have observed notices posted on a number of Guilford light posts that indicated that poles were to be installed by Verizon to accommodate small cell transmission. By contacting the City and Verizon we then learned that Verizon proposed installing new free standing or modified light posts of 20+ feet in height on Guilford residential streets in designated locations to permit short distance transmission of 5G service. We support better high speed wireless service to Guilford but such towers would be incompatible with Guilford's aesthetic and have an adverse effect on the historic district. The Association is opposing this proposal and rather has suggested the use of existing utility poles in areas behind Guilford properties.

LED Street Lights. Without notice to the Association or Guilford residents the City in April 2019 started replacing the light bulbs in the Guilford street light poles with high intensity white LED lights. The Association immediately objected to these excessively bright white lights that are incompatible with our residential community. With the assistance of Councilwoman Clarke and through the Association's letter to Mayor Young the installation was stopped. In meetings with City officials we were informed that previous Mayor Pugh had directed that the LED lights be installed throughout the city and that the lights had been purchased. LED lights are being installed in many cities because they are longer lasting and less expensive to operate. While the high intensity lighting improves visibility on major roadways most cities have concluded that they are excessive in residential areas and there are lower intensity LED fixtures that have a warmer light that

can be used. Baltimore officials have responded to our insistence that the light level be reduced in Guilford by changing the originally installed LED lights with what they report to be lights of lesser intensity. The light changes have resumed but the LED lights are still white and appear very similar to the initially installed lights. They do not present a warmer light. We will continue to object to the lights as we know that there are more acceptable LED options.

Architectural Committee. The Architectural Committee continues to receive proposals for a number of home alterations that require review and approval. Also a surprising number of properties have been listed for sale during the past several months, all requiring review for covenant compliance. As well, there are a number of properties with outstanding violations where corrective action is required. In this newsletter there is an article that describes the efforts being taken to restore and improve properties on Greenmount Avenue with guidance from the Committee.

Also, there is an article about the York Road/Guilford wall. It answers the many questions that have been raised about its origin and construction as well as the reasons for commercial development in Guilford along York Road north of Underwood Road.

We hope that you enjoy and find informative this issue of *The Guilford News*. As always, thank you for your continued support. Please be safe.

Tom Hobbs
President

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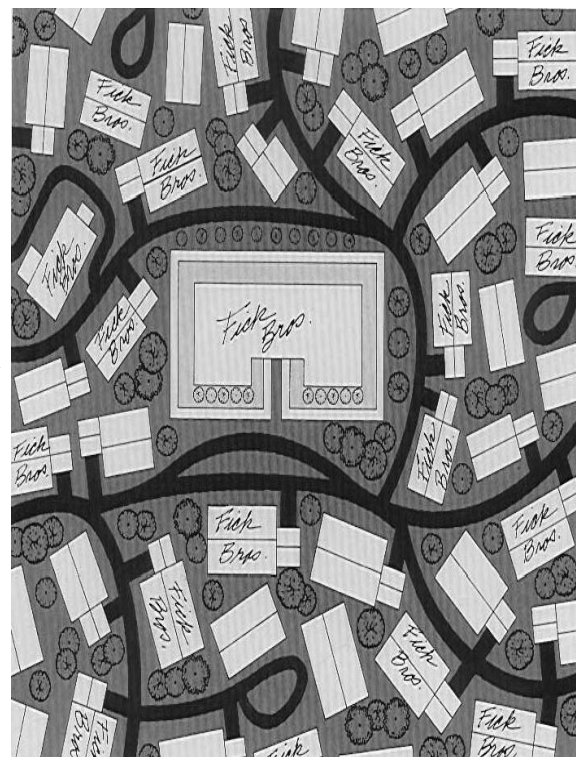
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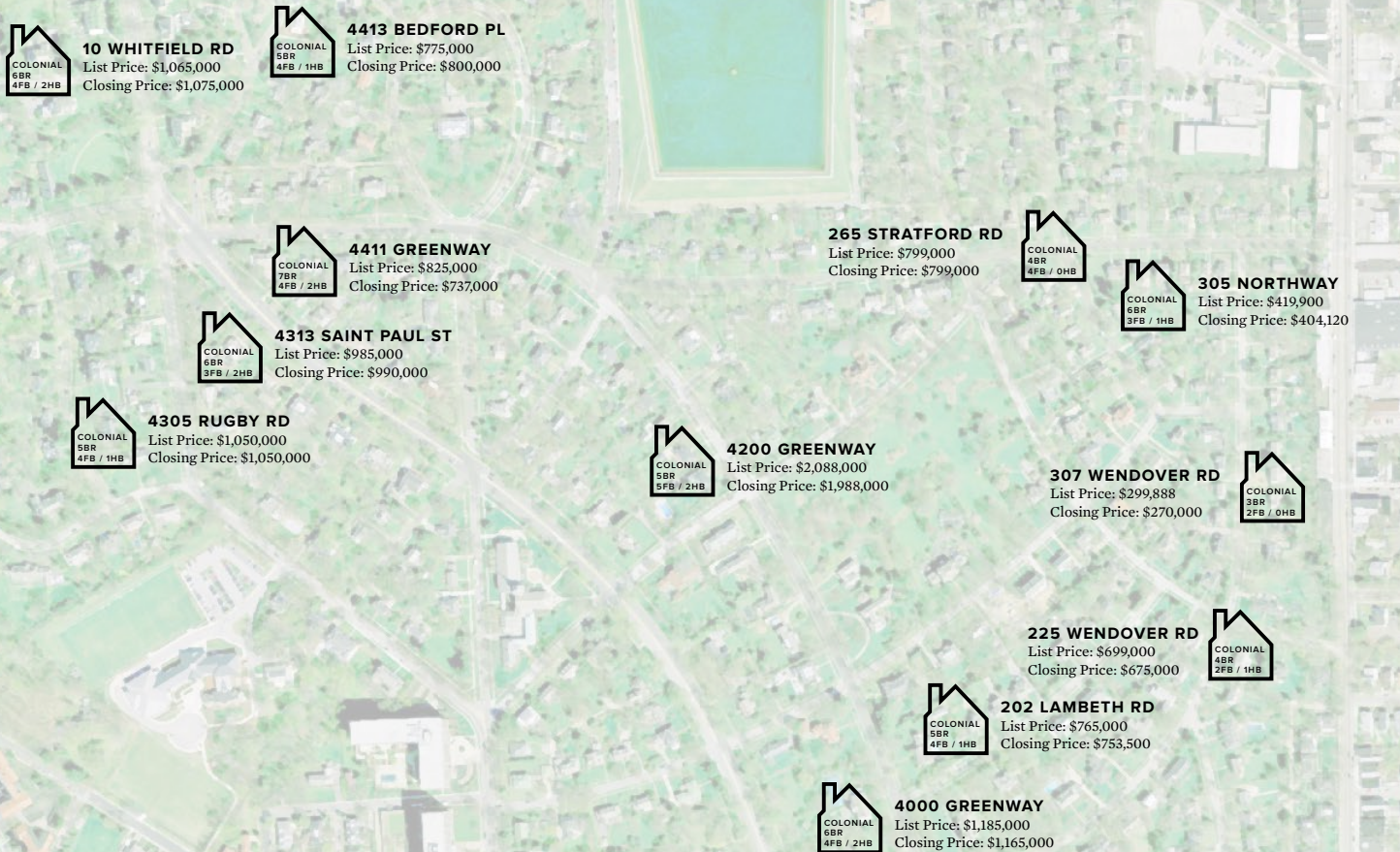
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205 SAINT MARTINS RD	\$825,000
5 STRATFORD RD	\$799,000
101 E HIGHFIELD RD	\$795,000
3707 GREENWAY*	\$795,000
203 E 39TH ST*	\$749,900
107 SAINT MARTINS RD*	\$735,000
226 E 39TH ST	\$650,000
4102 SAINT PAUL ST	\$635,000
4103 N CHARLES ST*	\$599,000
4206 CHARLCOTE RD*	\$589,000
4405 LINKWOOD RD	\$529,900
207 KEMBLE RD*	\$495,000
311 WENDOVER RD*	\$434,900
3813 JUNIPER RD*	\$369,900

*Under Contract

Guilford Property Sales

MARCH 1, 2020 – AUGUST 31, 2020



NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

GUILFORD WALL, *From page 1*

When the Maryland State Roads Commission put together a state road system in 1909, York Road from North Avenue in Baltimore to Parkton was designated one of the original state roads to be improved and for much of its length it was constructed as an all-weather road by mid-1910. Greenmount Avenue/York Road was to be a priority and it was reconstructed with further paving improvements from 42nd Street to its southern end with that work completed by 1924. The narrower portion previously in Baltimore County prior to the 1918 annexation was to be widened with concrete shoulders. That work was complete by the mid-to late 1920's. Further in 1928 the City decided to widen York Road still more from 60 feet to 80 feet from 42nd Street to the current city line. This involved substantial property taking, much from the Guilford site. One can see today where that widening started. The trolley tracks were located in the center of the street.

In addition to the road widening, the taking of a portion of property frontage and highway designation, from *Baltimore Sun* news articles at the time it appears that commercial/automotive uses were being developed on the east side of York Road in what was Baltimore County. These factors made the development of the Roland Park Company's Guilford property along York Road less attractive for residential development.

In 1922 the Roland Park Company filed a Declaration altering the original Guilford plat, re-subdividing the property extending north from the rear of Underwood Road properties (the former city-county boundary) to Old Cold Spring Lane with the intention of changing the use from residential to commercial. At about this same time evidenced by the Guilford plats dated 1921 and 1925, the stone wall was constructed and Marlow Road between Wendover Road and York Road was eliminated. Instead of the road connection a Marlow walking path was designated with an intended penetration through the wall. The wall was constructed to provide separation from commercial development and York Road traffic adding some protection to the parcels that were to be sold for residential development along Wendover Road and the Guilford Elementary School site.

The residential lots along Wendover Road that back up to the wall were made deeper than in the original plat as a result of the re-subdivision. They were generally sold for development after 1922 when the re-subdivision had taken place and the wall likely was constructed. The houses in the blocks of Wendover between Northway and Underwood were built between 1923 and 1930. With regard to the ownership of the wall, several deeds that were reviewed state that the properties on either side of the wall each own the wall to its center line. Further the Roland Park Company in one of its filed documents indicates that the wall shall be treated as a party wall between adjacent properties.

From available records it appears that the Roland Park Company was slow to attempt the development of commercial use east of the wall. The lot size had been reduced by the condemnation for the widening of York Road and thus the depth of the land parcels was limited. When the Roland Park Company did take initiatives to develop the York Road site for commercial use it drew considerable resistance from Guilford residents.

In 1929 the Roland Park Company obtained approval from the

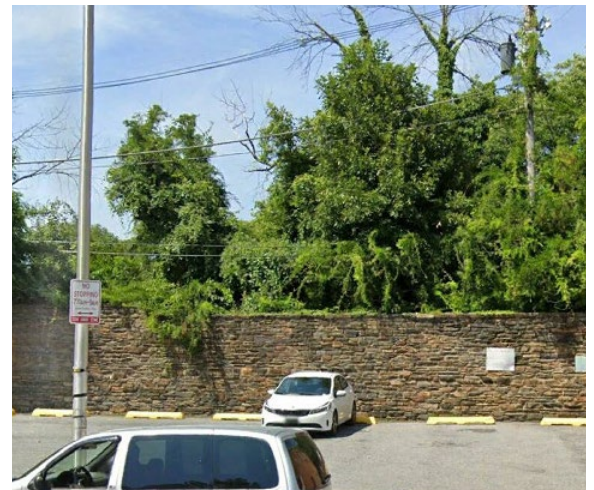
City to construct a "gasoline filling station" at the northwest corner of Northway and York Road. Nearby residents on the west side of the wall who had built their homes with the assumption that the wall and the Roland Park Company would protect them from undesirable commercial uses on York Road were outraged and a contentious debate occurred. There was appeal to the City's Zoning Appeal Board by the residents and the Women's Civic League seeking to have the City issued permit revoked. The Board sided with the community and denied the permit. The Roland Park Company did not give up and in 1931 the City Council passed an ordinance permitting the filling station at the York Road and Northway intersection and it was signed by Mayor Jackson.

Then in 1932 the Roland Park Company sought a permit to construct three buildings in the 4300, 4400 and 4500 blocks of York Road to be used as apartments and stores. Again adjacent residents petitioned the Board of Zoning Appeals arguing that no setbacks would be required violating the Roland Park Company's own standards and that the proposed two story buildings would extend above the wall and eliminate the privacy of the single family homes on the west side of the wall. The initial permit was denied and the Roland Park Company filed an appeal. After a public hearing the Board approved the construction.

It's unclear from our research whether these shops and apartments, which protesting neighbors called "tenements," were ever constructed. If they were they no longer exist or the buildings have been greatly altered. The 4300 block contains a vacant building that had a shop and office above and another office building at 4324. Viewed from the rear of properties on Wendover Road on the west side of the wall there are the second story of buildings visible with projecting dormer windows. The 4400 block contains a long stone building now used as an auto service and tire sales facility. The 4500 block contains the A.J. Michaels office and service building. If any reader has more information on the changes that may have taken place along this commercial strip on the west side of York Road within Guilford we'd welcome a clarification.

Note: Thanks to Ann Giroux for providing suggestions for source references and for the library of Guilford documentation that she has collected and maintains.

The 4400 block of York Road contains a long stone building now used as an auto service and tire sales facility.



The stone wall as seen from York Road.

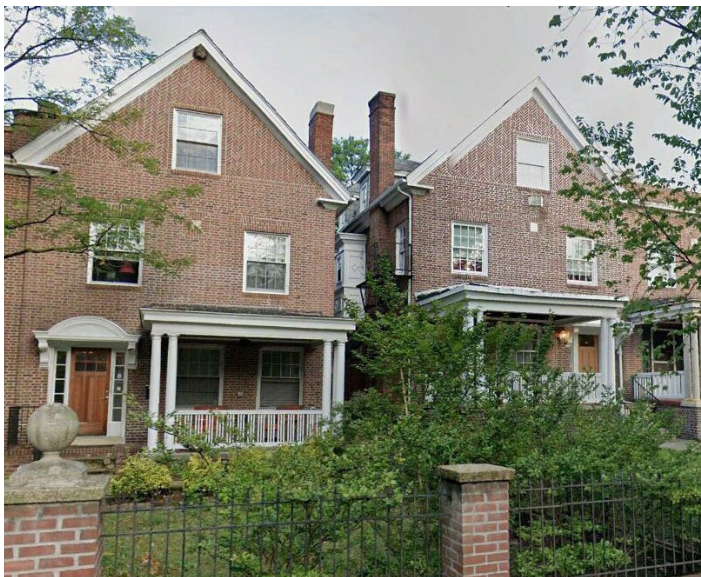
Houses on Wendover Road back up to the stone wall. Visible is a 2-story building with dormered windows. The history of these buildings on the west side of the wall is unclear.

Greenmount Avenue Properties

All of the residential properties on the west side of Greenmount Avenue extending from Underwood Road on the north to Southway on the south are within Guilford. This includes 61 properties facing Greenmount plus the 36 properties of York Courts. The 97 residential properties make up by address 12.5% of homes in Guilford. Some significant improvements are being made to a number of the properties that are positively affecting the home values and the general maintenance and attracting a diverse resident population.

All of the Greenmount properties and the homes of York Courts are subject to the obligations of the Guilford Deed and Agreement with one exception. Residential properties within 130 feet of Greenmount Avenue are not obligated to pay the mandatory maintenance fee assessed to all other Guilford properties. York Court properties do pay a separate fee to maintain the common court property.

Through research of Roland Park Company documents we determined that this carve out from the maintenance fee was because the properties were addressed on Greenmount Avenue, the only public road in Guilford when the community was developed.



There are 97 homes along the west side of Greenmount Avenue which are part of the Guilford neighborhood.

Also utilities were available from Greenmount Avenue. All of the other roads and the utilities within Guilford were private and the maintenance fee was initially intended in part to maintain and service the private system.

Particularly after WWII a number of factors negatively affected the Greenmount Avenue real estate. The City of Baltimore failing to acknowledge the restrictions of the Guilford Deed and Agreement

under the terms of the zoning ordinance then in effect granted variances permitting some of the houses to be occupied as multi-family dwellings. In addition Greenmount became a more heavily traveled traffic artery. Security concerns increased. In addition as residents moved a number of homes were purchased by investors and rented.

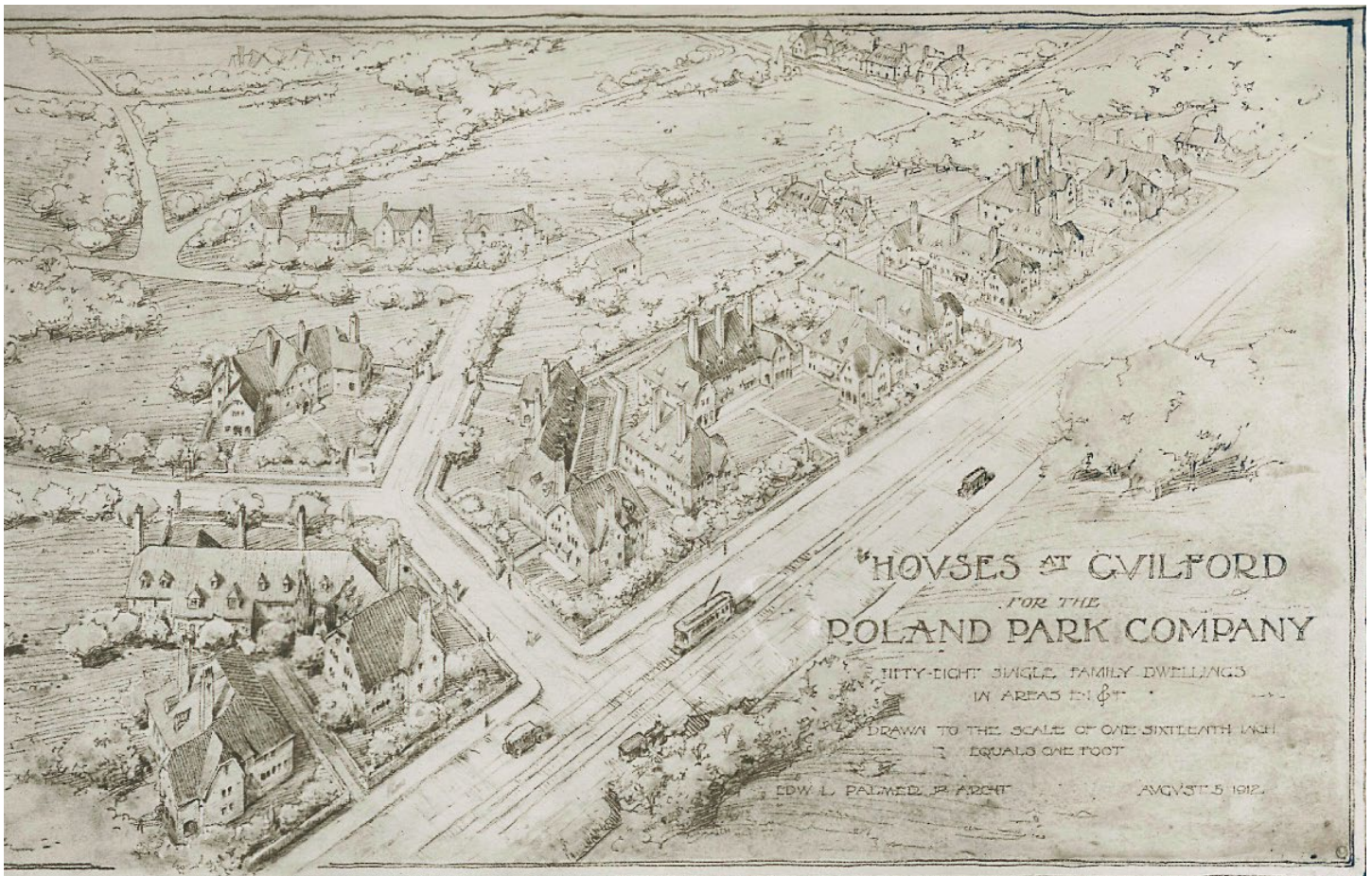
Another significant problem that impacted the care and marketability of the properties occurred because the requirements of the Deed and Agreement were misread and misinterpreted by the private management agents engaged by the Guilford Association in the 1950s and 1960s. The 130 foot exclusion from the maintenance fee was often interpreted as an exclusion from the architectural and other covenants of the Deed and Agreement. Enforcement was inconsistent.

Since the Association assumed direct administrative and management, the applicability of the provisions of the Deed and Agreement to Greenmount and York Court properties has been correctly applied. Because so many unapproved changes had been made to the properties, the Architectural Committee has worked with property owners to phase in corrections through allowance of a useful life period for many of the non-approved alterations, review and approval of new proposed changes as required by the Deed and Agreement and required correction at the time of property transfer or to address code issues.

As a further assistance to property owners Anthony Gill prepared detailed Pattern Books for both York Court and Greenmount Avenue homes. The books duplicate the original architectural drawings but make material allowances that may reduce the cost of violation correction and ongoing maintenance. The Pattern Books are posted on the Guilford website at: <https://guilfordassociation.org/architecture/york-court-pattern-book/> and <https://guilfordassociation.org/architecture/greenmount-avenue-pattern-book/>

A few property owners have resisted correcting covenant violations or continued to make unapproved alterations and in several cases the Association has litigated the issue. In all cases the Circuit Court decisions have supported the Association or a resolution and settlement has been negotiated that requires covenant compliance.

Particularly among the Greenmount properties, the locations where covenant corrections have been made and renovation has been undertaken the results have been dramatic. The groups of houses typically have between 2000 and 3000 square feet above grade living space. Among Guilford's earliest houses, they were designed using fine materials but provided in the rows a more urban environment than typical of much of the rest of Guilford. Because of the factors discussed, many of the properties had declined or had not been updated. Some were foreclosed after the 2008 real estate decline. Several were sold for prices significantly under \$100,000.




An early Roland Park Company drawing shows proposed homes along Greenmount Avenue. The homes along this corridor account for 1/8 of the properties in Guilford.

A number of the houses now have had exteriors restored and interiors have been completely renovated to accommodate current life style with expected interior appointments. Brick walls along the public sidewalk are being restored, providing a private, more secure separation from the street. The increase in sale prices where renovations have taken place is dramatic and have demonstrated that despite the Greenmount Avenue locational issues there is a growing market for these substantial houses when renovated. Five recently have been sold or marketed from \$220,000 to \$360,000 for an average of \$285,000. Other occupied houses are being improved consistent with the guidance of the Pattern Book.

The increased interest in the Greenmount Avenue homes is encouraging. They should be considered an important part of the Guilford community offering a substantial house at a lower price point than is typical in Guilford. The city environment and the need to engage with the adjacent Waverly and Pen Lucy communities is a consideration that residents can embrace and work together to solve mutual issues. Security and the street environment are factors on which the Association will remain focused. When the disruptive street construction and utility work is finished we will continue to push for the street scape improvements that have been long planned. There are still challenges to sustaining the renewed interest in the Greenmount Avenue homes but the signs are encouraging.

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Sherwood Gardens Update

This Spring, to spite Covid-19, Sherwood Gardens presented one of its best tulip displays in years. Because of the limitations on gatherings and requirements to stay at home the visitors to the glorious bloom were limited. Look at the photos! For those who did visit, the scent from hyacinth and the jaunty daffodils added to the pleasure of a walk through the Gardens during a time fraught with fear, uncertainty and worry.

The Annual Tulip Dig, traditionally held on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend for decades, was cancelled. All the regular events that occur in Sherwood Gardens were cancelled too. People were, and still are, implored to physically distance. No Tulip Dig meant this year's bulbs are still in the ground. We have been tending the beds to encourage a strong second bloom — proper removal of dead foliage, fertilizing, weeding, watering. It will be interesting to see if the special treatment of our tulip beds works and how the bloom in 2021 compares to what you see on these pages.

To continue the good feelings of hope emanating from the Gardens, we planted summer flowers on top of the bulbs in a few beds on each side of the Park. They are accompanied by the pollinator garden in the Park's center.

We wanted to remind the neighborhood that pesticides are NOT used on the lawns of Sherwood Gardens. Despite our best efforts to publicize that information we continue to be plagued with “anti-pesticide” messaging being written on the park signs and sidewalks. We greatly appreciate the neighborhood's assistance in spreading the message and helping us stop this vandalism.



We are pleased to share that *Baltimore Magazine* has announced that Sherwood Gardens was voted Baltimore's Best Urban Garden by the Best of Baltimore Reader's Poll.

A logo consisting of a stylized house icon made of geometric shapes (a white triangle, a grey square, and a black square) to the left of the text "ADR BUILDERS" in a bold, sans-serif font.

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Red “Parade” tulips stand tall at Sherwood Gardens this past spring. It was one of the best tulip displays in recent years.



The annual tulip dig was canceled this year. All of the tulip bulbs remain in the ground — we await their return next spring.

Tree Care

PATRICK NOLAND

In June 2020, the Guilford Association reminded residents to have their dying or dead trees removed and/or inspected by an arborist. Numerous residents responded positively, and have consulted arborists or removed dead trees.

Trees are protective shields along the edges of your property. They're Mother Nature's masterpieces in your own yard. They're beautiful, comforting and, for some, they're family. So, removing a tree can be a difficult experience. But when a tree poses risks to the people and objects in its shade below, the safest thing to do is leave its fate in the hands of a professional.

Your family and property's well-being are the paramount reason to have a dead tree removed as soon as possible. Dead and decomposed trees have weakened integrity making them susceptible to snapping or uprooting during a windstorm or when the ground becomes supersaturated. Dead trees attract pests, are unattractive, may spread disease to other trees, have dangerous falling branches, and are more likely to topple over.

Some signs of a dead tree include:

- Decay-producing fungi, such as mushrooms, growing at the base of the trunk
- Chipped or peeling bark and cracks or cavities in the trunk
- Dead or hanging branches in the upper crown
- Fine twigs without living buds near the ends of branches

Dead trees can severely damage your home or property. The most concerning part is that they are completely unpredictable. There is no way to tell if a storm coming up next week or next year will lead them to their breaking point, or if they'll come down on their own. This was demonstrated recently when two large trees fell from one Guilford property to another, blocking the roadway and bringing down a (third) healthy tree, which then damaged the roof of the neighbor's home.

Safely removing a dead tree or having trees trimmed by a tree care professional protects you and your landscape from these hazards and leaves room for you to bring new life to your landscape. Thanks for being proactive and keeping Guilford beautiful!



This summer two large trees on a Guilford property were uprooted, causing damage to a neighboring home.

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New Board Members

We welcome three new members to the Guilford Association Board of Managers. As a result of resignations creating unexpected vacancies on the Board of Managers the continuing Board Members elected to fill the vacancies as provided by the Association's Bylaws. The new Board members fill the unexpired terms of resigning members. One quarter of the 20-member Board will be elected at the Association's Annual Meeting.



Richard Yost has provided communications counsel to companies, government agencies, trade associations, non-profit organizations and individuals in the energy, transportation, health care and food industries. Currently, he is responsible for Strategic Communications at BGE and serves on the company's innovation steering committee. Previously he provided communications leadership to Constellation Energy Nuclear Group. Richard has a Master's degree from The George Washington University where he studied political management. He graduated from Washington College where he played lacrosse and in 2003 and 2004 was named All American lacrosse goalie. Richard lives on Fenchurch Road with his wife Erin and their three young boys.

of the Secretary of State, policy advisor for women and family issues to former Lieutenant Governor Townsend and Chief of Staff for former Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown. She later worked in NYC as Director of Major Gifts, with the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. A graduate of the University of Maryland College Park, Dawn holds a degree in Government and Politics. Dawn resides on E. Highfield Road with her husband Wes Moore and their two children, Mia and James.



Emily Brennan has been a resident of Guilford since 2009. She lives with her husband, two children, and Pepper, their Standard Poodle on Whitfield Road. Emily has practiced construction and insurance law for 15 years and is currently Vice President at HMS Insurance Associates, Inc., an independent insurance brokerage in Hunt Valley.

Emily is Treasurer of the Construction Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association and previously served as President of the Garrison Forest School Alumnae Association. She enjoys traveling and spending time outdoors, especially walking and biking around our beautiful neighborhood and beyond. Emily is a graduate of Wake Forest University and has her law degree from the University of Baltimore.



Dawn Moore is a philanthropist, community organizer, and campaign strategist. She has more than 20 years of experience in State government, non-profit work, corporate partnerships, and fundraising. She is currently the President of the Moore Family Foundation. The Moore Family Foundation was established by Dawn and

Wes Moore to make place-based grants and provide thought leadership, organizational support and create partnership alliances with non-profits in Baltimore City. Dawn has served in the Maryland State government in several roles including in the Office

Guilford Association Board

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Spotted in Sherwood Gardens: Cleome or “spider flower,” is named for its tall, leggy appearance and the shape of its leaves. A native of South America the annual flower appeared in gardens in North America, Europe, and the UK in the early 1800s and was a favorite of Victorian gardeners.

