



BROOKNOTES

The Newsletter of the Brookwood Hills Community

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ORIGINAL PLAN FOR BROOKWOOD WORTH PRESERVING

By Betsy Crosby and Elaine Luxemburger

Once upon a time there was a plan, and the name of the plan was Brookwood Hills. It called for curving streets, generous setbacks, tree-lined sidewalks, and well-built homes in a variety of styles. It was a new concept in property development in Atlanta—substantial houses built fairly close together within walking distance of public transportation, grocery stores, and small businesses.

The plan became a reality. There was a mix of old and young, in small houses and large. The children of the homeowners played in a woodland area in the center of the neighborhood—an area that would later become a park with tennis courts and a swimming pool. Neighbors greeted each other as they strolled on the sidewalks, or as they got out of their cars at the end of the day. Time and again they joined together for the common good. Generations of children grew up, left and returned to raise their own children.

A fairy tale? Maybe not. The neighborhood we call Brookwood Hills has thrived for close to eighty years due in large part because it has remained true to its plan. “Many people forget that there was a plan that resulted in Brookwood Hills,” remarks Karen Huebner, the Director of the Atlanta Urban Design Commission. “There was an overall concept, an overall vision about what the neighborhood should be like.” Yet in Brookwood Hills that original vision may be eroding as more and more large additions are built and modest homes torn down for grander replacements. “If everyone comes in and builds without considering the original plan, the result will be a new neighborhood form,” observes Ms. Huebner. And that new form, because it reflects the 1990s and not the 1920s, is unlikely to qualify for Conservation District protection.

It is the neighborhood’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places and its status as a Conservation District in the city of Atlanta that has saved Brookwood Hills from the expansion of I-85 and MARTA, as well as other encroachments upon its boundaries. Since 1994, when the neighborhood sought and received Conservation District status for Brookwood Hills, the UDC has been charged with reviewing and commenting upon proposed alterations to houses within the historic boundaries (which make up about 2/3 of the

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SECURITY REMINDER ; TALK TO KIDS ABOUT STRANGERS

By Walter Bland, Vice President and Security Chairman

It's almost summertime again! Our children will be spending a lot more time in the park and out and about in the neighborhood. Take this opportunity to review with them some commonsense precautions with respect to strangers.

A recent incident highlights the importance of talking to children about what to do when they encounter someone they do not know. A stranger was spotted sitting in a grey Pontiac parked on Camden playing with a doll or puppet. He was described as a white male in his thirties. This person may have been perfectly harmless, the friend or relative of a neighbor. However, we live in the middle of a city of over 3 million people and it is reasonable to be cautious - not paranoid, but cautious.

If you or your children see a person behaving strangely or suspiciously, try and get a description of him or her. Note the person's appearance and, if applicable, the person's car. Note the time and location you saw the person. Be clear about why the person's behavior seems suspicious or threatening. Call 911 and report the person. If you use specific details, you will get a better response. Please follow up with a call to the BWH Security Information Line at 404-325-5114.

Security Alert Signs

When you see the **Security Alert** signs posted at the entrances to our neighborhood, please call the **Brookwood Hills Security Information Line 325-5114** for details concerning a recent security incident. These signs are a signal that an incident has occurred in the neighborhood and the information has been recorded on the hotline.

When Irish Eyes are Smiling



Grand Marshall Mary O'Connor flanked by daughter Maureen and son Dan, III.

On Saturday, March 13th there was history in the making when the first female Grand Marshall of the Saint Patrick's Day Parade was bagpiped through downtown Atlanta. That woman was our own Mary O'Connor. From her work with the W.B. Yeats Foundation, an organization through Emory University that promotes Irish literature, music and art, to her selection as the Olympic attache for Ireland, Mary has been a dedicated proponent of Ireland in Atlanta. Wearing her green Olympic jacket, Mary remembers the weather was dismal, but "What a great day!"

Two weeks later, on March 31st Mary was sitting at dinner with 950 people, who were gathered to honor her and the nine other recipients of the 1999.11Alive Community Service Awards. Mary was recognized for her ground-breaking work opening the Sci-Trek Museum, her leadership in establishing the Atlanta chapter of the Achievement Reward for College Scientists (ARCS) Foundation, and her dedication to the Alzheimer's Association. It was Mary's vision and leadership that made Sci-Trek a reality and led Morehouse to become the first historically black college to participate in the ARCS Foundation program.

Mary and Dan O'Connor moved into Brookwood Hills in the fall of 1971. Mary was expecting their fourth child, son Mark. Twenty-eight years later, Mary is still as "crazy about this wonderful neighborhood" as ever. Unlike many longtime residents, Mary has stayed in the same lovely two-story brick house on Northwood Avenue for all of these years. She talks about raising her children here, how important the sense of community and neighborhood was then and still is today. By 1993, doctors suspected that Dan was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. This year he moved to Presbyterian Village where he is doing well. Now in a new phase of active life on her own, she wouldn't dream of leaving her home, though from time to time she loves to escape to the wonderful mountain retreat she and Dan renovated four years ago.

With a long list of community projects and two of her four children here in town (daughter Maureen is a consultant with Bain & Co., and son Dan, III is a political consultant), Mary has plenty to keep her busy in Atlanta. Daughter Cici and son-in-law Bo Fulton are often in Atlanta visiting with their two little girls, Carrie and Libby. Mary's youngest son Mark lives in Los Angeles where he is with Creative Artists Agency.

In fact, finding a good time to talk to Mary is like trying to have lunch with your average corporate CEO. Her work on behalf of the Alzheimer's Association is particularly important to her now. She started a group called "Forget-me-nots" to work with people in the early stages of dementia. In accepting the

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Eagle Scout Project Builds More than a Wall



Carson and brother John take a break from work at the park.

In 1996, Carson Weitnauer, who lives with his family at 111 Brighton Road, decided to make the Brookwood Hills park his Eagle Scout project. Carson will be eighteen years old this week and is a senior at Westminster. He has been in scouting since 1st grade and a Boy Scout since 6th. His troop 197 is nicknamed "Super Troop" and is based at Westminster. With the help and encouragement of the troop's second leader, Tom Stow, Carson decided to accomplish what only two percent of scouts ever achieve, Eagle Scout.

When asked what inspired him to go above and beyond the normal scouting experience, Carson pauses. "I guess my mother and grandparents. Alvin Barge, my mother's father was an Eagle Scout. He helped a lot on the rock wall. I knew if I started it I'd finish it. I wanted that sense of completion to my Boy Scout years."

Carson's goal was a multi-phase project to control erosion and beautify the park. With the help of his family and friends, and generous donations from Turner Construction Company, Carson recently completed a wonderful rock wall next to the shed. The rock wall is the last phase in a three-year effort that has included replacing steps on the Nature Trail, cleaning up the whole Nature Trail, doubling the size of railings, and adding a bench on the Nature Trail platform (see "Neighbors help Improve Park" October 1998 *Brooknotes*). Having completed the Nature Trail work, Carson felt he could do more. He consulted Ed Daugherty, the original designer of the park. After deciding on a design he built the wall in one Saturday. He added dirt behind it and planted ivy and added pine straw.

Carson admits there will continue to be an erosion problem as long as the sidewalk along the perimeter of the park continues to slope towards the park, pouring water down the hill rather than into the storm drains. Fortunately, his work will go a long way to helping improve the current conditions of erosion.

Carson spent over 426 hours on the project. A typical Eagle Scout project encompasses about 200 hours. Carson felt he gained as much from the work as the park did. Taking on an Eagle Scout project continued the character building that scouting has been teaching him for twelve years. Carson's words for young scouts or would-be scouts: "Scouting has been so influential in my life. I would encourage any boy to join scouts and strive for Eagle Scout."

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neighborhood). Although the Commission's comments are not legally binding, they represent an informed consensus about whether a change is appropriate, not only for the individual homeowner's style of house, but also for the neighborhood as a whole.

Most of us have renovated our homes at least once (if not two or three times) and we take pride in the dollars being invested in the neighborhood. Yet when our renovations grow out of scale, they can undermine the neighborhood's continued viability. There is an inherent conflict in trying to squeeze 1990s suburban ideals—large family rooms, attached garages, a bedroom for each child, and master baths big enough for a college mixer—into homes built for a 1920s lifestyle. “We are beginning to see proposed additions with almost more square footage than the original building,” comments Ms. Huebner. “Some are out of scale, with not enough articulation and breaking down of mass. Additions are meant to be secondary to the principal structure.”

In judging whether an alteration is “appropriate,” the UDC not only looks at the architecture of the home itself, but also how it fits within the original plan for Brookwood Hills. The plan has worked for many years, explains Ms. Huebner, and is what attracted most of the residents to the area in the first place. Part of the plan is the rhythm of the buildings and the spaces between the buildings on the street. “When overbuilding occurs, you destroy the rhythm,” she says.

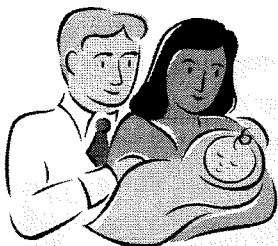
Most homes within the Conservation District were built in the 1920s and '30s in Historic Revival styles popular in the period, such as Colonial, Tudor and Mediterranean. Yet even those homes subsequently built as in-fill housing have been known to work in harmony with the original plan for Brookwood Hills. “The non-contributing structures often maintain the rhythm of the street with their attention to volume and set-backs,” observes Karen Huebner. When alterations are proposed for one of these non-historic homes, the UDC looks to see whether the homeowner is bringing it more in accordance with the plan in terms of architectural style, or at least is not doing the plan any harm. Height, scale, massing, and volume all make a difference as to how well new construction fits in.

Overbuilding affects the entire neighborhood, says Ms. Huebner. “Everyone makes an investment by buying into a neighborhood and the common vision. If anybody takes out more than he or she puts in, it diminishes the investment for everyone.”

YOU CAN HELP PRESERVE THE PLAN

- ◆ **Ask your contractor to get a building permit.** Even small jobs can affect the appearance of a home, and thus the neighborhood. When a building permit is requested for a home within the Conservation District, the request is sent to the UDC, who decides whether the proposed changes are significant enough for their formal review. A phone call to their office before you begin construction may help you avoid delays down the road, and may shorten the process. Ask to see the permit yourself—contractors sometimes say they will get one, but do not follow through.
- ◆ **Choose your architect and contractor carefully.** “If you have a good architect,” says Karen Huebner, “he or she is going to understand the ‘building envelope’ and how to manipulate that envelope to achieve the space that you need in keeping with an appropriate scale. There’s often more than one way to make it work.” Beware of contractors who advise you to make last minute design changes.

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New Faces

By Sarah and Patti



Correction. Amy and Irene Butler are new to 43 Huntington Road.

Mark and Sharon Williams of 106 Huntington welcomed their first baby, **Meredith Annette** on Saturday, May 8th. Born at Northside Hospital, Meredith weighed 8 pounds even. Meredith was born on Mom's birthday, and as it turns out, May 8th was the Saturday before Mother's Day that year, too!

NEW NEIGHBOR PARTY

On Monday, May 24th from 7:30-9:00 PM, there will be a poolside party for all new neighbors - "new" being defined as in the last two years. No need to wait for an invitation. If you have moved into Brookwood Hills in the last two years, please plan to come to the pool - but don't plan to get wet. If you have any questions, please call Jean O'Halloran at 404-352-0802 or Janet Frederick at 404-897-1440.

Graduates to be featured in June

Calling all graduates (parents, grandparents, etc.), please let us recognize you in Brooknotes in June. The deadline for submitting information is Friday, June 11th. You may e-mail it to Deirdre63@aol, fax it to 404-815-0682 or drop it by 23 Northwood Avenue.

Friendly Reminder: Yard Trimmings

By Walter Bland, Vice President and Security Chairman

Between the bumper crop of oak curlies and the trash from recent storms, it has been a struggle keeping up with yard work this year! Some people (and/or their yard service) are taking the easy way out and dumping their yard trimmings in the storm sewer. Please be reminded that this is a violation of city ordinances to deposit yard trimmings in the storm sewer. Furthermore, city ordinances require you to put yard trimmings in a marked container or paper trash bags for curb pick-up. You may not know that city ordinances also require a yard service or landscaper to remove any yard trimmings from your property altogether - taking it with them when they go. Violations of city ordinances are punishable by fines, imprisonment, and, in the case of yard trimmings, revocation of licenses.

The City isn't doing a very good job of collecting our yard trimmings promptly. The solution to that problem is to keep on calling Sanitary Services. In the meantime, we have to keep the storm sewer system in good working order to prevent flooding and pollution. Please do the right thing: dispose of yard trimmings properly and require your yard service to do the same.

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- ◆ **Think twice before tearing down existing architecture.** Even if you are just moving a wall, realize that the quality of workmanship today rarely matches the standards of seventy or eighty years ago. Today's Colonial Revival home is unlikely to be in keeping with a Colonial Revival home built in the 1920s and '30s in terms of both architectural detail and quality of construction.
- ◆ **Learn more about the architectural style of your home.** Once you realize that a gable is important to your house's "Bungalow" style, you may be less eager to rip it out in favor of a second story.
- ◆ **Respect zoning setbacks.** While setbacks may seem arbitrary at first glance, they give us the open spaces that are important to maintaining the original vision of Brookwood Hills.
- ◆ **Follow the advice of the Urban Design Commission.** The commission is composed of architects, real estate professionals, and architectural historians. They know whereof they speak, and they have the good of the neighborhood at heart—even if it may conflict with your own personal interests. Remember, the neighborhood sought *Conservation District* status, which relies on *voluntary cooperation*, rather than *Historic District* status, which relies on *mandatory cooperation*, out of a conviction that we could be trusted with the care and maintenance of our neighborhood, so that it will still be here in another eighty years.

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11Alive award, Mary summed up what working with Dan and others has given her and her family: "We have learned that caregiving is the ultimate expression of love."

POOL OPENING SOON

The pool will open its doors on Saturday, May 29th. Pool hours for the Memorial weekend will be noon until 8 PM on Saturday and Sunday. On Monday the pool will be open from 10 AM until 6 PM. Plan to come to the pool and be a part of a wonderful weekend of fun.

And while you are there, take a minute to notice all the lovely flowers at the entrance and along the park fence. The BWH Garden Club has been hard at work weeding and planting for the pool season. A big thank you to all Garden Club members for their efforts!

CALENDAR

Monday, May 24, 1999. New Neighbors Party at the Pool 7:30 – 9:00 PM. See page 6 for details.

Saturday, May 29th. Pool opens! Sat/Sun 12-8:00 PM. Monday 10 – 6:00 PM. See above for details.

Monday, June 7, 1999 BWH Board Meeting. 7:15 PM at the home of Marc Delesalle and Deirdre Stiles, 23 Northwood Avenue. All Community Club members are welcome. Please contact Deirdre at 404-249-9544 if you plan to attend.

Friday, June 11, 1999. Brooknotes deadline. GRADUATES INFORMATION NEEDED ON OR BEFORE THIS DATE.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale. Pecan Queen-size Bedroom Set – large dresser, armoire, headboard, and frame. Mattress/box spring available. Call 404-351-5479. Can be seen in the neighborhood.

Beach House Available. Beautiful 2+ bedroom, 2 bath home available to rent on Seabrook Island, near Charleston, S.C. Great family vacation retreat with activities to please all ages. Discounted rates to Brookwood Hills residents. For more information call Diane John at 404-870-0484.

Tutor. Brookwood Hills resident offering tutoring services. Certified teacher with tutoring experience in elementary level science, reading, writing, math and study skills as well as middle school level language arts and study skills. Please call Carrie at 404-918-2924.

For Sale. A SMARTVIEW electronic magnifying system for those with some vision loss or who need to magnify. It will enlarge (in color or black & white) printed material, handwriting or photographs. Useful for reading or writing. Includes Panasonic color monitor, control table and platform which moves side to side and front to back. Used maybe four hours. All instructions included. New \$3,508, asking \$2,500. For information call Mary Lynn Eckl 404-351-9876.

Housekeeper Wanted. We live in the neighborhood and need a new housekeeper. If you have a parti-time/day-a-week housekeeper that does a good job for you, please call Lauren at 404-877-5295.

For Rent. BWH guesthouse one block off Peachtree. LR, kitchen downstairs with loft/bath upstairs. \$750/mo. Available mid-June. 404-876-8339.

WORD OF MOUTH

Great pet sitter. Eileen Martin, owner of **Canine Companions**, is attentive and professional. She can stay at your home with your pet or make visits. She is bonded and insured. I am very particular about who cares for my dog and Eileen has been wonderful. **Canine Companions 1904 Peachtree Park Drive 404-352-8044.** Neighbor reference Jennifer Volk 770-396-4800.

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