

## **Chevy Chase Village History**

### **Introduction**

The following pages tell the story of the founding of Chevy Chase by Nevada Senator Francis G. Newlands and his associates. While Newlands accomplished much and was progressive on many issues of his day, it is important to acknowledge that he also held views about race that the Village's Board of Managers and residents find abhorrent today. Though Newlands' views are a matter of public record and have been well-documented over the years, greater public attention is now being paid to his egregious racism. The residents of Chevy Chase Village reject Newlands' white supremacist and segregationist beliefs as incompatible with the inclusive, welcoming and diverse community that Chevy Chase Village is today.

For further information on Francis Newlands, please contact the Chevy Chase Historical Society at [info@chevychasehistory.org](mailto:info@chevychasehistory.org).

### **Chevy Chase**

#### **A Bold Idea, A Comprehensive Plan**

*by Judith Helm Robinson*

Chevy Chase sits directly on the line between Maryland and the District of Columbia, with sections of development spilling into both jurisdictions and onto both sides of Connecticut Avenue. Exemplifying the new suburban ideal so admired in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the quiet, picturesque community of Chevy Chase today bears the indelible stamp of its founders' original concepts and the land-use tools used to shape it. The contemporary urban profile its founders sought to prevent—crowded alleys, row houses, industrial and commercial intrusions—is still absent. It is the “home suburb” they envisioned, stable, comfortable, and close to the heart of the city.

Broad verandas, patterned shingles and half-timbering, sleeping porches, decorative cornices, pergolas, and a variety of rooflines define a wide range of residential architectural styles. Quality of life today is defined by stately trees, broad streets, green lawns, and comfortable houses. The hub of Chevy Chase Circle establishes a strong sense of place, along with the churches that line its circumference, the Chevy Chase Village Hall, two quietly elegant private clubs, and two carefully defined and geographically restricted shopping areas on the west along Wisconsin Avenue and just south of the circle on Connecticut Avenue. A Metrorail station at Wisconsin and Western avenues and five Metrobus lines provide easy public transportation in and out of the central city.

Chevy Chase is the result of a progressive, bold scheme that took long-term financial resources and decades to realize. It required the initial purchase of more than 1,700 acres of farmland; the formation of a development company with a capital stock of a \$1 million; the ambitious construction of Connecticut Avenue's broad reach of more than five miles above Calvert Street; the creation of an electric railway line; and the establishment of clubs, churches, and schools to fill the new residents' needs. And it was all done to the highest-quality standards.

Perhaps even more important, Chevy Chase illustrates a new suburban ideal that altered the city landscape in the late nineteenth century—one that favored the separation of residences from the workplace. Exemplifying the ideal of country living espoused by luminaries such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Chevy Chase provided then-unprecedented infrastructure and amenities that prompted new residents to live far outside the settled bounds of Washington. The suburb’s founders provided transportation, electricity, sanitary sewers, telephone, and piped water, as well as strict building restrictions that banned commerce—in a comprehensive manner long before this type of planning was envisioned by others anywhere in the nation.



*The Chevy Chase Horse Meet in 1903 from the south elevation of the Bradley Farm House shortly after The Chevy Chase Club was founded. Courtesy, Chevy Chase Historical Society.*

In 1890 the area that was to become the new subdivision of Chevy Chase was well-settled farmland, studded with country estates and farmhouses and crossed by several country roads. Brookeville Road ran from Tennallytown to Brookeville, Maryland. Broad Branch Road, Jones Mill Road, and Milkhouse Ford Road wound through the farms. The only east-west connection between Brookeville and Old Georgetown roads was Jackson Road, now Bradley Lane. J. H. Bradley’s large tract, later to form the key purchase of the Chevy Chase Land Company, straddled the line between Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Two wealthy and powerful westerners transformed this farmland into a suburban community. On June 5, 1890, Francis G. Newlands and Senator William M. Stewart (a member of a group known as the “California Syndicate” who at the time had land holdings around Dupont Circle) incorporated the Chevy Chase Land Company. Their long-range vision was extraordinary, for the site they chose to develop began far northwest of the settled bounds of the city of Washington and was to become the first big development west of Rock

Creek. The bridge they built across Rock Creek at Calvert Street opened a large section of the Northwest quadrant of the city to new real estate ventures for themselves and others.

At the time of incorporation, Francis G. Newlands was a young San Francisco lawyer. Early in his practice he had become attorney for William Sharon, a senator from Nevada from 1875 to 1882 who made a tremendous fortune revitalizing and managing the rich Nevada Comstock Lode. In 1874 Newlands married Sharon's daughter Clara Adelaide. Following her death in 1882 and William Sharon's death in 1885, Newlands became trustee of Sharon's huge estate, was himself one of the heirs, and managed major land holdings in California and Nevada. Newlands quickly moved some of his share of the assets to Washington. In 1892 he was elected to Congress, where he was a great proponent of irrigation and land reclamation in the West. He served as congressman from Nevada for ten years (1893-1903) and then as senator for fourteen years (1903-17).

William M. Stewart, lawyer and two-time senator from Nevada (1864-75, 1887-1905), made his fortune investing in prospecting for gold in California and representing the legal interests of the original miners of the Comstock Lode. He was a leading political figure in the West, among other things carving out the Nevada Territory and representing western mining interests and railroads in Congress over a twenty-nine-year period.

Newlands and Stewart had experience with large-scale real estate ventures in California and Nevada and a shared confidence in the future growth of Washington. They had been involved in other speculative land ventures in the city—at Dupont Circle, for example—albeit on a smaller scale than in Chevy Chase.

Newlands is most often credited with the primary catalyst for the development of Chevy Chase. He attracted a powerful and talented group of men to his new Chevy Chase Land Company. Stewart was a partner, purchasing a large amount of the first issue of Land Company stock. Perhaps more important, Stewart was a strong legislative supporter in Congress, backing both the creation of Rock Creek Park and the charter of the streetcar line.

Beginning in 1887, Newlands launched an ambitious plan. His goal was to buy any parcel that touched on his projected length of Connecticut Avenue. Through straw purchases made secretly by his agents under a variety of names, he quietly bought farmland amounting to more than 1,700 acres along the entire proposed length of Connecticut Avenue from Boundary Street in the District to what is now Jones Bridge Road in Maryland. Edward J. Stellwagen was in charge of the majority of operations, and Major George Augustus Armes acted as a principal sales agent for the acquisitions. All holdings of the agents and trustees were transferred to the new Chevy Chase Land Company on June 5, 1890.

Newlands's key early purchase was Chevy Chase, a 305-acre plot straddling the line between Maryland and the District of Columbia. The name, which he subsequently adopted for the entire new subdivision, can be traced to the larger tract of land called "Cheivy Chace" that was patented to Colonel Joseph Belt from Lord Baltimore on July 10, 1725. It has historic associations to a 1388 battle between Lord Percy of England and Earl Douglas of Scotland over hunting grounds, or a "chace," in the Cheviot Hills between Scotland and

England. Part of the land patented in 1725 to Colonel Belt was sold in 1815 to Assistant Postmaster General Abraham Bradley. It was later acquired by businessmen and speculators, and then sold to the Chevy Chase Land Company.



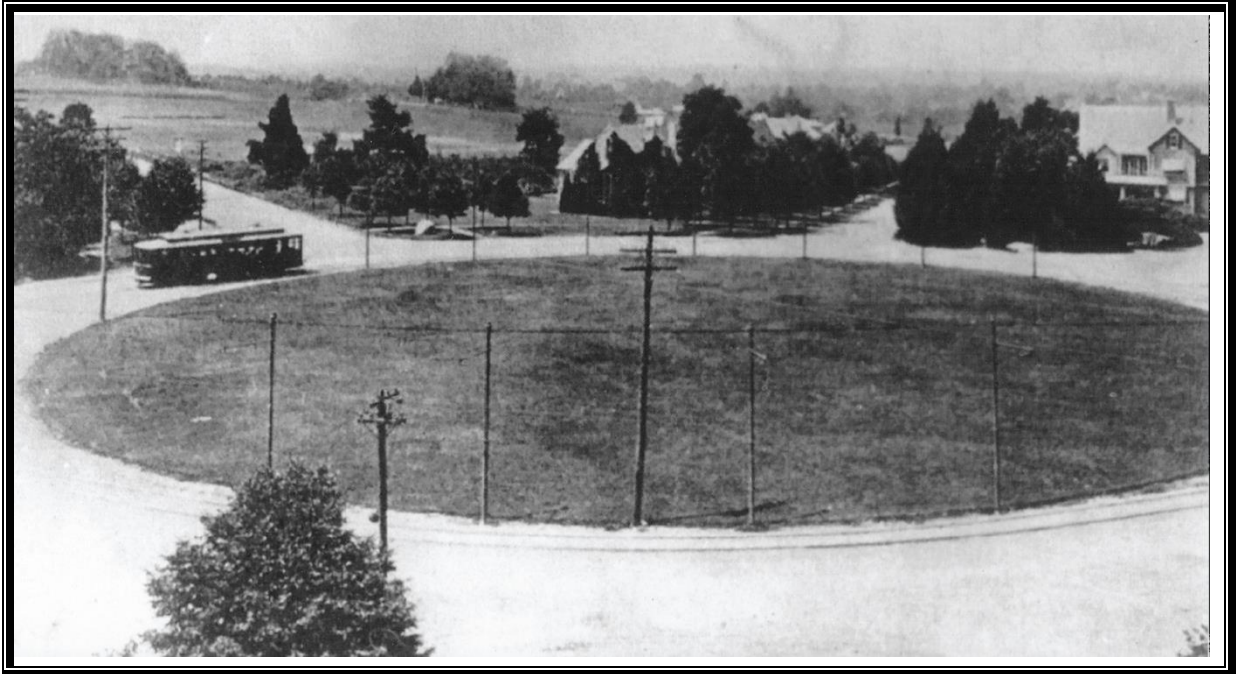
*Connecticut Avenue in the early 1900's looking south from Bradley Lane. The shelter at the right was for people waiting for the trolley car in front of The Chevy Chase Club. It serves the same purpose today.  
Courtesy, Ara Mesrobian/Chevy Chase Historical Society*

Newlands was a far-sighted businessman, intent on the finest quality of development. His goals are captured by a 1916 promotional brochure titled “Chevy Chase for Homes”:

*In the ordinary real estate development too frequently everything is sacrificed for quick financial returns, but this has not been done in Chevy Chase. Back of the development, so far as it has progressed today, is a big, comprehensive plan, and the men who formulated that plan believed that the best results could be obtained only where things were done right.... Instead of developing one small tract without regard to the surroundings, the owners acquired more than two thousand acres of land and have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in street improvements and the installation of every municipal convenience.*

Roderick S. French in his study of Chevy Chase points out that Newlands succeeded in keeping control and holding to quality standards in a way few other developers in the nation were able to do. “Newlands had the utmost interest in shaping the form and quality of the development,” French explained. “In order to achieve that control, he was willing to forgo profit for himself and his investors for 30 years. He had, or had at his disposal, the capital necessary to such a comprehensive, long-term undertaking.”





*The Chevy Chase trolley rounds the treeless Chevy Chase Circle and passes Western Avenue on its route south to Washington in this 1913 postcard. Grafton Street is in the right center of the picture which looks northwest over a pastoral landscape. Courtesy, Montgomery County Historical Society [All Saints Church and its previous Rectory are shown in the center.]*

His vast share of his father-in-law's estate was the cornerstone of the plan. Two other important financial and real estate alliances were also crucial. The Union Trust Company, organized in 1899, was integral to the long-term financing necessary for large-scale development. The real estate mortgage investment banking firm, Thos. J. Fisher & Co., organized in 1872, became the real estate department of the Union Trust Company and the exclusive leasing agent for the Land Company business from their offices. Stellwagen, vice president of the Land Company, was a link to both organizations, as president of Union Trust and president of Thos. J. Fisher & Co.

Newlands was among the first speculators who saw the development potential for the electric streetcar, and Chevy Chase may be one of the first suburban neighborhoods nationwide that was intentionally planned and built to take advantage of this mode of transportation. The Land Company's first task was to connect the new subdivision with Washington. Newlands privately launched the construction of Connecticut Avenue far beyond the improved streets of the central city into the rugged countryside to the north, following the route of the land he had purchased. Workers excavated more than five miles of roadbed, bridged ravines, and constructed a series of deep cuts and fills. Much of this was done using pick and shovel and horse-drawn carts. Trestle bridges were constructed over Rock Creek at Calvert Street and at Klinge Valley (Klinge Street) in 1891. The expense of the entire project was borne by the Land Company. The deep chasm of the Rock Creek Valley had effectively separated the rural areas of the District northwest of the creek from the central city; with the new bridge, they were now open for development.

At the same time the company constructed an electric railway at an initial cost of \$1.5 million. The Chevy Chase Land Company allied itself with the fledgling Rock Creek Railway Company, with Newlands as its president and principal stockholder. The first segment of the line opened in 1892 and the rest soon thereafter. On May 31, 1903, the *Washington Post* reported that streetcars made the six-mile run from the Treasury at 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue to Chevy Chase in exactly thirty-five minutes, leaving every fifteen minutes.

At the northern terminus of the line, two miles beyond Chevy Chase Circle, the Land Company built a water reservoir for generating electric power with steam turbines. Shortly thereafter, it constructed a small lake and an amusement park to lure prospective home buyers (once located east of what is now the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Chevy Chase Lake Drive). Pleasure-seekers flocked to Chevy Chase Lake on the trolley for concerts at the bandstand, which was a giant blue seashell covered with hundreds of twinkling lights. They rowed on the lake for five cents a half hour, bowled, rode the carousel and live ponies, tested their skills at the shooting gallery, and danced the two-step at the dance pavilion.

The first section of the new suburb to be laid out was between Chevy Chase Circle on the District line and Bradley Boulevard in Maryland, a section that is known today as Chevy Chase Village, or Section 2. It opened in 1893. Plans included broad streets, large lots, and parkland. Strict building regulations and covenants governed what future residents could build. Houses fronting on Connecticut Avenue were to cost not less than \$5,000 each, and on other streets not less than \$3,000. Houses constructed on Connecticut required a setback of thirty-five feet, and on side streets, twenty-five feet. No lot could be less than sixty feet wide. Alleys, apartments, and row houses were forbidden, and no business was to be conducted in the section. The guarantee of an exclusively residential suburb was tied to the strict ban of any commercial enterprises on Land Company lots. (Other areas were set apart for that purpose.) Stables and carriage houses were not to be erected within twenty-five feet of the front line of any lot. Similar restrictions were enacted in other sections developed later by the Land Company.

The first houses in the Village were built by or for officers of the Chevy Chase Land Company, and three of the original four houses remain. An article in the November 1920 issue of the *Chevy Chase News*, written by Chevy Chase's first schoolmistress, Ella Given, names the first houses and their residents. According to her account, the four original homes—all in the vicinity of Connecticut Avenue and Irving Street—were designed by nationally known Philadelphia architect Lindley Johnson, with Washington architect Leon E. Dessez as his associate. Dessez himself was the first resident, moving into the house known today as the Lodge, just northwest of the circle at 5804 Connecticut Avenue, in May 1893. Senator Newlands was the resident of a grand house (originally built for Senator Stewart) at no. 9 on the northeast side of the circle. Howard Nyman, secretary of the Land Company, moved into the residence at the northeast corner of Connecticut and Irving (no longer extant), and Herbert Claude moved into the house at 5900 Connecticut Avenue on the northwest corner of the avenue and Irving Street. As described in Given's article, "These four houses,

artistic and homelike, struck the keynote for the community which was to grow up around them.”

From the outset Chevy Chase attracted the best of residential design, bolstered by the high minimum price for houses stipulated in the building regulations. Initially, the Land Company engaged the talents of architect Johnson and New York landscape architect Nathan Barrett. Johnson, a successful and sophisticated Beaux-Arts architect known for his large country houses and resort structures, received several key commissions in 1892, including six “cottages” (actually large residences) and homes for Stewart and Stellwagen. Barrett, who had been associated with Johnson at the prosperous early resort communities of Winter Harbor, Maine; Tuxedo Park, New York; Ponce de Leon, Florida; and other developments, devised the landscape plan in Chevy Chase. Along with local architect Dessez, who is perhaps best known in Washington for his design of the Admiral’s House on Observatory Circle, NW (now the vice president’s residence), they set a tone of gentility with a few late Shingle-style houses and Colonial Revival houses in vogue in the 1890s. Newlands made Dessez a director of the Land Company in 1893 and gave him the responsibility of preparing the strict building regulations and for building two houses for sale.

Newlands and the Chevy Chase Land Company provided every comfort and convenience within their control, including water from artesian wells and attractive surroundings. Under Barrett’s direction, a gracious landscape plan, with curvilinear streets, shade trees, and ornamental shrubbery, was devised and partially executed. In addition to native trees such as tulip, poplar, oak, and locust, he specified many imports such as English elms, Japanese boxwood, pin oak, linden, and sycamore. Distinctive double rows of trees lined major streets.

The 1916 sales brochure published by Thos. J. Fisher & Co. maintained that “the best suburban section is always surrounding or adjacent to the leading suburban clubs.” Land Company officers had, in fact, organized the Chevy Chase Club in 1890 soon after the formation of the company itself, with Newlands as its first president. It was a country club devoted mainly to riding and the hunt, in the days when members rode to the hounds two or three times a week in season. The club adopted golf when that sport became popular. The old Bradley farmhouse on Connecticut Avenue served as the first clubhouse and was later remodeled into a guest house, incorporating portions of the old farmhouse.

The Land Company donated land for the first public school. Opening its doors in 1898, it was a small, four-room building surrounded by an expanse of mud, with a plank for a front stairway. It was located on the east side of Connecticut Avenue at McKinley Street, NW, where the District’s Chevy Chase Neighborhood Library stands today. In 1901 the Land Company also gave land on the northwest side of Chevy Chase Circle for the first church in the Village, the All Saints Episcopal Church, organized in 1897. The post office building, now the Chevy Chase Village Hall at 5906 Connecticut Avenue, was a small, pebble-dashed structure that also accommodated the public library, an “artistically decorated room” with a collection of one thousand books, as well as the fire apparatus, including a fire engine, hose cart, and hook-and-ladder. The fire bell was located just south of the building.

Following the opening of Chevy Chase Village in 1893, the Land Company planned additional sections in both the District and Maryland. A core group opened in the following order: Section 3 (1905), east of Connecticut Avenue and north of Bradley Lane; Chevy Chase, D.C. (1907), located immediately southeast of the circle; Section 4 (1909), west of Connecticut Avenue between the Chevy Chase and Columbia country clubs; Chevy Chase Heights (1910), west of Connecticut about a half mile south of the circle; and Section 5 (1923), east of Connecticut above Section 3.

The Chevy Chase, D.C., subdivision opened in 1907, east of Connecticut Avenue, bounded by Morrison Street, the District line, and a curved street to the east that became Chevy Chase Parkway. The subdivision mirrored the picturesque layout of Section 2 in Maryland. The Land Company restricted development to residential only, as it had in Maryland, and provided the same level of amenities—city water, electric lights, paved streets, sewers, and fine landscaping. However, the District plan had narrower lots, smaller setbacks (fifteen feet), and service alleys. The first home to be built in the new subdivision was P.L. Ricker's house at 3740 Oliver Street.

The second Land Company development in the District, Chevy Chase Heights, followed in 1910, a larger area west of Connecticut Avenue that stretched north from Fessenden to Keokuk Street (now Military Road), bounded by Belt Road on the west, with Reno Road winding through it. A 1913 *Evening Star* article reported there were already forty-two houses in the subdivision and described it as “a miniature town within itself.” In time this development and others nearby would come to share the common neighborhood name of Chevy Chase, D.C.

Through the 1920s, the Land Company added a few sections and expanded others. Originally, Section 1 lagged behind in the development chronology because it was set aside as hunting grounds; land added to Section 2 in 1925 took this title on maps, although it never gained widespread use. Although each section maintained a slightly distinct character, the largest difference was the commercial hub just south of Chevy Chase Circle.

Local landowners and real estate speculators, aware of the opportunities presented by the new development, quickly took advantage of the undeveloped adjacent lands and were responsible for entire communities of homes. In the District, in 1907 and 1909, Fulton Gordon purchased two parcels of land from Charles C. Glover, the president of Riggs Bank. Gordon subdivided the land located west of Connecticut Avenue and north of Chevy Chase Heights as Connecticut Avenue Terrace and Connecticut Avenue Park. Gordon did not prohibit commercial development—or multifamily homes or apartments, as the Land Company parcels did—which would have major implications for the future of this section of Connecticut Avenue. In Maryland, Otterbourne, Norwood Heights, Sonnemann's Additions, Martin's Additions, Leland, Mikkelson's Subdivision, and additional lands were folded into Chevy Chase's boundaries. Often, however, the Land Company sold lots to individuals or in small groups for development. Evidently, in a few cases —perhaps to open a new section for development—the company built houses, but this was the exception.

Despite all of the amenities, land sales in Chevy Chase went slowly in its first decades. The first section, the Village, opened in the economic panic year of 1893. Only



twenty-seven houses were occupied by 1897, and it required all the long-term financial solidarity of Newlands and his company to withstand the collapse of the boom of the previous decade. In fact, disbursements exceeded receipts for years. The Land Company would pay no dividends to stockholders until 1922, five years after the death of Francis Newlands. Accounts of growth patterns in Chevy Chase are varied; however, it appears that there were fewer than fifty families (unidentified by location) by 1900.

The Land Company was perfectly situated, however, to benefit from the expansionary period that followed World War I. Between 1918 and 1931, sales totaled more than \$7.5 million. By 1916 Thos J. Fisher & Co. reported that Section 2, Section 3, and Chevy Chase, D.C., were practically sold out, with sites still available in Section 4 and Chevy Chase Heights.

Because Chevy Chase's commercial development was strictly limited and controlled, the Land Company arranged for goods to be delivered to early residents. The *Chevy Chase News* of November 1920 described the system:

*Coal was ordered through the Land Company, and during the summer months a wagon was sent into the city for ice several times a week. If medicine were needed it could be telephoned for and delivered to a car conductor at Fifteenth Street and New York Avenue, or anywhere along the route.... The conductor would get off the car at Connecticut Avenue and Irving Street and put the medicine into a small box erected for that purpose.*

The only flourishing local store was Theodore Sonnemann's general store on Brookeville Road in Maryland. The Land Company had set aside one block in its Chevy Chase, D.C. subdivision, today's 5700 block on the west side of Connecticut Avenue just north of Northampton Street, for future business development, but nothing commercial would be built there until 1952.

It was on Fulton Gordon's tracts on the same side of the avenue just to the south—which had no commercial restrictions—where the first stores were built in what would become the Connecticut Avenue shopping strip of today. By 1910 W.B. Follmer's grocery store was serving customers at 5630 Connecticut Avenue, and Doc Armstrong's drugstore, adjacent to it, opened soon thereafter. By 1915 there were four stores between McKinley and Northampton streets, and by 1927 almost thirty businesses shared the 5500 and 5600 blocks on the west side of the avenue. Some of these businesses were housed in the attractive small building called the Chevy Chase Arcade, built in 1925 by developer Edward Jones, also president of the Chevy Chase Savings Bank. The bank opened the next year in an adjacent building designed by noted architect Arthur B. Heaton. Commercial uses on Land Company land to the south and on the east side of the avenue were ironically slowed by neighborhood challenges to the company's own plans for appropriate development. It would not be until 1973 that a Safeway grocery store would open on the east. The Chevy Chase Library and Community Center were built nearby three years earlier, on the site of the old E.V. Brown School.

The four blocks between Livingston Street and Chevy Chase Circle thus became something of a community center for the neighborhood. Peggy Fleming, who moved to the neighborhood in the 1960s, remembered walking to do her daily errands there and going to the movies at the Avalon. “On Sundays we picked a number and stood in line at Schupps to buy donuts. Once a week we had moo shi pork and pancakes at the Peking. On Christmas Eve, the dads met at Peoples for last-minute purchases of batteries for the toys Santa Claus would deliver later in the evening.... In 1968 our son got his first haircut at Chevy Chase Arcade Barbers from Jose Palupa.”

Aside from this hub of commercial activity, the character of Chevy Chase has always been a predominantly residential community. According to the 1916 promotional brochure: “The fixed purpose of The Chevy Chase Land Company was to provide for the National Capital a home suburb, a community where each home would bear a touch of the individuality of the owner, where each home would possess an added value by virtue of the beauty and charm of the surrounding homes.”

Houses of all sizes make up the different sections of Chevy Chase. Although Chevy Chase was planned to “meet the requirements of discriminating people,” the brochure noted “that does not necessarily mean, in our opinion, people of great wealth. Scores of those of moderate means make their homes there.” Residents have always maintained a range of occupations, from judge, senator, and physician to teacher, bookkeeper, bureaucrat, lawyer, and accountant.

When construction in the neighborhoods picked up after World War I, following the long slowdown after the panic of 1893, one style of architecture tumbled out on the heels of the preceding one. Virtually all of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century styles are represented today, including the Shingle, Colonial Revival, Tudor, French Eclectic, Spanish Eclectic, Mission, Neoclassical, Italian Renaissance, Prairie, Art Deco, and Craftsman styles. Only Modern and International style houses are largely missing. Bungalows mix with grand Colonial Revival mansions, and designs range from formal architect-designed houses to Sears prefabricated structures. An extraordinary mix of talented local designers is represented, including Arther B. Heaton, George S. Cooper, Thomas J.D. Fuller Edward W. Donn, Waddy Butler Wood, Clarence Harding, A.M. Sonnemann, Porter & Lockie, and Dan Kirkhuff, as well as prominent builders or developers such as Harry Wardman, Weaver Brothers, and M. and R.B. Warren.

Along Connecticut Avenue in the District, apartment houses began to dominate early in the twentieth century. Fulton Gordon’s Connecticut Avenue Terrace and Connecticut Avenue Park developments allowed this form of housing, which became increasingly popular in a city with government employees and others coming to the city to work for a short time. As early as 1930, the few blocks between Military Road and Morrison Street offered accommodations in five different apartment buildings.

Today the basic character of Chevy Chase as planned by the Chevy Chase Land Company in the 1890s has not changed, a powerful indication of the uniqueness of Newlands’s enterprise. The large majority of the houses built over the years are extant, although the recent pressure to tear down existing houses to accommodate much larger ones

is affecting the neighborhoods. Although there have been additions to the boundaries of the earliest land developed by the Land Company, the original sections still exist, each with its own character and identity. The Maryland sections each have an elected neighborhood government—headed by a section council or board of managers that can contract for street improvements, police and fire protection, and the like—while the corollary in the District of Columbia sections are the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions that advise the District government on issues affecting their communities.

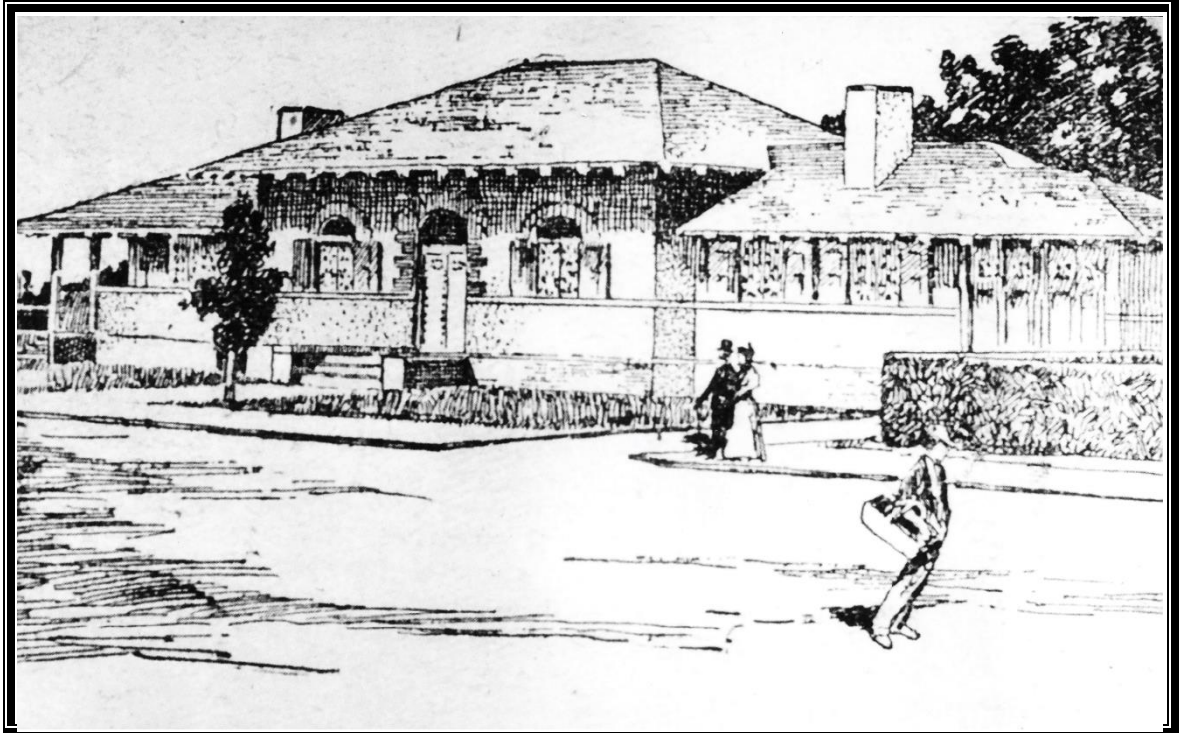
Residents of both Chevy Chase, Maryland, and Chevy Chase, D.C., continue to identify with the shops, restaurants, and services on Connecticut Avenue south of the Circle, now with sidewalk cafes, park benches, and flower boxes that make it even more of a gathering place. When Loew's closed the 1920s Avalon movie theater in 2001, alarmed residents created the Avalon Theatre Project, and the next year they leased the building and began to operate the theater as a nonprofit community venture. Over the years, the merchants have become more diverse: a 2005 survey revealed that people working in the area had been born in more than fifty countries, from Guatemala and Austria to Korea and Yugoslavia.

Commercial incursions have continued to be strictly controlled in residential Chevy Chase, and in 1928 the thrust of larger commercial development shifted to the neighborhood's western edge, along Wisconsin Avenue. Here the Land Company built Chevy Chase Center in the 1950s, bringing additional shops and offices to that area. The area became a large and sophisticated commercial district centered on the Friendship Heights Metrorail station, with the Land Company involved in much of the new development even in 2008.

The Chevy Chase Land Company still exists, largely owned by descendants of Senator Newlands and collateral heirs. After Newlands's death in 1917, Stellwagen became president, followed in turn by Edward L. Hillyer. Until the mid-1930s the company sold land and liquidated assets for distribution to shareholders. In 1946 William Sharon Farr assumed the presidency, and the company strategy changed as it began to develop its holdings into long-term, income-producing properties. Farr's son, Gavin, the great-grandson of Senator Newlands, currently serves as chairman of the board. A 1983 Land Company advertisement for an apartment building at 8101 Connecticut Avenue (occupying the original site of the streetcar barn at the northern terminus of the Chevy Chase line) fittingly described the structure as "built by the Chevy Chase Land Co. on land they selected and acquired in 1890."

Despite the passing of several characteristic features—Chevy Chase Lake was filled in during the 1930s, the electric railroad service was discontinued on Connecticut Avenue in 1935, the bridges at Klinge Valley and Calvert Street have long since been replaced, and Connecticut Avenue has been regraded several times—Chevy Chase itself stands as envisioned, a residential neighborhood, stable, comfortable, and quiet. Over a century later, it is a tribute to its bold original plan.

**Smith, Kathryn Schneider, ed. *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*. pp. 295-311. © 2010 Johns Hopkins University Press. Reprinted with permission of Johns Hopkins University Press.**



*The Chevy Chase Library (now Village Hall) in the early 1900's from a drawing published in a newspaper.  
Courtesy, Robert A. Truax/Chevy Chase Historical Society.*

The Chevy Chase Free Library Association was formed in 1896 by Janet and Edith Newlands and Miss Birney (Mrs. Harold Walker). Senator Newlands donated the property for the building in 1901 and the ladies' raised enough money to fund the structure. In addition to housing the library, the building afforded space for the beginning of several local churches, including the Christian Science Church, Blessed Sacrament Church, All Saints Church, and Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, as was the center for social gatherings, plus a school for local residents.

In 1906, the name was changed to the Chevy Chase Association. The new entity became the local government for Chevy Chase Village. The building then functioned as a governmental facility and local community center. It was also home for the hand-drawn fire fighting apparatus until 1927. The building was expanded in 1912 to house a postal facility and then changed very little until a major renovation in the 1940's.