

## ALTERNATE TROLLEY ROUTE

Good afternoon and welcome to the White Plains Homes of Distinction Tour

So, White Plains was actually founded in 1683 but remained a sleepy village for many years with the brief exception of its crucial role in the American Revolution. When the railroad came to White Plains in the 1840's, the village began to grow, becoming the county seat and a commercial hub. With the help of the Bronx River Parkway, as Steve just discussed, the growth of the suburbs took off. Around the turn of the century, White Plains was becoming a kind of a Newport South. Many wealthy New Yorkers built summer homes here which they called "cottages". Our very own clubhouse is one of these. In 1910 Thomas Kerr purchased 4 acres from his brother Robert and built a summer home. He died several years after the house was completed and it was sold to the Rich family hence the current name, the **CV Rich Mansion**. After the stock market crash in 1929, the Rich family was forced to sell and it became the clubhouse of the Woman's Club in 1930.

The house was designed by architects Albro and Lindenberg. It is an Italianate revival home – shallow hipped roof, shuttered windows, arches over windows and doors, arcaded/columnated loggia or porches at either end (which are now the tea and sun rooms) and variable frontal planes. The central square tower on front defines it as an Italianate villa. The carriage house was located on what is now Ridgeway Circle and a tunnel once existed from the mansion to the carriage house. The house also has beautiful terraced gardens in the back and once contained a small reflecting pool. Apparently there was concern back in the day that guests might fall in and it was filled in.

The property across Ridgeway was originally the Gedney Farm which was roughly bounded by Mamk Ave, Heatherbloom Road, Hathaway Lane and Ridgeway.

Our first house on the right **20 Seymour Pl** is probably one of the oldest homes in Gedney Farms, having been built around 1915. It is an example of California or Spanish mission style. Typical features include the tiled hipped roof, archways and smooth surface stucco walls. This house has 12 rooms, 3 baths and is actually quite narrow similar to the CV Rich mansion. The home was purchased in 1915 by Charles Folsom, an attorney.

To your left **21 Seymour Pl** was called Ridgmour by its owner Newton Steers and was built in 1924. It is a Colonial Revival style with a characteristic two story pedimented portico, red brick with white trim, an arched fanlight over door, 6 over 6 windows, gabled dormered roof with prominent chimney. Mr. Steers was the president of a celluloid film company. Claire Steers, his wife, was a member of the Woman's Club and very involved with the YWCA from the beginning, serving as its second Vice President and then on the Board of Trustees for many years. Their son Newton Jr. was a state senator and later congressman from the state of Maryland.

In 1897 business man Howard Willets bought the farm, continuing in the Gedney tradition of raising cattle as well as prize winning race horses. The horses were stabled in a barn that later became the men's locker room at Ridgeway Country Club. For years, there had been a desire to build an "upscale" community in WP similar to ones in Scarsdale and Bronxville but till the early 1920's conditions had not been favorable for building. In 1912 Willets sold the land to Robert Farley, maybe the same Farley who owned the building that the famous Button Factory was in. Farley and Willets planned to develop most of the land as a "cottage colony." Model homes were constructed and lots were sold. In 1924 lots were going for about \$2K which is roughly \$25000 in today's money. Colonial and Tudor houses were most popular after 1900 and make up the largest portion of homes built during the 1920s and 1930s. Spanish colonial became more popular after the 1920's.

As we approach Mamk Ave, we see the church of OLS which was built in 1929. The church was built on the approximate location of the original Gedney farmhouse. OLS's other claim to fame, besides being the mission church of St. Bernard's, is that Barbara Dannenberg's grandfather John Erickson was the builder and Tom Altamuro, husband of former WC member Ann Altamuro was the stone mason.

We are now arriving at arguably one of White Plains most notorious homes, the Pope Mansion

**30 Gedney Park Drive** The Pope Mansion is another Italianate revival style with classic shallow hipped tile roof, arched windows and central tower. The architect was Randall Henderson. It was built in 1922 for \$125K which would

be over \$1.5M today. Reportedly there was a tunnel which led to the road behind the mansion and was used either for escaping from the feds or more likely to for the owner's romantic encounters on the street in back.

Louie Pope, the owner, was quite a character. The son of Italian immigrants, he was an entrepreneur, always in the right place at the right time. He sold cars, was involved in real estate, owned saloons catering to workers at the Kensico Dam. He married several times and had two daughters. During Prohibition, Louie saw another big opportunity and eventually became the biggest bootlegger in Westchester County. Ships would drop off liquor on Thimble Island in LI Sound, his boats would pick up the liquor and distribute it to towns from Peekskill to New Rochelle. His biggest supplier was the Bronfman family of Canada who had to pay a \$1.5 million fine to the US government for illegally exporting liquor during Prohibition. Pope owned a speakeasy called the Central Hotel in Port Chester. He was an excellent chef and often threw big parties at the house and the hotel lasting well into the night. He could outdrink Babe Ruth which was apparently quite a feat. One night he was kidnapped by hijackers who often lay in wait for the bootleggers. He paid a ransom of between \$50-75K to get released and had his diamond ring stolen. In spite of his criminal bent, Louie had a soft side and at Thanksgiving and Christmas would distribute food baskets to over 500 poor families in WP and Port Chester. After prohibition, Louie's fortunes declined. The mansion was taken over by bank in 1938 for non-payment of the mortgage and ironically was eventually bought by the Capuchin Franciscan Friars. In 1943 he was caught selling stolen gas ration cards. Pope died of cancer on his boat the Ruth M in June 1950 and is buried in Danbury. Did you know that during Prohibition, billions of gallons of liquor were estimated to have been seized representing <5% of total amount of bootleg liquor!

Robert Farley, who we mentioned at the start of the tour, also built the Gedney Farm Hotel which formally opened in April 1914 and was located in the semicircle of Hotel Drive facing Gedney Esplanade. The hotel property occupied the entire area but the main hotel was nearer the Mamk Avenue end. Kenneth Murchison was the architect for the hotel and quite ingeniously incorporated features of the farm into the hotel itself. The original concrete cattle barn and silos were converted into the hotel itself giving it the appearance of a French chateau. A deep recess formerly used for refuse became the swimming pool, the bull pen became the recreation hall and the sheep run became the bowling alley. The hotel offered all kinds of indoor and outdoor activities including the Liberty Coach, squash, horseback riding, trapshooting and polo. In the winter, there was ice skating, tobogganing and sleigh riding. There was even a kennel for pets. The hotel had two restaurants and much of the food was grown on the farm. In 1915, dinner cost \$2. Guests included Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and Spencer Tracy.

**15 Hotel Drive on the right** built around 1920 and **16 Hotel Dr** on the left, built in 1928 are examples of what was called the "Stockbroker Tudor". The Tudor style typically featured steeply pitched roofs, half timbering, overhanging second floors, high chimneys, mullioned windows and pillared porches. They were referred to as Stockbroker Tudors because many of these homes were built by stockbrokers who felt the Tudor style was a reflection of wealth. In fact the owner of #15, Harry P Baulch of NYC, was a broker himself. #16 was owned by Francis Hopper who called his house "Justholme. His home incorporates a tower reminiscent of the silo of the hotel. #16 is roughly on the site of the left end of original hotel.

The hotel, unfortunately, did not last long. In September of 1924 it was destroyed by fire, leaving only the two towers and six chimneys standing. The hotel was never rebuilt but housing construction increased dramatically after the fire. The golf course was eventually sold in 1952 and renamed the Ridgeway Country Club.

Across from Hotel Drive is Macy Road. #16 Macy was the home of Ethel Kent, President of the WC from 1948-50. Mrs. Kent was the president who oversaw the restoration of the murals in the dining room and who presented the first City flag to Mayor Silas Clarke in 1949.

Several of the streets in Gedney Farm are related to Mr. Willet: Macy was his wife's maiden name, Oxford Road used to be called Willets Avenue, Murchison was named for the hotel architect and the portion of Heatherbloom Road which runs parallel to Hathaway was once called Crandall Drive after the second manager of the hotel.

Our next house is the yellow stucco building on your right.

**30 Burling** The yellow brick and stucco house to our right was originally the farmhouse built by John Bartholomew Gedney in 1854 and is the oldest home in Gedney Farms. John and Bartholomew Gedney settled in WP around 1740.

They were Loyalists during the American Revolution and the farm was badly damaged during war. Afterwards, however, the farm was restored and became quite prosperous. One Gedney descendant, Bartholomew, was internationally renowned for farming techniques and was once visited by a representative of the Russian czar. Although you wouldn't know it now, the house was a Greek Revival structure popular in the mid 1800's. It was cube like in shape originally, had a full width veranda with unique appearing columns, shallow hipped roof, small attic windows and Doric like pilasters around the door. The tripartite window on the second floor is actually more consistent with the Federal style which preceded Greek Revival. The house has, of course, been radically altered. It may have been wood originally but has been since been stuccoed and bricked. The porch has obviously been removed and the door and front stoop have been replaced. The large extension in rear was added in 1967 when it was the Westchester Music Conservatory. It also now has numerous solar panels on the roof and the dormers are not original. Despite all the alterations, it retains its significance as one of the oldest houses in WP.

As we drive down Burling, you will notice various other examples of Tudor and Colonial Revival houses as well as several Dutch Colonial Revivals with the gambrel roof, curved eaves and continuous dormer across the front

Howard Willet's mansion once stood on the hill across the street from us. It had a view of LI Sound, the Palisades and the Hudson River. Heatherbloom Road, named for one of Mr. Willet's prize racehorses, was part of the driveway and the estate reportedly had 2 ½ miles of macadamized roads which was quite new at the time. This house burned down in 1909 and new home built at 25 Hathaway Lane, named for another of Mr Willet's racehorses. The new house is completely different from the original mansion and is still in existence today. Howard Willet did not have much luck with fires. One of his barns which had been converted to Troop barracks also caught fire and was destroyed. This fire and the subsequent fire at the Gedney Farm Hotel finally convinced the city that enlarging the water system should be a priority. New and larger water mains were finally installed in Gedney farms and a pumping station instituted.

As we make the turn onto Mamk Avenue, be sure to look to your right at the beautiful buildings on the campus of Burke which were designed by the premier firm of McKim, Meade and White. All the property to your right extending to the Westchester Mall was originally part of the farm of Samuel Faile. The Bloomingdale Asylum which is now New York Hospital Westchester bought the land in the 1880's and constructed a new hospital here. It remains a psychiatric hospital today. A portion of the land was later sold to philanthropist John Masterson Burke who built the Burke Rehab Hospital opening in 1915.

Bryant Ave, which now separates the two properties, was not constructed until 1927 and was funded almost entirely by the Asylum. Prior to the Bryant Ave extension, the nearest east west road was Ridgeway. Bloomingdale Road was named for the Asylum but it is not a coincidence that Mr. Bloomingdale opened a store here.

As we go up Bryant, we are crossing over the route of the NY Westchester Boston RR which actually never made it to Boston. It terminated in WP at the junction of Bloomingdale Road and Mamk Avenue. In the old days, there was another road here which intersected Bryant named Panawok after one of the original Indian chiefs. It disappeared sometime between 1930 and 1950.

As we go up Shapham, you will notice several apartment buildings. The one on the left at 23 Old Mamk was originally known as the Shapham Arms Apts. It is now called Saxon House.

**44 Old Mamk** was one site of the Noble School. The date of the house is uncertain. Maps show a house at this location in 1881 but it is not clear if this is the same house. The style appears to be French Second Empire with stucco walls, prominent dormers with flared cornices and most important a mansard roof. This building was actually the annex to the Noble School run by Mrs. Kathleen Noble Jerome. Mrs. Jerome first married Charles Noble in 1894 in NYC. He died two years later leaving her with a one year old son and she moved to White Plains sometime after 1905. The school opened in 1909 in her home at 112 S Bway with 1 student. It became quite a success and moved many times ending up here in the mid 1920's. The school catered to the wealthy and had day and boarding students. There was a principal, 5 regular teachers and 3 visiting instructors who taught French, music and dance. The school went from K – 4<sup>th</sup> grades. The school moved to Mount Kisco in the 1930's.

We are now entering the **Highlands**, another neighborhood developed mainly after turn of the century. Presumably, it was called the Highlands since it was in a more elevated area of WP. The portion north of Linda Avenue was once called Greenridge Park and only the southern section was called the Highlands or on some maps Longview Park. Today the whole area is known as the Highlands, the Upper Highlands is everything south of Bryant and the Lower Highlands every north of this. The original zoning for the area was for double wide lots but as we drive through the neighborhood, you will notice that some of the lots are twice as wide as the others. After the war, there was such demand for housing that the area was rezoned to allow for smaller lots. Some of the larger lots were divided and additional homes built. The Upper Highlands tends to have more of the double wide lots with more mature landscaping. Although most of the homes in both sections are preWWII, the houses on the smaller lots were mostly built after the war.

**151 Longview** Thomas Bernie, whose parents were born in N Ireland was originally from Brooklyn. He bought this house in 1919 and quickly set up residence. According to the 1920 census, he was a "commission man" who sold hosiery. The Victorian style house was built between 1910 and 1914. The garage in back was used for Sunday school for the Church of the Highlands until the church itself was built. The garage, as you can tell, was originally a barn, complete with weathervane on the top.

**110 Greenridge** This Colonial home without the portico was allegedly custom built in 1926 for the founder of McCormick Spice Company. It was later the home of G. Alfred Knoche whose wife was a member of the Woman's Club. Mr. Knoche was the president of a paper company. They actually originally lived at 37 Greenridge which still exists but moved to this much larger home around 1928. Guess the paper business was pretty lucrative.

**100 Greenridge** The blue house on the left is an example of a Sears Craftsman home, in particular the Gladstone model. Between 1908 and 1940, Sears sold over 100,000 of these DIY kits to build a house. They were so popular that there was even a Sears Modern Homes Outlet on Main Street. You would select your model, the kit would be delivered to White Plains by train and then to the lot by truck. It weighed over 12 tons and contained over 12000 pieces of everything needed to build your house. Every piece of wood was numbered for your homebuilding convenience. A number of other companies including Montgomery Ward sold similar products. There are a number of Sears homes throughout WP.

**90 Greenridge** This Victorian home is said to have been built in 1890 by Alexander Jackson Davis of Lyndhurst fame. He would have been 87 years old at the time. Records, however, show that Richard Carpenter bought this property from the Grand View Residence Co in 1897 and 1901 maps show two houses on his property. The 1900 census shows a Richard and Charles Carpenter living next to each other. In any case, the house is a classic example of Victorian architecture. It has three stories, steep gabled and hipped roofs, a tower, an elaborate staircase leading to a wraparound porch, variable roof lines, a crow's nest on upper floors and mix of complementary colors on house and trim.

As we make the turn, the yellow and brick house across the street to our right, #62 Bryant, is another example of a Dutch Colonial. On the left across from the church, the beige house with white trim #55 Bryant is another Sears home. I believe this is the Arlington model which was available from 1913 – 1922. The house has been renovated and the side porch removed but it remains identifiable as an Arlington.

The yellow house across the street at **16 Stratford** or **68 Smith** was the home of Dorothy Olney, president of the WC from 1936-38. She was probably the youngest woman to be president as she was only in her late 30's at the time. Dorothy was quite a force even outside the WC being elected vice president of the Woman's Division of the Civic and Business Federation of White Plains. She and her husband owned a theater in WP and brought many famous people to speak in Westchester including Winston Churchill. The house was built around 1924.

On your right the white house with the brick porch, #34 Howard Avenue, is yet another example of a Sears home. This house appears to be a Bedford. Customers were allowed to customize the plans somewhat so the houses sometimes are not exactly as the plans show.

**66 Prospect St**, the large white house across the street, was the home of Frederick C McLaughlin. A house has been present at this location since at least 1910. Mr. McLaughlin was a member of the first Common Council of the city of WP and mayor from 1926-31. He had a lifelong interest in education and was responsible for combining the Chatterton Hill and WP School Districts. During his term as mayor, he presided over heated discussions concerning the use of non-combustible wood shingle for houses which the Common Council wanted included in the new building code. It is not clear who won. Mayor McLaughlin was also the father of Emily McLaughlin by his second wife Vaughn. Emily was an actress who played Nurse Jessie Brewer on General Hospital. She was famous for the opening line, "7<sup>th</sup> floor, nurses station" on the premier episode

As we continue on Prospect towards Soundview, notice the beautiful twin Victorians on the corner of Prospect and Sterling on your left. The one on the near corner probably dates from 1901 or earlier.

Our next neighborhood is known as Prospect Park. When we turn into the neighborhood, you will see the trademark stone pillars marking the entrances. In 1894 several land speculators, Fred Swift, Willard Baker and Oscar Swift formed a business called the New Netherland Realty Company. The land which became Prospect Park was originally the farm of Daniel Quimby. In 1898, only three houses existed, that of Fred Swift (now 19 NY Ave South), Willard Baker (now 12 Vermont) and the original Quimby homestead which was demolished in 1905. There were only two roads then – NY Ave and Vermont Ave. Prospect Street was eventually extended to Vermont and the originally straight road was curved to accommodate the lawn of 105 Prospect. Oakley and Prescott, now called Winslow, were added in 1902. Pin Oak Lane was originally considered part of Prescott but was later renamed Pin Oak after the Cushman estate. By 1906 the area had been fully mapped and divided into lots with 100 foot frontages although most of the southern section had no homes. In 1908 you could buy a home for \$12K.

Many of these homes were actually second residences for wealthy New Yorkers who only lived here part time. Despite being only part time residents, many of them contributed generously to the local community.

**21 Vermont** the yellow house on the left is a Victorian style built in 1903 for the Reed family. It was sold to Herbert Philbrick in 1952. Philbrick was an FBI informant who infiltrated the Communist party in New England and later testified against them during the 40's. He wrote a book about his experiences entitled "I Led Three Lives" describing his life as a salesman, Communist infiltrator and FBI agent. The book became a TV series, scenes of which were filmed at the house. Mr. Philbrick contrary to popular belief was NOT actually a Communist

As we continue down around the bend on Vermont, the large brown house on your right is **12 Vermont**. This was one of the original homes built in Prospect Park for Willard Baker.

**11 Vermont** Across from #12 is a Victorian style house built in 1902 for Mabel J Nathan. Mabel married Mr. Moore in 1901 but quickly divorced him in 1903. She was apparently quite the socialite and spent time in her various homes. The Saratoga Springs Evening Herald (apparently she had a house there too) reported in 1903 that she had been robbed but when the police chief called, a mysterious detective named Porter told him she was in bed and too ill to come to the phone. Mabel married Austin Clapp in 1911 and the house was then sold to Frederick McLaughlin

Coming up on our right and left, we will pass the homes of two past presidents. On the right, set back in the trees, #6 was the home of Linda Houston, president from 1946-48. The house was built by Fred Swift in 1901. He died in 1907. His wife Margaret Welles Barron Swift was a Titanic survivor and held a law degree from NYU. She never practiced but lectured frequently to Woman's Clubs on the law. #3, the yellow house set back on your left, was one of the many homes of Belle Knight, the first president of the WC. It was built around 1914.

**14 Winslow** is on our left. The house was built around 1908 by Clarion Winslow. It was called Mon Plaisor and had beautiful gardens surrounding it. The property reached all the way to New York Ave in the rear and Vermont to the side and there was a gasoline pump in the garage! Mr. Winslow was reportedly a descendant of Gov. Edward Winslow of Massachusetts who came over on the Mayflower. He started out as store clerk upstate but worked his way up and was ultimately an executive of FW Woolworth. After his retirement, he was a major philanthropist contributing especially to WP Hospital, YMCA, Community Chest and the YWCA. He also donated land to the Church in the Highlands to build a church. Over the last 20 years of his life, he donated over >\$1M to charity.

**15 Winslow** on the right is probably best described as Victorian and was built around 1905 by Henry Ungrich. One year, a new family was living here and when the man of the house died, his wife's relatives came to care for her. Now the family had a chauffeur who thought he was meant to be heir to the estate after the missus died. When the relatives showed up, he felt they were a threat to his inheritance and began to systematically poison them. The chauffeur was convicted and sentenced to Sing Sing. During a hearing in Supreme Court, he suddenly bolted and jumped out an 8<sup>th</sup> story window taking the judge's hat with him. The relatives survived, the chauffeur did not. Later owners included the Rutherfords who ran the Rutherford School of Dance and the Hamill family of Dorothy Hamill fame.

### **LEFT TO NY AVE S**

As we drive down NY Avenue South you will notice several Italianate revival homes including 22 NY Avenue, the home of Alfonse Wile. These homes were probably built in the mid 1910's

**19 NY Ave** The white home with the red tile roof on the right was the Cushman estate known as Pine Oaks but the current house is considerably smaller than the original. It is an Italianate revival house built around 1898 by Fred J Swift, one of the original investors in the New Netherland Realty Co. In 1900, Lewis Cushman bought the house and the surrounding 7-10 acres of land. He was a direct descendant of Robert Cushman who came with the Pilgrims in 1620. Cushman came to NY at age 19 and started a bakery business with his brother. Cushman's Sons Inc. eventually had 68 stores throughout NYC and Westchester and was one of the largest bakery chains in the country. After his death in 1936, the house was vacant for a number of years and in May 1947, there was a large fire. Two boys, aged 10 and 12, ultimately admitted to setting the fire. One of the boys was apparently well known to police. Property damage to the house was estimated at \$55K which was equal to the combined damage for all fires in the preceding year. In 1948, the house was rebuilt on a smaller scale. Although the original home was extensively damaged, enough remains to identify it in old photos.

We will soon be on Oakley Road which was named for Isaac and Cornelius Oakley. Isaac and Cornelius were the sons of a Quaker who owned the Oakley tavern in WP during the Revolutionary War. The Oakley Tavern was known as a meeting place for the patriots. Being Quakers, the brothers were unable to fight but they served as trusted guides to George Washington during the war. The Ballard Duran funeral home is roughly on the site of the Oakley tavern today.

**11 Pin Oak** on the left was the home of Gordon Cushman, the son of Lewis Cushman and VP of Cushman's Bakery. . The original house was just over 3000 square feet but has been enlarged and a pool added in the back. It is now over 4300 square feet, has 5 bedrooms and three full baths. The Tudor style home was designed by architect Randall Henderson and was built in 1927. Interestingly years later Randall Henderson was the architect who restored the original Cushman house after the devastating fire.

**10 Pin Oak** If you look through the trees on your right, you will see a home that was previously the carriage house of Cushman estate. The house was built in 1905 and is over 3800 square feet. Notice how the house is perpendicular to the street and resembles the Cushman mansion. At the time of the fire, the caretaker for the Cushman estate was living here.

During the Depression, some of the larger estates were subdivided to raise cash but home building slowed. After WWII, construction again picked up and many new homes were built on the subdivided lots and in the previously undeveloped regions on Winslow and Oakley. Winslow was originally known as Prescott Road but police and fire got so confused between Prescott Avenue and Prescott Road, they finally changed the name to Winslow. The cobblestone streets in this area were only covered with macadam in the 1960's. As we exit Prospect Park, you will notice that these homes are for the most part smaller and newer than the northern section.

### **RIGHT TO SOUNDVIEW, RIGHT TO HARTSDALE LEFT CUSHMAN, LEFT TO EARLWOODE**

We are now leaving Prospect Park and entering the Soundview section. Much of this land was owned by John Miles, an Irish immigrant who made his money largely in real estate. He purchased the land from the Horton family, an old WP family dating back to the 1700's. In April of 1925, the Building and Realty News stated that the Soundview section which included Soundview Ave and surrounding area was without question White Plains' smartest section. The area was called Soundview because back in the 20's you could actually see the LI Sound from these hills. Fenimore Country Club blocked further development south so available land was limited and competition for property was intense. Prices skyrocketed and a 500% profit for early buyers was not uncommon. Many large estates were built, a number of which have unfortunately since been demolished including the Hebard and Elliman estates.

The Earle estate was purchased from Frank T Earle by R Franklin Hull in the early 1920's. Hull was the realtor and Ward Carpenter the builder for the development known as Earlewoode. Many wealthy people purchased homes here including Randall Henderson, the prominent local architect. The area was desirable because of its easy access to transportation and furthermore, Mr. Hull stated that "Earlewoode, with its natural beauty and its exceptional landscaping is the cream of the Soundview section".

As we drive up Earlewoode, notice #25 on your right, the yellow Dutch colonial with the bay window. This was originally the carriage house for the Earle mansion. It has since been greatly enlarged but the exterior still resembles the original building.

**20 Earlewoode** was another home of Belle Knight. The house which was built in 1928 is of Tudor style. Belle was an amazing woman. In addition to being the first president of the WC from 1916-18, she was also the first woman elected to the Common Council in WP and started the Community Chest now known as the United Way. Shortly after the Knights moved into their new house, they held a big housewarming party for 150 guests in early Oct 1929. It is ironic that this big celebration was held just weeks before the stock market crash.

**12 Earlewoode Dr** the brown house on your left was built in 1928. This house won first prize in a design competition sponsored by the American Institute of Architects and was written about nationally. An open house sponsored by several of the local Woman's Clubs was held prior to owners moving in.

As we continue back to Soundview Ave, notice #10 Earlewoode on your left, the large Tudor style home set well back from the road. This Tudor style mansion was the original Earle estate house and was built between 1905 and 1910.

**258 Soundview** which you can see to the right is actually two 2-story Spanish mission style homes connected by a single level. It has a stucco exterior, tiled roof, archways and was built around 1922. In the 20's, it was the home of the Duncan sisters, Dolly and Rosie. The Duncan sisters were a vaudeville act popular in the 20's and were most famous for their roles in Topsy and Eva, a musical comedy based on Uncle Tom's Cabin (weird choice for a comedy). Infamously they were sued in WP for non-payment of their fruit and vegetable bill and the sheriff had to collect payment. The sisters performed for many years in movies, TV and nightclubs. Their act ended in 1959 when Rosie died of injuries sustained in a car accident.

**Soundview Manor 283 Soundview** will be ahead on our left. Robert Dula purchased this property from John Miles and built a house in 1920 for his son Robert as wedding gift. The architect was Chester Patterson. The stucco house is Classical Revival. It is actually "L"-shaped but the portion facing the street is symmetric in appearance with a three-

story central section flanked by two-story blocks on each side. It has flat roofs supported by simple columns, prominent balustrades and a plain unadorned entablature. Westchester Wag called it "the Other White House" and you can see the similarities. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hilary and Chelsea Clinton visited the house in 1999. As recently as 2013, the home was being used as a Bed and Breakfast. It has since been sold but future plans for the house are uncertain.

As we return to Soundview and make the sharp bend, #258 will be on your right. #283 will be on your left. I would also like to mention # 293 Soundview. This property was once known as Clovelly and is now the Temple Bet Am Shalom. It is a lovely Tudor home built in the 1920's. The house was sold in 1958 and became a synagogue. It was severely damaged in fire in 2003 but has been meticulously and beautifully restored. It is worth taking a look when you can.

As we drive down Ridgeway, the neighborhood on your right was originally the estate of the Reynal family known as Rocky Dell. Jules Reynal was a poor Frenchman of "noble blood" but his wife Nathalie Higgins was very wealthy. Her father left her an inheritance of \$35 million in today's money to the Reynal children. Nathalie Reynal built the church of St John the Evangelist downtown in honor of one of her sons who died as a child. She bought the land, furnished the church and gave it to them free of debt. The Reynal estate was later sold to group of investors and part of it ultimately became the Fenimore Golf Club (named after James Fenimore Cooper). After the Depression, the club was renamed Fenway. Persia Van Hoesen, WC president from 1950-52 lived at 30 Reynal Road

On your left, at the NW corner of Ridgeway and Mamk Ave once stood the country branch of the NY Orthopedic Hospital and later the McClusky Children's Home. The Children's Home was demolished in 1985 and Gedney Close was built. The land on your left along Mamk Ave was the Sammis farm and a part of the Thebaud estate. On our right, was the Briggs estate comprising 90 acres and the rest of the Thebaud property which consisted of 47 acres. Hillair, as the Thebaud estate was called, was built high on the hill and had views of Long Island sound. The mansion was made of Indiana limestone and resembled a French Chateau. It had 40 rooms and 12 baths. There is supposedly a small cemetery of the Thebaud family on Mamk Ave across from West Street on the west side of the road although the cemetery predates the Thebaud's owning the land. This area was quite popular for horseback riding and when the estate was sold in 1928, the house and stables were slated to become an exclusive riding club called the Saxon Wood Hunt Club. I don't think there was much hunting going on but there was lots of horseback riding. Bridal paths led from the trails to the back of each property so homeowners could stable their horses at the club. The club opened in 1929. It seemed to have survived the Depression but closed around 1940.

We don't have time to visit today but up ahead continuing down West St was the original Rosedale schoolhouse which was built around 1844. It is now a private home but it retains the original design of the school. A little further at the corner of Collyer and West St. is the Collyer house. Urban legend says this house was once a stop for Underground Railroad

250 Rosedale is on your right. This farm was originally owned by Clark Todd who appears in the WP census as early as 1880. The movie Unfaithful with Richard Gere and Diane Lane was filmed here

**384 Rosedale** On our left, the large white home was built in 1913 by Austin Greer and was known as Ingleside. It comprised 43 acres and a real estate paper described it as a "charming gentleman's home" consisting of the main house, several garages and several smaller outer buildings including a tea house situated on a brook which flows thru the property. The gardens were famous for roses. It was sold in 1922 for \$125K to Emil Mosbacher who called it Brook Hills. George Gershwin, who was a frequent visitor, wrote most of Porgy and Bess in a guest cottage tucked away on a corner of the grounds. Mosbacher was the ultimate American success story. He was an immigrant from



the elder and his other son Emil Jr was Chief of Protocol for Richard Nixon, 2 time America's Cup winning yachtsman and founder of Operation Sail.

**400 Rosedale** This Colonial Revival house was built prior to 1920. John J Thompson emigrated from Scotland to WP as child and lived initially on a farm owned by Samuel Faile on which buffalo grazed. That farm is now the grounds of NY Hospital. Thompson started out as a builder with his brother, then switched to real estate and development. He owned the Westchester Trim Co which sold lumber. Thompson was a man of strong principles and a teetotaler. In 1891 he reportedly erected a 4 ½ room house in Hartsdale overnight to halt the building of a saloon on the site.

**1131 North** The Griffin family had owned a farm in WP since the early 1800's. In 1879 Howard J Griffin purchased the farm and house. He was the father of Chauncey B Griffin, mayor of WP in 1931 and F Abbott Griffin, the first paid fire chief. The house has been added on to over the years and was renovated in 1923. The center portion of the house is believed to be pre Revolutionary War. You can see the exposed portion of the fireplace on the exterior of the building in its center section. The house is now the White House Thrift Shop of the Saint Gregory Armenian Church because the house was originally white.

Several outbuildings remain on the property. The dates of these outbuildings are not known. Up the hill on your left, is a small white house which appears to be a saltbox. The saltbox was a popular style of farmhouse in the late 1600's and early 1700s's. It has unequal roof lengths such that the front of the house is 1 ½ to 2 stories high and the back one story. This small white house is reminiscent of the Purdy house of George Washington fame. The other out building which is to the right of this white house and just visible through the trees was obviously a barn. There was also a root cellar across from the main house.

The land across North Street was also part of the Griffin farm. At one time, there was an orchard and a cider mill. In 1925 the property became the Maple Moor Golf Course and the county bought the property in 1927.

There were many large estates on North Street for many years. Up even till the 1920's there were estates on North St up to 80 acres. This area of WP seemed to be more resistant to developers than some of the other areas. Perhaps it was more inaccessible since Bryant Avenue did not exist till almost 1930. Unfortunately, many of these beautiful estates have since been sold, the mansions demolished and the land subdivided with new homes built on the properties. The next house we will see was actually saved from this fate and incorporated into a new development.

**959 North** the center house here was built prior to 1906. The original owner was Charles Smithers. In 1919 the house and 4 acres of land were sold to James A Thomas. Thomas called the house "Homeside". The current style is clearly Tudor although the picture we have does not appear to be Tudor. We believe, however, it is the same house because of the distinctive dormered window with the curved frame. There was a fire in 1926 and the "cottage" was renovated. Perhaps at this time, the Tudor style was created. James Thomas worked for the British American Tobacco Co in Shanghai and was a pioneer in introducing cigarettes to the "Orient". He was well respected in this part of the world and in 1905 was decorated by the Dalai Lama and honored by the Empress of China. After retiring, he moved to WP. He was a philanthropist involved with WPH, YMCA and Community Chest. When the King of Siam visited Westchester in 1931, he arranged a reception which was held at WPHS.

Our next house is well known to many of our members as it currently serves as the Board of Ed of WP  
**5 Homeside Lane** (previously 901 North). This home was built about 1921 by Charles Smithers, a banker. The estate was known as Hillandale and is a Colonial Revival building. The original home had composition flooring which was state of the art at the time and advertised to be "sanitary, fireproof and waterproof". It was also apparently one of the largest indoor plumbing projects of the day. In 1929 the house was sold to Herbert Martin who died shortly thereafter and in 1931 was purchased by Adolph Ochs. Ochs was the editor of the NY Times. In 1950's the house was bought by WP School District for use as a temporary school and administrative building. A waiver from the Common Council was required a waiver in order to complete conversion.

**22 Homeseide** was originally the chauffeurs quarters and accessory garage for the Smithers estate and was built in 1925. In 1950's it was converted to private home when the estate was sold off and the area developed. Similar to the Cushman carriage house, the building is perpendicular to the road.

As we head back to North Street, look to your left to see the back of the Smithers/Ochs estate. It is almost more impressive than from the front.

Our next home dates back to Civil War times and was built by James Gibson. It is an old style colonial farm house which probably dates from the 1860's.

**880 North Street** James Gibson was a Scotsman who immigrated to NYC in 1838. He made his money initially as a baker. (Seems to have been a lucrative business back in the day, remember Mr. Cushman) In 1858 he bought his farm which he called Bonnie View located 2 ½ miles SE of town. Gibson was a successful farmer and real estate investor and lived here for many years. In 1922 the property comprising 82 acres was bought by Howard Croker for \$125K. Howard Croker was the son of Richard Croker of Tammany Hall fame. The sale was lauded as one of the most important real estate deals at the time due to the location of the house. An article in NY Times 1922 stated "Automobile tourists from NYC lingered with interest at this picturesque farm, situated on one of the finest ridges overlooking LI sound". At time of sale, it was stated that the house evoked memories of Civil War days as the house was mostly unchanged. The original main house has since been enlarged.

As we continue down North Street we will be passing **#797 and #791** on the left. Both houses stand adjacent to the Club Pointe development and both fortunately have survived. **#797** was owned by Sidney Ward, a French born stockbroker who was a naturalized citizen. Valley Brook Farm as the estate was known was built prior to 1919. **#791** is a beautiful stone house which dates from 1895.

On your right, as we approach Ridgeway, is the St Nicholas Byzantine Church. The church stands on the grounds of the former Haviland estate and some of the buildings on the grounds may date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beyond Ridgeway on North Street was formerly the JC Penney estate known as "Whitehaven" as well as the Roy Ott estate known as Sunnycrest. The JC Penney home was demolished to make way for the new high school. The Ott house is now the headquarters of the Baptist church. Henry C Lomb, who was a musician, also owned a large house near the Penney estate. His home is now the Staff Development House for the HS. Other estates farther down North Street were demolished to build General Foods although a few houses remain.

Just before we reach Hathaway, you will see on your right at **408 Ridgeway** an example of an old time schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was built in 1847 for residents of the area and members of the Haviland, Horton and Purdy families attended school here. It continued as a schoolhouse until 1933. In 1948 it was donated to the Girls Scouts who used it as a meeting place. It was converted into a private home in 1985. What was the school is now the far right portion of the house.

As we continue down Ridgeway, the property on the left was originally owned by Daniel Safford and is now the Westchester Hills Golf Club. Further down the land was owned by **Robert Kerr**. On the right of course was the Gedney Farm.

This concludes our tour. We hope all of you enjoy this tour as much as we have enjoyed putting it together