

Bike Tour: Wyman Park to Herring Run and Neighborhoods

The Olmsted Brothers firm, successors to Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., left an indelible mark on Baltimore. This included their 1904 study “Report Upon the Development of Public Grounds for Greater Baltimore” (known as the “1904 Report”) which lays out a vision of an expanded and interconnected park system for the City. Parks were not just for recreation or enjoyment of nature, but could be used to protect the City’s drinking water, preserve ecological and cultural areas like the stream valleys, and serve as a framework for guiding new development as the City grew out from its historic core, including future neighborhoods like Original Northwood and Guilford, also laid out by the Olmsted Brothers.

The Friends of Maryland’s Olmsted Parks & Landscapes (FMOPL) Bike Tour: Wyman Park to Herring Run and Neighborhoods traces several of the parks, park connections, and neighborhoods that were planned and designed by the Olmsted Brothers. In addition to highlighting the Olmsted legacy, the tour also visits other historic, cultural, and scenic points of interest that make this area unique – from municipal water systems to public gardens to former sport fields.

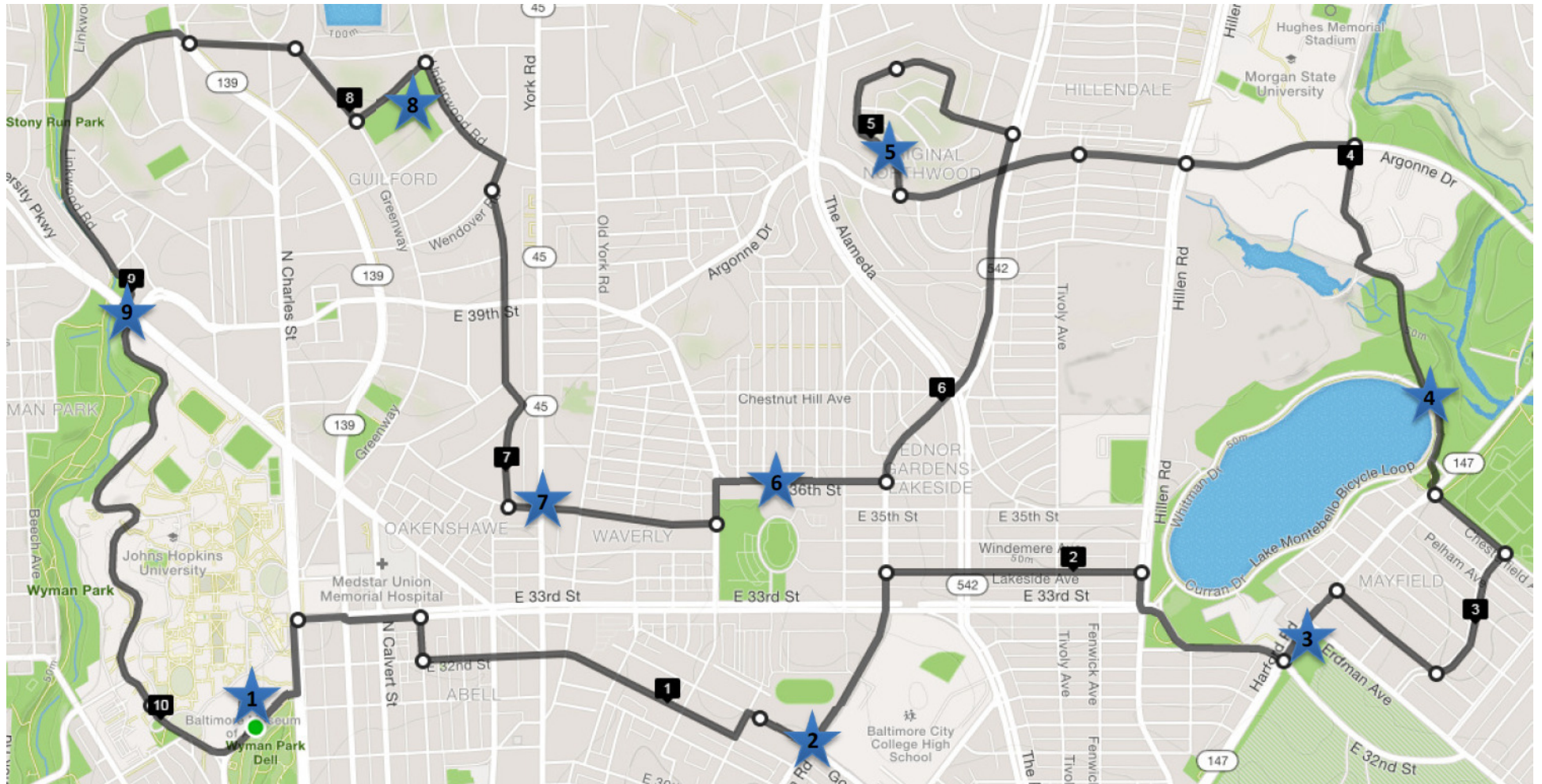
Educating people about the legacy of the Olmsteds as part of the City’s history, introducing people to places they may have never visited, and celebrating the beauty and quirkiness of Baltimore is why FMOPL organizes tours like this one. As an organization we are committed to advancing the Olmsted legacy of accessible public parks, sustainable landscapes, and livable communities—respecting and protecting the accomplishments of the past and seeking relevant solutions for the challenges of today. FMOPL is involved in such current issues as park funding, watershed protection, nature preservation, recreational opportunities, and environmental justice – this bike tour is one way that we help to build a constituency of people around these issues.

We hope that you enjoy this tour. For more information about FMOPL, future talks and tours, and past publications, visit: olmstedmaryland.org.

Thank you!

Mark Cameron, President
Friends of Maryland’s Olmsted Parks & Landscapes

Tour Route



Tour Cue Sheet

<http://www.strava.com/routes/8671168>

1. Baltimore Museum of Art

Content:

Wyman Park/Johns Hopkins Homewood/Baltimore Museum of Art
33rd Street Corridor

Route:

Proceed on Art Museum Drive toward North Charles Street (0.0)
Left onto North Charles Street (0.0)
Right on East 33rd Street (0.2)
Right onto Guilford Avenue (0.4)
Left onto East 32nd Street (0.5)
Continue on Homestead Street (0.7)
Left onto Independence Street (1.1)
Right onto Gorsuch Avenue (1.1)

2. Loch Raven Boulevard at Gorsuch Avenue

Content:

Loch Raven Boulevard

Route:

Left onto Loch Raven Boulevard (1.3)
Right onto Lakeside Avenue (1.6)
Right onto Hillen Road (2.1)
Left onto East 33rd Street (2.1)
Left onto East 32nd Street (2.3)

3. Harford Road and East 32nd Street

Content:

Mothers' Garden
Harford Road and Norman Avenue

Route:

Proceed on Harford Road toward Erdman Avenue
Right onto Mayfield Avenue (2.6)
Left onto Norman Avenue (2.8)
Left onto Chesterfield Avenue (3.1)
Cross Harford Road (3.3)

4. Lake Montebello

Content:

Hall Springs in Herring Run Park
Lake Montebello/Montebello Filtration Plant

Route:

Proceed on Lake Montebello Drive toward Hillen Road (3.3)
Right onto McCallum Drive (3.8)
Left onto Argonne Drive (4.0)
Right onto Westview Road (4.8)

5. Westview Road North of Argonne Drive

Content:

Original Northwood

Route:

Proceed on Northview Road (5.1)

Proceed on Eastwood Road (5.2)

Left onto Havenwood Road (5.3)

Right onto Loch Rave Boulevard (5.4)

Right onto East 36th Street (6.1)

6. East 36th Street between Ednor Road and Ellerslie Avenue

Content:

Venable Park/Memorial Stadium/Stadium Place

Route:

Proceed on East 36th Street (6.1)

Left onto Ellerslie Avenue (6.4)

Right onto East 35th Street (6.5)

Cross Greenmount Avenue (6.8)

7. West of Greenmount Avenue on Southway

Content:

Greenmount Avenue

Route:

Proceed on Southway (6.8)

Right onto Newland Road (6.9)

Left onto Juniper Road (7.1)

Slight right onto Wendover Road (7.5)

Left onto Underwood Road (7.5)

Left onto Stratford Road (7.8)

8. Greenway at Stratford Road

Content:

Guilford Neighborhood/Sherwood Garden

Route:

Right onto Greenway Note: Counter flow (7.9)

Right onto Saint Paul Street (8.3)

Immediate left onto Overhill Road (8.3)

Slight left onto Linkwood Road (8.6)

9. University Parkway at Linkwood Road

Content:

San Martin Drive

Route:

Proceed on San Martin Drive (9.0)

Left onto Art Museum Drive (10.1)

Baltimore Museum of Art is on your left

Wyman Park/Johns Hopkins Homewood/Baltimore Museum of Art

The land that makes up the 140-acre Johns Hopkins Homewood campus includes the former Homewood estate of Charles Carroll, Jr. and the Wyman Villa estate of William Wyman. In 1902, the estate of William Wyman bequeathed the remainder of Wyman Villa to Baltimore City as Wyman Park. Designed and built as a naturalized public park space between 1911 and 1914, Wyman Park Dell is Baltimore's best remaining example of a fully-realized park design by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. Wyman Park Dell serves as the gateway from the Charles Street boulevard to the more secluded Wyman Park, which extends along the Stony Run stream from University Parkway to the Jones Falls and Druid Hill Park. Built over Sumwalt Run, a tributary of the Stony Run, Wyman Park Dell exemplifies Olmsted principles of naturalistic park design, characterized by steep slopes with original oaks and American beech, a spacious lower meadow bounded by dry stone walls and sweeping pathways.

The Olmsted firm also planned the new park-like Johns Hopkins University Homewood Campus. In the 1920s, the Olmsted Firm recommended building the Baltimore Museum of Art to overlook the Wyman Park Dell for which the University contributed seven acres of its adjoining campus. In 1961, the University bought 30 acres of Wyman Park to expand the campus along the Stony Run. In 2004, the Jones Falls Trail to Falls Road was completed.

Since 1983, the Friends of Wyman Park Dell has served as steward for this green space, forging partnerships with Johns Hopkins University, the Baltimore Museum of Art, non-profit and fraternal organizations to support volunteer activities and revitalization efforts.



Events in the Dell

The Friends of Wyman Park Dell host a number of annual events in the Dell, including: the Winter Solstice Celebration, the Charles Village Festival, June Movies Series, and Big Draw in October. To see a calendar of upcoming special events and volunteer opportunities, go to: wymanparkdell.org

A 1930s view of Wyman Park looking northwest to the BMA and Hopkins campus.

33rd Street Corridor

33rd Street and the Alameda are part of Olmsted's city-wide vision for a network of parkways connecting the large anchor parks of Baltimore. The parkways were meant to serve as linear parks. The 1904 Report recommended a 250-foot-wide right-of-way designed in long, easy curves in the vicinity of what is now 33rd Street. According to the report, the character of the road would "maintain a continuity of park feeling" connecting Wyman Park to Clifton Park, Lake Montebello, and Herring Run.

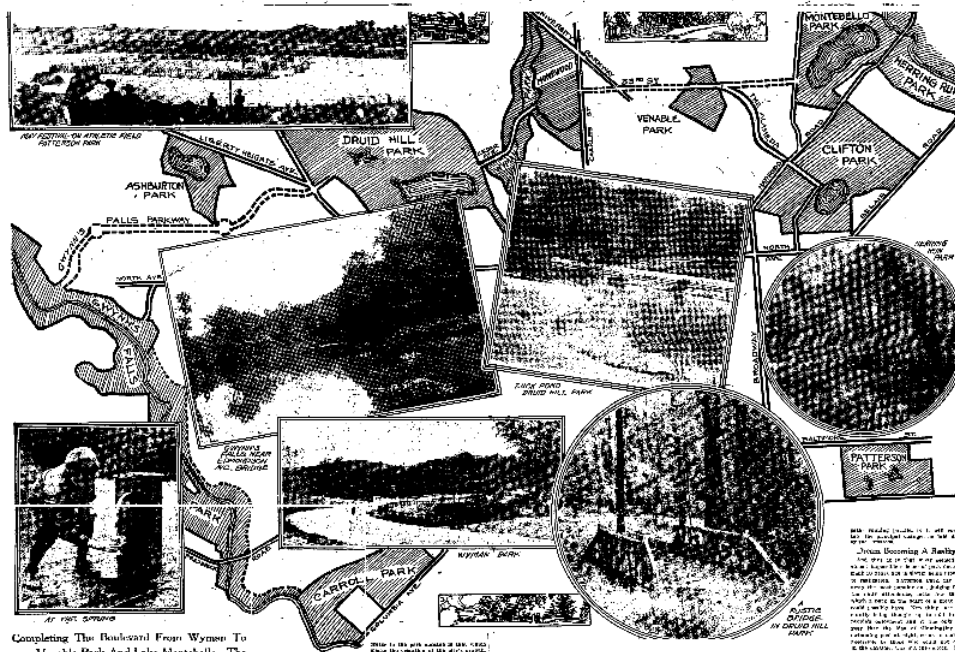
By the time the parkway was constructed just a few years later, land prices in this area had increased immensely and Baltimore City could no longer afford to execute Olmsted Brothers' grand vision. Instead, the City constructed what you see today: a straight 120-foot-wide boulevard with a wide tree-lined median. Still, the parkway's wide median and canopy of shade trees serves as a connection between the large anchor parks in northeast Baltimore.

In 2015, 33rd Street, Gwynns Falls Parkway, and a portion of The Alameda were designated as a Baltimore City Landmark, which honors these significant historic landscapes while also affording some oversight for changes in the future.

The Olmsted Brothers: Planning for pedestrians and bicycles

The Olmsted Brothers firm designed Baltimore's parkways to have lanes for driving, bicycling, and walking, each separated by tree-lined medians. While the Olmsted's multi-modal design wasn't implemented, it is a model that was far ahead of its time and is seeing renewed interest today.

Linking Our Great Park System By Boulevards



An article from *The Sun* on July 26, 1914 touting the Olmsted parkways plan.

Loch Raven Boulevard

In 1927, the mayor of Baltimore, Howard Jackson, introduced an ordinance to create a 120-foot-wide boulevard that would run from 33rd Street and The Alameda to the Loch Raven Reservoir in Baltimore County (which still provides drinking water to Baltimore City and surrounding counties to this day). This boulevard features a wide planted median similar to the Olmsted-designed 33rd Street and The Alameda. The construction of the road, and the water and sewer infrastructure beneath it, helped jump-start suburban development in this northeastern portion of the City. While the boulevard continues into Baltimore County, it never made it all the way to the reservoir that lends it its name.

The portion of Loch Raven Boulevard below The Alameda was an existing road originally named Montebello Road, because it originally led to Samuel Smith's estate named "Montebello" in the vicinity of 33rd and Loch Raven.

Today at this intersection are the buildings of two long-standing academic institutions: Baltimore City College and Eastern High School. Baltimore City College was established in 1839 and is the third-oldest public high school in the country. The school moved to its Collegiate Gothic Revival-style "Castle on the Hill" on 33rd in 1928, where it continues to serve students. In 1938, Eastern High School, originally established in 1829 as an all-female public high school, moved opposite Loch Raven Boulevard from the then all-male Baltimore City College. Today, the former Eastern High School is occupied by Johns Hopkin University.

Seeing double?

During the Great Depression, federal funds supported the construction of Eastern High School. The tight deadline to build the school (and create jobs as part of the New Deal) left no time for design, so the architects replicated the 1928 plans used to build its "sister school," Western High School on Gwynns Falls Parkway –today's as Frederick Douglass High School.



The east span of the bridge over Chinquapin Run under construction in 1933.

Mothers' Garden

Mothers' Garden is located at the northwest corner of Clifton Park. It was created by William Norris, the president of the Park Board, in memory of his own mother and to honor Baltimore-area mothers. Although there are incomplete accounts, the park may have originally been conceived to honor the mothers who had lost sons in The Great War.

The five-acre Garden consists of a rose-covered pergola, terraced flower beds, shaded walkways, benches, and a Japanese-inspired footbridge spanning a lily pond. This haven for mothers was presented to Mayor Jackson in 1926 at a ceremony that attracted over 6,000 attendees.

The Garden was neglected for many years, but in the early 1980s, when community activists and members of the Mayfield Improvement Association spearheaded a restoration of the site through a combination of public and private efforts. The Friends of Mothers' Garden Association (visit: fomg.org) was formed in 2011 and continues to restore and maintain this urban oasis.

Clifton Park: The park that almost never was

Clifton Park, including Mothers' Garden, was the country estate of Johns Hopkins and he intended it to be the site of the University that bears his name. However, it was deemed too far from the City's core, so the University's board sold it to the City for use as a park and municipal golf course.



An early historic photo of the footbridge at Mothers' Garden.

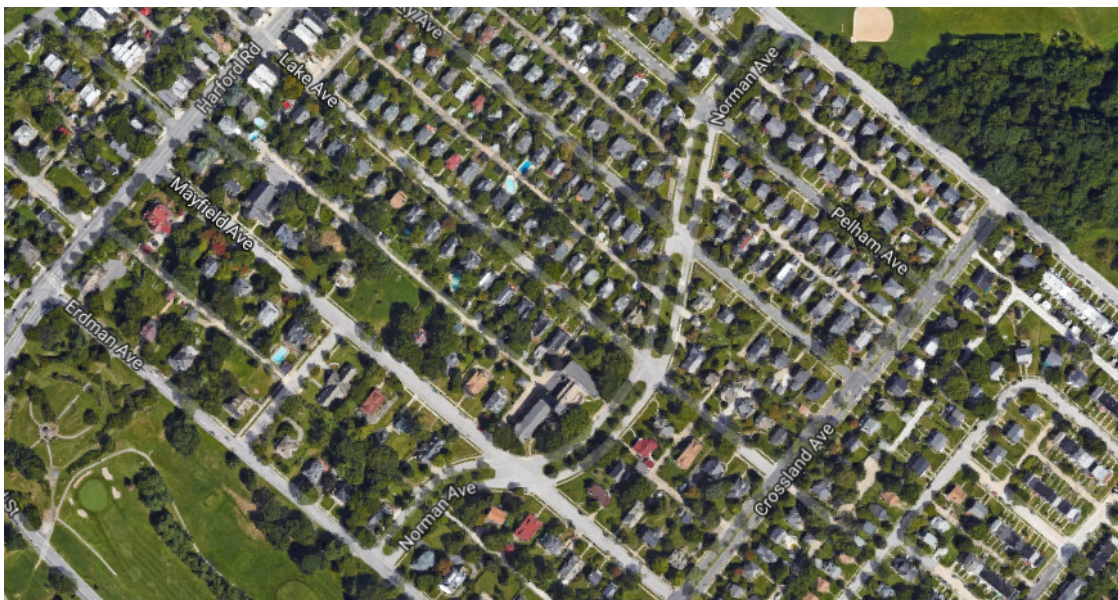
Harford Road and Norman Avenue

Although Mayfield was not fully developed nor was the Herring Run a public park at the time of the 1904 Report, the Olmsted Brothers recognized the value of the area as a natural boundary in the landscape that could serve as a threshold between the more developed urban areas to the south (with established Clifton Park nearby) and more rural, undeveloped lands to the north. Noting the “picturesqueness” of the Herring Run Valley as the “stream flows with many broken rapids, and abrupt outcropping ledges and fine growth of forest trees” near Montebello and Harford Road, the 1904 Report called for the acquisition of the Herring Run Valley as a public park not “merely as a piece of beautiful tract” but as part of a connection to Montebello Park and Clifton Park that would become a “very valuable radial parkway,” with Harford Road providing the radial connection between the hub of downtown Baltimore and the undeveloped outer ring of the City.

The Mayfield Neighborhood

Mayfield was developed as a residential subdivision in the early 1900s to meet the City’s growing need for housing. Improvements to Harford Road made the new development accessible to residents. The neighborhood sits on land originally part of the farm of Baltimore Mayor Sam Smith (1835-1838).

In contrast to the radial Harford Road is Norman Avenue, a meandering parkway located between Chesterfield Avenue on the north and Erdman Drive on the south in the Mayfield neighborhood of northeast Baltimore. Norman Avenue is notably curvilinear, standing out from the squared-off street grid of the rest of the neighborhood and providing a meandering experience to connect Herring Run to the north and Clifton Park south. While not designed by the Olmsted Brothers, the physical characteristics of the street mirror those of other “Olmsted Parkways,” including the tree-lined median on a broad boulevard as found in other handsome residential neighborhoods of Baltimore.



A contemporary aerial view of Norman Avenue and Harford Road in Mayfield.

Hall Springs in Herring Run Park

The 1904 Report proposed that the City purchase major stream valleys “before development overran and despoiled them.” One of the parks created was Herring Run Park.

Of course, the stream valleys drew settlers for many generations before the Olmsted Brothers showed interest in the area. Archaeological investigations by the Herring Run Archaeology Project have uncovered evidence that this river valley has served people in Northeast Baltimore for hundreds - likely thousands - of years.

Want to dig history in Herring Run Park?

Contact the Herring Run Archaeology Project to participate in an annual excavation in the spring or to work with artifacts and learn about the buried history of Herring Run Park year round at: herringrunarchaeology.org.

Since 2014, excavations have uncovered temporary Native American encampments, homes both grand and humble from the 17th and 18th centuries, stone mills, and the remains of an early 19th-century community known as the Hall Springs which was centered around a spring that provided clean fresh drinking water to its residents. The spring is all that is left today. A hotel, known as Herring Run Tavern and the Hall Springs Hotel, was constructed sometime in the early 1800s as a bucolic country retreat next to the spring and the river and was a destination for city-dwellers who would take horse-drawn omni-buses, trolleys, and later, the City streetcar line for a rural respite. A small community of wood-frame houses and a small chapel of the Eutaw Methodist Church sprung up around the hotel near the riverbank. However, by the early 20th century, the hotel was in disrepair and was demolished after the area was purchased for parkland. The ruins of the chapel are in the woods nearby.



Map of the Halls Spring in 1872.

Lake Montebello/Montebello Filtration Plant

Lake Montebello is actually a reservoir, part of the original Gunpowder Falls water supply system for Baltimore completed in 1881. It is connected to the Loch Raven Reservoir by a seven-mile-long tunnel. The gatehouse facing the lake dates from the reservoir's Victorian era. The large brick building behind the gatehouse is the Montebello Filtration Plant, the City's first water filtration plant. Built in 1915, Baltimore's mayor at that time, James H. Preston, called it "the most important event that has taken place in my time." A second filtration plant (on the west side of Hillen Road) was built in 1928 to meet the needs of the growing City. Together, the two filtration plants can treat up to 240 million gallons of water per day from Loch Raven Reservoir or the Susquehanna River.

Where did Montebello get its name?

Montebello was the estate of Gen. Samuel Smith (1745-1839), politician, businessman, a Maryland hero in two wars. A Francophile, General Smith named the estate to commemorate Napoleon's victory at the Battle of Montebello in 1800.

In the 1904 Report, Montebello Park and Clifton Park together fulfilled the role of northeast Baltimore's large rural park.



Montebello Filtration Plant during construction, early, and current operations.

Original Northwood

Once part of the wooded estates of John W. Garrett, Enoch Pratt, and Arunah S. Abell, Original Northwood was developed by Olmsted Brothers-affiliate The Roland Park Company in the 1930s. The neighborhood adheres to Olmstedian design principles of following the contours of the land, retaining mature trees, and situating each house according to the characteristics of the lot. The layout includes a curvilinear roadway network with contiguous front lawns interrupted only by pedestrian walkways and the many ornamental specimen trees.

Can you spot the Northwood Observatory?

A house on Westview Road is equipped with a rooftop observatory built in 1937 by Joseph L. Woods, a toy manufacturer and amateur astronomer. His work was highly respected, and the spot became a regular meeting place for members of the Maryland Academy of Science. In 1995, then-owner Russell Moran, who bought the house from Woods in 1960 and owned it for 35 years, commented to *The Sun* that "Woods always claimed you can't see stars without drinking a couple of beers."

Original Northwood represents the largest collection of houses by Roland Park Company architect John A. Ahlers. It is among the early wholistically-planned communities in the nation and notable for its "mixed income" approach. The 369 houses that make up this planned community include a mix of single-family detached homes, duplexes and rowhouses built in the English Colonial and English Tudor styles. The neighborhood's design has been integral to its continued success, with the mix of housing types supporting a diverse population and the winding neighborhood streets discouraging excessive vehicular traffic. Like other Roland Park Company developments, Original Northwood has architectural covenants regulating exterior alterations. The neighborhood was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.



A road being staked out during the development of Original Northwood.

Venable Park/Memorial Stadium/Stadium Place

The site bounded by 33rd Street, Ednor Road, 36th Street, and Ellerslie Avenue has had many iterations. In 1922, the City built the multi-purpose Municipal Stadium in what was then Venable Park. In the summer of 1944, the stadium became home to the minor league Baltimore Orioles when their previous stadium "Oriole Park" at Greenmount Avenue and 29th Street was destroyed in a fire.

Spurred by the Orioles' success, and hoping to attract a professional football team, the City rebuilt the stadium in 1950, renaming it Memorial Stadium in honor of the City's fallen from World War II. Construction began in 1949 and was completed in stages, slowly obliterating the old Municipal Stadium as the Orioles continued to play on a makeshift baseball diamond. Memorial Stadium was completed in 1954 at a cost of \$6.5 million and consisted of a single, horseshoe-shaped deck seating 31,000. A roofless upper deck was added in 1953 to accommodate the relocation of the St. Louis Browns to Baltimore as a new major league version of the Orioles.

With the departure of the Colts football team in 1984 and the development of Oriole Park at Camden Yards in 1992, Memorial Stadium was vacated and then demolished in 2001. It has since been redeveloped as Stadium Place, which includes mixed-income senior housing, a YMCA, and a new recreational field with its home plate in the same exact location as it was at Memorial Stadium.

The Baltimore Colts

In 1953, the Dallas Texans professional football franchise relocated to Baltimore and joined the Orioles at Municipal Stadium while construction was still underway, keeping the Texans "Colts" nickname and team colors. The Colts famously relocated to Indianapolis in the middle of the night on March 29, 1984 under threat of eminent domain by the City of Baltimore.



An aerial view of Memorial Stadium in its heyday.

Greenmount Avenue

Greenmount Avenue is part of MD Route 45, which follows the path of an 18th-century wagon road that connected the town of York to the port of Baltimore. The wagon road evolved into a 19th-century turnpike and was one of the original state roads marked for improvement by the Maryland State Roads Commission in 1909.

On the west side of Greenmount Avenue is the Guilford neighborhood, developed by The Roland Park Company in 1911. Although Guilford is best known for its stately detached homes, the eastern portion of the neighborhood features more modest duplexes and rowhouses, supporting a mixed-income community. Subsequent changes to the traffic patterns have eliminated vehicular access into Guilford from Greenmount Avenue, altering the intended transition between the residential neighborhood and the commercial corridor.

On the east side of Greenmount Avenue is Waverly, a neighborhood that was previously a tiny village known as Huntingdon. As wealthy residents began building summer cottages there in the late 19th century, a firehouse, town hall and post office were established. To avoid confusion with other places using the Huntingdon name, this postal village was named for Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Waverly*.

Why the name change?

The northern portion of MD Route 45 within Baltimore city is known as York Road, while the southern portion is known as Greenmount Avenue. The name change from Greenmount Avenue to York Road occurs at 43rd Street, where the highway exited the city limits of Baltimore as they existed from 1888 to 1917. In 1918, the City completed its final annexation to its present northern boundary.



The Waverly Theater changes with the times (earlier, left, Maryland Historical Society; later, right).

Guilford Neighborhood/Sherwood Garden

The Guilford estate was named by General McDonald to commemorate the battle of Guilford Court House, N. C. where he was wounded during the Revolutionary War. His son, William, inherited the estate in 1850 and built the old Guilford Mansion. William McDonald was imprisoned at Fort McHenry during the Civil War for allowing southern sympathizers to signal messages to the Confederate troops in Anne Arundel County from the tower of the mansion. The property was later purchased by Arunah S. Abell, founder of *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper, and it remained in the Abell family for 35 years, until it was sold to the Guilford Park Company in 1907. The Guilford Mansion was demolished in 1914.

The property was developed in partnership with the Roland Park Company in the early 1900s. Following the pattern of development in Roland Park, Guilford's design featured curvilinear streets and respect for existing topography to create an exclusive neighborhood.

The Guilford plan provided for three parks "for general use of the residents," the best known of which is Sherwood Gardens located on Stratford Road between Greenway and Underwood Road. Formerly known as Stratford Green, the gardens were initially planned as a community park for the enjoyment of the residents of Guilford. The Guilford Association purchased lots from the Sherwood estate and today maintains the gardens as a private park which the public is invited to enjoy free of charge. More information regarding visit the gardens and special events is available at: guilfordassociation.org.

That's a lot of tulips!

Sherwood Gardens as we know it today was created in the 1920s by Guilford resident John W. Sherwood, who began planting tulips that he imported from the Netherlands as a hobby. The gardens are now the most famous tulip garden in North America, covering Stratford Green and several adjacent lots and featuring 80,000 tulips annually best viewed at the end of April and beginning of May.



Sherwood Gardens with the tulips in bloom.

San Martin Drive

San Martin Drive is a 0.9 mile tree-lined scenic roadway that is accessible from East University Parkway to the north and Wyman Park Drive and pedestrian walkways in Wyman Park to the south. San Martin Drive winds around the west side of Johns Hopkins University's Homewood campus, with Wyman Park and Stony Run to the west. Although University buildings are on both sides of the road (including the headquarters for the Space Telescope Science Institute), the roadway itself is owned by the City of Baltimore.

San Martin Drive was part of Olmsted brothers' Wyman Park plan in the 1904 Report, making Wyman Park one of Baltimore's first parks to be designed by the Olmsted firm. They envisioned a section of the park as a natural stream valley reservation, with informal pathways blending with the landscape. San Martin Drive was planned to create a better connection to, and transition between, the natural elements of the park and the City.

Over the decades, the expansion of the University's campus made San Martin Drive less pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly. In response, the University spearheaded the \$15 million San Martin Drive Pedestrian Improvement project to enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity on San Martin Drive from University Parkway to Wyman Park Drive and Remington Avenue. The plan, which included a 36-foot-tall, 8-foot-wide pedestrian bridge, was completed in May 2017.

Before It Was A Park...

Before the Olmsted Brothers envisioned the preservation of the natural stream valley, Stony Run was the site of the Swan Lake Narrow Gauge Railroad in the 1870s (later the Baltimore and Lehigh, and then the Maryland and Pennsylvania railroads). A popular tavern known as Biddy Rice's Saloon operated along the tracks.



Recent pedestrian improvements on San Martin Drive.