

# MONTGOMERY MODERN BIKE TOUR



Docomomo Tour Day

Saturday • October 11, 2014



Presented by Montgomery County Planning Department  
Historic Preservation office



in partnership with AIA Potomac Valley



and

**DOCOMOMO-DC**

Special thanks to our sponsors:

North Chevy Chase Christian Church

Grateful appreciation to all our hosts for making this event possible.

Montgomery Modern is an initiative of the Montgomery County Planning Department Historic Preservation office



Docomomo is a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of modern movement resources.

# INTRODUCTION

The modern architecture of postwar Montgomery County symbolizes the County's hopes and dreams for new beginnings and a bright future.



*Hammond Hill, Architectural Forum, June 1950*

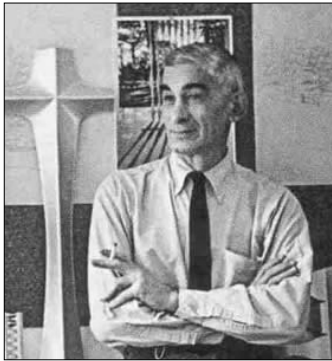
Following World War II, Montgomery County went through a time of tremendous change. Our population exploded from about 90,000 (1946) to some 580,000 (1974). Change came in the pace of life, as cars and new highways enabled ever increasing speeds, and in the scale of life, as space travel made the universe seem to be the limit.

Great change was reflected in a new architecture. The modern movement intentionally avoided the traditional design of revival styles—Georgian, Federal, Greek—that had been popular since the nation's early settlement. Rather than harkening to the past, modern design looked toward the future.

Modernist architects designed houses that reflected a new era. Two main schools of modern design thinking emerged. One, which became known as International Style, favored a rational, geometric design inspired by man-made material. Influential proponents of the International Style were Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer of the Bauhaus; Ludwig Mies van der Rohe—who turned the I-beam into an elegant design statement; and Le Corbusier, whose elevating pilotis became a symbol of the times. The other key force was the Organic Modernism of Frank Lloyd Wright, whose designs drew inspiration from nature and the innate character of the

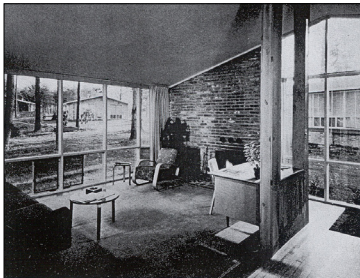
site. Organic Modernism, which includes works of Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, and Pietro Belluschi, incorporates native materials of stone and wood, as well as references to traditional or regional construction elements.

In Montgomery County, proponents of modern design catered to conservative tastes by tailoring modern design for a middle class market in suburban subdivisions. Early local practitioners were Berla and Abel, best known for apartment buildings, and Charles M. Goodman, known for his custom houses and residential subdivisions. Clients most receptive to modern design tended to be well-educated, and often had an artistic bent.



Charles M. Goodman (1906-1992)  
Robert M. Lautman photographer,  
in *Moderism*, Vol 1 (Winter 1998)

Starting in 1948 with Hollin Hills, architect Charles M. Goodman designed modest modern houses set into a natural landscape. Modern design comes from an exposed skeleton frame hung with panels of glass and wood. The rectilinear design was softened by the natural setting, made accessible by patios and walkways.



Hammond Wood, in *Progressive Architecture*,  
May 1952

The Washington metropolitan area was a formative arena in the promotion of builder-architect collaboration in tract housing. Award-winning architects added popular appeal to tract housing. Buyers who might not be able to afford custom designed houses could still enjoy a sense of prestige in owning a house designed by a respected architect.

Goodman worked with Robert Davenport for Hollin Hills in Virginia and Hollinridge in Montgomery County. For Hammond Wood and Hammond Hill, included on this tour, he collaborated with builders Paul Burman and his cousin Paul Hammond.

Community buildings were essential to suburban development, especially for newcomers who were putting down fresh roots. For residents of new suburbs, the church became essential to community life. By the early 1950s, the County was engaged in a great boom in church building. Partners William Frederick Vosbeck, Jr. and George Truman Ward, known for their church design, recall having little family life, as they were attending a church committee meeting nearly every day of the week.

John S. Samperton was a leading designer of modernist community buildings, specializing in churches and recreation buildings. In addition to buildings on this tour, he designed Roland Park's First Christian Church (1967) and Washington Grove United Methodist Church (1955-58) as well as numerous clubhouses and poolhouses. In his later work, Samperton is known for his buildings at Gallaudet and Catholic Universities.



John S. Samperton in 2008.  
Peerless Rockville photo

Underappreciated and threatened with redevelopment, mid-century buildings are fragile resources as they are being demolished or renovated beyond recognition. Too often, buildings from this era have been considered outdated and obsolete, rather than recognized for their historic significance and architectural distinction. As awareness of mid-century modernism grows, it is our hope that more owners and residents will appreciate the value of these resources to understanding our past. This bike tour includes examples that have been maintained and adapted to meet today's needs.



# 1 Newport Mill Middle School

11311 Newport Mill Road (1957-1958)

Justement, Elam & Darby, architects



Newport Junior High School (now Middle School) won a design award from the Washington Board of Trade. The firm Justement, Elam & Darby designed a campus-type facility featuring a green panelized steel-frame gymnasium that is a focal point for the main entrance, as well as functioning as a sound buffer from local traffic. Window walls bring natural light to the interior. In back, the low classroom wings were angled to maximize light and views to the surrounding landscape. Retaining many of its original features, the school has a high level of architectural integrity for a public school building.



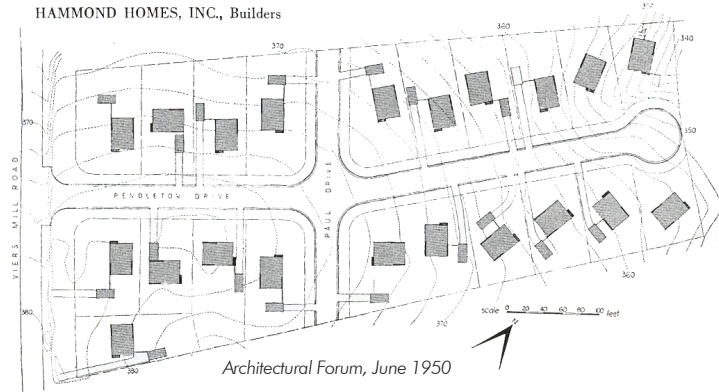
Architect's rendering, *Washington Post*, May 18, 1957

# 2 Hammond Hill

Pendleton Drive, north of Veirs Mill Road

(1949-1950) Paul I. Burman & Paul Hammond, developers; Charles M. Goodman Associates, architect

CHARLES M. GOODMAN, Architect  
HAMMOND HOMES, INC., Builders



3306 Pendleton Drive (1950), Top: street view; Bottom: rear addition. *Michael Cook, architect. Photos: Michael Cook*

Hammond Hill is the earliest Charles M. Goodman community in Montgomery County, designed soon after Goodman started on Hollin Hills of Virginia. The low slung slab-on-grade structures have fir siding, accented by pylon chimneys and accent walls of brick salvaged from the recently demolished Baltimore Brewery. Hammond Hill

houses first went on the market in March 1950 for \$10,750—and all 20 houses sold within one week. Hammond Hill received a 1951 design excellence award by Washington Board of Trade, in a contest juried by Louis Skidmore, John Wellborn Root, and Pietro Belluschi, when he was Dean of MIT's School of Architecture and Planning.

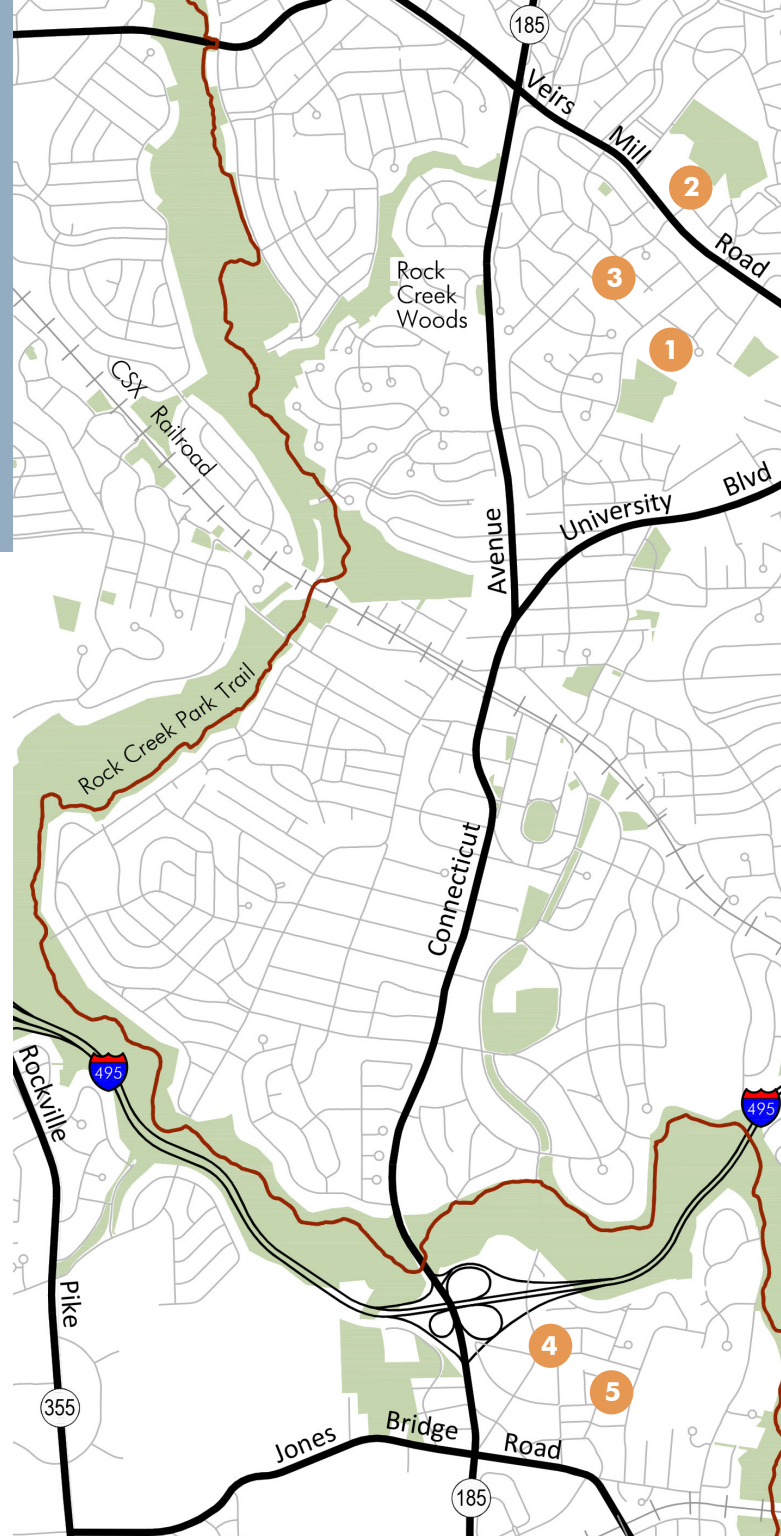
# TOUR MAP

Participants will meet in front of Newport Mill Middle School. Lunch will be served at the North Chevy Chase Christian Church.

- 1 Newport Mill Middle School**  
11311 Newport Mill Road
- 2 Hammond Hill**  
3306 Pendleton Drive
- 3 Hammond Wood**  
3412 Highview Court  
11528 Highview Avenue

Pass through Rock Creek Woods en route to Rock Creek Park trail

- 4 North Chevy Chase Christian Church**  
8814 Kensington Parkway
- 5 North Chevy Chase Pool Bathhouse**  
8827 Brierly Road

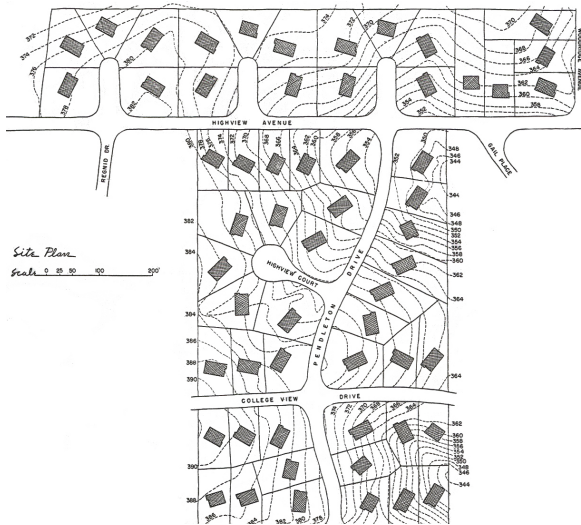




### 3 Hammond Wood

Pendleton Drive and Highview Avenue Vicinity (1949-1951) Paul I Burman & Paul Hammond, developers; Charles M. Goodman Associates, architect  
*Listed on the National Register of Historic Places*

After Hammond Hill quickly sold out, Burman and Hammond lost no time expanding their development by acquiring 15 acres of heavily wooded, rolling land to the south. The site plan called for cul-de-sacs which Goodman knew appealed to young families.

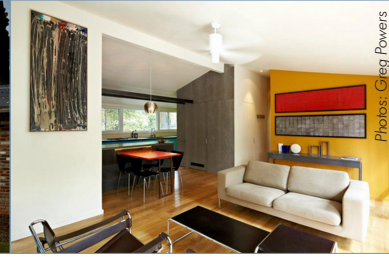


*Progressive Architecture, May 1952*

Buildings were skewed on their sites to maximize views of nature and minimize views of neighboring houses, and banked into hillsides to preserve the natural landscape. This approach of fitting modern design into a natural setting has been dubbed Situated Modernism. Landscape architect Lou Bernard Voight was available for hire to purchasers who wanted custom landscape plans. His plans included native rhododendrons and arborvitae. The one-story houses in Hammond Wood were not big, and, according to a construction supervisor, when a potential buyer asked Mr. Goodman, "Where does somebody put a baby grand in this house," Mr. Goodman simply replied: "People with baby grands don't buy this house." Goodman would always be considered a brilliant – but uncompromising – designer.



3412 Highview Court (1951)



*Photos: Greg Powers*

Janet Bloomberg of Kube Architecture opened up the interior by removing interior walls and updated it with color blocked cabinets and refinished walls. The house was featured in Dwell magazine September 2013.



11528 Highview Court (1951)



*Hammond Wood House, in Progressive Architecture, May 1952*

Hammond Wood included two-level houses with the living rooms and some bedrooms on the upper story. Some models were sold with an unfinished basement, affording the homeowner significant cost savings and future expandability. Plumbing was roughed in for a future bath and space provided for an additional bedroom, recreation room and laundry/utility room in the ground story.

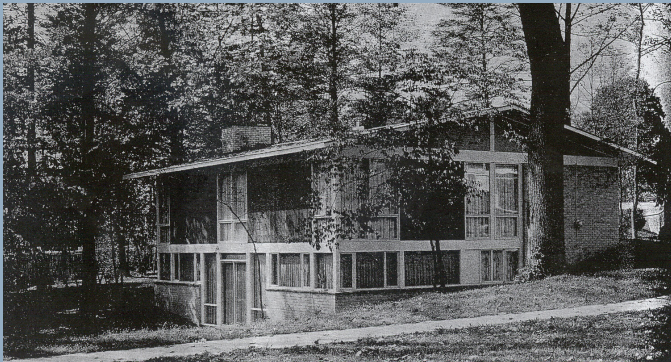
# NEARBY

Rock Creek Woods, Spruell Drive vicinity (1958-1961)  
Herschel & Marvin Blumberg, developers; Charles M.  
Goodman Associates, architect

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places



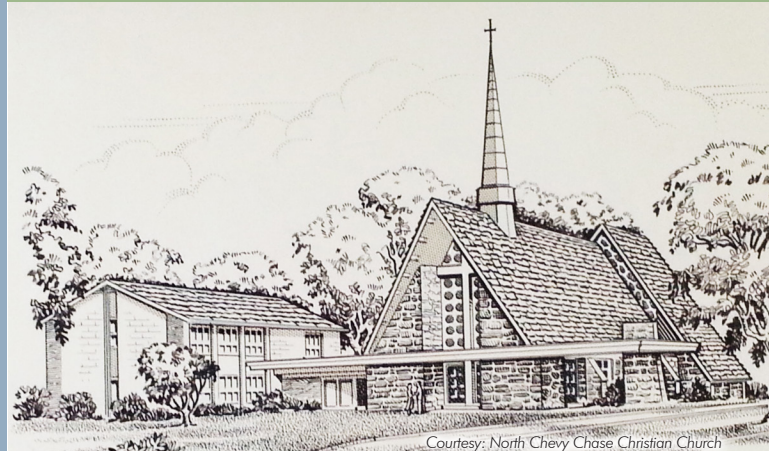
Larger Rock Creek Woods houses resulted from the Blumbergs' desire to cater to a higher-income market and provide larger kitchens. Houses have white wood frames with colored panel infill. In 1959, Rock Creek Woods received the Suburban Maryland Builders Association award for "best in siting, variety and excellence of design, preservation of natural land features, construction workmanship, and value to the purchaser."



Rock Creek Woods, in *House & Home*,  
November 1959, Robert Lautman photo

## 4 North Chevy Chase Christian Church

8814 Kensington Parkway (1959)  
John S. Samperton, architect



Courtesy: North Chevy Chase Christian Church

North Chevy Chase Christian Church uses natural materials including cedar shake roof shingles and native Stonehurst stone. The interior features flagstone entry and teakwood pews. A movable mosaic, *The Garden of Gethsemane*, can be raised to reveal a hidden baptistery. Founded in 1916, the congregation moved to this site from its original location on Park Road, Columbia Heights. Architect John S. Samperton designed this church complex to be built in stages. The sanctuary was built first—dedicated in 1959—followed by the education wing and offices, about a decade later. The A-frame was a popular building form for Christian churches in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The triangular form bears reference to the Trinity, and steep roof reaches toward the heavens. One of the earliest A-Frame church in the region was Pietro Belluschi's acclaimed *Church of the Redeemer* (1954), in Baltimore. A successful architect, Samperton expanded his Bethesda business in 1961 by opening a second office in Washington, DC. He designed *First Christian Church*, Roland Park, and later formed the partnership *Chatelain, Samperton and Nolan*.



Photo: Scott Wilets July 2014



## 5 North Chevy Chase Pool Bathhouse

8827 Briery Road (1959) John S. Samperton, architect



In addition to his modernist churches, John S. Samperton was known for his recreation buildings. His bathhouse for the North Chevy Chase Pool Association is modest in scale, but packs a high level of attention to detail. Shaped vergeboard give a soaring quality to a translucent roof that brings natural light into the interior. Louvered vents and floor level wall openings provide critical ventilation needed for a pool bathhouse. Among Samperton's other



recreation buildings, are clubhouses for Manor, Indian Spring, and Edgemoor Country Clubs, from 1954-1957, and the Little Falls Pool Bathhouse (1956). The North Chevy Chase Pool Bathhouse is his last known extant recreation building.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[montgomeryplanning.org/historic/montgomery\\_modern](http://montgomeryplanning.org/historic/montgomery_modern)

Thomas Jester. *Twentieth-Century Building Materials*. Washington DC, National Park Service, 1995.

Elizabeth Jo Lampl. "Subdivisions and Architecture Planned and Designed by Charles M. Goodman Associates in Montgomery County, Maryland." National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, M-NCPPC, 2004.

Richard Longstreth (Ed), *Housing Washington*, Chicago, IL. Center for American Places, 2010

Chad Randl, *A-frame*, New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009.

Wolf Von Eckardt. *Mid-Century Architecture in America: Honor Awards of the American Institute of Architects*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961.

The Washington Post Archives.



# MONTGOMERY MODERN BIKE TOUR

DOCOMOMO TOUR DAY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2014



Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

 **AIA** Potomac Valley  
A Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

*Montgomery*  
**MODERN**