



Auchentoroly Terrace



Auchentoroly Terrace by Foot

A Historic Neighborhood & A Changing Druid Hill Park

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Auchentoroly & Druid Hill Park

Built between 1876 and the 1920s, Auchentoroly Terrace represents an impressive collection of Victorian-era architecture. Nine rows of housing, two former mansions, and one synagogue frame the western edge of Druid Hill Park. The buildings eloquently contrast with and honor the park's romantically-inspired, natural landscape. Generations of hardworking, caring, and creative residents have made political, educational, and artistic history along the grand street.

When first settled in the 1600s, the area that would one day become Baltimore was inhabited by Susquehannock Native Americans. In 1643 King James granted Cecil Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, the Chesapeake land and established the Charter of Maryland. In 1688 Cecil's son Charles Calvert, third Lord Baltimore, assigned the land that would eventually become Druid Hill. Over time the land was subdivided and given various imaginative names, such as "Hab Nab a Venture", "the Level", "Hap Hazzard", "Happy be Lucky", and "Come by Chance".

In 1741 George Buchanan purchased various parcels of adjoining land including Hab Nab and the Level. Buchanan named it Auchentorlie after his family home in Scotland and commenced with building a castle-like mansion. "Auchen" is Gaelic for "fields". It may be understood that Auchentoroly means "Torlie's Fields". Druid Hill Park was originally part of the Auchentorlie estate. By 1796 Buchanan's son-in-law Nicholas Rogers had built a new mansion (after the castle burned down) and renamed the estate Druid Hill. In 1856 Lloyd Nicholas Rogers, great grandson of George Buchanan, sold 33 ½ acres to John Morris Orem, a Baltimore dry goods magnate. Baltimore City purchased the remaining Druid Hill estate in 1860 with city stock and money from a tax on a lucrative train line contract.

In the ensuing years, Baltimore City converted Druid Hill into a large urban park. The former private estate was redesigned in the English landscape tradition by landscape architect Howard Daniels, architect George Frederick, and park commissioner John H. B. Latrobe. Unlike Europe's geometric gardens of the 16th & 17th centuries, the romantic landscape sought to evoke an idealized view of nature. Asymmetrical designs included gentle laws and water features set against tree groves and accented with picturesque architectural structures. Druid Hill Park is the third oldest large urban park in the country after Boston Commons (1634) and New York's Central Park (1858).

With his 33-½ acres John Morris Orem built a large summer home and named it Auchentoroly in tribute to the original name of the former Buchanan estate. In 1876 Orem built two additional mansions on Auchentoroly Terrace for his son William Morris Orem and son-in-law William West, who had married his daughter Sophie Baker. The Orem siblings would go on to plan, parcel, sell, and develop much of the Auchentoroly Terrace and the Mondawmin neighborhood.

Writing, photography, and production by Graham Coreil-Allen for the New Auchentoroly Terrace Association.

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Technical descriptions based on research by Mary Ellen Hayward.



2001 Liberty Heights Ave: Shaarei Tfiloh Synagogue

The Shaarei Tfiloh Synagogue was founded in 1921 by predominantly Russian and Eastern European Orthodox Jewish immigrants living in the neighborhood. The initial congregation first met in 1920 in the rowhouse at 2218 Bryant Avenue before raising money to build a permanent temple. From 1921 to 1927 real estate businessman Louis Cordish, grandfather to prominent Baltimore developer David Cordish, and others raised over \$285,000 to construct the two-story stone synagogue. Designed by architect Stanislaus Russel, the building is unique in its embellishment on all four sides with rusticated stone quarried at Port Deposit, stained glass windows, and a tall copper-clad dome with clerestory fenestration illuminating the interior sanctuary. Inside, the ground floor was used for smaller gatherings and Hebrew school. The grand second floor features two levels of seats - 700 for men and 300 for women. At its peak in the 1940s the building hosted upwards of two thousand congregants during High Holy Days.

Beginning in the 1950s suburban development spread around Baltimore, attracting middle and upper class residents away from the city. Local Jewish residents began moving farther northwest to places like Pikesville. During that same period African Americans began moving to neighborhoods around Druid Hill Park.

The Shaarei Tfiloh Synagogue is still used for High Holy Days under Rabbi David Herman.



Liberty Heights & Holmes Avenues: Verda Welcome Home

The Mondawmin Neighborhood Improvement Association was founded in 1954 by Verda Welcome. In 1958 Welcome was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates. In 1962 she was elected to the Maryland State Senate, making her Maryland's first African-American female state senator. Welcome lived a block off Auchentoroly Terrace at the southwest corner of Holmes and Liberty Heights Avenues. During her 25 years in the Maryland legislature Welcome championed legislation improving employment regulation and eliminating Maryland's racial segregation laws.



3442 Auchentoroly Terrace: former Orem Mansion

John Morris Orem built this mansion in 1876 for his son William Morris Orem. The mansion was purchased by a developer in 1922 and converted into apartments. It was around this time that the three-story porches were added, bearing resemblance to other porches on nearby "Daylight" style rowhouses.



3436 Auchentoroly Terrace: former Orem-West Mansion and Park School

John Morris Orem build this mansion in 1876 for his daughter Sophie Baker West and her husband William H. West. The red brick exterior of the Italianate period home is largely unaltered. The building is adorned with a distinguished cornice featuring modillions and dentils above a deep, unadorned frieze. The front double doors hang beneath a stone arch below a dentiled, flat pediment. The steps are framed by curved stone railing. Segmentally-arched lintels cap all windows. The building's side and rear walls feature two and three-story bay windows.

In 1912 the former mansion became the Park School, named after its proximity to Druid Hill Park. At the time Baltimore school superintendent James Van Sickle and the Board of School Commissioners supported progressive educational reforms, including kindergartens, playgrounds, trade programs, and culinary training. Mayor James Preston ousted Van Sickle when these reforms proved controversial. Several of the board members left in protest and met with local prominent Jewish community leaders to found their own progressive school under the vision of Dr. Hans Froelicher. The Park School was the first in Baltimore to integrate classrooms with Jewish and Christian students. Froelicher's son Hans Froelicher Jr. became headmaster in 1932. Upon retirement he told the Baltimore Sun that, "progressive' meant teaching children not by rote or compulsion but by creating the educational climate that made them want to learn. ... It meant teaching with all the available scientific knowledge of what causes learning to take place". The idea of "learning by doing" is now common practice in public schools. In 1917 the Park School moved to a larger set of buildings on Liberty Heights Avenue, and in 1959 it moved to its current campus in Brooklandville. Following the school's departure the mansion was converted into apartments.



3400 Auchentoroly Terrace: Daylight Rowhouses and the Renaissance Revival

Auchentoroly Terrace's most recently built homes are the three, two-story "Daylight" style rowhouses at 3432, 3432-½, and 3434 constructed in the former Orem-West mansion's south yard in 1928. In lieu of long hallways with dark interior rooms, Daylight rowhouses were designed with two rooms in the front and two in the back,

ensuring that every room had at least one exterior window. Daylight rowhouses also feature front porches, sometimes enclosed with windows. Directly south of these newer buildings stand three, three-story homes built in 1916 in a streamlined Renaissance Revival style.



Further south rises 3400-24 Auchentoroly Terrace, a grand row of high Renaissance Revival, three-story homes built by Charles Gerwig in 1908-9. Collectively, these homes work in concert: tiled mansard roofs alternate with Dutch end gables featuring central oculuses and urns atop. Deep porches are covered by central pediments fronted with leafy sheet metal ornaments and supported by Ionic columns set on brick piers. The second floor bay windows are framed by sheet metal engaged columns capped by large cartouches with round-arch transoms of stained glass in-between. The third floor windows under the mansard roofs have round arches while those under the Dutch end gables are rectangular.

3402 Auchentoroly Terrace: former home of Artist Hugh Harrell

3402 Auchentoroly Terrace is the former home of acclaimed artist Hugh Harrell. Beginning in the early 1980s Harrell used this home as his residence, studio, and art gallery. He made figurative paintings and sculptures depicting everyday scenes of African American life. The artist was once married to actress Beah Richards and sold work to numerous celebrities, including comedian Dick Gregory, actress Ester Rolle, and musician Stevie Wonder. Writer James Baldwin reportedly bought half a dozen works by Harrell and once sat for a portrait in his first floor Auchentoroly Terrace gallery. When working inside Harrell would turn on an orange porch light indicating he was receiving visitors. On warm days the artist would work on the porch. In 1998 Harrell moved back to his hometown of Hampton, Virginia before passing away in 2009 at the age of 82.



3400 Auchentoroly Terrace Redevelopment

Independently wealthy elocution teacher Eleanor Mouldsdales first bought 3400 Auchentoroly Terrace in 1909 for \$24,000. The home originally included a two-car garage, five bathrooms, and a complete laundry facility. Since the early 1980s the building sat vacant and caught fire in 2009. In 2014 the the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development stabilized the building. Since 2016 Meadow Development Group has been working with Baltimore City and the New Auchentoroly Terrace Association on redeveloping the structure. Construction began in early 2019, with completion expected in the fall. The revitalized building will have sixteen apartments, including three accessible units, that will be rented at affordable and market rates.



Park Entrance: Oak Wisdom

Created by artist William Cochran in 2010, "Oak Wisdom" is a monumental colonnade marking Druid Hill Park's main western gateway. The artist describes the artwork as a tribute to the history of Druid Hill Park:

Oak Wisdom is comprised of six entablatures on salvaged iron columns, arranged as a seventy foot colonnade. The blood red glass entablatures, laminated with shattered glass, hold silkscreened

public memories of the park. The artwork is an abstraction of a sacred oak grove and a standing prayer for the wisdom to rethink our relationship with the natural world. Druid Hill Park is named for giant oaks that once shaded its hills; legend has it that Druids worshiped in sacred oak groves. The word "Druid" means "oak wisdom."

Rawlings Conservatory and former Tennis Courts

Originally known as the Druid Hill Conservatory, the Howard P. Rawlings Conservatory was designed by Druid Hill Park architect George Frederick and first opened in 1888. Baltimore's Conservatory is the second oldest steel-framed and glass structure of its kind in the country. In 2002 the central Palm House, Orchid Room, and rear



production houses were renovated while the two side galleries were added. The former production houses are now climate-themed environments: mediterranean, tropical, and desert. Upon completion of the renovations the center was renamed in honor of longtime Maryland House of Delegates Appropriations Committee Chairperson Howard "Pete" Rawlings.

Next to the Conservatory lies a rectangular grassy field leveled into the gentle hillside. This space once served as a set of tennis courts historically open only to white players. In 1948 the Young Progressives of Maryland publicly announced plans to host an integrated tennis match on Sunday, July 11th. Just after 2pm on that day hundreds of residents lined up to watch the first double match between Mary Coffee and Gloria Stewart, who were black, and Mitzi Freishat and Jeanette Fino, who were White. Before they could begin playing the Baltimore Park Police broke up the event and arrested 22 people, including both blacks and whites. The Young Progressives later unsuccessfully sued the state to desegregate Baltimore's recreation facilities. In 1955, a year after the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board was decided, the city park board voted to integrate recreation facilities.



3300 Auchentoroly: Suburban Transition

In contrast to older blocks south of Orem Avenue, the 3100-3400 blocks of Auchentoroly Terrace feature distinctly suburban elements. In her 2015 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Auchentoroly Terrace Historic District, architectural historian Mary Ellen Hayward explains:

Many of the houses in the Historic District are also representative of the transition that took place in rowhouse building at the end of the nineteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth century—changes that closely reflected nationwide trends towards suburbanization. The first rowhouses built in the district, south of Orem Avenue, are stylish, with the swell-and-square-fronts and corner roof turrets, but none have front porches or front yards. But beginning around 1905-7, Baltimore builders added front porches and often short front lawns to give their houses the appeal of the new suburbs being developed by the Roland Park Company north of the city, where affluent homebuyers could purchase individual homes on treed lots along winding, picturesque streets. For Baltimoreans who could not afford a large suburban house, or still preferred rowhouse living, developers created a new kind of three-story rowhouse with at least a deep front porch and front lawn.

3100 and 3200 Auchentoroly Terrace

The 3100 and 3200 blocks of Auchentoroly Terrace are the first to have been developed by the Orem siblings as they parceled out their family estate into a neighborhood. Constructed in 1899 and 1900, respectively, the blocks consist of three-story Renaissance Revival style rowhouses with swell fronts, iron-flecked Roman brick, and rusticated stone denoting the basements, window sills, and continuous lintel bands. Conical turrets with slate shingles rise at the corners of both blocks. Third floor stick-style porches sit atop the swells of two homes on the 3200 block. On the 3100 block stepped decorative brickwork fills the frieze below a dentiled sheet metal cornice.





2700 - 3000 Auchentoroly Terrace

Originally called Evergreen Terrace, the four blocks of Auchentoroly Terrace between Fulton and Orem Avenues were built 1895-6 as ornate Renaissance Revival style two and three-story rowhouses. Clad in Roman brick and rusticated stone accents, rounded swell front homes alternate with square front homes accented by ornate stick style porches with triangular pediments. End homes feature rounded corners topped by slate covered spires, establishing Auchentoroly Terrace's signature rhythm of jubilant turrets.

Fork in the road at Ruskin Avenue: Auchentoroly Terrace and the Druid Hill Expressway

Standing at the east end of Ruskin Avenue, one can experience first-hand Auchentoroly Terrace's historically human-scaled street width. The previously two-lane, park-front residential street provided residents with safe and easy access to Druid Hill Park. From 1947-8 Auchentoroly Terrace was widened, over community opposition, into what was then called the Druid Hill Expressway. The expressway was meant to relieve automobile congestion in Druid Hill Park and provide a quick commute to downtown from the northwest suburbs. McCulloh Street and Druid Hill Avenue were converted to one-way traffic and then merged into a widened Auchentoroly Terrace at Fulton Avenue. In the process of creating this highway, a small section of Druid Hill Park was cut off and remains today along the 2700-3000 blocks of Auchentoroly Terrace. Auchentoroly Terrace was also extended north from Liberty Heights Avenue to Reisterstown Road at Anoka Avenue, separating the section of the Druid Hill Park that non-profit Parks and People now uses as their headquarters. [continued...]

When planning the Druid Hill Expressway, the city ignored the opinions of the area's predominantly Jewish and African American residents, many of whom voiced strong opposition. They correctly predicted that the highway project would effectively cut off the neighborhood from the park. Clarence Mitchell, then labor secretary of the NAACP, protested that increased traffic speeds endangered black residents who were unable to move to the highway-served suburbs due to redlining. Shaarei Tfiloh synagogue Rabbi Nathan Drazin wanted to ensure that traffic would not endanger children attending Hebrew school or impede the crowds of congregants who traditionally walked down the middle of Auchentoroly Terrace during the High Holy days. Despite resident sentiment, the highway project was supported by local elected officials at the direction of political boss Jack Pollack and completed in 1948. That Pollack lived on Anoka Avenue, the same street where the expressway ended, suggests he may have had a uniquely personal interest in its approval.



The Access Project for Druid Hill Park

While the Druid Hill Expressway may have improved commute times for suburban drivers, it has since made accessing Druid Hill Park more difficult for local residents, especially those on foot, wheelchair, and bicycle. Excess lanes around Druid Hill Park encourage motorists to drive at high speeds that discourage pedestrians from entering the park due to concerns over personal safety. Druid Park Lake Drive and Auchentoroly Terrace lack safe intersections and crosswalks for residents to reach the park on foot. Sidewalks are not entirely accessible to wheelchair riders. People who rely on bicycles and electric scooters do not have protected pathways serving all neighborhoods around the park.

In 2017, 7th District Councilman Leon F. Pinkett III convened the Druid Hill Park Stakeholders group, including the New Auchentoroly Terrace Association, the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Bikemore, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Parks & People, and several city agencies. From this was born The Access Project for Druid Hill Park (TAP Druid Hill), a campaign to better connect residents of West Baltimore with Druid Hill Park. The group is promoting complete streets best-practices to counteract years of urban planning that prioritized cars over the public health and economic opportunity of local residents. Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to be safe and accessible for all, including pedestrians, transit users, wheelchair riders, and people who rely on bicycles and scooters to get to work, school, and family. Each complete street is different and based on the needs of the surrounding residents and neighborhood. In February 2018 the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) agreed to conduct a major transportation study to address the concerns of residents living around Druid Hill Park. Starting in 2019 DOT will be launching the Druid Park Lake Drive Complete Street design effort. During the study residents will have the opportunity to shape a public vision for converting the dangerous highways around Druid Hill Park into complete streets safe and accessible for all.



Fulton Avenue Wall and Murals: DPW Every Day & Orem's Dream

Constructed in 1905, the historic wall along Fulton Avenue at Auchentoroly Terrace was designed by the Olmsted Brothers as part of an improved gateway to Druid Hill Park. This project was part of a larger set of recommendations they made in their landmark *1904 Report Upon the*

Development of Public Grounds for Greater Baltimore. The wall was intended to shield park goers from seeing the industrial Park Terminal streetcar barn across the street. To make way for the Druid Hill Expressway in the mid-1940s the decorative iron Fulton Avenue park entrance adjoining the wall was demolished and the nearby Chinese Pavilion moved further east.

In August 2018 the New Auchentoroly Terrace Association was pleased to welcome a new set vibrant of murals to the neighborhood titled, "DPW Every Day," by celebrated artist Gary Mullen. The new murals on the south side of the wall facing Fulton Avenue were commissioned by the Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) and Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts (BOPA). The nine panels celebrate the civic contributions of DPW employees benefiting the quality of life across Baltimore. Mullen created the mural in his signature "Afro-Cubist" style with assistance from twelve Baltimore City youth, employed through BOPA's summer Youthworks and YH20 job training programs.

Later in 2018 Mullen worked closely with local residents and the New Auchentoroly Terrace Association to create another set of murals along the northside of the Fulton Avenue wall. "Orem's Dream" includes nine panels depicting historic buildings and scenes along the west side of Druid Hill Park.

*Right: Artist Gary Mullen at work.
Photo by Susanna Hindman.*



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