
CHEVY CHASE CLUB

Our southern neighbor the Chevy Chase Club occupies 190 acres of land bordered by Bradley Lane, Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase Village, and Wisconsin Avenue. Most of this area is an 18-hole golf course framed by a narrow strip of woods. There are many kinds of gardens in the club grounds, including a rose garden, an herb garden, and an English border garden. In the woods, an arboretum of many thousands of trees, are a wildflower walk and a bird sanctuary.

This extensive landscape, once tobacco fields cleared from wilderness, has been gradually shaped by an organization now almost 100 years old. Its history begins in 1885 with the founding of the Dumblane Club, devoted to foxhunting and steeplechase, on the Dumblane farm north of Nebraska Avenue at Tenallytown. In 1892 this club moved to Belmont, a 100-acre farm northwest of Chevy Chase Circle, which Arthur J. Goldsborough had sold to the Chevy Chase Land Company. Senator Francis G. Newlands, Land Company founder, and a group of members of the downtown Metropolitan Club were then considering forming a family club outside the crowded city. A year later, the Dumblane Club joined the newly organized Chevy Chase Club and Hunt, with 82 members and the support of the Land Company, which leased to the new club a 9.6-acre tract along the west side of Connecticut Avenue south from Bradley Lane, including the Bradley farm house. In 1894 this tract was still remote from the city, until then reached across open country, on the Georgetown-Rockville Pike, by horse, carriage, bicycle, or the still-rare automobile. The newly-built Connecticut Avenue with its electric trolley now provided an easy, reliable, and enjoyable journey for city dwellers.

In 1895 the combined Hunt moved from Belmont to stables and kennels on the new grounds (on the site of the present garage), where it remained until disbanded in 1912. At that time, carriage-driving, horse shows, steeple chase, fox hunts, and polo games all ceased. It was the end of the era of the horse in an increasingly urban area.

The Bradley farmhouse became the Chevy Chase Clubhouse, for 16 ensuing years undergoing a series of alterations and additions: ballroom, kitchen, bedrooms, dining rooms, tap and smoking rooms, and enclosed porches. A separate shingled bungalow was added as a

dormitory at the north end of the present range of buildings.

Meanwhile a six-hole course for the new game of golf was laid out to the east of the farmhouse. According to the source of this article, John M. Lynham's *The Chevy Chase Club, A History 1885-1957*: "The first tee was on the west side of Connecticut Avenue in front of the Old Clubhouse, and from there the golfers drove across Connecticut Avenue with its car tracks and overhead trolley [wires] to the first green on the other side. The next four holes were played over the open fields of the Chevy Chase Land Company and the sixth and last hole was played back across Connecticut Avenue from a tee about . . . at #1 Quincy Street, to a green on the site of the [future] Bungalow." A year later, this course was supplanted by a new nine-hole course to the west of the farmhouse, expanded to 18 holes in 1898. Tennis, squash, baseball, and croquet courts were added, and in 1905 four bowling alleys.

The 9.6-acre grounds were filling up, so between 1903 and 1908, the club bought several parcels of land, enlarging the grounds to their present size and shape. Donald J. Ross designed a new 18-hole golf course, often revised since.

In 1911, the year the Columbia Country Club opened just to the north of then Section Four, the Chevy Chase Club built an entirely new clubhouse, designed by Henri de Sibour, which is the core of the present main building. The porte cochère was added in 1914; the gazebo at the trolley stop on Connecticut Avenue in 1915; and the present stone retaining wall in 1931. The original clubhouse became a dormitory, then was redesigned and greatly enlarged to its present form in 1926 by the architect Waddy Wood. He also enlarged the main building and added a tennis house at the west end of the new swimming pool. Extensive planting of gardens and trees in the following years created the main lines of the present landscape.

With another building campaign, beginning in 1960, the club replaced the old bungalow with the present north wing of pool dressing rooms, constructed an entirely new winter sports center on the site of the old bowling alleys, with paddle tennis courts, and ice skating rink, and enlarged the wings of the main clubhouse, thereby establishing the Chevy Chase Club as it looks today.

Eleanor Ford