



HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

To Identify and Honor Great Neck's Most Notable Homes



THE WYCHWOOD APARTMENTS, GREAT NECK, NY

In September 1928 *The New York Times* announced construction of the The Wychwood Apartments, to be erected at 8 Barstow Road, Great Neck Station Plaza. It was completed the following year. The building was designed by the renowned firm of Schwartz and Gross, Architects, who designed over one hundred apartment buildings in Manhattan, including scores on Central Park West, West End Avenue, and Riverside Drive. With the exception of two buildings, one in Brooklyn and the other in Garden City, the Wychwood is thought to be one of the only buildings on Long Island designed by the prestigious firm. The magnificent garden that is the centerpiece of the building, with a private courtyard and beautiful landscaping, was designed by Mann and MacNeille, Architects.

Walter W. Davis purchased the tract of land south of the railroad station, planned the construction and managed the building until the 1950s. He had an apartment at the Wychwood for many years. A developer, lawyer and former Colorado mine operator, Davis was active in the buildup of Great Neck. He was responsible for the Great Neck Hills and the Great Neck Villa developments, which became the Village of Thomaston. Davis was a trustee of the Village of Great Neck Plaza and wrote frequently in local newspapers about the high-class nature of his developments and the need for zoning. The building was erected by the Wychwood Holding Corporation, which originally planned to construct three units on the entire block from Shoreward Drive to South Middle Neck Road.

Located on a triangular plot on the site of the former Brookdale Hotel and Wychwood Garden Tea Room, the Italian Renaissance Revival-style, seven-story building features brick corner quoins, decorative brickwork and golden terra cotta belt courses (horizontal bands of molded stone set in line with the window sills to make them visually prominent). There are four wings, each with its own elevator to impart a private, intimate feeling to the residence. The Wychwood boasted a great number of amenities, with a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments featuring spacious rooms, two outside exposures for each suite, a bathroom with every bedroom, automatic refrigeration, electric temperature controls, soundproof walls, and electric laundry machines. Many have working wood-burning fireplaces, formal mantel pieces and sun porches, now enclosed, as well as handsome views of the surrounding community or the Manhattan skyline in some locations. The lower floor was designed to house ten shops, a restaurant, and the Great Neck Post Office, which remained there until 1939 when the Welwyn Road building was erected. Inside, the historic reception hall and first floor hallways are paneled with oak. Golden bottle-glass double-hung windows overlook the landscaped garden from the hall. The building has its original 84 units.

During the late 1920s there was high demand for apartments in Great Neck. In addition to the Wychwood, other apartments constructed in 1928 and 1929 were the Westminster apartment building on Maple Drive, the



Belgrave Apartments on Brompton Road, two buildings of The Towers on Spruce Street and Tuscan Court on Middle Neck Road. Another large apartment building, the Kenwood apartments on Middle Neck Road, was completed in 1925.

At the time the Wychwood Apartments was constructed, the Long Island Rail Road tracks were at street level on Station Plaza. The building was designed in a V-shaped plan. The open part of the V faced Middle Neck Road, forming a garden entrance

to the building. Part of the garden remains, fenced in as a private area. The main entrance is now on Barstow Road. In 1930, Wychwood apartments, "just steps from your train and 28 minutes from Pennsylvania Station" were priced from \$960 per year. In 1986 the Wychwood converted to a cooperative.

Additional information about The Wychwood Apartments is available at Wychwoodapartments.com and on the Historic Preservation page of greatneckplaza.net.

