



HERITAGE RECOGNITION PROGRAM To Identify and Honor Great Neck's Most Notable Homes



17 BEVERLY ROAD, GREAT NECK, NY

The Great Neck Historical Society's **OUTSTANDING RESTORATION AWARD** is presented to Yael Freeman and Avi Reshtick for their exceptional achievement in restoring 17 Beverly Road to its original grandeur. They purchased the house at the end of 2011 and moved in with their children, Daniel, Yoav and Ariel, in 2015 following a complete renovation. The exterior is nearly identical to its original appearance. Inside, the owners respected the character and spirit of the house, largely following the early layout.

The house was built c. 1912 for O. R. Taylor, designed by architect Aymar Embury II. Early in his career, Embury was known as a "society architect," a builder of country houses for the upper middle class. He designed several homes in the Village of Kensington, the planned community developed by R. J. Rickert and Charles E. Finlay. Later, he designed scores of college buildings, including several for his alma mater, Princeton, as well as social clubs. After Robert Moses was appointed commissioner of the Department of Parks for New York City, Embury became the chief or consulting architect for projects around the city. He supervised the design of an estimated six hundred public projects, including pools, playgrounds and parks, among them Bryant Park and the Central Park Children's Zoo; the New York City Building at the 1939 New York World's Fair (now Queens Museum of Art); the Triborough and Henry Hudson Bridges and the Lincoln Tunnel; and Hofstra University Campus. During World War I Embury designed the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal of the U.S. Army



Photograph published in *Architecture and Building*, 1914



17 Beverly taken in 2017 after four years of restoration

In 1915 the Beverly Road house was purchased by Guy Bolton, renowned American playwright, librettist and author, as a wedding gift for his bride, Marguerite Namara, an acclaimed soprano. Bolton began his working career as an architect, helping to rebuild the military academy at West Point and designing the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument and the Ansonia Hotel in Manhattan. But he soon turned to theater, where he was one of the most celebrated American

playwrights of the time. He is credited with 50 plays and musicals produced for Broadway and London stages. He collaborated with acclaimed writers and musicians including P.G. Wodehouse, Jerome Kern, George and Ira Gershwin, George M. Cohan and Cole Porter. Bolton spent many hours in the upstairs study of 17 Beverly Road working on his shows. One of his most popular, written many years later, was the musical *Anything Goes*, which is still performed today. Marguerite Namara was a classically trained soprano whose varied career included serious opera, operettas, Broadway musicals, film and theatre roles, and vocal recitals. She sang at the Boston Opera House, Chicago Opera Company, Metropolitan Opera, and Opera Comique in Paris; acted in five films, including one with Rudolph Valentino; and made several recordings. Guy and Marguerite entertained dozens of celebrities in their home including dancer Isadora Duncan, tenor Enrico Caruso, and neighbor Ed Wynn. After the Boltons divorced in 1925, Marguerite gave the house to Guy Bolton and his new wife.