Dear Residents:

We members of the Cornell Historic Preservation Planning Program are excited to share with you the cultural resource survey we have been conducting of the Scottholm Tract. Over the past three months, students enrolled in the CRP5610 Preservation Planning Workshop have been researching a section of your neighborhood; you may have seen us walking around, taking pictures, measuring sidewalks and the distance between trees, or talking to you about the history of Scottholm. This survey is a joint effort between the City of Syracuse and Cornell’s Historic Preservation Planning Program, conducted so that the city can have a better understanding of its historic resources in order to enhance future planning in the area. We have created this booklet for you to see what we have been doing, and some of what we found. Thank you for the warm welcome you have extended to us over the course of the semester, and for allowing us to survey your neighborhood.

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From the opening of the Erie Canal to the beginning of the Great Depression, Syracuse experienced a century of nearly unabated progress and prosperity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the city enjoyed a vibrant downtown, a booming population, and a healthy mix of industrial and commercial pursuits. During this period, Syracuse bristled with urban improvements: paved roads, the electric streetcar, improved infrastructure, and City Beautiful-inspired public amenities. Between 1900 and 1930, the population of Syracuse doubled, surpassing 200,000 citizens. As the city grew, inner-city residential areas were redeveloped to suit commercial needs, and residential expansion was stretched to the outskirts of the city, and in some cases, beyond. As the city grew in population, therefore, it also grew in physical size; its outlying areas enjoying the amenities of suburban life as well as convenient, streetcar access to the central city. Spurred on by this convenient transportation and unregulated real estate investment, early middle-class suburbs sprouted up east of the city, especially in the vicinity of the Syracuse University campus. While many suburbs conformed to the prevailing street grid, some chose to emphasize irregular, park-like settings. These included Berkeley Park, Strathmore “By the Park,” and Sedgwick Farm, whose designs were integrated with curvilinear street patterns, generous vegetation, and access to recreational amenities. Although it appeared late in this first flush of picturesque suburban development, Scottholm was no exception to these rules.

Scottholm, located two miles east of the center of downtown Syracuse, falls within a region first surveyed under the 1794 Central New York Military Tract, under the name of Manlius, in lots forty nine and sixty. The Military Tract program was a reparation system for Revolutionary War soldiers, designed to encourage settlement in Western New York State. Many soldiers did not make the trip west, however, but rather sold their lots to prospective settlers or real estate speculators. The first settlers to the area, John Young and his family, predated the Military Tract Settlement. He was soon followed by others, including Daniel Knapp and Major Moses DeWitt, who arrived prior to the turn of the eighteenth century. It was DeWitt who laid out the Genesee Turnpike, an important thoroughfare for westward trade and expansion (and present-day East Genesee Street), and for whom the village of DeWitt was named in 1835.

Daniel Knapp acquired significant acreage along the Turnpike. In 1860, his family built the handsome Italianate farmhouse that now stands at the corner of East Genesee Street.
and Scott Avenue. In the late nineteenth century, the Knapp Homestead and the adjacent farm were acquired by Benjamin Scott. He resided there until his death circa 1910, whereupon the 140 acres were purchased by investors under the auspices of the Scottholm Company (alternately known as the East Genesee Extension Corporation). Considering the growth of nearby suburban neighborhoods, the vacant farmland must have been ripe for development. Further, its pending incorporation, which would occur in 1915, would soon give it access to the municipal services of Syracuse.

Arthur C. Comey, the landscape architect and urban planner chosen to design the plan of Scottholm, was in the vanguard of the landscape architecture field in the United States. He graduated from Harvard University with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture in 1907. Harvard's landscape architecture program, the first in the country, was established in 1900 by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Arthur Shurcliff, both nationally prominent landscape architects and urban planners. The program would go on to educate many of the leading practitioners of the era, and

Landscape architect Arthur C. Comey's 1914 landscape plan for Scottholm set forth a plan for picturesque, tree-lined streets.

Provided by Scottholm resident and Chair of the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board, Don Radke
Comey himself would serve as a professor there from 1928 to 1940. He also was one of the early members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, founded in 1899, and by 1920 he was inducted as a Fellow.

While Comey was trained as a landscape architect, his repertoire of writing and work suggests that he held a much keener interest in urban planning. He certainly had the opportunity to work across a broad range of locations and planning situations, from Houston to Boston. Exactly how he established his relationship with the Scottholm developers is unclear, although in 1909 he was serving as the Superintendent of Parks for Utica, New York. After returning to Cambridge in 1911, Comey likely would have sustained ties to Upstate New York, and completed projects there in addition to Scottholm. His plan for Scottholm dates from 1914. The general layout suggests that Comey strove for uniformity in his design, with sensitive responses to natural topography, as well as allowances for amenities, both recreational and aesthetic.

The latter was given careful consideration in Comey’s and the developers’ plans. Each physical situation (from boulevard, to hillside, to typical residential street) is allowed a unique design matching its spatial and aesthetic needs. Most prominently, medians along Scottholm Boulevard are shaped to give a unique experience of movement along the corridor, but also to create and frame the entry to the subdivision from East Genesee Street. As this would have been Scottholm’s main processional axis, the first impression was an important one. As such, the developers of Scottholm endeavored to make this first impression monumental. Massive, cobblestone gates were designed and built there as early as 1916. With their battered pylons, pedestrian–friendly entries, and integrated street lamps, these gates were an iconic and practical element of the Scottholm landscape, and they adorn the neighborhood’s promotional materials from the beginning.

It is evident that the designers and developers of Scottholm desired harmony in their neighborhood. While this is made clear by Comey’s plan, much more explicit requirements are outlined in deed records. Beginning in 1915, the East Genesee Extension Corporation arranged to sell lots in Scottholm, governed by a series of restrictive covenants. These covenants would be enforced for twenty-five years from that date, ending in 1940, and included nearly every aspect of physical development. First, construction was limited to single-family residences to be constructed for certain minimum costs, depending on location in the neighborhood. Setbacks were also enforced, although these too varied by location. Residence designs, while not prescriptively limited, were required to be submitted for review.

In addition to physical restrictions, the deeds mention two

This photograph shows the mostly undeveloped Scottholm Tract. In the foreground are the cobblestone gates that still welcome visitors to Scottholm from East Genesee Street.

Onondaga Historical Association
more idiosyncratic ones. First, on each property, “Vinous, spirituous or malt liquors shall at no time during the aforesaid period be manufactured, sold or offered for sale thereon.” Second, “Said lots shall not during the aforesaid period be occupied by or conveyed to negroes [sic] as owners or tenants.” These two points highlight the socioeconomic aspirations of the Scottholm developers, which are reinforced in advertisements for the neighborhood throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Apart from an easy commute and a sylvan setting, Scottholm offered “class,” “protection,” and even patriotism.

Not only was Scottholm marketed along the lines of offering easy living, good investments, and beautiful surroundings, but it was also a technologically advanced community. Its graveled streets, paved sidewalks, bountiful planting, and access to city infrastructure were progressive enough to merit frequent mention in promotional materials. Beyond this, Scottholm was hailed as the neighborhood with “The Electric Home.” This residence, built at the corner of Scottholm Boulevard and Scott Avenue, was designed in an austere, Neo-Regency style by prominent Syracuse architect Ward Wellington Ward. The house, fitted with electric lights, outlets, and—significantly for the time—built-in appliances, became a city-wide draw. For its opening ceremony in 1922, it merited a visit from the Mayor, and public tours and lectures were held in the home for several subsequent weeks.

On a broader scale, two technological developments contributed greatly to the development of American suburbs as a whole, and by extension to Scottholm: the introduction of the first electric streetcar in 1887 (the first electrified line began operation in Syracuse a year later), and the mass production of automobiles that occurred after 1908. The physical fabric of Scottholm reflects changing patterns of suburban transportation from the former to the latter. Its early marketing campaigns highlight the convenience that proximity to an affordable (at the time, 5¢) streetcar line entails. But while it was marketed as such, the neighborhood’s individual properties suggest that Scottholm was never entirely a “streetcar suburb,” evidenced by the fact that all had private driveways, and a great majority had detached garage structures. This disjunction is most likely caused by the fact that, despite Scottholm being laid out as early as 1914, the majority of its homes were constructed between 1922 and 1929, when the automobile was becoming popular. Streetcar use in Syracuse gradually declined until 1941, when service was discontinued.

Scottholm’s development slowed during the Great Depression and appears to have completely stalled at the outbreak of World War II; no new homes were constructed within the neighborhood between 1940 and 1945. In 1946, the East Genesee Extension Corporation submitted its final map of the subdivision. At the time, Scottholm was a well-established suburb within the city limits, but the surrounding region still offered large, open tracts with easy city access along East Genesee Street. More importantly, Scottholm itself offered many undeveloped sites.

Most of these open sites within Scottholm in the postwar period were on the southern parts of the development—along Scottholm Terrace and across Meadowbrook Drive—but could also be found scattered around its central areas. The residences constructed in this later period chose to adopt styles distinct from the central, older portion of the neighborhood. Instead of the eclectic and revivalist styles that dominate the older areas, the new houses were increasingly modern or vernacular adaptations. Additionally, many were ranch or split-level designs with attached garages or carports. By the late 1940s, popular magazine surveys indicated that families enjoyed the single-story, open spaces of ranch houses. The style had developed in California in the 1930s, but would become a symbol of the postwar building boom that occurred across the suburban United States. Ranches had a number of features that were associated with modern architecture: horizontal massing, open plans, picture windows, sliding glass doors, broad chimneys, exposed timber beams, deep eaves, exterior terraces, and patios. They could also feature distilled elements of traditional,
revivalist architecture: clapboard siding, shutters, and front porches.

Today, the northern and southern portions of Scottholm (delineated by Meadowbrook Drive) largely represent distinct periods of development. However, architectural heterogeneity may be found in all parts of the neighborhood. Indeed, it is the engaging mix of building styles and compositions—no less than a sensitive design and abundant vegetation—that contributes to the character of the neighborhood. Continued care for its development and maintenance, as well as stewardship of its extant resources, will no doubt increase the longevity and deepen the appeal of Scottholm.

Bibliography


Deed Records. Held at Onondaga County Courthouse. Syracuse, NY.


A Survey of Scottholm

Scottholm Style Guide

Adapted from:

With drawings from A Field Guide to American Houses

Italianate (c. 1840 to c. 1885)
The Italianate style, borrowed from the rural architecture of northern Italy, was introduced by way of the English Picturesque movement of the late 1830s. The plans and books of Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing helped to make Italianate the dominate building style in the latter half of the 19th century. Low-pitched roofs with wide overhanging eaves and decorative brackets beneath characterize Italianate style homes, as well as tall narrow arched windows with decorative crowns. Examples in Scottholm include 2686 East Genesee Street and 2800 East Genesee Street, which also has a belvedere (also called cupolas).

Colonial Revival (c. 1880s to c. 1955)
The Colonial Revival style emerged in the late 1800s as a departure from the elaborate Victorian styles as well as out of a nostalgia for Colonial American images brought on by the nation’s Centennial. Houses built in this style have the simplicity and refinement of Georgian and Federal styles while incorporating details that are more modern. Generally, the Colonial Revival house will be rectangular with a high gable or hipped roof. Common character defining features include an accentuated front door (often with a decorative crown or pediment) supported by columns, symmetrical façades, windows with double-hung sashes with multi-pane glazing, and prominent dormers and gable windows. Colonial Revival examples in the Scottholm neighborhood include 217 Scott Avenue, 207 Scottholm Boulevard, and 112 Ramsey Avenue.

One-story Colonial Revival homes are often referred to as Cape Cod cottages, patterned on the early wooden folk homes of the eastern Massachusetts. Usually only one or one-and-one-half-stories, Cape Cod style houses have steeply pitched, gabled roofs with small overhangs. A Cape Cod cottage in Scottholm can be found at 232 Scott Avenue.

Dutch Colonial Revival (c. 1880s to c. 1955)
Architecturally related to Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revivals are defined by their steeply pitched gambrel roofs. They usually have either separate dormer windows or a continuous shed dormer. The Scottholm neighborhood has a large number of side-gabled Dutch Colonials with the end gable facing the street, like 217 Crawford Avenue and 216 Scott Avenue.

Shingle (c. 1880 to c. 1900s)
The Shingle style is a uniquely American adaption of other architectural styles to create an unusually free-form and variable style. It borrows the wide porches, shingled surfaces and asymmetrical forms from Queen Anne style. From the Colonial Revival style, it borrows gambrel roofs, classical columns and rambling lean-to additions. From Richardsonian Romanesque it borrows an emphasis on irregular, sculpted shapes. While nationally, Shingle fell out of fashion around the turn of the century, Scottholm neighborhood has examples from the 1920’s like those found at 226 Scott Avenue and 206 Crawford Avenue.

Prairie (c. 1900 to c. 1920)
Originating in Chicago, the Prairie style aimed to reject the popular academic revival styles and sought to create buildings that reflected the rolling Midwestern prairie terrain. Character defining features, which emphasized the horizontal, include low-pitched (usually hipped) roofs with widely overhanging eaves. Most Prairie style homes have two-stories with a one story wing or porch. The American Foursquare (also called the Prairie Box) is a common subtype of Prairie style houses. Earlier American Foursquare are
understated and more vernacular but still adhere to the Prairie aesthetic. While later examples may have Mission, Italian Renaissance or even Classical secondary details. 106 Scottholm Terrace and 205 Scott Avenue are examples of Prairie Style in Scottholm.

**Tudor Revival (c. 1890 to c. 1940)**
Influenced by early English building traditions, Tudor Revival style houses emphasize highly-pitched, gabled roofs with elaborated chimneys. Many examples have decorative half-timbering, as well as tall, narrow windows with multi-pane glazing. 121 Scott Avenue, 202 Scottholm Boulevard and 108 Ramsey Avenue are examples in the Scottholm neighborhood.

**Craftsman (c. 1905 to c. 1930)**
Originating in southern California and inspired by the English Arts and Crafts movement, the Craftsman style became the dominate style for smaller homes built from around 1905 through the 1920s. The dominate features include wide overhanging eaves on low-pitched gabled roofs, exposed rafter, and porches supported by square columns and massive piers. The style is often associated with bungalows, yet many two-story houses were built as well. Examples of Craftsman style homes in Scottholm include 116 Ramsey Avenue and 208 Crawford Avenue.

**Spanish Eclectic (c. 1915 to c. 1940)**
With the Panama-California Exposition held in 1915, Spanish Colonial architecture received wider attention. The post-1915 examples strayed from the previous Mission interpretations, by emphasizing the richness of Spanish precedents in Latin America. Spanish Eclectic style houses usually have low-pitched roofs with little or no eave overhang and are clad with tile. Often there is one or more prominent arches, placed above a door or principal window, with a stucco wall surface. High styled examples normally have elaborated chimney tops and balconies with wood or iron railings. Scottholm has several examples including 201 Scott Avenue and 213 Scottholm Boulevard.

**Modern (c. 1935 to present)**
After World War II, Scottholm began seeing the construction of Modern style homes. These styles include minimal traditional, ranch, split-level, contemporary, and shed.

The Minimal Traditional found at 122 Ramsey Avenue, has a simplified form based on the Tudor style of the 1920’s and 1930’s, complete with dominate front gables and massive chimneys. Yet unlike Tudors Revival buildings, Minimal Traditional homes have a lower pitch roof and a simplified façade.

The Ranch style house finds its way to Scottholm in the early 1950s. One-story houses, Ranches have low-pitched roofs and broad, rambling facades, as can be seen in the house at 102 Scottholm Boulevard.

Split-level style homes also saw a rise in the 1950s. Generally having traditional decorative detailing, split-level style homes have half-story wings and sunken garages. Scottholm examples of split-level style homes include 214 Scottholm Terrace, 220 Crawford Avenue, and 228 Scottholm Terrace.

The Contemporary style, a less common modern style, was a favorite of architect-designed houses of the 1960’s and 1970’s. They are characterized by wide eave overhangs and either flat roofs or low-pitched roofs, with low, front-facing gables. 210 Scottholm Terrace is an example of a Contemporary Split-Level.

The most recent of the modern styles is the Shed style. It is characterized by moderate to high pitched shed-roofed elements, which dominate the façade and give effect of several geometric forms shoved together, as can be seen at 224 Scottholm Terrace.
House Spotlight:

**Early Italianates**

**2686 Genesee Street**

Originally owned by the Scott Family, this late 19th century Italianate farmhouse is one of the only remaining buildings from Scott Farms. According to a 1916 newspaper, the Scotts used this home as an inn for travelers on the Genesee Turnpike. After the farmland was sold to Amon Sanderson in 1914, the house was sold to and rehabilitated by E.A. O’Hara in 1915. His father, Edward H. O’Hara was a well-known publisher of the *Old Syracuse Herald*. E.A. O’Hara followed his father’s footsteps into journalism and eventually came to be president and publisher of the the *Herald-Journal*. It was he who ‘modernized’ the house, installing electricity and building the entry porch (below is a 1916 *Syracuse Herald* account of these modernizations). The home stayed within the O’Hara family until 1969.

**2800 Genesee Street**

The residence at 2800 Genesee Street is an excellent example of Italianate architecture in New York State. It is square in plan, with simple Italianate details, capped by belvedere with arched windows. The building’s history is associated with nineteenth century development around Syracuse, and with the rich agricultural history of the area. Onondaga County was originally part of the Central New York Revolutionary War tract. The land that the building occupies was originally “Military Lot 49,” in what was then the town of Manlius. Lieutenant George Leaycraft of New York City drew Lot 49 in 1791. The land was then divided and sold to settlers. Throughout the nineteenth century, the lot was occupied by a number of residents and farmers. The Italianate residence, built in the 1850’s, was most likely a farmhouse. In 1914, the East Genesee Extension Corporation purchased the lot for subdivision, which brought the home into the Scottholm neighborhood.
House Spotlight:

Neighborhood Connections

The Markson Brothers Company in Scottholm

A notable business in Syracuse, the Markson Brothers company specialized in the sale of furniture and other home goods. Started by four Polish immigrant brothers in 1905, Markson Brothers had stores in downtown Syracuse, Utica, Auburn, Oswego, and Rome. Several members of the next generation of Marksons continued to operate the business for years to come. Interestingly, several members of the Markson family decided to settle in Scottholm during its first years of development.

202 & 208 Scottholm Boulevard

These two houses, while not similar in style, have a Markson family connection. In 1929, Max Franklin and his wife, Esther Markson Franklin, moved into the home at 202 Scottholm Boulevard. The next year, Esther's sister, Kate Markson Liberman, and her husband, Arthur, moved into 208 Scottholm. Both Esther and Kate were daughters of Abraham Markson, the oldest of the original Markson brothers. Max Franklin was president of Franklin Co. Furniture, which was at one time the largest furniture chain in New York State. His marriage to Ester Markson is an interesting case of two furniture company families coming together!

102 Scott Avenue & Scottholm Boulevard

This residence is a great example of Spanish Eclectic style with excellent craftsmanship, and it remains in very good condition. The property was purchased from the East Genesee Extension Corp. in April, 1917 by Joseph O. and Marry Whitcomb and then in 1925 to Asher S. Markson. It stayed in the Markson family as an investment, passing from N. Wesley and Maybelle G. Markson to Isaac Markson on November 12, 1925. The house was built on his behalf in 1937.

306 Scottholm Boulevard

N. Wesley Markson, who had owned the property at 102 Scott Avenue, made his home at 306 Scottholm Boulevard in 1924. Lane & Goes were the builders, and were responsible for constructing a large portion of Scottholm around that time. N. Wesley Markson was another child of Abraham Markson, and he and other family members of his generation continued the family business following his father's death. The Marksons owned the home until 1946, when it was purchased by Meyer Rose and his wife. Rose was operator of Rose Liquor Distributors.
**Colonial Revival**

**112 Ramsey Avenue**

This residence is a good example of early 20th century, middle-class domestic Colonial Revival architecture and is consistent with the Revival styles predominant in the neighborhood. Some alterations to the house are evident, but original form, massing, and materials allow it to convey its historical significance dating to the period following the subdivision of the Scottholm Tract in the 1910s and the growth of this newly incorporated suburban Syracuse neighborhood.

The house was built c. 1929, following the 1920 purchase of the property from East Genesee Extension Corporation by George Howell, a chiropractor. It was purchased in 1928 by Stanley and Genevieve Porter; Stanley was employed at this time as assistant manager at the Onondaga Provident Loan Association, Inc, located downtown at 113 S. Salina Street. The Porters first appear as occupants in the 1930 Syracuse city directory. They occupied the house until the late 1950s. During its first decades, the house had residents from a middle- or upper-middle-class occupations employed downtown, consistent with Syracuse’s expanding professional class and the broad history of early-20th-century American residential suburbs.

This residence exemplifies several characteristics of houses in streetcar suburbs, including an elevated but not tremendous level of detail (such as its quarter-round windows and tapered chimney). Particularly, its orientation on a narrow lot, with its long dimension perpendicular to the street, represents the inclination in streetcar suburb design toward less street frontage and a more compact arrangement of houses. The end gable’s first-story porch (now enclosed as an interior room) was designed as a link between house and sidewalk. Houses of this form, style, and orientation are common throughout Scottholm and show the prevalent local use of a national design trend.

**Spanish Eclectic**

**201 Scott Avenue**

This house is a good example of the Spanish Eclectic style, and has retained a high level of integrity. Character-defining features include the roofing (red straight-barrel Mission tiles); stucco cladding; wood windows (including a distinctive triple-arched window); wood doors with iron strap hinges; small stucco projections imitating vigas; decorative iron sconces; low Mission style wall with decorative tiles; small iron balcony; and stucco-clad, Spanish-Eclectic style garage with red Mission-tile roof.

The property was purchased by Clara E. Poole from the East Genesee Extension Corporation (the developer of Scottholm) in 1919. She transferred the property in 1925 to Carl Sutphen, who, with his wife Lillian, transferred the property the same year to N. Edward Rosenberg, a lawyer. The latter deed has an attached mortgage, indicating the house was built by 1925. According to city directories, Rosenberg and his wife Leah lived in the house from 1927 to 1931. Jacob and Clara Karp moved into the house in 1932. A March 28, 1935 deed shows that the Karps were foreclosed upon, although they remained in the house until 1938. Jacob Karp was the proprietor of the Cameo Theater, and has been described as a “pioneer in the motion picture industry in Syracuse” (per January 23, 1970 and August 14, 1980 Herald-Journal articles).
**House Spotlight:**

### Tudor Revival

**308 Scottholm Boulevard**

This house has many distinctive architectural details that are consistent with the non-half-timber designs of Tudor Revival houses. Interestingly, the garage behind the house (presumably its contemporary) mimics some of the house’s features while adopting a more traditional half-timbered gable. Although the home lacks some of the more detailed Tudor Revival elements found in other houses of that style in Scottholm, it is distinctive in its own way and retains a great deal of integrity.

The property was first sold by the East Genesee Extension Corp. in 1923 to C.A. Sager, a sales agent at the National Cash Register Company. Sager held onto the property, likely as an investment, until he sold it to Lane & Goes in 1927. Lane & Goes, the contractors who built this house, advertised it as a “beautiful new English home just completed” in the August 13, 1927 issue of the Syracuse Herald (see ad above). They sold the house in October of 1927 to Marion Jackson Wyatt, a widow. Upon her death in 1944, the house was sold to Edwin Euphrat, a physician, and his wife Ann, who lived there until 1966. The house has changed hands five times since then.

### Real estate advertisement from the August 13, 1927 Syracuse Herald

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**House Spotlight:**

### Modern

**230 Scottholm Terrace**

This house is part of a modern development on Scottholm Terrace, built on one-and-one-half lots of the original Scottholm subdivision (lot 24 and the southerly half of lot 23 in block 7). It is a good example of the architecture of its period, and it still retains much of its modern stylistic features. This architecture would likely be of interest to scholars of mid-century modernism.

This house was built in the late 1950s or early 1960s by Albert Homes, Inc. It is one of a row of houses on Scottholm Terrace built by Albert Homes that were all originally owned by Syracuse University professors. This home was no different; Albert Homes sold it in 1962 to Frank and Rosemary Munger; the former was a Syracuse University professor.