

## GLENWOODS

This magnificent brick English manor-style house was created by three of Atlanta's most illustrious architects, Neil Reed, Walter Downing and Phillip Shutze. It is interesting to note that most of the principal as well as many of the master craftsmen involved with Swan House were also the creators of Glenwoods.

Originally, the seven and one-half acres surrounding the house encompassed formal gardens designed by the internationally known English landscape architect, Robert D. Cridling. In the Spring, the home is a fairy-land of grand old Oaks beginning to turn green and of multi-colored azaleas and dogwoods. The infinite variety of plants bespeak of the original owners' horticultural studies here and abroad. While attending such a seminar in England, the former owners met a German landscaper, a Mr. Haemer, and engaged him to take charge of their gardens with five men under him. Many ancient English boxwood were shipped to Atlanta to be placed at Glenwoods. Stone for the walls and walks were brought by mule cart from Stone Mountain. It is estimated that there is enough stone here to build a house the size of the existing one. Charming vinettes were planned for strollers, including two ponds, a stone bridge, stone walkways, a barn in the shape of an English church with two milking stalls, and grape arbors. Several formal gardens and numerous stone walks and benches were tucked away in shady spots of quiet contemplation.

Sadly, for the preservation of these grounds as well as the other mansions on Ponce de Leon, some years back this street was zoned highrise, making the maintenance of such city estates financially prohibitive. An attempt was made by the current owners to find a patron to sponsor the grounds as a conservation garden. But again, this proved financially unfeasible.

The house, built for the late Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Dodson who were its only previous owners, became the home of a young attorney and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. A. Leigh Baier, some seven months ago, shortly after their first wedding anniversary.

The home offers an interesting example of a young couple preserving an older home while adapting to the way of life as well as the realities of today's living. This is reflected in the areas that they have planned for informal living within a formal framework. It is also reflected in the use of the adjoining land for townhouses. These townhouses will be in the same English manor-style of Glenwoods. Great pains have been taken to preserve the large oaks and other ancient trees and shrubs. When the construction is completed, the landscaping for the townhouses will largely be composed of the outstanding bushes and shrubs that were saved for this purpose and Glenwoods itself will be walled off into a similar townhouse effect.

The house was built in 1918. Both Neil Reed and Walter Downing were involved in its actual erection. In 1933, the interior of the house was totally ripped out and an entire new interior was created by Phillip Shutze. The new decor featured breathtaking ornamental plaster work ceilings and hand carved panels in the dining room, extraordinary millwork, handsome marquetry floors and elaborate moldings throughout the house. Palatial mantles and magnificent Chippendale fan light doors were brought from Europe to be placed in this home. The walls were painted and hand-rubbed for sixteen coats, being so finely done that they appear freshly painted after thirty six years. The home encompasses the grandeur and craftsmanship of an older home as well as the conveniences of modern living, including a marble steam cabinet, two burglar alarm systems, an elevator, a bomb shelter, two commercial heating systems, two commercial air conditioning systems, a flood lighting

Mr. and Mrs. Baier are building on this very solid foundation and have already added a number of outstanding items as well as many mementoes from their European wedding trip and other travels. They make it a point to bring back a significant keepsake from each such trip.

Even a brief visit to Glenwoods makes the visitor feel that they know the people who live here. Every nook and corner of the home bears the hallmark of their taste and interests as well as their way of life. The visitor will immediately note their ardent love of photographs and mementoes. Also in evidence are numerous tea sets. Each bedroom is so equipped and Glenwoods' continual flow of house guests are treated to morning tea in bed.

Glenwoods has also hosted numerous international visitors. The dining room table is always set as Mrs. Baier believes in keeping it ever ready for use. The Irish coffee tray in the dining room reveals the Baiers' favorite way of entertaining. They particularly enjoy inviting friends over after the theater or the symphony for Irish coffee and good conversation.

It is unmistakable that the entire home is thoroughly used, enjoyed and cherished and that the Baiers have made a total commitment to the care and preservation of this architectural land mark. They say that they plan to live here for the rest of their lives.

"The Baiers' purchase of the house has undoubtedly saved it from destruction in the name of progress."

# Glenwoods Controversy

The property known as "The Glenwoods" is at 1632 Ponce de Leon Avenue, in the City of Atlanta. The mansion was built around 1918 by yeast tycoon J. Glenwell Dodson and reportedly designed by Reid and furnished later by Shutze. Once surrounded by extensive gardens, it is now surrounded by the Dorchester Apartments.

The Glenwoods issue was lost when the apartments were built around 1970, and in January 1992 it became an issue again. This time the owner wishes to rent it as a "reception facility," for which it is not zoned. It is situated in the Druid Hills Landmark District, where zoning was passed in 1982 to exclude commercial land use.

Members of the DHCA were instrumental in writing and passing this "Landmark Zoning" intended to foster residential use along the Ponce corridor. Non-residential uses, permitted only to save structures, are few and selected for their quiet, low-traffic character.

While minor changes after 12 years may be proposed, it is still residential. There are currently 227 owned residences along that stretch of Ponce and S. Ponce plus, of course, the Dorchester Apartments. By contrast, there are only 14 non-residential uses, which include nine churches and schools (permissible in all zones), three non-profit institutions, one golf club, and a single non-conforming law office. With no high-rises or commercial spot-zones, it still feels spacious.

The Glenwoods case would crack the carefully-crafted protective armor. DHCA has backed a 26 month battle to prevent commercialization of the property because:

1. The near neighborhoods paid dearly for Druid Hills property, often after careful assessment of zoning protection. They are understandably opposed to the onset of commercial activity.

2. The property has essentially no on-site parking and, since apartments surround it, no prospect of paving any.

3. A "party permit" will inevitably boost the property's asking price higher than its free market residential value. One of two things may happen: it may sell to a new owner for commercial use or be declared "no longer suitable for residential use." Translation: "Our price is too high for residential use."

4. We foresee an anguishing precedent if Glenwoods breaks existing zoning. If the area becomes primarily non-conforming, adherence to residential "Landmark Zoning" becomes pointless. It's our duty, according to objectives B, D, E, F, and H of our by-laws, to prevent that.

To this end, we've appeared to testify before the Atlanta Zoning Review Board (to defeat a City Council amendment to legalize party houses), the Atlanta Bureau of Zoning Adjustment (the hearing was canceled), and the Urban Design Commission (twice).

Glenwoods is now on notice from the Atlanta Bureau of Buildings that reception use is not legal. No parties have been observed since Christmas. However, Glenwoods recently challenged the county decision in Fulton County Superior Court.