



West Park

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded 2005 • Cleveland, Ohio

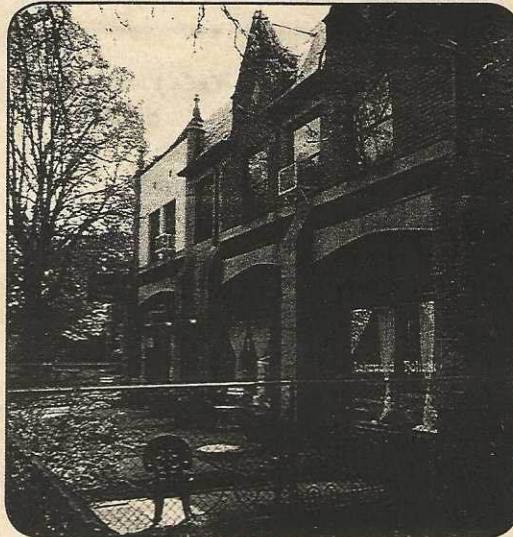
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The Grand Plan for Exeter Square

by Dar McGeady

TUCKED AWAY AT the extreme northwest corner of West Park stands a two-story brick and stone building which brings to mind the architecture of Old England. The building is part of a 1929 development plan for multiple structures named Exeter Square, after a village in Devonshire, England. The triangular-shaped parcel was once the J.C. Pilgrim estate on Fischer Road at Riverside Drive, purchased by The S. H. Kleinman Realty Co. The Fischer Road frontage of 530 feet, south of the Lakewood border, was designated for a group of buildings comprising street-level stores with suites above. The 350-foot Riverside Drive frontage would feature apartment houses with a view of the Rocky River Valley.



The Exeter Square Building at 16903 Fischer Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 2017 Photo by Dar McGeady

forecast "...at least twenty stores and 82 apartment suites of three to six rooms each to be provided besides the garage for 54 cars..." The development of businesses, homes and apartments, as originally planned, was expected to eventually produce a total investment of nearly \$1 million!

The designer was architect Alfred Wilson Harris, who had been active in Cleveland since 1917. His specialty was English-style houses, commercial blocks and apartment buildings.

The Exeter Square building was completed by S. H. Kleinman in 1929. Located at 16903 Fischer Road, it has three stores at street level (a Kroger grocery occupied the store on the right for several years) with rental suites on the second floor.

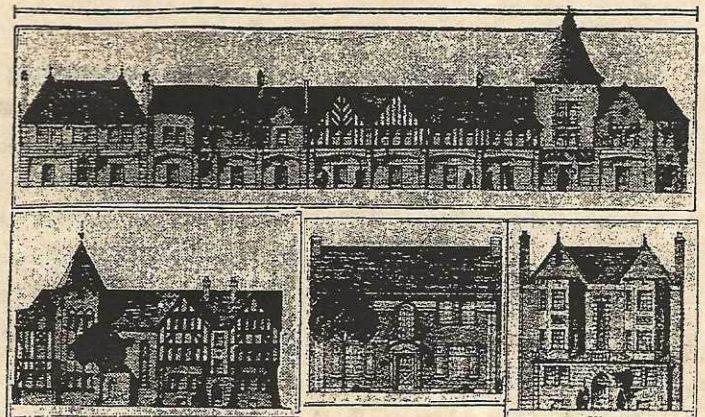
FISCHER RD., 16903
NEAR RIVERSIDE DRIVE
5 rooms and bath; new building; \$65 per month.
Call or phone Mr. Bendell. MAIN 6240.
The S. H. Kleinman Realty Co.
Third Floor National City Bank Bldg.

Plain Dealer classified ad, November 15, 1929

At the corner where business and apartment buildings were to meet, the plan called for a double tower effect three stories high to carry the English motif along the Riverside and Pilgrim Drive frontages. Some buildings were to be constructed by the Kleinman Co., while other parcels would be sold to and built upon by individual developers. Old English and Tudor design elements were mandated for all buildings and homes in the allotment in order to maintain a harmonious aesthetic.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* of January 24, 1929, reported that "...no individual parcel need sacrifice anything for a driveway. This is provided for along the rear lot lines, the drive leading to a quarter-acre area intended as a site for a community garage and community heating plant." Future development

\$1,000,000 Development Laid Out



Architectural rendering of Exeter Square front elevations appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 24, 1929



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A note to our members: Please inform us when you change your primary postal mail address, e-mail address, or phone number. Thank you.

West Park Historical Society is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization under IRS section 501(c)(3)

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Exeter Square — Continued from page 1

Mr. Kleinman's ambitious plan for West Park's Exeter Square, along with his other area subdivisions, would be unfulfilled as the devastating Stock Market Crash in October 1929 became a prelude to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Architect Alfred Wilson Harris passed away in 1932.

Sadly, Samuel H. Kleinman, one of Cleveland's outstanding real estate figures, would not live to see the end of the Depression. He passed away at age 46 of a heart attack suffered at his Fairmount Boulevard home on June 10, 1934. His obituary in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* credited him with being "a community builder and developer of 91 subdivisions... pioneering the sound idea of making the residential allotment a thing of beauty rather than a gridiron of straight, unlovely streets." He had been in the real estate profession for more than 25 years following his graduation from Baldwin-Wallace College.

Although on a smaller scale than Mr. Kleinman envisioned, Exeter Square subdivision today is a beautiful enclave of classic brick and stone Colonial, Tudor, and traditional-style homes built as the U.S. economy recovered during the post-Depression era.

— Dar McGeady



The main entrance to the Exeter Square building's second-floor office suites.