

Mid-century tableau fades in Arlington



PHOTOS BY EVY MAGES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

A spiffy new house in the Williamsburg section of Arlington County is typical of the tear-down trend in that and other well-located neighborhoods in the D.C. area. Where 1950s and '60s ramblers once stood, houses three or four times as big are being built.

When Johanna Braden returned from overseas in 1999, she and her husband, Thomas, who had been a defense attaché, decided to move to the Williamsburg neighborhood of Arlington County because they thought the schools would be ideal for their two children.

After working as a nurse for 35 years, she opened Two the Moon, a gift shop in the Williamsburg Shopping Center, two years ago.

Through her store, she enjoys getting to know many neighbors and their families. There's a small-town feel to the neighborhood, which sits on Arlington's border with Fairfax County.

"You know your neighbors, and therefore they're sort of there for you," Johanna Braden said. "People bring things over when you're sick."

Mansions and ramblers side by side: Within a mile of the East Falls Church Metro station, Williamsburg has maintained its low-key, almost off-the-radar vibe.

Williamsburg is made up of 1,100 households, mostly in single-family homes.

Many houses were built between 1955 and 1960, but the landscape began to change about 15 years ago.

Some houses that once attracted prospective buyers lost their appeal. People wanted more space. So the tear-downs began — people bought a house and replaced it with something bigger.

Some of the original homes were 1,000-square-foot ramblers with three small bedrooms, one bathroom, and a dining room, living room and kitchen on one level, said Jim Toronto, who has been working in real estate for more than 30 years and is the treasurer of the Williamsburg Civic Association.

The houses that replaced the original ones are as large as 3,000 to 4,000 square feet. Other homeowners have renovated or enlarged homes that were original to the neighborhood.

More recently, in the past 10 years, real estate companies have gotten into the act, buying original homes, tearing them down and building new ones on a speculative basis. The result is a neighborhood, like others around the Beltway, where original ramblers stand side by side with larger homes.

The Williamsburg Shopping Center — in walking distance for some, on Williams-

burg Boulevard near Sycamore Street — meets residents' needs with more than a dozen storefronts. Besides Braden's gift shop, a barbershop, a 7-Eleven, a CVS drugstore, a bank, two restaurants and a dry cleaner are among the businesses, some of which have been there for many years.

Just outside the civic association's boundaries is the Lee Harrison Shopping Center, where Harris Teeter, Starbucks, H&R Block and Chesapeake Bagel Bakery are among the businesses. A Safeway is across the street. One late Monday morning, a line stretched almost to the door at Starbucks.

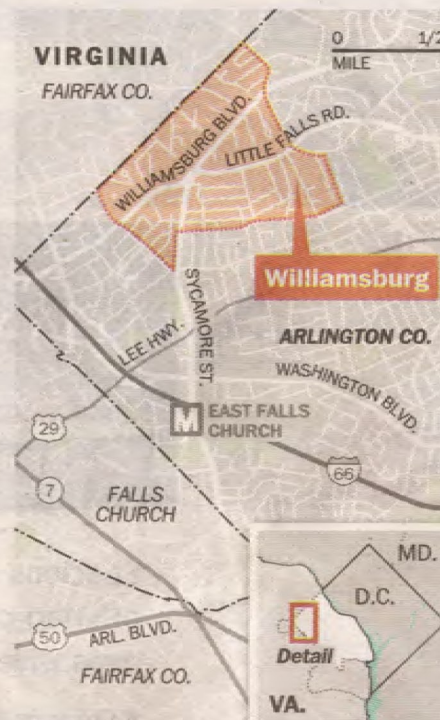
Improvement projects underway: Williamsburg has a touch of Civil War history at Minor's Hill, named for George Minor, at Powhatan Street and 35th Street North in Minor Hill Park. Union troops used the hill to their advantage by building an observation tower on the site. They also used hot-air balloons to keep an eye on Confederate troops in the area.

Adjacent to that park is another, Emily Sharp Park. And Tuckahoe Park, a larger green space with nature trails, lies just outside the boundaries of the Williamsburg Civic Association.

Williamsburg benefited from one of three street-improvement projects that were identified by residents and approved by the Arlington County Board in 2013. The county opted to spend \$521,409 on the second phase of a project to improve parts of North Sycamore Street, reducing traffic lanes, adding bike lanes and creating ramps for disabled people at intersections.

In 2007, residents of the nearby Arlington-East Falls Church Civic Association requested that Arlington County create a citizen task force for land-use recommen-

Along the Fairfax line,
buyers and builders are
updating and upsizing



Source: maps4news.com/©here
WEIYI CAI/THE WASHINGTON POST

dations for the area adjacent to the East Falls Church Metro station. The result was creation of the East Falls Church Area Plan, which recommends future mixed-use development projects and proposed limits on building heights.

Living there: Williamsburg is bordered roughly by the Fairfax County line to the northwest, North Kensington Street to the northeast, and 27th Street North, North Sycamore Street and North Trinidad Street to the south.



Thirty-nine homes have sold in Williamsburg in the past 12 months, according to Toronto, an agent with McEneaney Associates. They range from a three-bedroom, three-bath house that sold for \$650,000 to a six-bedroom, five-bathroom house that went for \$1.9 million. Seven properties are on the market, with prices ranging from \$1.649 million for a six-bedroom, five-bath house to \$2.095 million for six bedrooms and six bathrooms.

Schools: Nottingham and Tuckahoe elementary schools, Williamsburg Middle, and Yorktown High.

Transit: The closest Metro station is East Falls Church, on the Orange and Silver lines. Metro and Arlington Transit provide bus service. With Interstate 66 nearby, this is a car-oriented area.

Crime: In the past 12 months, according to Arlington police, the area had three burglaries — two residential and one commercial.

realestate@washpost.com

washingtonpost.com

To see more photos of Williamsburg, go to washingtonpost.com/realestate.