



# Revival VERNACULAR

{March 2011}

[www.revivalconstruction.com](http://www.revivalconstruction.com)

*Creating Beautiful Homes and Lasting Relationships*

## Knollwood

### *An Architectural and Social Landmark*

After the turn of the century, wealthy Atlantans began to purchase property north of the city along Paces Ferry Road to build summerhouses. James L. Dickey, Sr. was one of the early pioneers of the area, and he purchased 400 acres from F. M. Powers in 1899. In 1904 Robert F. Maddox bought 73 acres of Dickey's property for \$90 per acre. Maddox built a summer home, stable, servants' quarters, and other outbuildings, and the property was named Woodhaven.

At the end of 1911, Maddox sold William H. Kiser the eastern portion of his property that included the original summer house and several outbuildings. At that time, Maddox began to build a large home on his remaining property and hired architect Walter T. Downing for the design. The Tudor Revival home, also named Woodhaven, was built by 1913, and Maddox lived at Woodhaven until 1962 when he sold the remaining seventeen acres to the State of Georgia. The State demolished Maddox's home to build the new governor's mansion.



The original summer house was built by Maddox between 1904-5 and stood where the current Knollwood sits today. While the Maddox family modestly referred to the summer house as a "cottage," it was a significant home and the stage for elaborate events. The Atlanta Constitution wrote that the home "was elegant enough to invite Teddy Roosevelt to a white-tie-and-tails dinner that began with caviar." Woodhaven, in both versions, was the scene of many brilliant social affairs, and this tradition continued at the new Knollwood.

In 1917-18 the Kisers hired Norman C. Butts to develop the formal terraced garden in the rear of the house. These gardens were considered among the finest in the city. The formal terraced garden was featured in the *Garden History of Georgia* (1933) as well as on many spring garden tours for local charities.

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## Revival *in Print*

In January of this year, Wright Marshall began writing a regular series for *Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles* focusing on Atlanta's forgotten architects. While several of the architects will be familiar from the *Vernacular*, this feature will be published every other month and will continue to highlight important but less well-known architects. Please look for these articles in coming months.

With Revival's focus on the renovations and additions to pre-World War II homes, it is important that we know the history and background of all of our projects. Through our research and experience, we have developed a great deal of information that we want to share and have created a blog, [www.thegeorgianrevival.wordpress.com](http://www.thegeorgianrevival.wordpress.com), to do so. The articles on the blog are longer versions of some of the *Vernacular* features as well as other articles that have been written for other groups or projects.

## Our *Growing* Family



Eleanor Farmer Meeker has been Revival's Office Manager and Director of Finance and Administration for the last nine years. While Eleanor has been one of the foundations of our company, she has recently decided to reduce her hours to spend more time with her family and to pursue other interests. She will continue to handle Revival's bookkeeping and financial duties but will work only three partial days every week. We wish Eleanor the best and are glad to have her continue in this capacity.

With Eleanor's transition, Revival has hired Crystal Belloit as its new Office Manager. A native of east Tennessee, Crystal has lived in Atlanta for ten years and graduated from Kennesaw State University with a degree in English. Crystal brings with her a great deal of experience promoting home improvement in Atlanta at both SEMCO Productions, which produces the Atlanta Home Show, and

*Atlanta Home Improvement* Magazine. In her free time, she loves watching sports, especially college football and professional tennis; reading mystery novels; listening to music; and training for 5k's. Crystal lives in Buckhead with her husband Chas and two cats, Rafa and Thomas.

## Brookwood Hills Transformation Tour *Saturday, March 26th 10-4*

The Brookwood Hills Friends Group is hosting its first *Transformations Tour of Homes* to benefit Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The tour will feature five renovated homes designed by D. Stanley Dixon Architect. Stan Dixon, who lives in Brookwood Hills, is an award-winning architect who specializes in classical design.

One of Revival's current projects at 80 Huntington Road will be featured on the tour. This year's theme, *transformations*, parallels the transformations that take place with both the homes on the tour and in the lives of the children being treated at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Please visit the website [www.choa.org/brookwoodhillstour](http://www.choa.org/brookwoodhillstour) to purchase your tickets and support this worthy cause.

{Article Continued from Cover}

In 1929 the Kisers engaged Hentz, Adler, and Shutze to design their new home. The plans were “put out to bid” in February 1930, and Kiser awarded the contract to Collins, Holbrook, and Collins, the contractor for both the Goodrum and English houses on Paces Ferry that were also designed by Shutze. The construction of Knollwood continued into 1931, and the Kisers began entertaining in the fall of 1931.

The Kiser family sold the property in 1952. Bernard Wolff purchased the home and a few surrounding acres, and the Smyrna Land Company purchased and developed the remainder of the property. While the home has had several owners since the Wolff family, it has remained largely intact, and the gracious legacy of entertaining has continued to the present owner, Barbara Morgan.

For the design, Phillip Shutze took inspiration from several Georgian precedents in England and her colonies. As with all of his designs, Shutze would not simply copy an earlier design but would use his extensive historical vocabulary to develop a dynamic system of architectural devices. While the Paces Ferry façade was modeled after Chatham, an 18th century estate in Stafford County, Virginia, he used numerous other sources as well.

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The beautifully designed limestone porte cochere recalls the work of English architect William Kent, but the double curved stairs with its elegant wrought iron railing was inspired by the Duncan house (1814) in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. While the interior stairs allude to colonial Virginia, the design was modeled after a staircase from the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Clapton, England. This precedent was published in one of the volumes in the firm’s extensive library, and the conditions of these books indicate their constant use. As was typical, Shutze was inspired by a historical precedent but developed the design so that it was his own. The Knollwood staircase is a wonderful example. The Deaf and Dumb Asylum provided the overall inspiration, but Shutze then took details from the Brush-Everhard House near Williamsburg and created a delightfully new combination.

Shutze’s extensive knowledge of both English and American Georgian architecture allowed him to improvise and develop a new design that was uniquely his. While the design was Shutze’s, Knollwood feels as if it could have comfortably been set in both colonial Virginia and contemporary England.



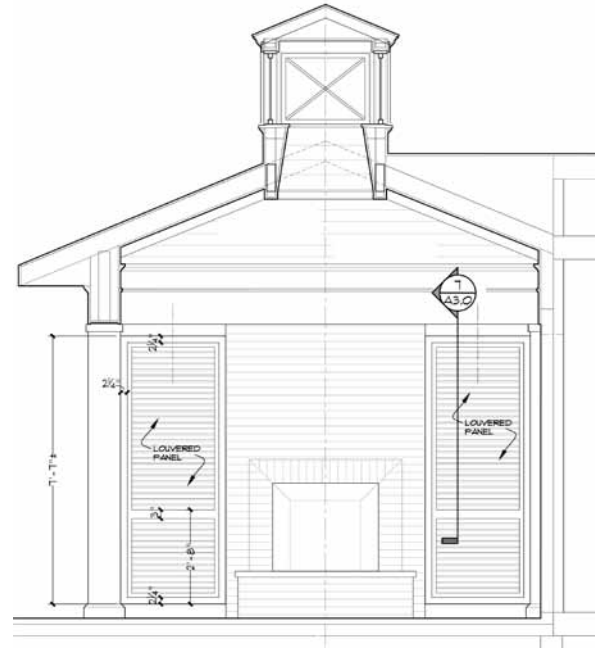


# Vernacular Term

## Cupola

*A cupola is a small, typically dome-like structure that crowns a larger roof or dome. These decorative structures can admit light or air to the structure below. Lantern, belvedere, and belfry are also terms that fit under the cupola category. The cupola that sits atop Mount Vernon is one of the most famous examples in American architecture.*

*Revival is currently building this lantern version of a cupola on its project in Brookwood Hills that was designed by D. Stanley Dixon Architects.*



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