

# Bolton Hill walking tour offers varied parks, architecture

By EARL ARNETT

Just as the thawing, moist ground reveals its secrets in the Spring, so does Baltimore seem to open its hidden recesses during the month of May. Bolton Hill, for example, a city neighborhood often cited as a model of urban design and restoration, will welcome walkers Wednesday from 10 A.M. to 5.30 P.M. in a tour that will feature houses, gardens and parks.

Many of the homes in this residential area are well known, but the gardens and parks of Bolton Hill comprise a special attraction this time of year. They combine a Japanese sense of space with an English love of greenery into a visual delight for the urban stroller.

Visitors will probably even have the unusual opportunity to meet two men for whom a small park on Dolphin lane is named. Actually, the area is labeled a "triangle," in that city policy requires that parks cannot be named for living people.

A small plaque on one of enclosure's brick walls reads: "Dedicated to the spirit of neighborliness exemplified by William Gailes Contee and Edward Wilson Parago, May 1971." Both Mr. Contee and Mr. Parago are very much alive and reside next door to each other across the street from their namesake.

Office workers come there for lunch and children play near the fountain in warm weather, Mr. Contee said, who has lived on Dolphin lane since 1930. Now 80 years old; the proud progenitor of 5 children, 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; he still operates a small furniture repair and upholstering business at this location.

"I get along very nice," he said when asked about his neighborhood. "If you behave yourself and stay in your own yard, you'll get along."

Mr. Parago has lived in the same house since 1908. The neighborhood has always had a mixture of white and black residents, he said, although many of the small structures once inhabited by black servant families have been razed.

"We never had any trouble," he said about his neighbors. "We understand each other. We always stay around here and exchange words with people. I'm really satisfied with the improvements; they're keeping out a lot of undesirables."

A retired maintenance man, the 74-year-old Mr. Parago spends most of his time at home. He watches visitors to the park, many of them women with children, and ponders the steady flow of

people in and out of the Bolton Hill area.

The median strip along Eutaw place, which forms the approximate western boundary of the Bolton Hill neighborhood, has also been restored to its original beauty. Its benches, fountains and pathways define a pleasant oasis in the midst of automobile traffic.

Mrs. Charles Austrian helped the city locate the water system for the Francis Scott Key Fountain at Eutaw place and Lanvale street. To the delight of the children who find its relatively deep pools fascinating, the apparatus now works, giving new life to a famous monument.

Sculpted by Jean Marius Antonin Mercie, a French artist, and dedicated in 1911, the monument was given to the city by Charles L. Marburg. Although the style is dated and too flamboyant for the present age, the bronze figures and plaques give the passerby interesting subjects for casual curiosity.

Another urban park off Eutaw place near Mosher street is named for Billie Holiday. Modestly small, its development was spurred by sculptor Tylden Streett, who maintains a studio there. All that is visible of his proposal for a monument to the famous jazz singer is a concrete base. He has offered to do the work for nothing but has still been unable to find the funds to pay for materials.

The empty space forms a poignant contrast to the Key sculpture, stirring a current of reverie over the lives of these two different Marylanders and what they have meant to the rest of the country.

The variety of parks in this neighborhood gives surprise, contemplation and pleasant exercise for the walker. The street park in the 1300 block of John street, Rutter Mill Park on Rutter street between Mosher street and Lafayette avenue, the grassy common at Bolton Square, the mall at Bolton Place, the triangle park at Dolphin and Howard streets, an unnamed park at Bolton and Wilson streets—add these to the private gardens that abound in the area, and you have the ingredients for a delightful spring walk.

The Bolton Hill Garden Club will also be setting up more than 100 hanging baskets of flowers along the tour route this weekend to embellish the spring flavor of Wednesday's tour.

So even those who find no particular pleasure in viewing other people's houses will discover other pastimes. Sometimes the fragrance of a flower, the touch of fresh green and the pleasant feel of walking in the spring sun give more rewards than anything else.