Welcome to:
Historic Ghent

Image Courtesy of Norfolk Public Library/
Sargeant Memorial Room

The Holland House

The Holland House was built in 1904 by Clarence Neff, of Neff & Thompson, at the foot of the Ghent Bridge. The structure represents one of the first apartment buildings in Ghent and one of the earliest apartment houses in Norfolk, which began to appear on the landscape at the turn of the nineteenth century. According to Ghent’s National Register of Historic Places nomination form, the Holland House was built “in anticipation of housing needs for the 1907 Jamestown Exposition held in Norfolk” (p.7). In any event, the apartment building was constructed to take advantage of the location on the streetcar line in the bustling new suburb. The first residents included professionals such as attorneys, doctors, and nurses, and the building featured amenities like a café, dry cleaner, ballroom, and dining room.

Places of Interest in Historic Ghent:

1. Chrysler Museum of Art
2. Site of Sara Leigh Hospital
3. The Holland House
4. John Graham’s House
5. Christ-St. Luke’s Church

To learn more about Norfolk’s first suburb, Historic Ghent, visit http://www.norfolk.gov/Planning/comehome/Ghent_History.asp
Ghent Farm was purchased by The Norfolk Company in 1890 to become Norfolk’s first high-end planned suburban development.

John Graham is the civil engineer who designed Ghent. His first improvement was to replace the old wooden footbridge with a new cast iron footbridge in 1892. Construction began in 1892. Ghent homes were the most elaborate with modern amenities of plumbing, electrical and access to the electric streetcar.

Sarah Leigh Hospital, formally located on Mowbray Arch facing The Hague, was erected in 1902 however it caught fire and was demolished in 1987.

The Ghent Club was built in 1903 as a social club house for the middle to upper-class. It hosted balls and other club activities.

By 1914 Ghent proper was fully developed.

In the early 1900s places of worship began to erect.

Between 1900 and 1910 the first apartments, red brick Colonial Revival architectural style were built.

The electric trolley was an essential component to Ghent’s development, allowing residents easy access to downtown.

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