

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

## SKILLS THAT FULFILL THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL STANDARDS

- ✓ **Math** is the science of patterns. In his architectural designs, Goodman created patterns of bricks, arches and glass for example, applying rules of proportion, scale and customary measurement.
- ✓ **Language Arts** opportunities for writing are plentiful. Students can partner and role play as architect and client. Using the background information on a client/classmate, students can write a profile of their client and draw a picture of a house based on their needs. A rubric could be designed by students for the class to assess each other's design and writing and if the architect met the needs of the client. Collaborative learning. Pair off, one architect to one client. Then switch.
- ✓ **Visual Arts** is exemplified by The Commons of McLean, inspired by nature and serving as a model for principles of composition and structure. Goodman was inspired by his surroundings and experimented with materials and design to create the innovative buildings for which he is famous. Goodman's buildings blended in with their surroundings as reflected in his fascination with glass, open spaces and light. Students might choose the culture and art of their own family heritage to guide their designs as they use their own diverse background to draw and create house/building designs. They can compare their chosen elements to those Goodman used in The Commons such as glass, brick and communal, open spaces.
- ✓ **Science** is what describes Goodman's experience throughout his life as an architect. Goodman experimented with innovative building materials/design and new construction systems as seen in Hollin Hills. Involve your students in the design process using materials from their own local areas. Just as Goodman wanted to construct affordable, community-inspiring housing, your students can conceptualize housing for the homeless, for instance, using recycled materials.
- ✓ **Social Studies** can explore the economic, historic and geographic influence on architectural design. Display an aerial map on computer of The Commons/Tysons Corner and give a brief talk on Goodman's elements of design. Include examples of significant and historic architecture, but also point out design features of "everyday" buildings and houses and how the location and function of Tysons Corner and The Commons influenced other Fairfax building design. Have students write notes in an architect's sketch journal, where they can draw and record design details of buildings in Tysons Corner that they visit or view on the internet. Have them design/draw an apartment complex in Fairfax County or a house for someone moving to Tysons Corner.

# LESSON PLAN

## CHARLES M. GOODMAN AND THE COMMONS OF MCLEAN IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

This interdisciplinary lesson plan, guided by information contained within this website, will underscore the relationship between architecture and a broader world understanding. Designed to appeal to the interests and abilities of 4th graders, students will experience the creativity and challenges of being an architect, while at the same time gaining practice in skills related to national education standards in math, language arts, visual arts, science and social studies. Students will be encouraged to explore the work of architect Charles M. Goodman, The Commons of McLean, and Tysons Corner of Fairfax County, as well as their own local history and the city around them.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide a profile of Charles M. Goodman and his architectural works.
2. To acquaint the students with The Commons of McLean and its relevancy to Fairfax County.
3. To enhance the students' appreciation of architecture within Fairfax County.
4. To provide activities for students to promote a familiarity with some of the elements of architecture.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

#### WHAT IS AN ARCHITECT?

Answer: An architect is a professional who plans and designs buildings—such as houses, schools and skyscrapers—and the sites they are constructed upon. An architect expresses creative ideas through use of form and space, taking into consideration function and aesthetic appeal.

#### WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE?

Answer: Architecture is the art or practice of designing buildings, open areas, communities, and other types of structures such as bridges.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LANDSCAPE, SOFTSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE?

Answer: The landscape comprises the visible features of the land surrounding a building. There are two categories of landscape. One is softscape, or any horticultural feature, such as grass, trees, shrubs and flowers. The other is hardscape, or any built feature, such as brick walkways, stone walls and fountains.

## WHO WAS CHARLES M. GOODMAN?

Answer: Charles M. Goodman was a famous architect. He was born in New York and lived from 1906 to 1992. He grew up outside of Chicago and received his architecture degree from Illinois Institute of Technology. Before the age of 30, he moved to Washington D.C. where he designed the original terminal at Washington National Airport (now Reagan National) and later became the principal architect for the Army Air Forces Air Transport Command during WWII. After founding his own firm called Charles M. Goodman Associates in 1946, over the next three decades he established himself as the leading modernist architect in the Washington D.C. area and became famous for his residential designs throughout the country. The hallmarks of modernist architecture he incorporated in his work were experimentation with the use of new materials and simplification of forms by reducing ornamentation.

## WHAT WAS HIS CONTRIBUTION TO FAIRFAX COUNTY?

Answer: Charles M. Goodman was an architect who had an historical impact on Fairfax County, as commemorated by the listing of his acclaimed modernist homes of Hollin Hills in Alexandria, VA, on the National Register of Historic Places and in the Virginia Landmarks Register. He is also known for his design of Hickory Cluster in Reston, VA, and for the subject of our lesson, The Commons of McLean in Tysons Corner, VA, both in Fairfax County.

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HIS DESIGN OF THE COMMONS OF MCLEAN?

Answer: These beautiful garden apartments and townhouses designed by Charles M. Goodman were built later in his career in phases from 1965-1973. The architectural elements he used included modernist geometric shapes, flat roofs and abundant use of glass combined with classic arches, beams, and brick masonry. The Commons of McLean teaches us that it is possible to achieve a good result by combining architectural styles. Goodman also believed in creating a sense of community using landscaped open spaces where people could gather. He included walkways and fountains and used the natural slopes of the land to guide the placement of buildings rather than simply clearing and grading the land first, which was the usual practice. The Commons also served an important purpose by housing a growing population at the beginning of the economic rise of Tysons Corner as a thriving community in Fairfax County.

## VOCABULARY:

Architect, architecture, design, aesthetic, modernist,  
landscape, softscape, hardscape, community

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## PROCEDURE:

- Read the objectives, essential questions and vocabulary words to the students.
  - Using the website for An Uncommon Architect as a resource, review photos and videos with the students to establish a visual understanding of the Goodman principles used at The Commons of McLean and other significant projects.
  - Handout Goodman Principles worksheet.
  - Class discussion of Goodman Principles and examples of similar architectural contemplations in their own neighborhoods.
  - Assign the class to view buildings and other architectural elements of their neighborhood which exemplify Goodman principles. Encourage students to share examples on Instagram using the hashtag, #anuncommonarchitect, #goodmanprinciples, and #architecture
  - Hand out the Word Search to further familiarize students with vocabulary terms.
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## EXTENSIONS

- Have groups of students act as planner and devise their own set of local architectural guidelines for their town. They should explain how architectural styles (such as building colors and roof styles) and city plans (such as street width, areas zoned for residential versus business, areas designated for parks or open space) should be regulated.
- Have students use cameras to document the old and new architectural styles in their community. Again, encouraging students to share on Instagram using hashtags such as #anuncommonarchitect, #goodmanprinciples and #architecture
- Have students create a short essay on their neighborhood, outlining ways in which the population is encouraged to interact with each other as well as nature. Is there a common meeting area? Are there park spaces? Does the landscape interact with the streetscape? Is the history or natural element present or was it changed to allow for their homes?

# WORD SEARCH

Charles M. Goodman was a notable architect during the modernist period who contributed greatly to the DC Metro area with much of his recognized work in the Fairfax County area.

Below is a Word Search containing relevant terms. Can you find the words listed below?



ARCHITECTURE

COMMONS

FAIRFAX

GOODMAN

LANDSCAPE

SOFTSCAPE

TOWNHOUSES

TYSONS CORNER

# GOODMAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**Charles M. Goodman is known for certain design principles. Listed below are examples of these elements illustrated at The Commons of McLean. Can you find any examples in your own neighborhood that reflect similar thinking?**



## CURVES AND LINES

Charles M. Goodman made use of geometric elements in his design. Lines, arches and curves are examples of geometry. An example is shown here. Can you find a similar example in your home or neighborhood?



## COMMON GATHERING PLACES

In Ancient Greece, cities were known to have a common gathering place where residents could socialize. In the planning for The Commons of McLean, Goodman made a point of creating pools, playgrounds and walkways where residents could interact. Can you list examples of places in your neighborhood where you can interact?



## NATURAL ELEMENTS

Nature provides rolling hills, lush landscapes and abundant light. Goodman designed dwellings with these elements in mind. What about your home is similar? Is your home filled with light? Does your yard contain hills and valleys? Are there disrupted elements of nature found in your home and neighborhood?