

Greenbelt Community Center

Current Name: Greenbelt Community Center

Original Name: Greenbelt Center School

Address: 15 Crescent Road
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Architect(s): 1937, Douglas Ellington & Reginald D. Wadsworth
1995, Florance, Eichbaum, Esocoff, King; Vitetta Group,
Restoration Architects

Year of Construction: 1937; 1995 Rehabilitation

Current Use: Civic and Religious

Original Use: Civic and Religious

Greenbelt was one of three utopian green towns built by the New Deal's Resettlement Administration (Greendale, Wisconsin and Greenhills, Ohio were the other two). The town was planned for suburban resettlement of rural migrants but also to prove the viability of garden-city planning principles. The original community was beautifully integrated into its site, a wooded crescent-shaped ridge, with careful planning to separate pedestrian and road traffic and provide open space for recreation. It was a self-contained town with a shopping center and its own school which was intended to be the focal point of the community.

While the housing was designed with the International Style in mind, the school was more Moderne, featuring a series of setbacks marked by streamlined buttresses, strips of casement windows, low relief panels, and smooth wall finishes. The design focuses attention on the notable bas-relief panels sculpted in place by Lenore Thomas that depict the preamble of the Constitution beginning with "We The People," intended to reflect the social and economic concerns of the era. It is often remarked that the design of the building facade and the placement of the bas-relief panels might have been inspired by the design of the Folger Shakespeare Library, also featured on this

Website. Thomas later executed a sculpture for the shopping center entitled “Mother and Child.”

The city of Greenbelt is worth a visit in its own right. In addition to the Community Center, the community maintains one of the original houses as a museum, and guided tours of the museum and town are available. Contact museum@greenbeltmd.gov or (301) 507-6582.



Static (Fixed) Google Map:



Dynamic (Searchable and Expandable) Google Map:

<https://tinyurl.com/y64o949x>