

PH LF NEWS

Published for the members of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

No. 142 April 1996

- The Garden of “Elm Cottage” in Sewickley Heights
- Gardens Under Glass: Phipps Conservatory and Its Tradition
- Commanding the Hilltop: St. Vincent Archabbey
- Pittsburgh Architecture: Out of the Ordinary

Photo by J. C. Schisler, courtesy of the Tribune-Review



Demolition of the 5400 block of Penn Avenue was halted on November 24, 1995 due to neighborhood protest.

City Block Saved: Landmarks, Neighborhood Residents, and City Councilman Save Historic House Row at 5408-20 Penn Avenue

Diane I. Daniels

A \$62,750 loan from Landmarks’ Preservation Loan Fund, along with other needed funding and involvement by Pittsburgh City Councilman Dan Cohen, enabled community organizations to save the 5400 block of Penn Avenue in the Friendship/Garfield neighborhoods from demolition.

Loans from Landmarks and the Community Loan Fund of Southwestern Pennsylvania to the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) and Friendship

Development Associates, Inc. (FDA) were used to purchase the building row at 5408-20 Penn Avenue, remove asbestos, and secure the site. The historic row consists of four buildings with ten units and two commercial buildings.

Rick Swartz, executive director of BGC, said that “Landmarks’ loan was a critical piece in the efforts to save the structures.” He also said that “his group is trying to hold on to the historical continuum of the late nine-

teenth century and early twentieth century architecture with later architecture in the neighborhood.”

Mr. Swartz stated that the BGC plans to seek funding from the Urban Redevelopment Authority and private sources to renovate the buildings for rental use and possibly erect some new houses on vacant sections of the site. They intend to start the project this fall, with an expected spring 1997 completion date.

Better Times Coming in Manchester

On February 16, a Komatsu PC-300 with Mayor Tom Murphy at the controls clawed away at a public housing complex in Manchester on West North Avenue and Manhattan Street. This began the demolition of 107 detested units of public housing, and the first phase of revitalization in the Manchester HOPE VI Plus Program. The scattered public housing blocks, constructed in the 1960s, proved impossible to manage, were singularly void of design for this historic neighborhood, and put a stigma on inhabitants.



Photo by Diane DaBaldo of Kenderson Studio

Manchester residents and the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation have longed to rid the historic neighborhood of these buildings. Set back from the street unlike the many historic buildings of Manchester, their design suggests warehouses of purple or yellow brick surrounded by chain link fencing. These houses have exercised a major negative visual influence on the neighborhood. Public housing does not have to be ugly, nor does it have to violate the basic architectural character of a neighborhood. How such inappropriate structures ever were designed in the first place is a real mystery.

Using the slogan “A brand-new house for a house, an apartment for an apartment,” the Manchester Citizens Corporation (MCC) is moving ahead on a complex \$40 million strategy for the revitalization of Manchester, a National Register District on Pittsburgh’s North Side. Many public and private agencies are collaborating to realize this program, which received a federal grant of \$7.5 million from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1995.

MCC’s long-range plan will proceed in various phases to develop commercial and industrial properties and construct and rehabilitate over 200 houses. Landmarks Design Associates Architects will design new public housing units to be compatible with the historic fabric of the neighborhood. They will be interspersed with new houses for sale.

Last year, Landmarks worked with the MCC to help raise funds, and our staff continues to be very involved with the comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan.

Photo by Bill Rydberg, PHOTON



Queen Anne doorheads from the Penn Avenue house row of 1886.

Photo by Diane I. Daniels



5400 block of Penn Avenue.

PH NEWS

Welcome New Members

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation welcomes the following new members who recently joined Landmarks. We look forward to their participation in our work and special events.

Elizabeth Atkinson	George E. Klingelhofer and family
Thomas and Patricia Baker	Lucille M. Koehler, M.D.
Ricia Banther	Norma L. Kush
Bernard and Eva Bauer and family	John L. Linden
Rich Boyer	John G. Lovelace
Joan Bradshaw	Mary S. Lucas
Carlow College	Mrs. Artemis C. Manos
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Mary E. Cole	C. McColester
Lynne Cummings and family	Sara J. Narcisi
The Design Alliance	Mr. & Mrs. B. Gordon Nelson
Judi Digioia	and family
Kathleen Dolegowski	John R. Orie, Jr.
Jane Duffield	Kevin B. Parnham
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph D. Dury, Jr.	Stephen Petures
Elderton High School	Margery T. Pisarcik
Joan Evans	Renee M. Quinn
Christy Fitzpatrick and Kevin Burns	Radelet McCarthy, Inc.
Jonathan Fox	Peter Safar, M. D.
Martha Garvey	Sue E. Schaefer
James and Rachael Hall	Kevin G. Scott
Rosemary Hopkins	Richard K. Seckinger
Ronald Hornish	A. Silvestre
David W. Hunter	Richard A. Smith, Jr. and family
Integrated Architectural Services Corporation	Dr. Mohammad A. Taheri
Rev. Jared J. Jackson	Barbara Urich
Michael E. Kelly	Mr. & Mrs. Edward R. Weidlein, Jr.
Keith M. Kerr	Andrew D. Wilson
	Diana and Dave Wood

Welcome Corporate Members

Benefactors	Partners
Dollar Bank	Allied Security, Inc.
Mellon Bank, N.A.	Bognar and Company
	Hilb Rogal and Hamilton Company
Patrons	of Pittsburgh, Inc.
Calgon Corporation	Landmarks Design Associates
	Port Authority of Allegheny County
	TRACO



Brigitte Westgren, Library Volunteer

Brigitte Westgren has been working at Landmarks since October 1995 as a volunteer archives assistant to Al Tannler. She has organized several collections and is currently preparing a computerized inventory of Landmarks' art holdings. Brigitte developed an interest in historic preservation while restoring two Victorian houses for her mother and while studying English and Art History at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Recently, she returned to Pittsburgh from Washington, D.C., where she lived five blocks from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Brigitte hopes to find a public relations position in a non-profit organization that will further the extensive skills she has developed as a volunteer. In addition to her work at Landmarks, she has handled public relations for three non-profit organizations, two of which are located in Pittsburgh.

Silly Us

How did we ever come to state, on page 10 of the January 1996 newsletter, that the Duquesne Works was in Aliquippa? Just for the record, the Duquesne Works was in Duquesne, about fourteen river miles up the Monongahela from Pittsburgh. The steel plant lasted from 1896 into the mid 1980s.

PHLF News is published four times each year for the members of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, a non-profit historic preservation organization serving Allegheny County. Landmarks is committed to neighborhood restoration and historic-property preservation; public advocacy; education and membership programs; and the continuing operation of Station Square, an historic riverfront property opposite downtown Pittsburgh.

Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr.	President
Cathy Broucek	Assistant to the President
Louise Sturgess	Editor/Executive Director
Elisa J. Cavalier	General Counsel
Tom Croyle	Comptroller
Mary Lu Denny	Director of Membership Services
Mary Ann Eubanks	Education Coordinator
Barry Hannegan	Consulting Director, Historic Parks and Gardens Survey
Thomas Keffer	Superintendent of Property Maintenance
Walter C. Kidney	Architectural Historian
Linda Mitry	Staff Accountant
Howard B. Slaughter, Jr.	Director of Preservation Services
Albert M. Tannler	Historical Collections Director
Ronald C. Yochum, Jr.	Facilities Management Assistant
Greg Pytlik	Designer



Photo courtesy of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Looking from Union Station toward the Shoenberger Works of the American Steel & Wire Co. in the Strip: "weather clear-variable wind, July 20, 1906. 2:06 P.M."

New Edition of Landmark Architecture to be Published

This is one of 200 duotone photographs that will illustrate the historical essay in *Landmark Architecture: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*, by Walter C. Kidney. There also will be about 80 color photos in the essay, and more than 500 black-and-white photos of significant architectural landmarks in the guide section of the book. There will be an advance book order form for members in a forthcoming issue of *PHLF News*.

Trustees and Members Contribute to Landmark Architecture

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation thanks the following trustees and members for their recent contributions to support publication of a new edition of *Landmark Architecture: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*, by Walter C. Kidney.

Charles Covert Arensberg	James W. Knox
Jeanne Berdik	Mrs. Alan Lehman
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Sarah Evosevich	Furman South III
Edith H. Fisher	Teri and Tom Streever
John H. Hill	Mary Wohleber
Henry P. Hoffstot, Jr.	Dwayne Woodruff

All contributors will be acknowledged in the book itself. If you have not yet contributed to the new edition but would like to do so, please complete the form on page 4 of this newsletter.

Special Contributions

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation thanks the following people for their recent gift contributions:

- Joan F. Adibi in memory of J. Judson Brooks.
- Nancy and Jon Chalfant-Walker in honor of Mrs. Clinton B. Hollister.
- Mr. & Mrs. Ronald C. Zimmer in honor of Robert L. Spear's retirement.

Gifts to the Library

Our thanks to Father Thomas R. Wilson for a copy of his book, *St. Bernard Church, Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania*; to Jean Craige Pepper for *Lost Erie: The Vanished Heritage of City and County*, by John R. Claridge, Erie County Historical Society, 1991; and to Clyde Hare for *Carnegie Magazine*, Volume 53, Number 3, 1979.

"WIN" Initiative Assists Areas' Small Businesses

Diane I. Daniels

As reported in the January 1996 PHLF News, the "WIN" initiative (Working in Neighborhoods) is designed to provide loans to small businesses located in or moving to low- and moderate-income or historic neighborhoods throughout Allegheny County.

The initiative is a collaborative effort between Landmarks and the Community Development Lending Group, a consortium of eleven local savings banks: Keystone State Savings, Laurel Savings, Mt. Troy Savings, Pennwood Savings, Pittsburgh Home Savings, Sewickley Savings, Spring Hill Savings, Stanton Federal Savings, Troy Hill Federal Savings, West View Savings, and Workmens Savings.

Photos by Bill Rydberg, PHOTON



2119 Sarah Street, South Side.

2119 Sarah Street

Nancy Eshelman, the first "WIN" initiative recipient, plans to open her bed-and-breakfast, Morning Glory Inn, in the spring of this year. She is completely renovating the 1845 three-story South Side structure; special projects include refurbishing a 1907 Chickering grand piano and completing the garden around the house.

The Morning Glory Inn, at 2119 Sarah Street, will be a part of the April 27 South Side House Tour and the June 19 neighborhood walking tour sponsored by Landmarks.

911 Western Avenue

State Farm Insurance agent Darlene Shelton-Lamont plans to purchase and renovate 911 Western Avenue into an office facility and a two-bedroom apartment unit. Located in the historic Allegheny West neighborhood, Darlene says the community is "pleased and excited to have the vacant building restored." She anticipates that the project will be completed by the summer and plans to relocate her 808 Western Avenue office to the building.

"Working with Howard Slaughter to receive the \$75,000 loan was a pleasant experience," said Darlene, and she encourages entrepreneurs to explore the "WIN" initiative. The loan was approved for a 100% minority-owned business.



911 Western Avenue, Allegheny West.

1010 Beech Way: Anflo Fastening Systems

For twenty-seven years Anflo Fastening Systems has been located on the North Side and in the family of Bill and Florence Fleckenstein. Originating on Brighton Road, Anflo is now located at 1010 Beech Way.



Photo by Diane I. Daniels

Excited about buying the business from his parents and extending Anflo into the next generation, Walter Gugala says "the \$75,000 'WIN' loan enables us to take the business to the next level. Bill consolidation and working capital is a necessity." His goals are to increase his current eight-member staff and remodel the building.

The industrial supplier furnishes fastening tools to the construction industry and industrial plants.

Byars and Alexander Financial Group

The Byars and Alexander Financial Group received approval for a \$15,000 loan to provide working capital to continue to do business and seek more contracts while maintaining a positive cash flow. The company has contracts with the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Blue Cross, and other organizations. Currently, the financial group is located in Commerce Court at Station Square. This loan was approved for a 100% minority-owned business.

6933 Baum Boulevard

John J. Clark and Associates received approval for a loan in the amount of \$66,000 for the acquisition of real property located at 6933 Baum Boulevard in an architecturally significant building in the East Liberty section of Pittsburgh. This loan will enable John J. Clark and Associates, a marketing and research firm, to move to a permanent location in a site they will own, restore, and maintain. This loan was approved for a 100% minority-owned business.

Join LANDMARKS

Support the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation in its work to:

- Identify and preserve the architectural, historical, and industrial landmarks in Allegheny County;
- Encourage and support the revitalization of historic inner-city neighborhoods through Preservation Loan Fund initiatives and programs;
- Operate Station Square, the historic riverfront project initiated by Landmarks in 1976;
- Create tours, publications, and educational programs on local history and architecture;
- Educate the public about historic preservation through the resources of Landmarks' library and archives;
- Continue a well-managed, responsive, and creative membership organization with the ability to implement these goals on a long-range basis.

Membership Benefits

- Free subscription to *PHLF News*.
- Many volunteer opportunities.
- A 10% discount at The Landmarks Store in The Shops at Station Square.
- Free access to our reference library in The Landmarks Building at Station Square.
- Discounts on, or free use of, all educational resources.
- Reduced rates on tours, and invitations to lectures, seminars, and special events.

Membership Categories

Please enroll me as a member of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. I have enclosed a contribution in the amount of (check appropriate category):

Individual \$20 or more
Family \$25 or more
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Corporate Member \$250 or more
Life Benefactor \$5,000 (one-time gift)

The portion of your dues exceeding \$15 is tax-deductible.

"A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement." (as required by PA Act 202)

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Membership
Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
One Station Square, Suite 450
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1170



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REGISTER FOR THE FINEVIEW STEP-A-THON on May 12

A 5K run like none you have ever done before. This race includes climbing the grueling city staircases from Howard Street to the heart of Fineview on Henderson Street, up and down streets which hang on the hillside, more steps, and finally arriving at WPXI.

CALL
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Sponsored by the Northside Neighborhood of Fineview and the Fineview Citizens Council.



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Preservation Scene

CONTRIBUTE

to the publication of a new edition of

Landmark Architecture: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

by Walter C. Kidney

Originally published in 1985, *Landmark Architecture* has been out of print now for several years but is still much in demand. If all goes well, we hope to publish a new edition of *Landmark Architecture* this October. Our staff is now updating the contents of the original publication and commissioning new color and black-and-white photographs. *Landmark Architecture* will be the most comprehensive account of the architecture of this region and will identify more than 500 historic sites worthy of preservation.

Photo by Clyde Hare



If we are able to raise funds to support the publication of the book, we can price the book at about \$45.

All contributors will be acknowledged in the book itself and invited to the book release party. Your contribution will ensure a quality publication with many handsome photographs. Please contribute by filling out the form below:

☐ Yes, I am (we are) making a contribution to *Landmark Architecture* in the amount of \$____. My (our) check is enclosed, payable to the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and referenced to "LA Book."

I (we) understand that this contribution will be used to support the book's publication and does not entitle me (us) to a free copy of the book upon publication.

I (we) would like my (our) name(s) to be printed in the contributor's list in the book as follows:

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Please mail this completed form with your contribution to:

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Thank you very much for your contribution!

"A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement." (as required by PA Act 202)



Photos by Harry Edelman

Restoration of St. Mary's Church

St. Mary's Church on Pittsburgh's North Side, one of the oldest religious structures in Allegheny County and one long threatened with demolition, has been restored as a banquet and conference center and renamed "Pittsburgh's Grand Hall at The Priory."

The German Catholic parish began construction of the building in the spring of 1853 and dedicated the church December 10, 1854. It began as an outpost of St. Vincent's Archabbey in Latrobe (see the article on page 16). Relatively unadorned, the structure is dominated on the interior by tall barrel vaults atop Corinthian columns that intersect at a central dome. Small lunette windows high on the exterior walls provided the only natural light to the structure at a time when the anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant "Know Nothings" were a threat to any larger, more accessible windows. On the exterior, flamboyant onion domes atop the two towers facing Lockhart Street contrasted with the otherwise spare exterior brick walls and were landmarks in early Pittsburgh scenic views.

The parish grew throughout the nineteenth century, adding school facilities now demolished, and the Priory, now a bed-and-breakfast inn. In 1882 large murals by M. Lambrecht were added to the interior of the church. In 1897 a skylight was added to the dome, followed in 1898 by a repainting of the walls and ceilings and restoration of the murals by Ertle of New York. A new entry vestibule in the Edwardian Italianate style by Sidney Heckert of Pittsburgh was constructed in 1906, and finally, eight large and four small stained-glass windows were installed in 1912, many in place of former murals.

The church was closed in 1981 and scheduled to be demolished for the East Street Valley expressway. Although overshadowed at the time in the public outcry over the proposed demolition of the nearby St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church, St. Mary's also was spared from its fate through the efforts of Landmarks and the East Allegheny neighborhood association, and was offered for sale by PennDOT. Landmarks had made record drawings of the building for the Historic American Building survey in anticipation of its demolition, and these were included in the sales packet offered by PennDOT.

The Graf family came forward to purchase the church and the adjoining Priory in 1984. They turned their attention first to the Priory, which they restored as a twenty-five room bed-and-breakfast. A loan from Landmarks' Preservation Loan Fund helped leverage additional funds. For the next eight years the Grafs and the East Allegheny Community Council had to work

through an almost uncountable number of obstacles put up by the Federal Highway Administration to obtain vacant land adjoining the highway for necessary parking.

This permit was finally secured in early 1995, and the Grafs worked with Landmarks Design Associates Architects to plan for the restoration. A banquet hall was a perfect fit for the nave of the church, with its broad floor area beneath the tall vaulted ceiling. The principal design challenge was the insertion of coat and restroom facilities within the vestibule and beneath the balcony, and the installation of a full banquet kitchen in the ancillary areas on either side of the former altar areas. This was accomplished by a half-height wall in this area, which left the volume of the upper area of the apse and its applied mural within view of the main hall. Although the twenty-inch-thick walls provided good thermal mass and thus moderated outside temperature changes, substantial new heating and cooling equipment was necessary; this was inserted in the large timber attic roof trusses.



The interior decorative scheme took its cue from the historic finishes which remained: the murals from 1882, ceiling stenciling from the redecoration of 1898, and the stained glass windows of 1912. The massive walls were painted a soft warm stone color, while the barrel vaults were painted a light yellow to better reflect the indirect lighting added at the top of the cornice. The ornamental painting remaining from 1898 was repainted by Navarro Celestino, and the remaining ornamental elements such as the entablature, paneled beams, and balcony balustrade were painted with colors based on that palette. The Corinthian capitals were repainted in gold leaf, but the regaining of the columns themselves in dark verde marble was delayed for a future decorative scheme.

The building was restored for its new use with remarkably little change from the function it had performed for 130 years. As part of the funding for the restoration, the Grafs took advantage of the investment tax credit for National Register properties: the reviewers thought that the project was one of the best church reuse projects that had ever come before them. The project will be featured at a seminar on the successful use of the tax credit at the Pennsylvania Heritage Partnerships Conference in Pittsburgh, April 28 through 30.

Award of Merit Nominations

Call Walter Kidney at (412) 471-5808 if you would like to nominate an individual or organization for consideration by Landmarks' 1996 Award of Merit Committee. Each year, Landmarks recognizes individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the preservation of Pittsburgh's historic architecture and increased public knowledge of our heritage.



Photos by Clyde Hare



A simple, forceful composition, now unused.

McClure Avenue Presbyterian Church

All but hidden in Woods Run beneath a bridge of Ohio River Boulevard, this work of 1887 by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow and Frank Ellis Alden is a connoisseur's church: a simple, forceful red-brick mass enclosing some powerful carpentry, heavy joinery, and strongly colored glass. Now it is without a discernible future. Palm Sunday marks its tiny congregation's last service, though its ownership continues. Beginning in 1997, unless the building is once again a place of worship, the property will be taxed. The congregation is anxious that the building be saved and recently approached us for our suggestions. If anyone is interested in purchasing the building, please contact Howard Slaughter, director of preservation services at Landmarks, at (412) 471-5808.

St. Peter's Replacement

Last summer, Carlow College announced that the Science and Technology Center depicted here would be built at Fifth and Craft Avenues, where St. Peter's Episcopal Church stood until 1990. In midwinter, the design by Thomas C. Celli remained basically unchanged.



St. Peter's Episcopal Church, John Notman, architect, 1851-52. Moved to this site in 1901.



Carlow College Science and Technology Center.



Burke's Building

Early February brought the welcome news that the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is to purchase Burke's Building, at 209 Fourth Avenue, as its headquarters. The building has been fully reconditioned within its 1836 shell, and suitable interiors are to be planned by Landmarks Design Associates Architects. It looks like happy years ahead for the Triangle's only Greek Revival building.



Gwinner-Harter House

Midwinter found the Gwinner-Harter house with its mansard roof back on and the decorative slating about to come. Its application in February was to be followed by a duplication of the turn-of-the-century Roman Doric porch and the painting of the exterior, which is necessitated by crude patching of the brickwork. The wall color will probably be pale yellow, with cream and dark green trim. Inside, Frederick John Osterling's sumptuous wood, marble, and bronze ground floor will be left as is—the fire of 1986 hardly touched it—the second floor restored, and new family rooms created in the mansard. Joedda and Ben Sampson, the owners, hope the house will be finished by June. The gardens will have something of a tight Mid-Victorian quality, though probably not imposing Mid-Victorian demands for maintenance. Joedda and Richard Liberto, formerly of Landmarks, will be designing the garden.



The Gwinner-Harter house around 1980, and after the fire of 1986.



Photo by Bill Rydberg, PHOTON

Sellers-Carnahan House

It appears that the future of this grand old house in Shadyside has become clear at last. The Samuel Land Company will buy the house, restore it to some extent, and offer it for sale as a single-family home. A scenic easement and a covenant will protect the open character of the property. The house itself is a City Historic Landmark, legally protected. And, the proceeds of the sale will go to the City, probably for park improvements: thus honoring, after a fashion, the will of Ella Mae Carnahan.

St. Jude has smiled thrice in the last few months: Burke's Building; the Gwinner-Harter house; and the Sellers-Carnahan house.



John Brashear's House

The three-story wooden house of John Brashear, astronomer and lensmaker, is to be restored after six years' emptiness following a fire. The house is at 1954 Perrysville Avenue, in front of the brick lens-making plant of the John A. Brashear Company. Close by was the old Allegheny Observatory, so that life could hardly have been more convenient for this distinguished Alleghenian. The restorer and owner is Donald McCartan of the Perry Hilltop Association for Successful Enterprises.

Briefly in the Light

This February, the Spanish Romanesque facade that some remember at the corner of Liberty Avenue and William Penn Place made a brief reemergence between the removal of 1960s slipcovering and demolition. The mid-1920s facade had been erected for Kappels Jewelers in a style far more delicate than that of the Courthouse, yet was related to it insofar as Romanesque Spain was a source for both. A number of people have lamented the demolition, which is intended to straighten out a kink in the intersection. Landmarks would have been pleased if the cheap metal paneling were removed for restoration purposes rather than as the first phase in a demolition: the modest but well-composed front would have made a pleasant incident in the street scene.

Once again, the ease of driving an automobile triumphs over cultural preservation. The building was removed because anyone driving along Tenth Street, crossing Liberty Avenue, and entering William Penn Way, had to make a slight jog around the building. The highway engineers of the administration preceding that of Mayor Tom Murphy had redesigned the intersection so as to eliminate this slight turn. The Murphy Administration did not want to go to the expense and suffer the delay of redesigning this entire intersection for the Liberty Avenue improvement program;

this is why this handsome building was demolished.

How many buildings in the past fifty years have been demolished in Allegheny County to make life easier for car driving is unknown, but it must reach into the thousands. The East Street Valley alone was a major sacrifice of hundreds and hundreds of buildings. Now we face the onslaught of the Mon Valley Expressway, potentially devouring not only buildings and neighborhoods but farmland and green space, all in the name of a transportation system that has been repeatedly proven not to work. Highways have not solved traffic problems; they have bred them. We need to learn from Portland, Oregon, with its



Clearing the corner of Liberty Avenue and William Penn Place brings Kappels Jewelers' facade briefly back into view.



new light rail trolley system and from the cities of Europe that are augmenting their rail and trolley systems.

In February we hosted a group of mayors, city managers, and city planners on behalf of Partners for Livable Communities as they conducted a workshop here. The head of Partners in Europe, Michel Rivoire, told us how he can put in a full work day, board the TGV high speed train at 5:00 p.m., travel a distance equal that of Pittsburgh from Philadelphia for a dinner meeting, and be back in his hometown of Lyon at 11:15 p.m. We cannot even accomplish that by air, but he goes from downtown to downtown on a system that is comfortable, safe, and uninterrupted without the necessity of changing from cars to planes to taxis: and, in addition, the system is punctual.

And so another small, handsome facade on Liberty Avenue is gone and in its place, more asphalt, "speeding" cars one block to the traffic signal at Seventh Avenue.

Pennsylvania Heritage Partnerships Conference 1996

"Making the Connections"

April 28-30
Westin William Penn

Keynote address: Monday, April 29
8:30 a.m.

Dell Upton, Professor of Architectural History, University of California, Berkeley; author of the introduction to the new edition of *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania*

Contact Preservation Pennsylvania for registration brochure and further information:
(717) 234-2310.

Citizen Adoption

Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr.

All across America signs erected by highway departments indicate the adoption of pieces of highway by citizens who have pledged to keep these areas clean. Here is a peculiar expression of America's love for the automobile; would that we could also clean up the noise and pollution that the automobile leaves in its wake. We have destroyed our transit systems, our farms, our center cities, and our rural towns all for the automobile, and now good citizens trudge along the highways picking up the styrofoam cups and the bottles and cans that other citizens toss out on their joyful journeys.

Wouldn't it be fine if this same citizen spirit could be used to adopt green space, public squares, sections of parks, public sculpture, and even facades of historic buildings for which maintenance funds are lacking, and create a civilized environment in which to walk and in which to live rather than one that is pretty for driving purposes.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has made a good start with its small gardens at strategic public intersections, but many of these are for enjoyment from the automobile only; some in historic neighborhoods have become part of the environment, but others along roads are unapproachable on foot.

Let us re-channel citizen commitment to a beautiful environment by adopting public and private areas that can be beautiful but for which funds and commitment for maintenance are lacking. In this way, on a Saturday morning one can simply walk to the area to be cleaned, have an espresso around the corner during a break, and then walk through the neighborhood, perhaps shopping on the way home. Wouldn't that be a much more pleasant experience than driving out to an expressway, picking up the litter as the cars and trucks whoosh by, and then driving back home only to enjoy the benefits of one's work when one passes through the area again at a high rate of speed? In the former effort, after the clean-up work on Saturday, one could simply enjoy the beautified space, sit down and read a book, and converse.

Planning to Renovate Your Home?

Before calling your contractor call

Renovation Information Network

at (412) 391-4333

a community resource for home renovation consultation.

If you are a City of Pittsburgh resident, we'd like to help you plan your renovation to retain the distinctive architectural features of your home, and save energy by expanding, not limiting, your options.

We provide information and professional consultations for a small fee to help support program costs. (The fee can be reduced for low-income Pittsburgh homeowners.)

Renovation Information Network

is a program of the non-profit Community Design Center of Pittsburgh



Looking southward across the garden at "Elm Cottage," the work of Ellen Biddle Shipman (1870-1950), summer 1995. This view, thanks to the near-miraculous condition of the garden, offers some evidence for Mrs. Shipman's fame as the finest woman landscape architect America has yet produced.

Mrs. Curry, Mrs. Shipman, Mrs. Cobb: The Garden of "Elm Cottage" in Sewickley Heights

Barry Hannegan

Just after the close of the Second World War, Elizabeth Curry (Mrs. Henry M. Curry, Jr.) undertook improvements at a newly acquired home, "Elm Cottage," in Sewickley Heights. The dwelling was an ample frame farm house, resting at the lower, southern edge of a broad, gently sloping site, nestled in the rolling meadows of the Sewickley uplands. For the necessary architectural changes, she engaged F. Phillips Davis of Pittsburgh whose deft touches transformed an example of Western Pennsylvania vernacular construction into a gracious late-Georgian Colonial residence, rural still but certainly not rustic.

However, for the garden of the house, Mrs. Curry went to the very top of the landscape architecture profession, securing the intervention of Ellen Biddle Shipman. By 1946, Mrs. Shipman had been a pre-eminent fixture in the American garden scene for over three decades, and she was emerging from a war-imposed retirement for a brief flurry of activity before the closing of her studio in 1947 and her death three years

later. "Elm Cottage," last of the eight projects she created in Allegheny County, has survived to a remarkable degree, thanks in large part to the place's current owners, Bruce and Sherry Cobb. It is this fact, linked to Mrs. Shipman's great importance in American garden history and the wonderful quality of her work at "Elm Cottage," that has prompted this report.

A Philadelphia Biddle, Mrs. Shipman might be said to have been born with a silver spade in her hand. Her adult life was centered equally on her country house in New Hampshire and a home in Beekman Place, Manhattan. This was decorated and furnished to her own designs in what the better shelter magazines would once have characterized as exquisite taste. Certainly, the entire residence was testimony to the knowledge, discrimination, and creativity she invariably brought to her landscape work. Some time around the turn of the century she met Charles A. Platt, who was formulating a new style and role for residential landscape design based on

examples of the Italian Renaissance but going beyond those in establishing a design method that merged house and grounds into a single formal unity. He recognized her ability and ambition, and helped her with the finishing stages of her professional training and also by inviting her to act as assistant and then collaborator in a number of his own projects.

Supported by such friendship, undoubtedly aided by her own social position and affluence, and undaunted by her family's opposition to a professional career, Mrs. Shipman soon emerged as one of the country's best designers of residential landscapes. She found it necessary to acquire a staff of helpers, all women, who were accommodated in a new studio wing attached to the rear of the Beekman Place house. The entrance to the residence had a green door while further along on the same side of the building there was a blue door that gave admittance to a clients' reception room and the studio. There, the assistants all wore blue

smocks, and given Mrs. Shipman's eye for detail, I would venture that those exactly matched the door's blue paint.

Both she and Mr. Davis, the architect, treated the site with tact and a certain practicality. He swept away the long porch that concealed much of the house's northern elevation that faced the garden, replacing it with an extensive brick-paved terrace; she recognized the potential of an expansive artificial plateau a little ways up the slope, where there had been an earlier flower garden filled with eccentrically shaped Victorian beds and aimlessly curving paths. Together, they created a paradigm of the reticent Classicism that underlay the best expressions of the superb standards of American residential and garden design during the first three decades of our century and that still lingered briefly in our post-war culture.

After 1947, a visitor at "Elm Cottage" could move through spacious, light-filled rooms to leave the house by ample French doors onto the terrace. This and the adjacent lawn were merely the floor to a vastly larger space created by the high green canopy of the great elms. Beyond, a simple embankment was divided by a short, easy flight of steps leading to a wrought-iron gate promising that more lay out of sight, above eye level.

And indeed it did, for once the gate was gained, the garden appeared to roll away in every direction like a great Persian carpet truly made of plants and flowers. Directly in one's line of vision the fountain jet played, and then behind it stretched the successive planes of the allée of flowering fruit trees, the apple orchard, and, finally, the distant woodland at the summit of the easily rising ground. To the far left and right the paths and flower beds were closed by

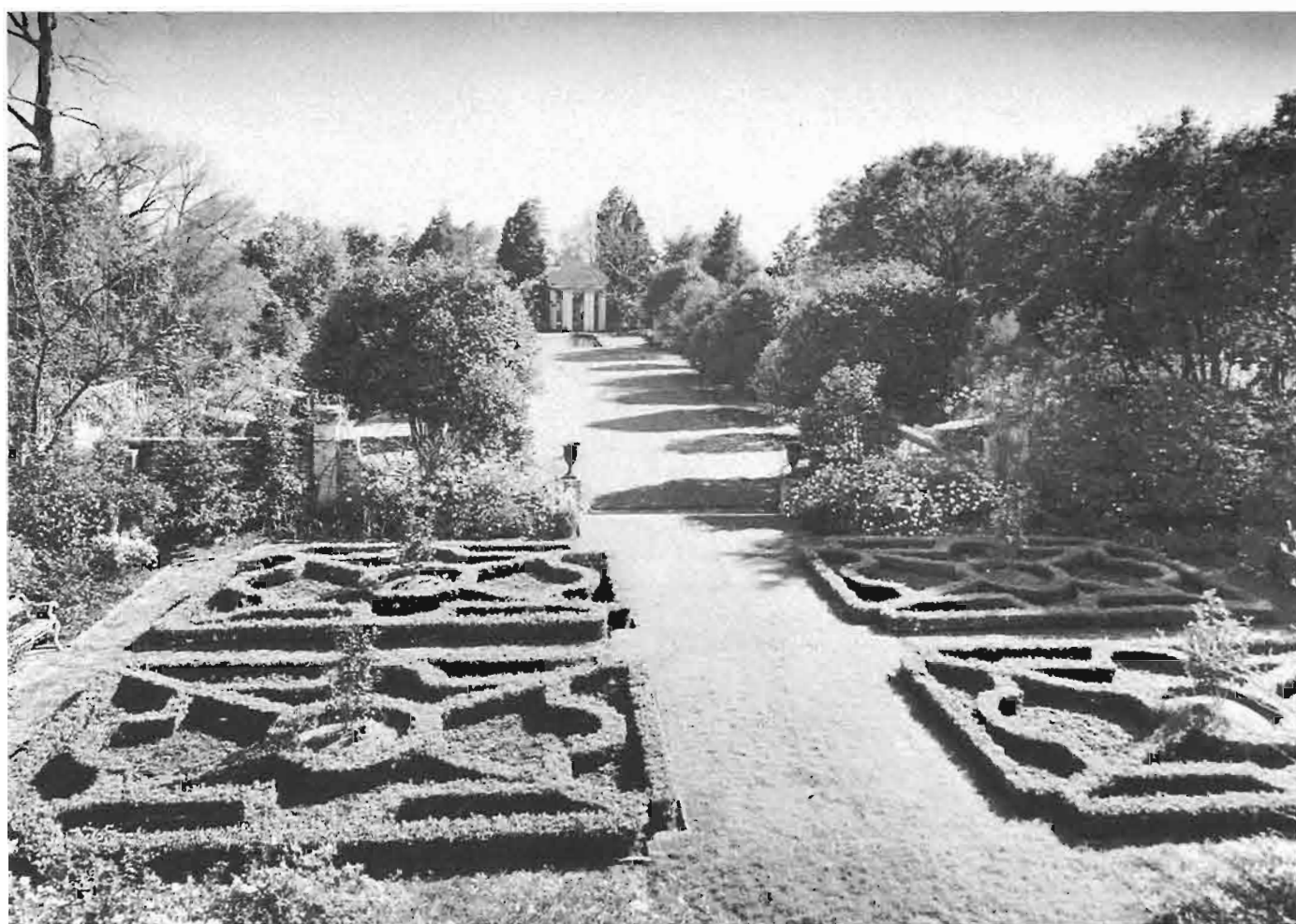
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Mrs. Shipman's own garden at "Brook Place," her country home in Cornish, New Hampshire, as it looked around 1923. It can be seen as a quintessential American garden of the period, ordered but relaxed, with a cozy abundance that would have been unlikely in a comparable English garden of the same time.

A garden in Worcester, Massachusetts, planted before 1840, as it looked around 1900. This is a good example of an indigenous American garden style, having its origins in the seventeenth century and recognized in the late Victorian era as a native expression, referred to as an old-fashioned or grandmother's garden. A comparison with Mrs. Shipman's garden seems instructive, since it suggests that however dedicated she was to what we might now term high-style design, she appears to have been aware of the charm and significance of our own vernacular garden tradition.





The Portico Garden (foreground) and South Lawn at “Longue Vue,” New Orleans, designed by Ellen Biddle Shipman in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The boxwood parterres are derived from the many patterns for flower beds published and used in Europe around 1600 and invite comparison with her slightly later design at “Elm Cottage.” The gardens at “Longue Vue,” beautifully maintained and open to the public, illustrate the persistent openness and soft articulation of American gardens, even at this level of elaborateness. A comparable English or European garden of this type would almost surely have been given a much stronger architectural setting and a more emphatic definition of space.

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shrubs and small flowering trees (the existing bay magnolias are surely original) that veiled but did not conceal the studied simplicity of the garden’s bucolic setting.

And time passed and owners changed. The largest elm died in 1976. The apple orchard aged and withered; the flowering allée vanished. The system for supplying water to the ground and pool failed, and the cultivation of flowers diminished and all but stopped. And all the while, the boxwood slowly grew, losing its trim crispness of form, smothering the flowers within its borders, constricting the paths and walks. That hardly mattered; there was less and less worth walking into the garden to see.

The garden at “Elm Cottage” was on its way to the fate that has overtaken so many (too many!) of the area’s fine gardens when the property was acquired in 1987 by the Cobbs, who did indeed save the garden from the bulldozer. Mrs. Cobb describes their relationship to the property as one of stewardship, recognizing that the garden, above all, imposes obligations and restraints on the owner. From the outset, it was clear that the abundant evidence of the garden’s deterioration would have to be erased; Mrs. Cobb took on this responsibility herself, spurred by her immediate love for the garden, sustained by her skillful expertise as a gardener, and helped considerably by both the cache of historical information that came with the house and the first-hand knowledge of the garden’s creation generously shared by a member of the Curry family still living in the neighborhood.

Thinking rather far into the future, the Cobbs have planted two new American



The center of the garden at “Elm Cottage” around 1950. The octagonal center bed, containing the small pool, is shown here with its original raised brick curb and dense planting of perennials, among which we can distinguish iris, hosta, bergenia, delphinium, and ferns, with what is surely a weeping flowering cherry at the right. The single fountain jet is barely visible at the center, while this view along the major north-south walk of the garden looks toward the house and shows clearly one of the great American elms that gave the property its name.



Another view of the gardens at “Elm Cottage” when they were still quite new. We are looking here along the major east-west walk, also brick paved, eastward toward the raised octagonal perennial bed that closes the vista. Conspicuous here are standard and bush roses filling the quadripartite arrangement of beds edged with tiny, well-clipped box. Roses were repeated at the other, eastern end of the garden where, however, the beds are arranged as small octagons set within square borders. All of the center portion of the garden—the octagonal central pool bed and its large bracket-like corner beds—was reserved for perennials and the occasional flowering small tree. These beds did not originally have a boxwood edging (this is clearly seen in these two early photographs), and this would have been yet another device used by Mrs. Shipman to give variety and differentiation within a unified, formal design.



The central bed of the garden as it looked in the mid 1980s, about the time of the beginning of the Cobbs' ownership. The most obvious change is the leveling of the pool bed and the replacement of its plantings with turf. However, the most significant change is the growth of the boxwood which by this time had overrun the vertical brick edging of the walks and had encroached a full foot on to the walks themselves; the narrower, wood-chip paths that define the triangular and octagonal beds had disappeared entirely as had almost all of the planting space within the box borders.

elms to compensate for the lost original shown in old photographs. These new trees are a strain that has been developed for its immunity to Dutch elm disease, while each year, as the trees begin to form themselves, the lowest range of branches is removed in order to achieve clean, high-reaching trunks and, eventually, a distantly floating dome of green. With these, some day, the great antechamber to the garden will again be a reality.

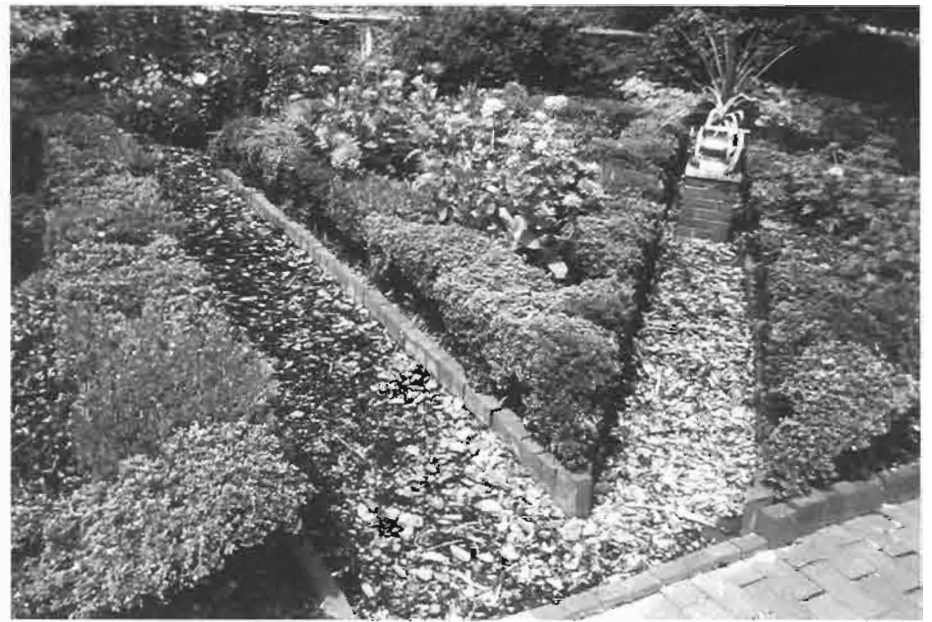
The most visible effort at recovering the true, intended appearance of the garden has been the shearing of the box borders to bring them back within bounds. This was done in two successive annual campaigns which left the boxwood looking, in Mrs. Cobb's words, "like a bonsai forest, or a playground for elves." The visible surface of the boxwood is almost all new growth, while the borders themselves have regained much of their desired regularity of form. With continued growth and trimming, the few remaining indentations will entirely disappear. From time to time in the past, an original boxwood has died and been replaced by another variety of *Buxus*, producing a somewhat piebald effect here and there in the borders. Cuttings from the original plants have been taken and are being rooted so that they can replace the later obtrusive additions, thus restoring the borders to their original uniform appearance with what are essentially more of the original plants. This is a practice now widely used in the restoration or maintenance of historic gardens where special nurseries are created for the propagation of plants taken from old, existing stock.

As for flowers, there was very little left when the restoration started; a few of the most robust and invasive perennials had pretty much taken over what open space remained in the beds and peripheral border. Thinning made room again for flowers—first, annuals for immediate color and then perennials grown from seed on the site. Choices have been made taking into consideration both Mrs. Shipman's repertory and the tastes of the current gardener. I think it would be safe to say that there is now a far greater variety of flowers in the garden than Mrs. Shipman called for.

Whenever a plant can be identified as likely to have been a part of the initial planting, it is respectfully retained. This has very much been the case with the surviving white-flowered evergreen azaleas that were originally used in considerable number.

There has been a carefully thought-out decision not to re-create the rear allée of spring-flowering trees. To do so would reduce the space available for flowers, for which there now never seems to be enough room. However, the aesthetic value of the lost allée, particularly as a backdrop for the view of the garden from the direction of the house, has been recognized, and there have been murmured speculations about what might be done with the now empty area just above the retaining wall. A further stage in the restoration that is projected, possibly for as early as this coming summer, is the reactivation of the pool and its fountain jet. This will entail repair of the plumbing system in the garden and the installation of electrical wiring to power a circulating pump for the fountain; there is no evidence of what the original arrangement for this feature might have been. Even though the surrounding bed will neither be raised again by a brick curbing nor planted with Mrs. Shipman's dense massing of perennials, the reintroduction of water, both moving and still, will be a significant and welcome recovery.

Hence it is that this exceptional bit of designed landscape is gradually regaining the life and richness intended by both Mrs. Curry and Mrs. Shipman. The restoration here is not an archaeological one, such as we can see at Mount Vernon or Monticello. This is a living garden, cared for by a serious gardener, and it is surely Mrs. Cobb's informed abilities that permitted her initial enthusiastic recognition of the garden's great quality and that continue to guide her in her commendable efforts. Alexander Pope, arguably our first great amateur landscape designer, advised gardeners always to "Consult the Genius of the Place." These words, both sensitive and sensible in their import, could well sum up the philosophy directing the restoration just as it would have inspired the creation of the garden at "Elm Cottage."



A detail of the garden at present. The point made here is the successful trimming of the boxwood in order to return it to an appropriate scale and form. The vertical brick edging is once again being used as a guide and demarcation, the paths have recovered their utility (and visibility), and the beds themselves can now again accommodate the flowers for which they were indeed created. The low brick plinth in the path to the right is one of four such elements placed symmetrically in the garden that concealed water taps and supported sculptured figures; these moved some twenty years ago to another Sewickley garden.

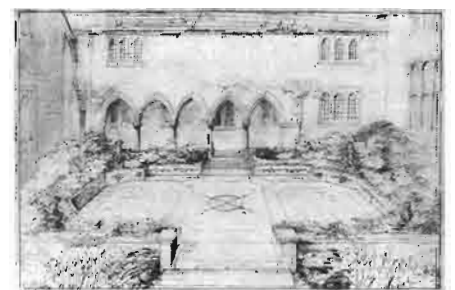


*A view along the rear edge of the garden, looking slightly north of due east. A section of the field stone retaining wall can be seen at the left, as can a portion of the grassy upper bank which originally held the small apple orchard. More easily discerned are the double wood-chip paths, crossing the major north-south walk some twelve or fifteen feet into the view. The right-hand path surrounds the entire garden, but the one to the left is a somewhat independent unit that in Mrs. Shipman's design formed the axis of an allée of pink and white flowering pear and plum trees. This disappeared some years ago, but the black cubes of trimmed *Taxus* that formed the terminal anchors of the allée can just be seen in the center distance.*

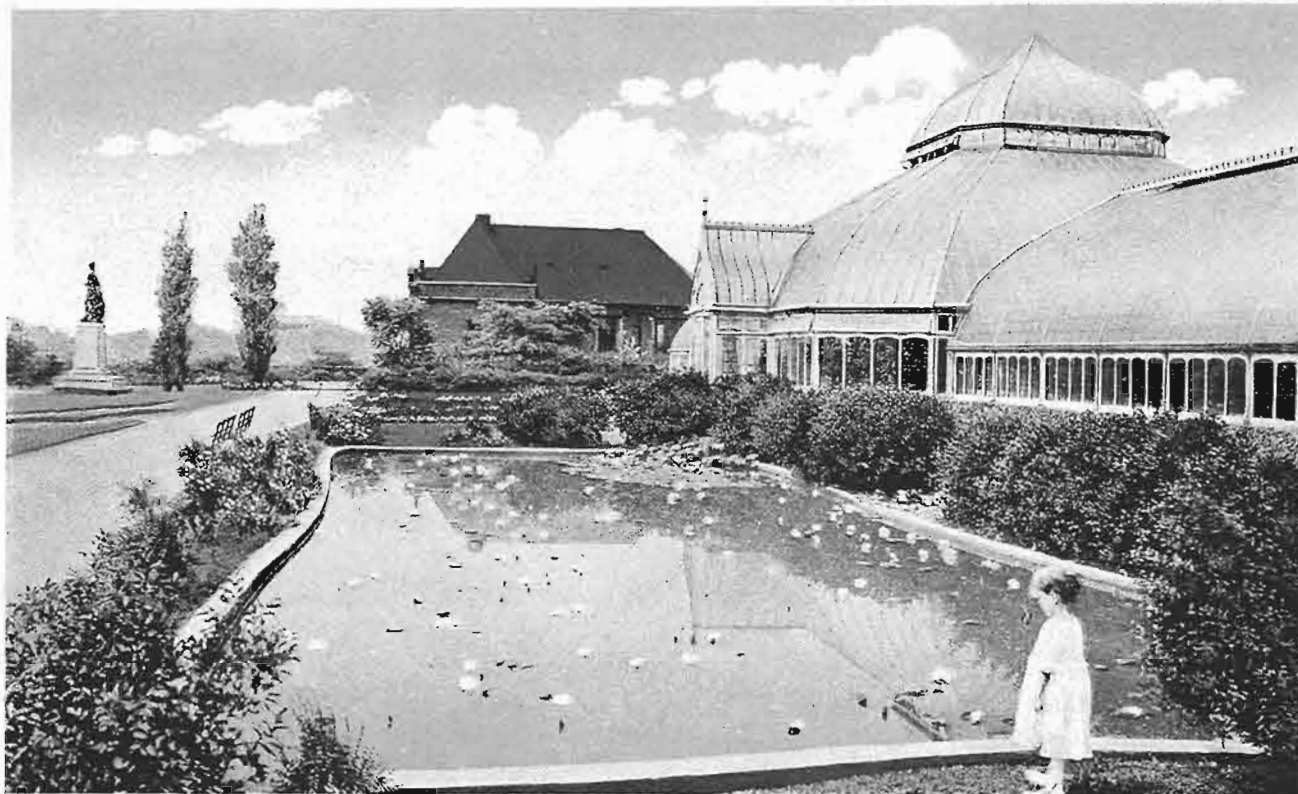
My warmest thanks go freely to Sherry Cobb for her kind reception at "Elm Cottage" and for her generosity of time and information. I am also happily indebted to Judith Tankard, whose full-scale study of Ellen Biddle Shipman will appear later this year, and to Catha Grace Rambusch, director of the Catalog of Landscape Records at Wave Hill. The documentation for "Elm Cottage's" garden is extensive. First and foremost, there is the garden itself, supplemented by the house archives. The Shipman papers at Cornell University contain a series of drawings labeled merely "Curry." Landmarks' Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens has been able to identify these as belonging to the "Elm Cottage" project. Finally, a great and highly significant quantity of material relating to the garden's creation remains in the hands of the Curry family. If all of this documentation could be assembled and correlated, we would have a remarkable record of the genesis of one of our region's most important surviving gardens.

Readers who have enjoyed learning a little about Ellen Biddle Shipman should certainly not miss the exhibition now on view at The Heinz Architectural Center in Oakland. Curated by Judith Hull, *A Century of Women Landscape Architects and Gardeners in Pittsburgh* runs through June 2.

The drawings in the exhibition by Annette Hoyt Flanders are on loan from the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. This drawing, dated January 1939, is of the Lead Court at "Penguin Court," the estate of Mr. & Mrs. Alan M. Scaife near Ligonier.



LILY POND AND PHIPPS CONSERVATORY, SCHENLEY PARK, PITTSBURGH, PA.



From a postcard of 1918.

Pittsburgh's Oldest Surviving Designed Landscapes? Gardens Under Glass: Phipps Conservatory and Its Tradition

Barry Hannegan

On March 28 and 30, I presented a mini-course on conservatories under the joint auspices of Landmarks and Pitt's Informal Program. The idea for the course came from discoveries that I had been making in the context of Landmarks' Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens, but the justification of the course is the continued presence here of one of the few surviving great Victorian glass houses—Phipps Conservatory in Schenley Park. To have one's attention turned again to our local monument has been beneficial, not just to see it again as a splendid and now rare example of its kind but more particularly as an opportunity for looking more closely into its own special history and traditions.

Considered as an architectural type, the conservatory often engages the attention of the architectural historian since its history is also the early history of steel skeleton construction, the high-rise structure, and the prefabricated building. Viewed by the historian of gardens and ornamental horticulture, the conservatory takes on a different significance and an even longer history. If, for the moment, we define the conservatory's chief function as providing tender plants with an artificial environment where they can survive and even flourish, then the likely ancestor of all such shelters was a dismountable shed of wood and glass panels devised in 1619 for the winter protection of citrus trees belonging to the Elector Palatine, the sometime King of Bohemia, at his residence in Heidelberg. The temporary, and probably extemporized structure was the progenitor of a wonderful series of elegant buildings, christened *orangeries* from the nature of their contents, for a succession of crowned heads. Of these, surely the best-known is Louis XIV, who created at his chateau at Versailles a truly sumptuous winter quarters for his 4,200 or so neatly tubbed exotic trees.

In its typical, fully developed form the orangery was a long, shallow building of brick or dressed stone. One long

side faced south and was pierced by as many large glazed windows as a classical syntax of design would allow, while the north wall was solid, thick masonry to exclude as much cold as possible. The roof, of whatever material, was necessarily opaque.

However, the greenhouse as we know it is the invention of the late eighteenth century, when technological innovations in the production of iron and glass gave architects the materials for creating delicate, transparent shells within which it could always be summer. Further refinements of manufacture and fabrication, linked to unprecedented new ways of heating, quickly brought the construction of greenhouses to prodigious levels of design, complexity, and size.

The nineteenth century, with its liking for elaborate categories of differentiation (remember the proliferation of specialized utensils for the Victorian dining table), saw the greenhouse proper as the workaday facility for plant storage or propagation or horticultural research and invented a new form of glass house, the winter garden, where, although lush plants might be very much in evidence, the principal aim was the provision of luxurious surroundings for social pastimes of a leisurely and polished sort.

It was also during the nineteenth century that the most highly evolved form of greenhouse—the conservatory—was created. Here, the intention was nothing less than the re-creation under glass of the landscape itself. This might be a bit of tropical jungle, from which so many of the thousands of new plants available to the gardener came, or it might be a demonstration of any of the various styles of garden design employed in the beautification of both private and public lands. The essential skill involved in this transplanting indoors was the ability to distill and concentrate the qualities of the landscape, either designed or natural, so that the counterfeit, effulgent and evocative within its crystal pavilion, could be

experienced as both nature and art. Those conservatory gardens were, in fact, products of the highest artifice, drawing on the skills of not just the botanist or horticulturist, but as well on the architect, garden designer, and, sometimes, lighting engineer, sculptor, and set designer. In their way, the great conservatories of the late nineteenth century, whether private or public, were a special kind of microcosm of their time, in much the same fashion as the ocean liner encapsulated the *soigné* energy of the early decades of our own century.

This was the level of expectation that governed the original permanent design and planting in Phipps Conservatory when it opened. The two early photographs reproduced here attest to the quality and variety of plant materials (Pittsburgh in 1893 was said to have the finest botanical collection in the country) and to the artistry of their arrangement. The seasonal flower shows, however, tended to rely on massed bloom—other early photographs show one of the rooms wall-to-wall with huge potted chrysanthemums bearing thousands of flowers larger than grapefruit.

That method changed in 1935, when Ralph Griswold created explicit garden settings for all of the Conservatory's rooms, thus providing a fixed, articulated background for the changing arrangements of the seasonal shows. These really were gardens under glass, incorporating and displaying the best and newest plants that might tempt the home gardener and offering suggestions about design and plant combinations. It might be thought that the need to conform in some general way to the style of the given room setting would hamper the designers, but just the opposite proved to be the case. When the designer of a seasonal show had real ability, the specific character of each of the rooms was a stimulating challenge.

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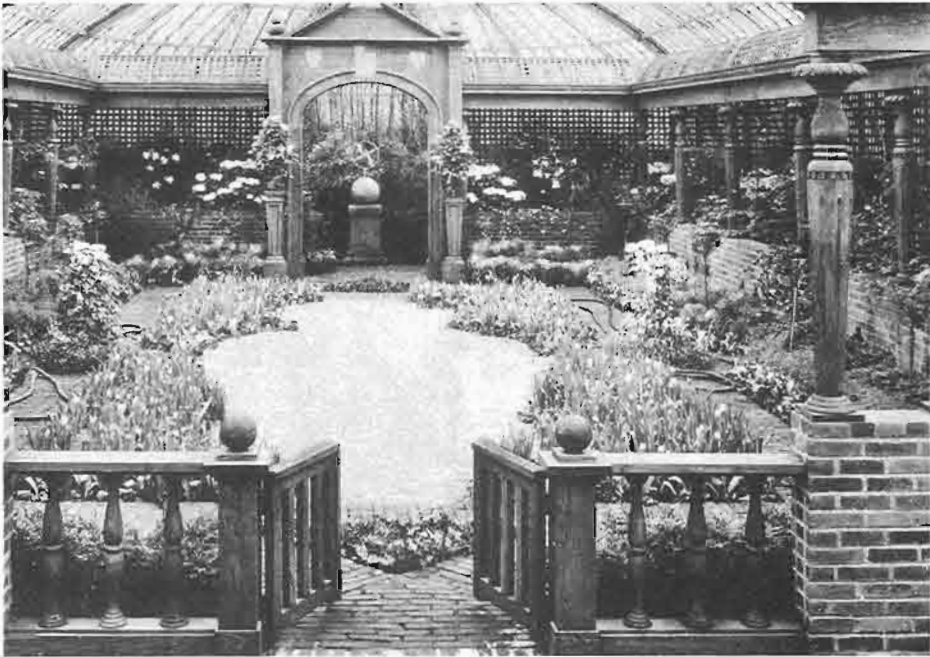
Photos courtesy of Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.

The Fern Grotto in the Palm House.

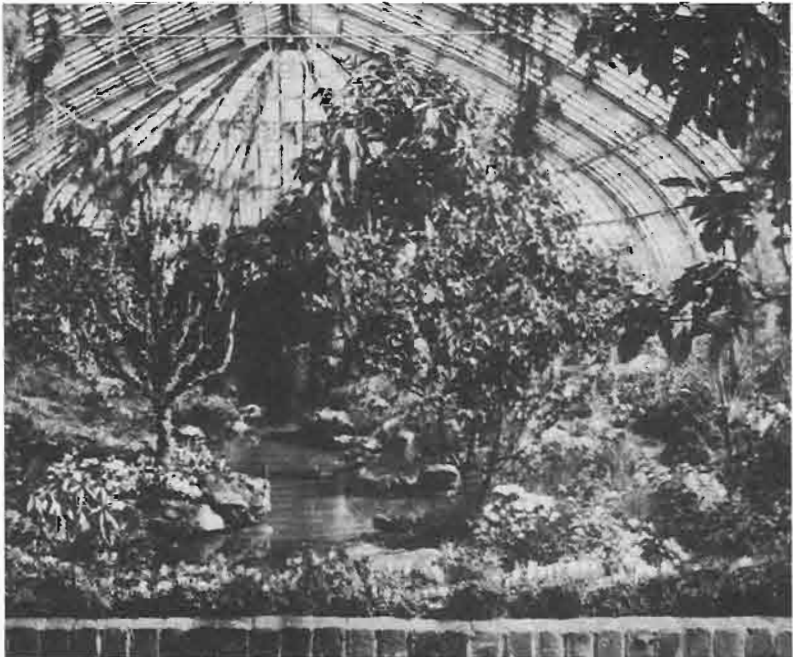
The Grove of Australian Tree Ferns in the Fern Room.



These two views are taken from a souvenir program on the Conservatory, published to record the 27th Triennial Conclave of the Knights Templar in 1898. The Conservatory, open a scant five years, already displayed the rich, naturalistic massing of plants that has always marked the style of its permanent installations; many of the plants, including the Australian Tree Ferns, came to Pittsburgh by way of Chicago where they had figured in the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Impressive as these 97-year-old images are to present-day eyes, our reaction would be tepid compared to the certain wonderment of a Pittsburgher of that time on seeing these overwhelming and totally unfamiliar jungles. Aside from a few wood- or steel-engraved book illustrations or the occasional stereoscopic view, there was little that the average person of the time could have seen by way of preparation for the tropical riot of foliage that met him on entering the Conservatory.

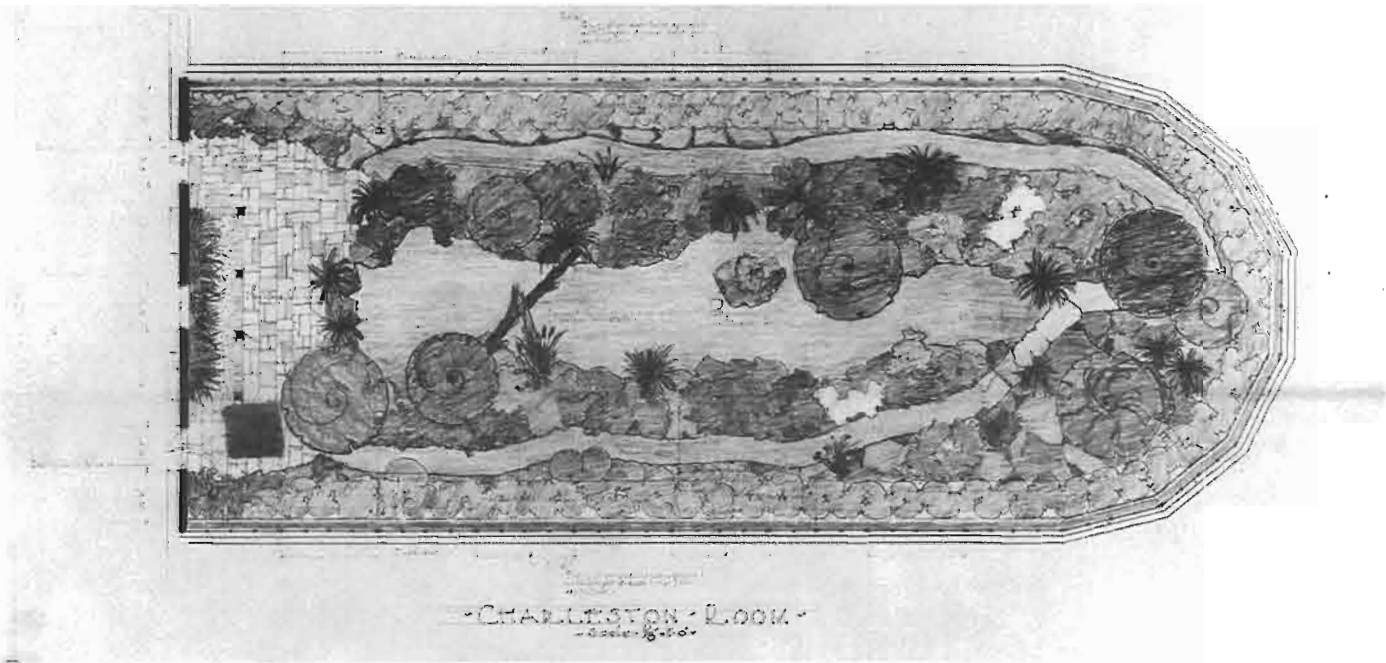


The Cloister Garden, in the late 1930s.



The Charleston Room, in the late 1930s.

The two photographic views record the elaborate “theme” settings designed for most of the Conservatory’s rooms in 1935 by Ralph Griswold, parks director and arguably Pittsburgh’s most renowned landscape design architect. Providing each of the rooms with a period or regional style insured a fairly strong architectural context, “hardscape” in current landscape design parlance, and also served an elementary educational end by introducing notions of the tastes of other times or other places. These installations were rather like the period rooms that were appearing with great frequency and great success in American art museums in just the same years. The Charleston Garden, housed in the room now called the East Room, relied for its associative and evocative power on massed azaleas and magnolias, augmented by Spanish moss, while the Cloister Garden, now the Broderie Room, was a quite knowledgeable re-creation of a small aristocratic (clerical or no) garden of northern Europe around 1600.



A planting plan in colored crayon, for the Charleston Room, c. 1935.

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In recent years, that challenge often seemed to go unmet. The various rooms, which had undoubtedly seen change from time to time, began to lose their individual character. The pergola that rose along the ramped walkway in the South Conservatory just beyond the Palm Court was removed by the last City-appointed director; the drawings by Mr. Griswold for that feature survive in the City’s Department of Engineering and Construction and record that he specified hand-adzed timbers for the pergola. This same room suffered a further loss in the general tidying-up connected with the recent restoration when the great clouds of bougainvillea (four colors!) that were one of the room’s delights were scrapped. Elsewhere, the Japanese Garden that had filled the East Room since 1963 has disappeared to be replaced by a particularly empty design that has been improved somewhat over the past two years and at least still adheres to the arrangement of the space as a vista to be seen and enjoyed from a viewing terrace. I particularly regret the passing of the Japanese Room since, especially in its late and rather worn condition, it seemed to me a worthy setting for a performance of *Madam Butterfly* as it might have been realized from water-colors by Childe Hassam.

In part, the changes made in one or another of the rooms at whatever date have mirrored current tastes in garden design. This is even true of the present Exhibition One Room, for a long time the Modern Room, and of the Serpentine Room, to the west of the Palm Court. These two designs, in their basic configuration at least, are introductions of the 1970s when the pragmatism of then-contemporary garden design sometimes shaded off into the perfunctory, a tendency fully realized now in the existing arrangement of the East Room. From the earliest years of the Conservatory, a visit there plunged the viewer into a heady environment, an assault on eye and nose that delighted and enthralled. In the Palm Court, the Fern Room, and the Stove Room, we can still experience the very landscapes that thrilled our late-Victorian forebears; these interiors are precious documents and, as well, object lessons in the proper interior arrangement of a great glass house. Their preservation is as urgent and essential as is the maintenance of the Conservatory’s very fabric. The best of Ralph Griswold’s interiors have been lost, but there are still the Broderie Room and the Orchid Room that demand recognition as his work. That the Survey has identified an outdoor garden of his from the 1930s still in

good condition seems a miracle, but the Phipps contains at least two! His introduction of a pictorial style of interior landscape heightened both the intensity of Phipps’ rooms and the appeal of plants and flowers. Unlike the late Victorian installations (and these would essentially include the Victoria Regia and Cactus Rooms as well), many of Griswold’s designs called for a viewing terrace at the inner end of the room, controlling visitor circulation and insuring the inviolability of the plant material. This scheme has much to recommend it, not least for its suitability in a day of concern for handicapped equality. A longish memory acknowledges change at the Conservatory—in interior landscape design, in plant materials, and in the seasonal shows. Change is welcome, and when thoughtfully done, reveals new pleasures and new ideas in the use and deployment of plants. Indeed, change at the Phipps Conservatory has had the benevolent inevitability of the cycle of seasons in one’s own garden. There have been times when the seasonal flower shows appeared to be modeled on the Rose Bowl parade floats rather than on any recognized school of garden or floral design. Happily, in just the last couple years, there has been a *change* in the direction of more

Photo courtesy of the Pittsburgh City Department of Engineering and Construction.



The Cottage Garden as it looked during the Winter Show, 1993.



Photo by Bill Rydberg, PHOTON

The former Cottage Garden, now the location of the new Tropical Fruit and Spice Room.

Installed in 1951, the Cottage, or Cabin, Room contained a grist mill and small cottages built of timbers salvaged from an actual farmhouse dating to 1833. The buildings were removed in 1991, probably being thought too stagey, but their disappearance left more space for a small grove and seasonal planting that seems consistently to have inspired the designers of the various flower shows to some of their best efforts. Visitors to the 1993 Winter Show will recall the delightful use of naturalized amaryllis in a woodland setting. The room was cleared last fall to make way for a new effort at telling us something about useful plants, a duty acquitted with great drama and authority in the Economic Room of the Phipps Conservatory of 1893.

restrained, more properly horticultural displays, and often plant materials have been used with great discrimination to achieve elegant, instructive installations.

However, recent visits have given rise to increasing misgivings about the current in-house awareness of the Conservatory's history and significance. The trigger for this uneasiness was the removal of the Cottage Garden for the installation of the Tropical Fruit and Spice Room, an installation that has been referred to by the Conservatory as both temporary and permanent. Although the display of these useful plants harks back to the initial educational activities of the Conservatory, it has been realized at some cost to the established canon of the Phipps' rooms. The interest that Landmarks has long had for the Conservatory is well documented, not least through our successful fundraising for the structure's restoration. Landmarks has recently opened a discussion with both the administration and the Board of Phipps Conservatory to share with them our understanding of that great institution's history and meaning.

Is Your House or Church Eligible for a Historic Landmark Plaque?

Buildings, structures, and districts may be approved for a Historic Landmark plaque if all of the following conditions are met:

- they are remarkable pieces of architecture, construction, or planning, or if they impart a rich sense of history;
- alterations, additions, or deterioration have not substantially lessened their value in the above respects;
- they are at least 50 years old;
- they are within Allegheny County.

If you own a building or know of a building that fulfills these criteria, then consider nominating it for a Historic Landmark plaque. Call Walter Kidney for details at (412) 471-5808.



Photo by Mark May

Landmarks' First Old House Fair

Proclaiming its purpose to bring "together those who are restoring old houses and those who can help them survive the experience," Landmarks held its first Old House Fair on March 2. The one-day event, co-sponsored with Victoria Hall and with funding and support from Integra Bank, was held in the restored Second Empire splendor of Victoria Hall in Friendship. Between 10 a.m.—when the doors opened to admit about fifty eager and impatient home restorers—until 5 p.m. when the Fair concluded, more than 800 visitors met vendors, attended lectures, collected brochures and pamphlets, consumed lunches and desserts, and marveled at the decor.

*...bringing together
those who are
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In the ballroom and theater, restoration architects, craftsmen and contractors, conservationists, and glass and lighting designers and fabricators joined representatives from insurance and lending institutions, neighborhood organizations, The Victorian Society, The Landmarks Store, and The University of Pittsburgh Press to answer questions and describe and offer services and products.

Simultaneously, experts gave lectures and demonstrations in the chapel on the half-hour on related restoration and preservation topics and answered questions; some sessions were "standing room only." In the billiard room, photographs of houses were presented for informed inspection and the correct house style or type was identified and discussed.

At the end of the day, a consensus had been reached and conversation among the sponsors looked to an Old House Fair next year; later in the year perhaps, when outdoor as well as indoor space would be available. We thank Joedda Sampson, owner of Victoria Hall, Integra Bank, and all exhibitors and participants for helping Landmarks successfully launch what we hope becomes an annual Pittsburgh tradition.



Education Classes

Call Mary Ann Eubanks at (412) 471-5808 if you would like information on any of Landmarks' spring and summer classes:

Exploring Your City
Monday evenings,
April 1, 15, 22, and 29

A teacher inservice offered by Landmarks through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Teachers may call (412) 394-5761 for details.

Exploring the Interior Architecture of Downtown Landmarks
April 18 and 20

Offered through Pitt's Informal Program. Please call (412) 648-2560 to register.

The 30-Minute Kennywood Architect
May 9

Plan a school field trip to Kennywood Park on Thursday, May 9, and have your students participate in Landmarks' "30-Minute Kennywood Architect" program. Call Louise Sturgess at (412) 471-5808 for further information.

The Garden History Path: Landscape Designs of Frederick Law Olmsted in New York and Pittsburgh
May 9 and 11

Offered through Pitt's Informal Program. Please call (412) 648-2560 to register.

Pittsburgh's Architectural Heritage II: Buildings of the 20th Century
May 30 and June 1

Offered through Pitt's Informal Program. Please call (412) 648-2560 to register.

Exploring Architecture
June 17-21

A teacher inservice class offered by Landmarks through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Teachers may call (412) 394-5761 to register.

Exploring Your Neighborhood
June 24-28

A teacher inservice class offered by Landmarks through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Teachers may call (412) 394-5761 to register.

Pittsburgh Heritage I
July 8-17

Pittsburgh Heritage II
July 22-26

Teacher inservice classes offered by Landmarks through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Teachers may call (412) 394-5761 to register.



Education News

Architectural Apprenticeship

The final session of Landmarks' 1995-96 "Architectural Apprenticeship" was inspirational. Sixteen high school students met in the Hall of Architecture at The Carnegie, and architects Cherie Moshier and Joel Bernard helped class instructor David Roth critique student projects showing designs for an office park, apartments, a transportation museum, and convention center/hotel at Station Square. Dennis McFadden, curator of The Heinz Architectural Center, then led students on a tour of the "Monolithic Architecture" exhibit and Frank Lloyd Wright office. The "Architectural Apprenticeship" is offered by Landmarks through the Gifted and Talented Program of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

African-American Timeline of Key Events

Within one month, Landmarks distributed 2,500 copies of a timeline of key events in local African-American history to area schools, community groups, churches, neighborhood organizations, libraries, and individuals. The timeline proved to be a valuable educational resource during Black History Month.

The timeline was written for the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation by Eliza Smith Brown of Brown, Carlisle & Associates, with contributions from Frank E. Bolden and Laurence A. Glasco. Dollar Bank contributed funds to Landmarks to help underwrite the printing costs.

Portable Pittsburgh

We're packing up Pittsburgh this March, April, and May, and traveling to more than 50 schools to present the one-hour "Portable Pittsburgh" program. By looking at historic photographs and artifacts, students learn about Pittsburgh's 238-year history and are challenged to think about its future. Fifteen docents will be working with our education coordinator Mary Ann Eubanks to present the "Portable Pittsburgh" sessions.

Downtown Dragons

More than 30 schools are scheduled to tour downtown Pittsburgh with Landmarks in March, April, May, and June. Elementary-school students search for creatures carved in stone on the "Downtown Dragons" tour, and in the process discover something about the history and architecture of the city. Mary Lu Denny and about 25 docents will lead these walking tours.



Eric Kinney's drawing of a detail in the Hall of Architecture.

Teachers Use the Built Environment to Enrich Classroom Curricula

Louise Sturgess, executive director of Landmarks, met with twenty-two Pittsburgh Public School teachers on February 21 and 28 to describe Landmarks' educational resources, introduce basic concepts in architecture, and discuss the value of historic preservation. The inservice was sponsored by Gateway to Music and the Performing Arts, in collaboration with Clayton Traditional Academy.

Louise presented similar programs to elementary and secondary teachers of the gifted on March 11 in a workshop offered through the California University of Pennsylvania, and on March 13 to elementary school teachers in a workshop offered by the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Celebrity Reading Program

On March 15, the Parent-Teacher Association at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Bethel Park invited Louise Sturgess to participate in a "Celebrity Reading Program." Louise read *No Star Nights* by Anna Egan Smucker to third-grade students, and talked with them about Pittsburgh's steel heritage.

Book Reviews

Celebrating the First 100 Years of The Carnegie in Pittsburgh 1895-1995

Agnes Dodds Kinard. No place or publisher, 1995. 256 pp., 150 b/w and color photographs. \$23.95 at The Landmarks Store.

This is a very factual account of a huge, complex institution's many operations and accomplishments, past and present. Apart from its early pages on Andrew Carnegie it has no particular narrative; rather, it offers a source of useful information and builds up, from the sheer accumulation of topics, a strong impression of how much the Carnegie Institute—the Science Center and Warhol Museum included—has accomplished. The author, Agnes Dodds Kinard, is a trustee of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. We commend her on this fine book.

Into the Other America

Charles Morse Stotz, *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania*. Originally published 1936, republished 1966 and 1995. Introduction to the 1995 edition by Dell Upton; introduction to the 1966 edition by Charles Morse Stotz. liii + 299 pp., 410 halftones, 81 plates of measured drawings. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995. \$60.00.

This is simply the Old Reliable as regards pre-1860 architecture in the twenty-seven counties in the western third of our state. The information has doubtless been supplemented and corrected many times since 1936, but everyone still relies on "Stotz," and it is good to see it back in print. The halftones for this edition were remade from the original nitrate negatives, taken in the early 1930s for the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey, and taken in many cases by Luke Swank, then rising to prominence.

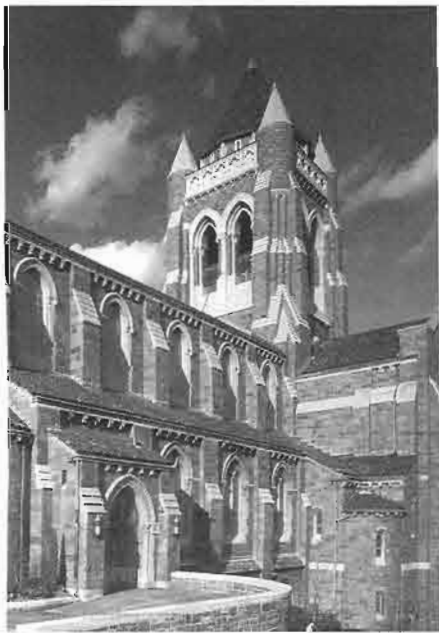
The new introduction by Dell Upton, "The Story of the Book," makes an excellent book even better, and is a paper of great individual worth. It sums up the character and career of Charles Morse Stotz, who led the Buhl-funded Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey and wrote this book's text, and thus contributes to the architectural biography of this region. It puts the Survey and the book into a nationwide context of sketching and photographic trips, methodical surveys, and publications that, a century or half-century ago, set out to record American architecture from the time before what then was seen as its cultural debilitation by Victorian fashions and valueless commercialism.

Further, it introduces the concept of an "Other America" that those architects of decades back were moved to track down. One can imagine some such architect, looking out of a train halted at an unprosperous small town and seeing a proud house or a courthouse of quiet elegance, fine in proportion and detailing but sullen in neglect. Or being driven to the site of a client's suburban house and noting in the distance an empty country mansion or a log house. The architect and his acquaintances, urban, educated, prosperous, might well have social and aesthetic reasons for looking more closely at this old architecture and the way of life that it perhaps continued to shelter, in search of values to re-insert in their own culture: or something of the sort. In practice, the old architectural clarities did not necessarily house the Arcadians the investiga-

tors may have anticipated, and Stotz himself seems to have had a few confrontations amusing to third parties, with inhabitants of the "Other America."

Sixty-some years have passed since the Survey. Much of what back then was plainly rural is now road-ridden and quasi-suburban. The "Other America" has shrunk where not wholly disappeared. And many of the buildings that Stotz's survey teams could record have yielded, unnoted, to empty ground. In his 1966 introduction, Stotz held out little hope that many of the survivors could be restored, and by that time the concepts of viable modern architectural style had changed so much that the Survey of three decades could be seen only as an act of remembrance, no longer an act of hope to preserve or inspiration to design.

Photo by Edward A. Massery



St. Bernard Church, Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Reverend Thomas R. Wilson; photographs by Edward A. Massery. Mount Lebanon: St. Bernard Church, 1995. Approx. 250 pp., very heavily illustrated, very largely in color.

To sum things up, this is a lavish book celebrating what, to a nonsectarian eye, is one of the late triumphs of the Eclectic movement in architecture and its accompanying arts. What fraction of a percent of the American art lovers have even heard of the architect William Richard Perry, the sculptor Frank Aretz, the painter Jan Henryk deRosen, and the glazier Alfred R. Fisher? These people produced a gorgeous ensemble, at what must have been excruciating expense, between the laying of the foundations in 1933 and the completion of the art work in 1969. And they did so regardless of the dogmas of contemporary critics and the current trends in architecture and the art market. There seems to have been an intention to produce the sort of Transitional Gothic church that Bernard of Clairvaux might have been familiar with, yet the details are not antiquarian. The Ludovici-Celadon roof tiles in random hues and shades have a fairy-tale look that warrants their appearance on the dust jacket but is not truly medieval, and the faces on deRosen's painted figures have too photographic, immediate a look to recall the Middle Ages. The art simply is as it is, neither emphatically old or new.

The book is a lavish one, a treat to look at and pleasantly copious in its information. The photographer cheats a little out of doors, where the sunlight is always golden at one end of the day or another. Otherwise, no reservations.

The book is available at St. Bernard's rectory. Copies may be purchased at the rectory between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, at a cost of \$50 per book. Copies may be ordered by mail by sending a check for \$60 to St. Bernard Church, 311 Washington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15216. For additional information call (412) 561-3300.

Wings and Wright

Albert M. Tannler

Name some architecturally distinguished American cities. New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Buffalo. . . . Buffalo? Yes, Buffalo. This upstate New York city—gateway to Canada and the Niagara frontier and known popularly for Buffalo wings, a never-say-die football team, and fierce winters—contains splendid buildings and parks designed by some of the most gifted architects of nineteenth- and twentieth-century America.

The City of Buffalo is an outdoor museum of extraordinary architecture. . . . Its buildings and public spaces are among the best in the country, yet its place in American architecture has seldom been recognized.

So states the preface to *Buffalo Architecture: A Guide*, published in 1981 by M.I.T. Press, a leading architectural publisher, with contributions by eminent architectural historians Reyner Banham, Charles Beveridge, and Henry-Russell Hitchcock; reprinted numerous times, the book remains in print today.

This book is our first clue that Buffalo is a major destination for anyone interested in American architecture. Another indication is that Erie County—in which Buffalo is located—has *nine* designated National Historic Landmarks, *seven* of which are within the city limits.

What will the visitor to Buffalo find?

At the center of downtown Buffalo stands St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1849-51, designed by Richard Upjohn, one of the leading Early Gothic Revival architects of the day; the spire was added in 1870 and the interior changed after a fire in 1888 [National Historic Landmark]. Near by an interesting building for Pittsburghers is the Old Post Office, designed by Jeremiah O'Rourke in 1894 and modeled on the Allegheny County Courthouse. An intriguing space is the great interior court of the Ellicott Square Building, designed by D.H. Burnham & Co. in 1895-96. Buffalo's City Hall, a massive Art Deco skyscraper designed by John J. Wade in 1929, dominates a circle which is the hub of the city's spoke system of major streets. At the center of the circle is a 1907 memorial to President William McKinley, which united the talents of architects Carrère and Hastings and D. H. Burnham and sculptor A. Phimister Proctor.

Of special interest is the Guaranty Building, 1895-96 [National Historic Landmark], arguably the finest and certainly the best preserved of the skyscrapers designed after 1890 by Louis Sullivan, "father" of the skyscraper and mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright. The Guaranty Building exhibits some of the finest of Sullivan's extravagant and complex stylized ornament. Based on his study of plant forms and sometimes compared to Art Nouveau, the ornamentation is unlike any other. (Unfortunately, less than fifty of the 250 buildings designed by Louis Sullivan survive.)

Leading out of downtown is Buffalo's "grand avenue," Delaware Avenue which still has some great houses left, among them H. H. Richardson's early (1869-71) Dorsheimer house and the Williams-Butler house (1895-98) and Williams-Pratt house (1895-96) by McKim, Mead & White. West of Delaware Avenue is Kleinhans Hall, home of the Buffalo symphony, designed by Eliel and Eero Saarinen, 1939-40 [National Historic Landmark]. Further north off Delaware Avenue is the William Heath house, 1904-05,



Buffalo City Hall

designed by Frank Lloyd Wright—one of five important houses he designed in Buffalo (Wright's most important Buffalo building, the Larkin Company headquarters, was demolished in 1950; that act gave birth to Buffalo's historic preservation movement.) Near the Heath house is Buffalo's other surviving (and also early) Richardson building: the majestic Buffalo State Hospital of 1870 [National Historic Landmark], later landscaped by Olmsted and Vaux. Here one is on the edge of the North Park/Central Park section of the city, dominated by Delaware Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the 1870s and subsequently the site of the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. The park forms a hub for a series of parkways connecting the waterfront and downtown with the city's most graceful sections. The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society occupies what was the New York State pavilion (and sole survivor) of the 1901 Exposition [National Historic Landmark].

East of Delaware Park the remaining Frank Lloyd Wright houses are located: the Darwin Martin estate consisting of three houses designed 1903-06 [National Historic Landmark] and the Walter Davidson house of 1908.

About twenty miles south of Buffalo is the town of East Aurora, once home to the extraordinary Elbert Hubbard and his Roycroft society; Hubbard left a successful business career to build an artistic/literary empire inspired by William Morris. The Roycroft Campus, 1895 and after [National Historic Landmark], consists of the buildings where the Roycrofts bound books and created metalware, art glass, and Arts & Crafts furniture; the Roycroft Inn—its rooms named after famous artists, scientists, and philosophers—provided accommodations to many notable and curious visitors during Hubbard's lifetime (he and his wife were passengers on the ill-fated *Lusitania*, which sank in 1915). Other interesting places in East Aurora include the Elbert Hubbard-Roycroft Museum which occupies a Roycroft-built house of 1910 and the home of Millard Fillmore [erected 1826; National Historic Landmark].

Ten years ago Landmarks organized a trip to Buffalo for its members and friends. This fall the architectural treasures of this often overlooked city beckon us back. Join Landmarks and visit Buffalo, September 6 to 8; we will be staying at the Roycroft Inn. If you would like a tour preview, Landmarks trustee Phil Hallen will present a slide lecture about Buffalo on June 10, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel at Station Square. For further information call Mary Lu Denny at (412) 471-5808.

Tours and Special Events

Call Mary Lu Denny Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at (412) 471-5808 for more information on the following tours and special events. Members will be mailed invitations to each event containing detailed information—so sort through your mail carefully! Mark these dates on your calendar now, so you can tour the Pittsburgh area and neighboring cities with Landmarks.

April 25 6-11 p.m.
Enjoy dinner at the Penn Brewery Pub and a brief lecture on English gardens by Barry Hannegan, followed by the Pittsburgh Public Theater's production of *Arcadia*.

May 13-17 12 Noon-12:45 p.m.
Landmarks will lead free walking tours of the Grant Street area during Preservation Week.

May 19 2-5 p.m.
Neighborhood walking tour of Garfield.

June 1 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Margaret Henderson Floyd of Boston will lead a bus tour to Carnegie libraries designed by Longfellow, Alden & Harlow.

June 5 6-8 p.m.
Neighborhood walking tour of Woodland Road.

June 10 7-8:30 p.m.
Phil Hallen, a trustee of Landmarks, will present a slide lecture on the architecture of Buffalo and preview the weekend excursion to Buffalo that Landmarks will offer in September.

June 11 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
A bus tour of six private gardens in the East End.

June 19 6-8 p.m.
A neighborhood walking tour of the South Side.

July 14 2-5:30 p.m.
A bus tour to the gardens of Old Economy in Ambridge and the Merrick Art Gallery in New Brighton.

August 3 9:30-11:30 a.m.
August 4 2-4 p.m.
A "Downtown Dragons" family walking tour.

August 11 2-5 p.m.
A bus tour of several historic homes on the North Side and in the East End.

September 6-8
A weekend bus tour to Buffalo, New York.

Oliver Miller Homestead

A pioneer landmark and Whiskey Rebellion site in South Park

Open every Sunday,
April 21 through December 29
from 1-4 p.m.

For more information or to schedule a weekday group tour, call (412) 835-1554.



The campus in 1906. From left to right: Alfred Hall (college administration); Anselm Hall (monastery); Andrew Hall (monastic choir chapel and library); St. Vincent's Church.

The Western Pennsylvania Traveler Commanding the Hilltop: St. Vincent Archabbey

Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr.



Archabbot
Boniface Wimmer,
1809-87.

Commanding a hilltop beyond Ligonier and facing Chestnut Ridge stands St. Vincent's Archabbey, a collection of fine historic and contemporary buildings, gardens, quadrangles, cloisters, and fields. St. Vincent's has been there since 1846, when Boniface Wimmer of Bavaria arrived in the United States together with eighteen monks and lay brothers to found a Benedictine monastery.

Wimmer believed that the Benedictines were not like those Orders of itinerant missionaries who traveled from place to place to spread the Word, but rather were missionaries who achieved permanence, according to Jerome Oetgen's biography *An American Abbot*. Oetgen writes that: "History had abundantly shown, Wimmer said, that the conversion of England, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Hungary, and Poland was almost exclusively the work of medieval Benedictines." He suggested a plan for a North American mission "which called for the acquisition of a tract of land in the interior of the continent where a monastery could be established whose economy would primarily depend upon agriculture." He foresaw expansion in colonies around the country, utilizing profits from the sale of the agricultural products.



Sportsman's Hall.

St. Vincent's in 1846.



A site near the village of Carrolltown, Pa. had been offered to Wimmer, but although he made a preliminary contract to purchase it, he felt that it was a "high, stony, barren plateau, little suited for agriculture, but excellent for cattle-raising." He was also offered the land known as St. Vincent. After some changes of mind, Wimmer accepted the latter as more attractive. Originally a property called Sportsman's Hall, it had been purchased by a Father Theodore Brouwers, one of the earliest Catholic missionaries in Western Pennsylvania. Father Brouwers had bequeathed the property "to any Roman Catholic priest who would take up residence there and work among the Catholics of the region."

Wimmer felt that the land was "an uncommonly beautiful and fertile region," consisting of two farms totaling 450 acres, a brick church erected in 1835, a one-story parsonage, a dilapidated barn, and a log structure.

From the beginning, Wimmer saw there immediate goals for the group: teaching, farming, and establishing missions at further points, and in fact within two years they had nine more stations in Westmoreland and Indiana Counties. In spite of his work, almost from the beginning there were

complaints from more strict members of the Order about "the lack of enclosure and the merry atmosphere of the monastery." Nevertheless, Wimmer always prevailed with his vision and his determination. In spite of rugged accommodations in the first few years, the monastery grew, always with the ultimate goal of training a German clergy for the American church.

By 1849, college had begun when thirteen students were accepted for study and learning rather than for entering the priesthood. Father Wimmer set about not only developing the college but erecting structures to house it, improving the living accommodations for the monks and the lay brothers, and elevating St. Vincent's itself, which in 1855 was given the rank of exempt abbey with the right of the monks to elect an abbot for life. Wimmer was appointed by the Pope as abbot for three years, after which an election would be held for the permanent abbot.

"By 1856, through the efforts of Boniface Wimmer, the Benedictine Order was firmly established in America. And both the vision and efforts of the monks during their first ten years



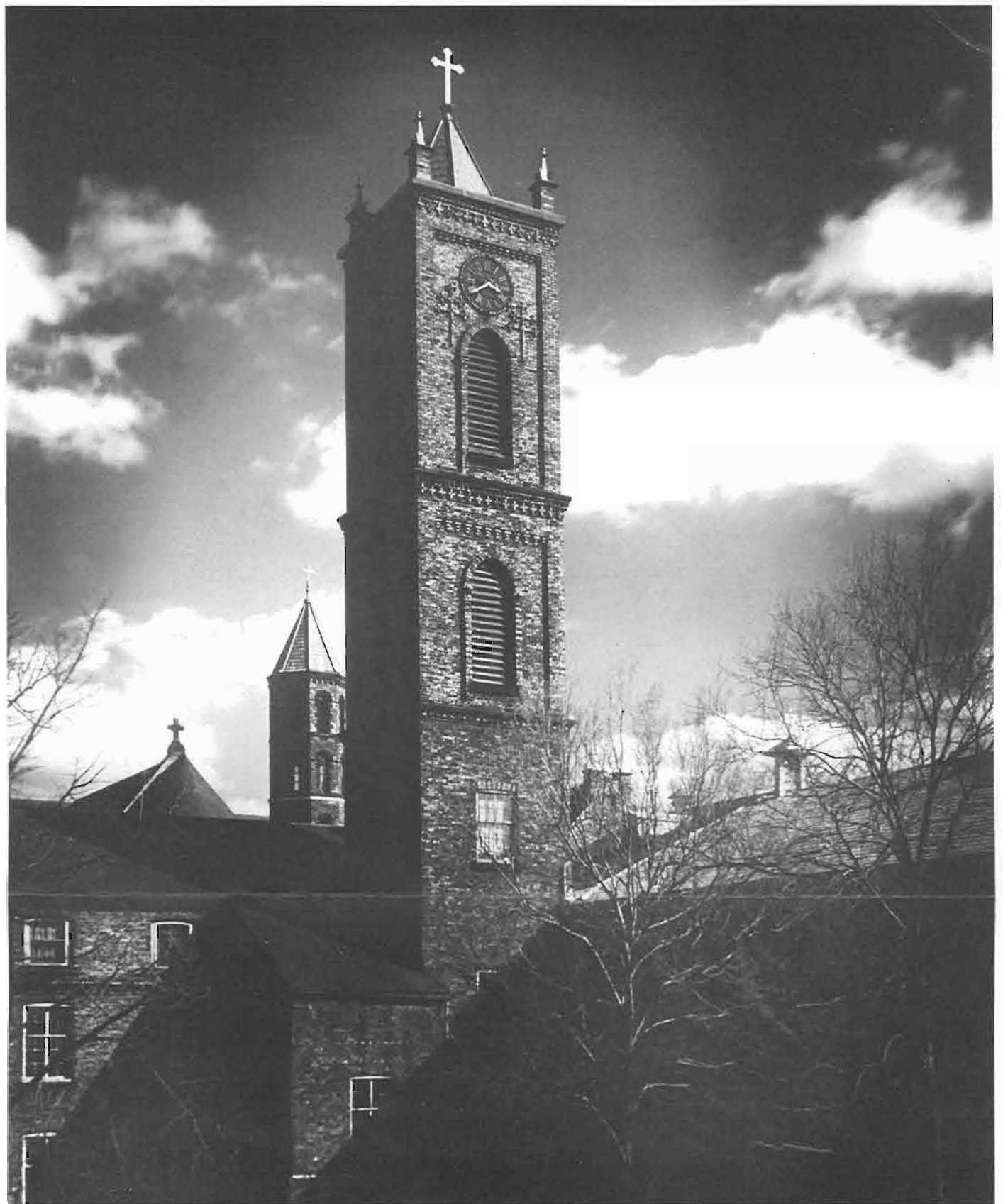
The Grist Mill, in a photograph of 1988.

of service in the American Church had borne fruits whose extent and potential probably startled even Wimmer. The monastery at St. Vincent had increased in membership tenfold between 1846 and 1856. A flourishing school trained both German-speaking and English-speaking men for the American clergy, and Benedictine missionaries had spread out to nearly every corner of western Pennsylvania, establishing priories, schools, parishes and mission stations." During the next ten years, the monks would reach far beyond Western Pennsylvania into Minnesota, Kansas, Virginia, New Jersey, and New York. Various complications arose with Wimmer's tolerance with some of the monks who believed in a stricter form of life and with some of those from more distant places who were rebellious. Because of their complaints, when Wimmer was elected permanent abbot, the Cardinals in Rome decided that he should be given another three-year term, after which another election should be held.

Wimmer continued his missionary activity, deploying monks to such distant places as Galveston, San Jose, San Antonio, and Fredricksburg. In 1866 his community in Minnesota became known as the Abbey of St. Louis on the Lake. Thus, a second abbey was established, one with 1,400 acres of land along a beautiful lake.

The home base kept growing, and by 1867 there were 100 monks at St. Vincent; thirteen parishes in the Diocese of Pittsburgh were administered by Wimmer's priests. St. Vincent offered three distinct courses of study, the Ecclesiastical course, the Classical course, and the Commercial course. By 1868, there were 167 students enrolled in the Classical and Commercial courses, and there were twenty-two professors, all but one of whom were

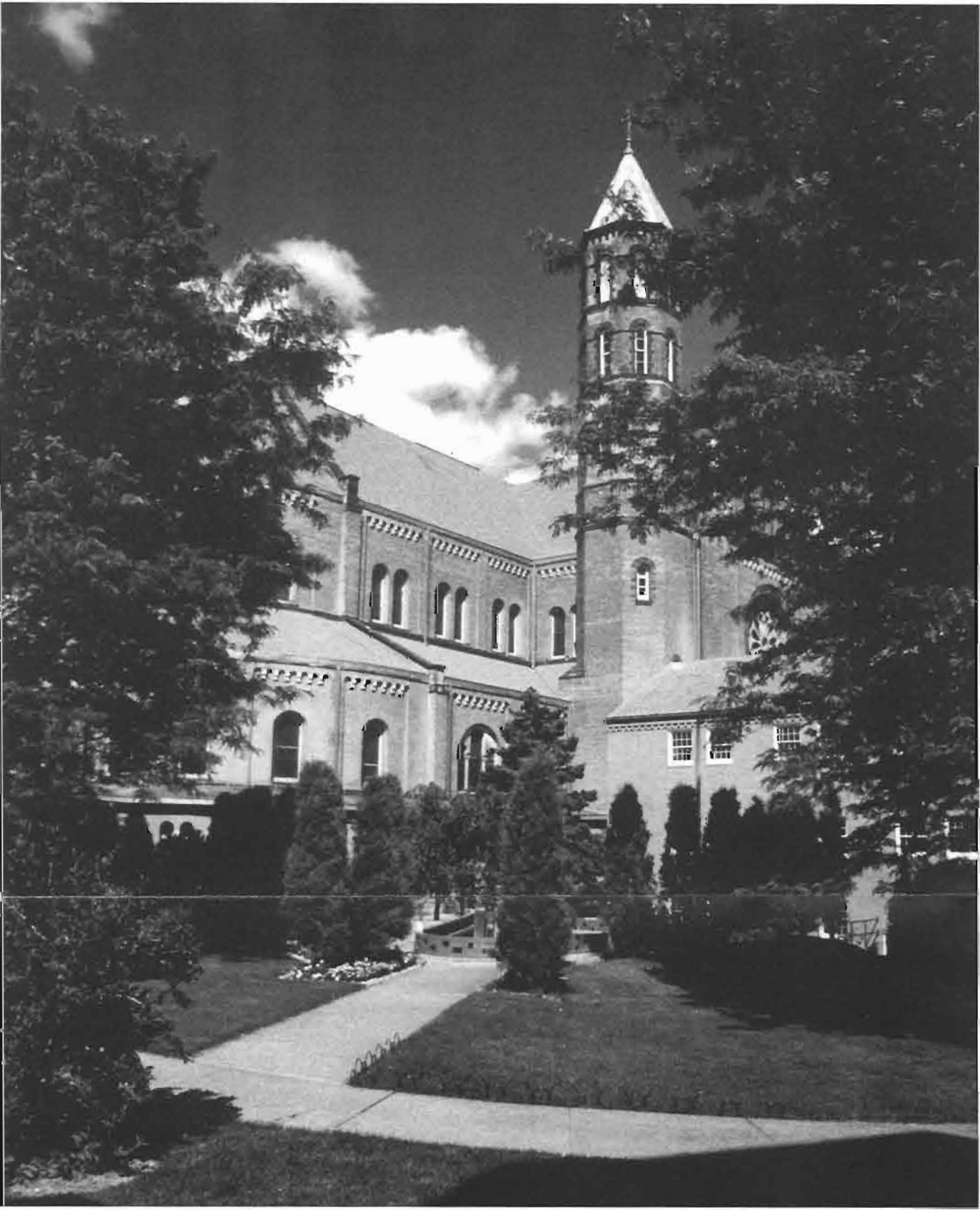
Continued on page 19



The Clock Tower, 1872-1963.

St. Vincent's Basilica, consecrated 1905.





The Basilica, looking toward the apse.

Alfred Hall in 1914.



Bede Hall (gymnasium), 1894-1970.





A model of 1954.

Continued from page 17

monks. In addition, Wimmer established an elementary school at the abbey and had thirty-three pupils enrolled. In 1870, the State Legislature issued a charter which empowered St. Vincent "to grant and confer such degrees in the arts and sciences . . . as are granted in other colleges and universities in the United States."

Wimmer maintained a fierce travel schedule to his various missions and to Europe, where he often visited with King Ludwig of Bavaria, who provided funds from time to time for Wimmer's work, and on to Rome for various supplications and participation in various proceedings.

Wimmer had tremendous spirit. At the age of 68 he wrote: "Under the circumstances there is always more work. For us it is a time for growth, for development. I *must* make use of it. And even if I don't know where to put them, I must take as many candidates as I have room for in order to be ready when necessity calls . . . We feel the urge to expand, and that is the reason there is no rest. Something new is always turning up." By 1855, five missions had been elevated to abbeys, 400 students were in the various academic disciplines at St. Vincent, and more than 100 were studying for the priesthood. In December of 1883, marking fifty years since he had made profession as a Benedictine monk, Abbot Wimmer finally was named arch-abbot with lifetime tenure.

In 1885, Wimmer began to feel the effects of age and, although he tried to maintain his heavy schedule including a considerable amount of travel, by 1887 he was seriously impaired; he died in his seventy-eighth year on October 15, 1887. His vigor and the span of his life fulfilled the establishment of the Benedictines in the United States. After his death, only one more community received abbatable status. The Basilica at St. Vincent which he had planned was

built by his successor Father Hintenach and commands the campus today.

When he was in his early sixties, Wimmer wrote: "As autumn in the circle of years is the most beautiful season, so is old age in life! The young ones don't want to believe this, and yet it is true. In growing white one also grows wise—or at least wiser than one was. I am glad the hot season of my life is passed; I would not want to go through it again even if I could. A burnt child, you see, shuns the fire."

But Wimmer burned hot all his life. From that distant outpost, thirty miles from Pittsburgh, he created and commanded a Benedictine empire around the country and grew a major educational institution that today ranks among the finest small colleges in the United States and is a great resource to Western Pennsylvania.

The Basilica is now being restored, and efforts are under way to restore the Grist Mill of 1854. New buildings are rising and have risen recently, but it is the restoration of the Basilica which symbolizes the continuing intensity of Wimmer's spirit. As the bricks that had become drab with soot are now cleaned, they glow a vibrant ruddy red, and Wimmer's spirit seems to be bursting through them, suggesting the possible immortality of his principles and his institution even as the suburbs grow in the nearby valley and the planes come and go at the modern Latrobe airport across the hill. A spirit that drove toward the future and yet reached back through the centuries of Christianity asserts itself in those glowing embers of brick even still.

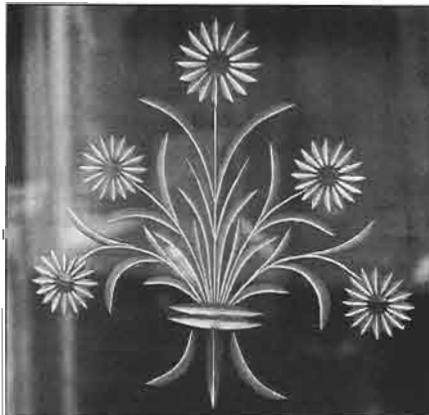
All quotations are taken from An American Abbott by Jerome Oetgen, Latrobe, PA, The Archabbey Press, 1976

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*Landmarks appreciates the
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in helping us create a future
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PITTSBURGH ARCHITECTURE: *Out of the Ordinary*

Walter C. Kidney

A view from Route 28 may or may not prompt a second glance at a foursquare hipped-roof building of yellow brick, in most regards just your ordinary Pittsburgh suburban house from early in this century, a little larger perhaps than the average. But: there is no porch; the roof is rather steep, and has medieval features; there is a cor-



The chapel; two side windows have stone tracery.

ner tower, not uncommon even into this century on houses—but this one *swells* out of the walls rather than being the usual 270-degree arc; and there is a chapel with a polygonal termination, that looks as if it had been whittled from a ground-floor wing. The brick is slightly rough, the mortar joints textured and thick, the common bond a little more interesting and randomly laid than the usual running bond of the yellow-brick suburban foursquare. This is, in its subtle way, a folksy sort of institutional work, a neighborly house of God: the Convent of St. Scholastica, whose future is now unfortunately in some doubt. The architect, in 1925, was Edward Joseph Weber, better known for the Synod Hall at St. Paul's Cathedral and for Central Catholic High School.



A closer view of the chapel, showing also a Gothic dormer with a cusped vergeboard.



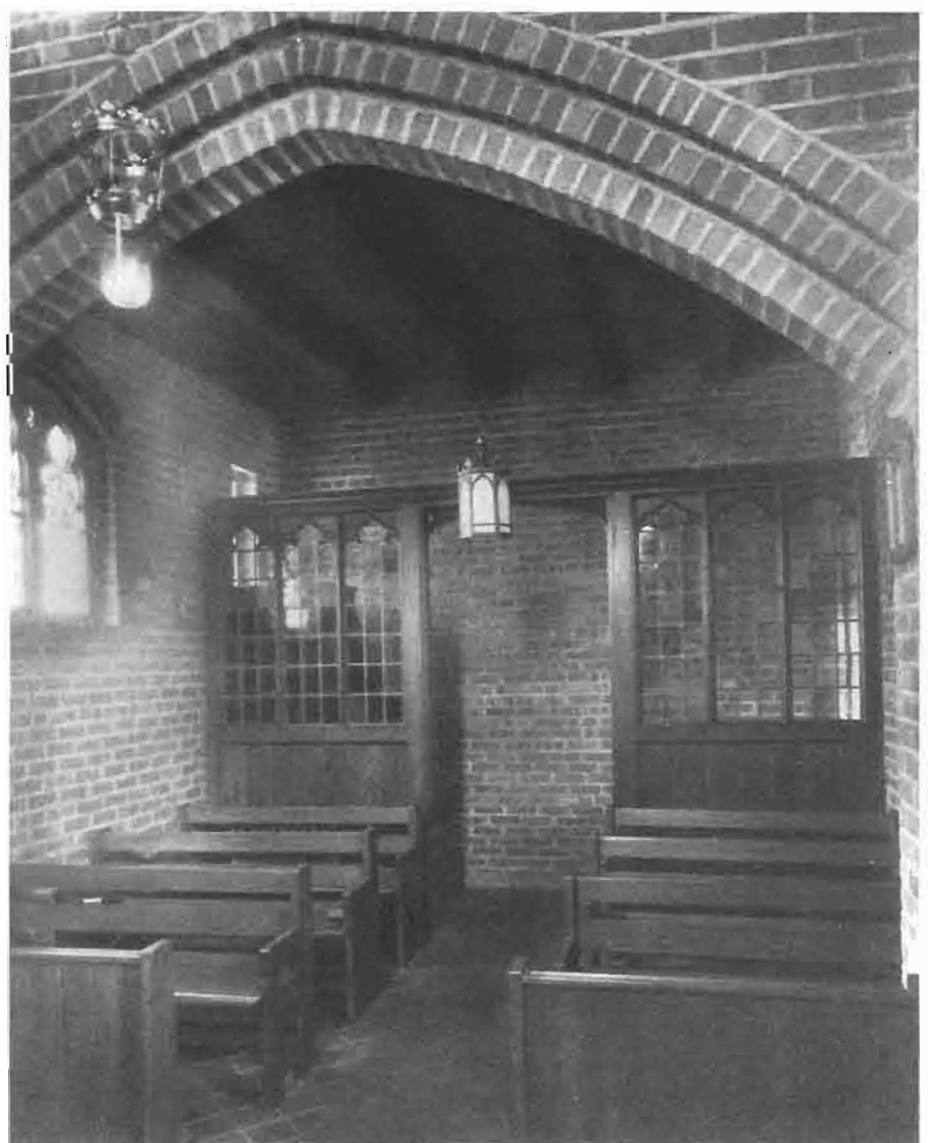
The swell of the tower, and the rise of the eaves from the main roof to the tower roof.



The strong random patterning of the roof slates.



Overall view.



Inside the chapel.