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 nineteenth 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.

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.

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 decrepit 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.
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.

Barry Hannegan . . . Consulting Director, Historic Parks and Gardens Survey
Ronald C. Yochum, Jr. . . . Facilities Management Assistant
Walter C. Kidney . . . Architectural Historian
Mary Ann Eubanks . . . . . . Education Coordinator
Elisa J. Cavalier
Howard B. Slaughter, Jr. . . . Director of Preservation Services
Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr. . . . President
Louise Sturgess . . . Editor/Executive Director

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 will also 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.

Welcome Corporate Members

Benefactors
Dollar Bank
Mellon Bank, N.A.

Partners
Allied Security, Inc.
Bougar and Company
Hill Rogal and Hamilton Company of Pittsburgh, Inc.
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 archivist 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.
WIN Initiative Assists Areas’ Small Businesses

Diane I. Daniels

As reported in the January 1996 PH LF 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 Workingmens Savings.

2119 Sarah Street
Nancy Elshelman, 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 completely by the summer and plans to relocate her 808 Western Avenue office to the building.

1010 Beech Way
Anflo Fastening Systems

"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.

6933 Baum Boulevard
John J. Clark and Associates

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Byars and Alexander Financial Group

The Byars and Alexander Financial Group received approval for a $35,000 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.

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Byars and Alexander Financial Group

Cummings 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.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE DUSQUESNE INCLINE

Dedicated to the preservation of that which cannot be replaced

For a membership please phone 381-1665
Preservation Scene

CONTRIBUTE to the publication of a new edition of Landmark Architecture: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County

by Walter C. Kennedy

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.

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:

(print your name clearly)

Please mail this completed form with your contribution to:

Louise Sturgess
Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
One Station Square, Suite 450
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Thank you very much for your contribution!

"A story 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 2021"
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 stonework to come. Its application in February was to be followed by a duplication of the turn-of-the-century Revival porch and the painting of the exterior, which is necessitated by crude patching of the brickwork. The waff color will probably be pale yellow, with cream and dark green trim. Inside, Frederick John Osterling’s spacious wood, marble, and bronze ground floor will be left as is—the fire of 1896 hardly touched it—the second floor restored, and new family rooms created in the mansard. Joedda and Ben have sold the house to the City, probably for park improvements; thus is ornament, after a fashion, the will of Ella Mae Carnahan. St. Jude had smiled thrice in the last five months: Burke’s Building; the Gwinner-Harter house; and the Sellers-Carnahan house.

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 statement and a covenant will serve to protect the house property. The house itself is a City Historic Landmark, legally protected. And, the present owners will sell to the City, probably for park improvements; thus is ornament, after a fashion, the will of Ella Mae Carnahan. St. Jude had smiled thrice in the last five 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 154 Perryville 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 McCapit of the Perry Hilltop Association for Successful Environmental Restores.

Briefly in the Light

This February, the Spanish Romanesque façade that some remember at the corner of Liberty Avenue and William Penn Place made a brief reemergence between the removal of 1960s window covering and demolition. The mid-1920s façade had been erected for Kappel’s Jewellers in a style far more delicate than that of the Courthouse, yet was related to it insofar as Romanoigue Style was a source for both. A number of people have lamented the demolition, which is intended to straighten out 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 jog. The Murphy Administration did not want to go 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 Mead Valley Expressway, potendly devoting not only buildings and neighborhood 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 light rail trolley system and 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 Van Couver in Europe, Michel Rivoire, told us how he can put in a full work day, have 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 or planes to taxis; and, in addition, the system is punctual.

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

Citizen Adoption

Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr.

All across America signs erected by highway departments indicate the adoption of pieces of highway by citizens who cherish the environment as a place where they can go to get away from it all, to enjoy the beauty of nature. Here is a peculiar expression of America’s love for the automobile; wouldn’t it 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 try to get rid of it by 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 façades 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 but significant projects at strategic public intersections, but many of these are for enjoyment from the automobile only; some 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 whiz by, and then delivering 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.

Pennsylvania Heritage Partnerships Conference 1996

"Making the Connections"

April 26-30
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.

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Renovation Information Network is a program of the non-profit Community Design Center of Pittsburgh.

Clearing the corner of Liberty Avenue and William Penn Place brings Kappel's Jewellers' façade briefly back into view.
Looking southward across the garden at “Elm Cottage,” the work of Ellen Biddle Shipman (1876-1950), 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 Hannonan

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 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 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.

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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 eccentically shaped Victorian beds and similarly curving paths. Together, they created a paradigm of the rectilinear 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 left and right the paths and flower beds were closed by

Continued on page 8

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 in quite 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.

Continued from page 7

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, smoothing 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...
els 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 ante-chamber 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 as to reproduce what are essentially more of the original boxwood, in order to return it to an appropriate scale and form. The artificial mound 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 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.”

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 Hall, A Century of Women Landscape Architects and Gardeners, Pittsburgh runs through June 3.

The central bed of the garden as it looked in the mid-1980s, about the time of the beginning of the Cobb’s 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 walls and had encroached a full foot on to the walks themselves; the narrow 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.

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

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 by 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 blooms—either early photographs show one of the rooms wall-to-wall with huge potted chrysanthemums bearing thousands of flowers larger than grapefruit. That roofshd 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 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 counterfeited, 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 surplus 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 blooms—either early photographs show one of the rooms wall-to-wall with huge potted chrysanthemums bearing thousands of flowers larger than grapefruit. That roofshd 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 to 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.

Continued on page 12
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 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 not) garden of northern Europe around 1600.

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 joss 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. In 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 these 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 Penn 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 out-door 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 Boats 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...
The Cottage Garden as it looked during the Winter Show, 1993.

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 stately, 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 and 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.

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. and 5 p.m., when the doors opened to admit about fifty eager and impatient home restorers—and 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.

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 ballroom 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.

...bringing together those who are restoring old houses and those who can help them survive the experience...
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.

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.

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.

African-American Timeline of Key Events

Within one month, Landmarks distributed 2,200 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 is available for the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation by Eliza Smith Brown of Brown,Carlisle & Associates, with contributions from Frank E. Bolden and Laurence A. Glassco. Dollar bank contributed funds to Landmarks to help underwrite the printing costs.

Portable Pittsburgh

We're packing up Portable Pittsburgh 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.

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 School in Bethel Park invited Louise Sturgess to participate in a "Celebrity Reading Program." Louise read No Star

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 Carnegie Library, and architects Cherie Mother and Joel Bernankind 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's office. The "Architectural Apprenticeship" is offered by Landmarks through the Gifted and Talented Program of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

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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.

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 and no particular narrative; rather, it offers a source of useful information and builds up from the sheer weight of information. It is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the Carnegie Institute's history, from its early days to the present. The book is well-written and well-illustrated, with numerous photographs and diagrams.

Into the Other America


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 half-tones for this edition were re-made from the original stereo 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. In the end, the Survey and the book into a nationwide context of sketching and photographic trips, methodological surveys, and publications that, a century or half-century ago, set out to record American architecture and the way of life that it perhaps seemed to re-insert in their own culture; or something of the sort. In practice, the old architectural clarities did not necessarily house the Arcadian the investiga-
Wings and Wright

Albert M. Tawney


The City of Buffalo is an outdoor museum of extraordinary architecture. . . . Its buildings and structures are among the best in the country, yet its place in American architecture has been somewhat overlooked.


This is our first book that Buffalo is a major place—yet for anyone interested in American architecture. Another indication is that Erie County—in which Buffalo is located—has nine distinguished 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 H.O. Bumham & Co. in 1895-96. Buffalo's City Hall, a massive Art Deco sky scrapers designed by John J. Wade in 1895, dominates the City. Which is the hub of the city's spoke system of major streets. At the center of the circle is a 1913 memorial to President William McKinley, which united the talents of architects Carrere 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 by 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 still intact.

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

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 head house is Buffalo's other surviving (and also early) Richardson building: the majestic Llafujo State Hospital of 1870 (National Historic Landmark), later landscaped by Olmsted and Vaux. Here one is on the edge of the Now Park/Central Park section of the city, dominated by Delaware Park, designed by A. Jackson in 1870 and subsequently the site of the Pan- American Exposition of 1901. The park forested a series of parks 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 Wiltse 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 begin an artistic/literary empire inspired by William Morris. The Roycroft Campus, 1895 and after (National Historic Landmark), consists of the buildings where the Roycrofters 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 (preceded 1826; National Historic Landmark).

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 a piano recital 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 a bus tour of the Grant Street area during Preservation Week.

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

June 1 10 a.m.-6 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 2:30-5:30 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 landscape and Whiskey Rebellion site in South Path.

Open every Sunday.

April 21 through December 29 from 1-4 p.m.

For more information or to schedule a weekday tour, call (412) 917-0200.
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.

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.

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, story, 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 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 Fredericksburg. 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 Basilica, looking toward the apse.

Alfred Hall in 1914.

Bede Hall (gymnasium), 1894-1970.
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, Wimmer finally was named archbishop with lifetime tenure.

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 being raised 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.

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.

net 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.