

ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



January/February 2019

<http://www.uchs.net>

Joseph Minardi, Editor



Congratulations to our Award Winners!

Photos, left to right: UCHS President, George Poulin, Art Read and Cindy Rosenthal, Peter Kendzierski and Leslie Stahl of Zeppelin RE Holdings, LP, Amy Lambert, Amanda Bouwman (and daughter). Joseph Minardi, photographer.

Preservation Initiative Award:

Amy Lambert or her unending dedication to preservation causes in Philadelphia and her many contributions to the University City Historical Society.

Outstanding Preservation Award:

Peter Kendzierski and Leslie Stahl of Zeppelin RE Holdings for removal of Aluminum Siding, recreation of porches, and new landscaping, 813 & 815 S. 49th.

Linford Martin, Golondrina LLC for new storefronts, windows, façade and cornice repairs and multicolor paint, 705-707 S. 50th.

Gift to the Street Awards:

Mark Brack: 3501 Baring Avenue

Porch and woodwork restoration and complete exterior painting. Carlos Escobar, contractor.

Brock Eichenhoffer: 3509 Hamilton Street

Woodwork restoration and new three color paint scheme. Oscar Tabares Reyes, contractor.

Erica Darken: 3629 Hamilton Street

Porch repairs, landscaping, and new three color paint scheme coordinating with adjacent home. Oscar Tabares Reyes, contractor.

Joanne Darken: 3631 Hamilton Street

Three color paint scheme coordinating with adjacent home. Oscar Tabares Reyes, contractor.

Isabelle and Hanley Bodek: 3623 Hamilton Street

Façade repairs, new divided light windows, and a sensitive rear addition. Alexandra von Wussow, interior decoration.

Joe Beckham, Loco Pez: 4631 Baltimore Avenue

New multicolor paint scheme.

Shari and Josef Mintz: 4613 Larchwood Avenue

New bold paint scheme and windows. Ryan Painting, masonry, carpentry and paint. Emerald Windows, sills and windows. Fine Garden Creations, landscaping

John & Elizabeth Davidson: 4730 Cedar Avenue

Energetic new multicolor paint scheme.

Amanda & Alexander Bouwman: 4824 Larchwood Avenue

Removal of aluminum siding, new windows and paint scheme.

Alexine Fleck: 4830 Larchwood Avenue

New paint scheme.

Cynthia Rosenthal: 4921 Larchwood Avenue

New multicolor paint scheme.

Lauren Kovach, Mike Harpring: 527 S. 55th Street

Removal of aluminum siding and restoration of front porch. Harpring Designs, Construction with George's Roofing and Hometown Insulation.

Hickman Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church: 5001 Baltimore Avenue

Stabilization of façade. With special thanks to Dr. Gregory Nelson, Presiding Bishop Rt. Rev. Gregory G.M. Ingram, Presiding Elder Dr. Janet J. Sturdivan, First Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. David Hincer, Ryan Spak, and Kathy Dowdell.

UCHS Oral History Project, Episodes One and Two

The University City Historical Society is proud to announce that its long-awaited Oral History Project is finally here. The first interview was conducted with the Kellermans at their home on St. Marks Square. Joanne Kellerman was a Board member of UCHS and served as the Society's treasurer for many years. She and her husband, Leon, have lived in University City for decades and we are delighted that they were featured in our first episode.

Episode Two of the Oral History Project was with Barry Grosbach and Mike Hardy at their home on South 43rd Street. Barry and Mike have lived in the same house since 1970 and have been very active in various organizations in University City. Barry and Mike recollected on what the neighborhood and Clark Park were like when then first

moved in nearly fifty years ago and the numerous changes over the years. When asked if there are more children now than when you first moved in, Mike quipped, "You nearly get run over by perambulators now." Barry opined as to why Philadelphia is a City of Neighborhoods. "It's such a walkable city," he mused. "You can meet people on the street and talk to them, not everyone is driving from place to place."

Look for the UCHS Oral History Project on our **YouTube Channel** (Yes! We have a YouTube Channel) in the coming weeks. And don't forget to hit **like** and **subscribe** to the UCHS YouTube Channel.

Also, if you know of anyone that would make for a good subject for an interview, please let us know at info@uchs.net.



University City Historic Architecture Walks

Let's take a stroll through the area in West Philly called Garden Court. I say a stroll rather than a tour because this neighborhood is less about outstanding buildings and more about the neighborhood as a whole.

Starting at the corner of Pine and 47th, take a look at the apartment building on the NW corner that gave the neighborhood its name: the Garden Court. You will know it by the big urns over every doorway. There are a lot of apartment buildings on Pine and they all date to the same period, a recognition that West Philly was filling up in the 1920's and apartments were a welcome addition to the fairly dense housing stock.

But let's stroll southward, toward Osage. You will see some pretty big houses, built at the same time as the apartments, belying the notion that apartment buildings and large single-family residences are incompatible (against zoning in many new neighborhoods). Halfway down the block turn into the alley between Pine and Osage.

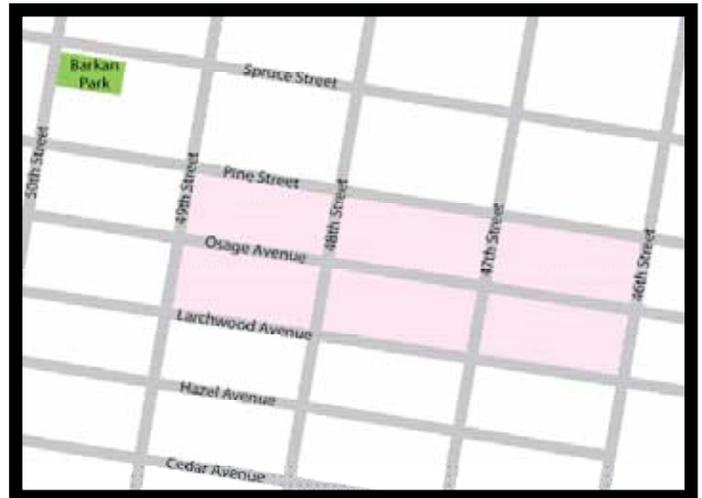
This is where the Garden Court neighborhood story fleshes out. Unlike the rest of West Philadelphia, this 12-block neighborhood was designed for the automobile. And in this alley you see the suburban solution: off-street parking for cars, back porches and doors into single-family residences, and trash collection out of sight.

The developer of Garden Court, Clarence Siegel, thought long and hard about this approach. He'd had lots of experience building the typical West Philly rows and doubles. But this development you will notice is a half-mile walk to the nearest trolley line, not really convenient to public transportation. It is the only West Philly development that presages the late 20th century suburb development: houses on grassy lawns with trees, with car-parking. Keep strolling west through the alley to 49th Street and turn left and left again onto Osage Street.

Here you see what really became Suburban Development architectural vocabulary: pleasing English Cottage styles in 2-story houses, with porches, and the feeling of more space and nature than city dwellings offer. At 47th Street turn right and head south to another alley, and turn right there. Again the alley gives evidence of the importance of the car and its symbolic freedom from the constraints of city living.

Turn left with the alley between 49th and 50th and left again on Larchwood Avenue, heading east. Again the Cottage style is smaller, cozier, than the typical 3-story doubles on the next block over. These are houses for "modern" folks, without household servants. When you get back to 46th Street, you can spot to the right the imposing Edwardian 3-story houses, the ones painted a consistent cream-color on huge moldings, that referenced a past that was fast disappearing.

Development ended in West Philly with the Crash of '29. In fact, one tower of the Garden Court Plaza Apartments was never completed because of the Crash. The popularity of the neighborhood moved to the western suburbs until the late 20th century when "reurbanites" rediscovered the pleasures of living in the city. A lucky few found this tiny neighborhood of Garden Court and have been enjoying "the best of both worlds."



The Many Ways To Say... “Porch”



West Philadelphia wouldn't be the same without its ubiquitous front porches. Over a century ago, the porch was an excellent way to cool off on a hot summer day, converse with the neighbors, or watch the daily drama of life pass by your front door.

The porch has its origins in the classical portico (see definition below). The primary function of the classical portico was to make an emphatic architectural statement. The portico defines the entrance with an elaborate framing element; it provides the visitor approaching the building with a clear visual signal as to where the portal lies. Unlike a verandah, the portico is not meant to be used as a living space. Rather, with its columns, pediment, and often a grand stair, the portico is designed to impress and inform the visitor. The idea of a verandah as a living space caught on in America with the help of Andrew Jackson Downing, whose romantic designs introduced the idea of the broad verandah as a central element in American life. As Downing once opined, a broad porch was a “necessary a delightful appendage” in a country with hot summers.

By the 1880s architectural styles were markedly different from those of Downing's day, but the verandah remained as a dominant architectural feature on most houses. In the rapidly developing West Philadelphia, the verandah or front porch, was the perfect accessory for Victorian suburban living.

Gallery: A roofed promenade, especially one projecting from the exterior wall of a building.

Loggia: A covered gallery or passage, arcaded or colonnaded, open to the air on a least one side. Often, the roof of the loggia is formed by the upper stories of the building. The term can also apply to an arcaded or colonnaded porch. The word is usually associated with Italianate architecture.

Piazza: Originally, an Italian term for an open public space surrounded by buildings, or the open courtyard in the center of a house or villa. It can also describe a long covered gallery with roof supported by columns. During the 19th century, with the fascination with all things Italian, the term began to be used interchangeably with “porch” or “verandah.”

Porch: The general term used to describe a roofed space outside the main walls of a building. Strictly speaking the term should be limited to a covered entrance for a building, having a separate roof projecting from the wall. Longer roofed galleries attached to a house and intended as outdoor living spaces are more accurately termed “verandahs” or “piazzas.” The porch can be called a “portico” if it has columns and a pediment that cause it to resemble the front of a Greek or Roman temple.

Porte Cochere: A carriage porch, designed to permit passengers to alight from a carriage and enter a building without being exposed to the elements.

From *The Old-House Journal*, August 1981.

To be continued in the next issue.

Ask the Experts

COLUMN CONUNDRUM

Q: The columns on my house are relatively soft and some of the wood is split. How do I relaminate them?

A: Before you can repair the splits, you need to determine what kind of column you have, say restoration consultants. If the gaps are irregular and tend to spiral, the column may be hollow-bored from the center of a tree trunk, or a solid blank cut from the heart of a tree. If the splits are straight and parallel, the column is stave-built; pieced together out of long shafts joined by any one of a half-dozen techniques.

In the likely case of a stave-built column, you can repair the splits with the column in place if the loose, open joint is less than 1/8” wide and can be moved back together by hand.

To make the repair, move the wood back into alignment and apply an epoxy adhesive formulated for wood. Use band clamps to hold the joint together. If the joint doesn't close with hand pressure, don't try to force it closed with the band clamps. If you do, you risk forcing open another joint or splitting the shaft.

Modified from *The Old-House Journal*, 1996.

Nominators' Writing Group

Four writers met with UCHS Board Member Amy Lambert in late January to begin the process of writing historic preservation nominations for University City. The potential nominations included a block-wide district nomination in Squirrel Hill, one multiple-house nomination in Walnut Hill, and two single-dwelling houses in Powelton Village.

Basing her advice on many successful nominations in the past, Amy broke the process down into manageable components. “It's like writing a term-paper!” exclaimed one writer. The group hopes to complete the nominations by summer.

Any UCHS member is free to join the writers' group, with or without a specific building nomination in mind. The next meeting will be February 20th at 6:30 pm. If interested, contact Jenny Loustau at jenloustau9323@gmail.com.



PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

Clement Remington

Clement Remington (active c. 1887-1910) studied architectural drawing at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and was a founding member of the T-Square Club. Remington also worked for such luminaries as George T. Pearson and Horace Trumbauer before striking out on his own. By around 1908 he relocated to Haddonfield, New Jersey, perhaps drawn there by earlier commissions.

Selected Relevant Commissions:

1909: Alexander Apartments, 516-526 S. 42nd Street

ON THE WEST SIDE



University City Then & Now: The Swain Mansion,
3925 Chestnut Street (Ronald McDonald House).



Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Archives.



Photo by Joseph Minardi.

Built in the early 1890s for attorney and publisher William Swain, this marvelous residence in the heart of University City became a funeral parlor after leaving the Swain family ownership in 1926. In 1982 it became the Ronald McDonald House for Children.

University City Historical Society

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Visit our YouTube Channel!

Check out the University City Historical Society's YouTube channel for great videos like our Oral History Project and UCHS updates and events. And be sure to click the subscribe button.



CEASE and Resist!

The next time someone disparages historic preservation, do this: put your palm right up in their face and shout **CEASE!**

And then tick the five following points on your fingers:

C is for Community!
E is for Economy!
A is for Architecture!
S is for Stewardship!
E is for Environment!

If your someone looks at you askance, then flesh it out:

Community is us, the people living here, invested here, making a meaningful life. It's more than a monetary investment; it's quality of life.

Economy is local, personal, small-scale, dispersed throughout the neighborhood, shared by all.

Architecture is irreplaceable; modern construction cannot compete with craftsmanship and materials of a by-gone era.

Stewardship is caring for our unique history and culture.

Environment; NOT tearing down a building and NOT building a new one saves our natural resources and reduces our trash.

Then offer to shake hands.