

ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



September/October 2019

<http://www.uchs.net>

Joseph Minardi, Editor

Save
the
Date!

Historic Homes of University City

Saturday October 19, 11am to 3pm

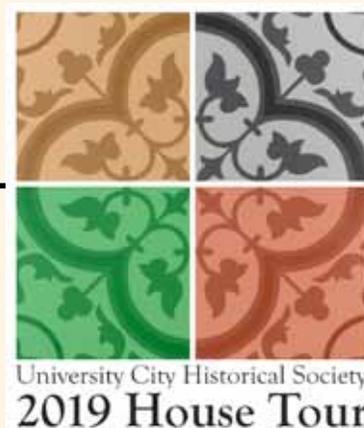
Our most popular event returns! This year's house tour will feature a delightful assortment of homes listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. This self-guided tour will provide an inside look into some of West Philadelphia's most beloved properties, including those on St. Mark's Square, Woodland Terrace, and the newly created Chester-Regent Historic District. The curated collection of homes will feature interiors both beautifully preserved and imaginatively adapted, challenging the notion of what it may be like to live in a listed property.

Advanced tickets are encouraged and can be purchased at uchs.wildapricot.org/events

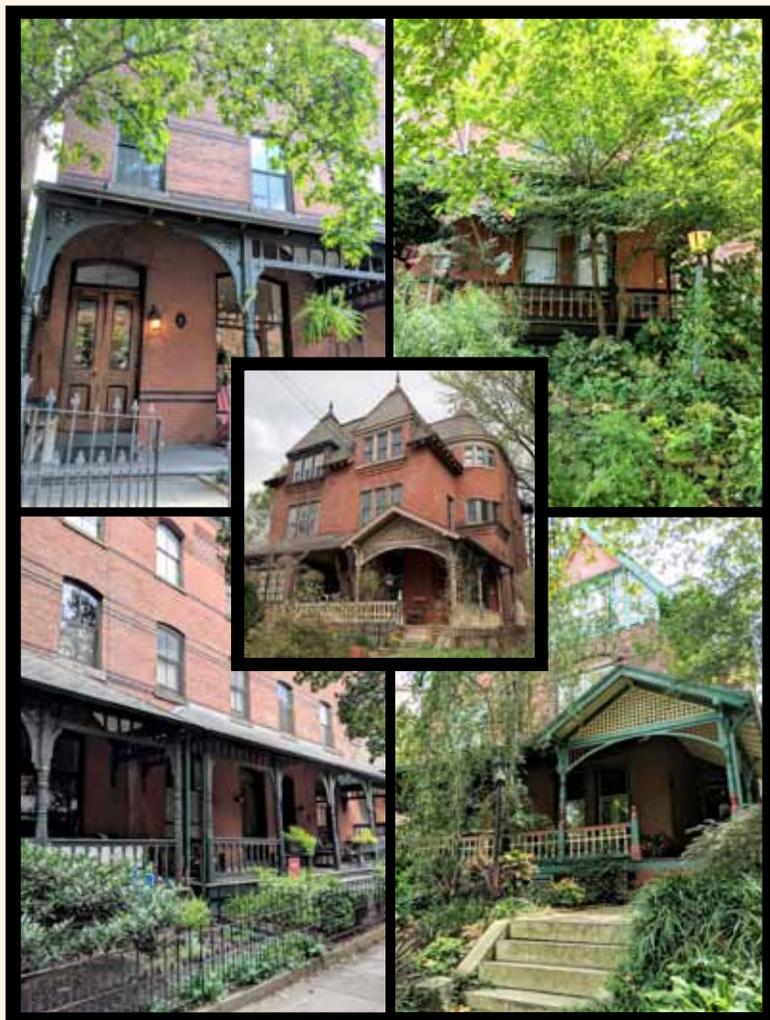
Non-Members: \$35

UCHS Members: \$25

Tickets can also be purchased the day of the tour at **The Restaurant School, 4207 Walnut St** beginning at 11am.



University City Historical Society
2019 House Tour



Photos courtesy of George Poulin and Roy Harker.

Ask the Experts

TILE TROUBLES

Q: How can we clean the little white hexagonal tiles on our bathroom floor? We'd like to get the existing floor clean without replacing the tiles?

A: The advantage, and disadvantage, of those old-fashioned tiles is that they are not glazed. This makes them non-slippery even when wet, but it also allows them to pick up stains. A good hands-and-knees scrubbing with detergent and household bleach mixed in hot water will improve the color of the tiles.

Dirty or deteriorated grout between the little tiles contributes to a dingy appearance. The grout can be brightened by washing with muriatic acid (from the hardware store). Or, you may want to have the floor regouted.

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

Glossary of Paint Terms

For first-time painters, here is a glossary of the common terms used in describing paint.

Alkyd: A synthetic resin modified with oil that gives good adhesion, gloss and color retention. Most "oil-based" paints today are based on alkyd resins rather than the traditional linseed oil. Alkyd paints are also called "oil-alkyd."

Binder: A film-loving ingredient in paint (usually a resin) that binds the pigment particles together.

Enamel: Basically a varnish to which pigment has been added. Makes a tough, durable easy-to-clean paint. Enamel (gloss or semi-gloss) is often used on trim.

Latex: A suspension of a synthetic resin (e.g. polyvinyl acetate, styrene-butadiene, or acrylics) in water to form the basis for a water-thinned paint.

Oil Paint: The traditional formulation consisted of pigment suspended in linseed oil, a drier, and mineral spirits or other type of thinner. Term is now applied to alkyd paints.

Pigment: Paint ingredients (e.g., titanium dioxide) used to impart color and hiding power.

Primer: A specially formulated paint that helps bind the top coat to the surface being painted. A primer has little weather resistance by itself and needs the protection of a finish coat.

Resin: A natural (linseed oil) or synthetic (alkyd, polyvinyl acetate) material that is the main ingredient of paint and which binds the ingredients together and provides adhesion to the surface being painted.

Varnish: A solution of resins in a drying oil. Varnish contains no pigment.

Vehicle: The liquid portion of a paint, composed mainly of solvents, resins and/or oils.

From *The Old-House Journal* February 1981,

PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

Walter Smedley

Walter Smedley (1862-1939) was one of the founders of the Philadelphia T-Square Club, apprenticed with Balderston & Hutton upon graduating from the Franklin Institute Drawing School in 1881. He remained with Addison Hutton until 1890. His most lasting contribution to West Philadelphia was the development of the Wynnefield section and was a manager of the Wynnefield Avenue Improvement Company. Walter Smedley retired from architecture in 1932.

Selected Relevant Commissions:

- 1892: Stores and residences (4), Lancaster Avenue near 40th
1896: Fiery, Thomas P., residence, Wynnefield Avenue
Roberts, George B., residences, 53rd and Wynnefield Ave.
Sheltering Home for Colored People, 44th and Haverford
1897: Reiley, T.F., residence, 2246 N. 52nd Street
Residences (4), east & west sides of 53rd, south of Wynnefield
Residence, Overbrook Avenue, west side of Bryn Mawr Ave.
West Philadelphia Title & Trust Co., 4000 Lancaster Ave.
1898: Residence, 2216 N. 51st Street
1899: Residence, 2217 N. 51st Street
Residence, 2208 N. 51st Street
1900: White, Asa A., residence, 4028 Walnut Street
1901: Mehl, Alfred S., residence, 5235 Wynnefield Ave.
Moss, Frank S., residence, 39th and Locust
Residence, 3906 Spruce Street
1902: Residence, 5313 Wynnefield Avenue
Residence, 51st and City Avenue
Schaefer, Charles, residence, Wynnefield Avenue
1903: 5701 Wynnefield Avenue
1905: Residence, east side of 52nd, 240 feet south of City Avenue
1906: Residence, west side of Bryn Mawr Ave., south of Overbrook
1907: Smedley, Samuel and Walter, residence, 2226 N. 52nd St.
1909: Kinney, Charles C., residence, Wynnefield
Residence, east side of 52nd, 200 feet north of Overbrook Ave.
Residences (7), 5241-53 Gainor Road
1910: Residence, 2227 N. 51st Street
1912: Abbott's Alderney Dairies, dairy building, 31st and Ludlow
Pearl, H.P., residence, Wynnefield
Woolman, Ed. W., milk depot, 47th and Lancaster Avenue
1915: Abbott's Alderney Dairies, stable, 34th and Lancaster Ave.
Gibson, W. Herbert, residence, 2258 N. 53rd Street
Herdt, William M., garage, 2226 N. 52nd Street
Women's Hospital of Philadelphia, 4015-35 Parrish Street

SEE US AT THE DOLLAR STROLL

September 12, 2019

Stop by and say "hi" at our table at the Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll on **Thursday, September 12th from 5:30 to 8pm**. UCHS will offer a wide variety of items for sale and we're there to discuss our preservation activities in the neighborhood and upcoming events. We will be at our usual spot outside of the Calvary United Methodist Church along **Baltimore Avenue at 48th Street**. We look forward to seeing you on September 12th!

Membership Online Renewal

UCHS reminds our members that you are now invited to renew your memberships online at www.uchs.net by clicking the Renew button on our homepage.

Prior to and on your expiration date, you will receive an automatically generated renewal notice via email inviting you to renew online. Doing so will require you to create a password to log-in. This ensures that your information is kept safe and secure. If this is your first time logging in, you will need to create a password using your email address by clicking “the forgot password” button.

All members will still be given the option of renewing via USPS. To do so, look for your renewal form and envelope with your issue of the newsletter.

If you have any questions about this process, or have difficulty renewing online, please reach out to us at info@uchs.net and we will be happy to assist you.

Additionally, as of September 1st, our membership rates are now available in the following tiers:

Student/Senior: \$20

Individual: \$25

Household: \$35

Friend: \$75 (free tote bag)

Patron: \$125 (free tote bag and 2 complimentary tickets to UCHS tours)

Business: \$250 (advertising in On the West Side)

UCHS thanks you for your support!

Recommended Reading: Do It Better!

We know that UCHS members love to read about our neighborhood's rich history, and when a good book comes along, we'll make a recommendation for addition to your library.

Sister Constance Touey and Sister Jeannette Lucey of St. Francis de Sales Church (4625 Springfield Avenue), are two tenacious nuns who wrapped their arms around children who suffered unspeakable losses and launched them on a path to success. Not just a few children, but countless students from around the world who arrived at their little Catholic School. Fiercely devoted to their students, they have written a moving and evocative book that chronicles the students' triumphs over adversity. *Do It Better!* offers hope and optimism amidst today's divisive conversations about immigrants and refugees.

This 160 page book was published in 2018 and is available at the Penn Bookstore on 36th and Walnut Streets and can be purchased on Amazon.com.

We at the UCHS are proud to have as valuable an asset to the neighborhood as the staff and faculty of the Church of St. Francis de Sales. The historic Byzantine Revival-style church is a local landmark located at 47th Street and Springfield Avenue.

Church of the Good Shepherd Update

The University City Historical Society has offered our support for the zoning application for Church of the Good Shepherd (316 S. 46th Street). The developers, Hightop Development and Real Estate, originally intended to demolish the circa 1930 church and replace it with a 36-unit apartment building. After consulting with the Preservation Alliance and University City Historical Society, the plan was changed to converting the church building into 20 studio and one-bedroom apartments and a new addition that would include 12 apartments. Development in the immediate area has been on the rise lately, leaving many of the neighbors concerned about the usual fears associated with high-density residential buildings.

One of those fears was parking, which Hightop representative, David Landskroner, tried to assuage at a June 4th meeting between developers and neighbors conducted by the Garden Court Community Association (GCCA). Landskroner stated that few of the new tenants would be car owners. UCHS President, George Poulin, was in attendance at the standing-room-only meeting, and urged local residents not to scrap the proposal to save the church building because of parking. “The moment you prioritize parking over quality-of-life issues, I think that’s a dangerous mistake,” said Poulin. The UCHS was instrumental in convincing the owner to pursue a preservation-oriented solution rather than one which would have demolished the building.

The Church of the Good Shepherd has seen a dwindling congregation, a common concern in the city of late. The church's pastor cited conflicts with neighbors in the recent past.

A slight majority of attendants at the GCCA meeting were in support of the project, although the vote was non-binding. The issue will go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment at a future date.

More info can be found at:
www.gardencourtca.org



Left, drawing showing new building situated on church courtyard. Right, rendering showing apartment building facing 46th Street. Courtesy of ISA Architects.

Donate to GBT Church

You can donate to the restoration of the **Greater Bible Way Temple** at 52nd and Warren Streets which was engulfed in flames on August 28th. The historic church was nearly burned to the ground except for the church's outer walls of stone. The 1904 church also served as a homeless shelter. A **GoFundMe** page has been set up for donations. Please follow the link below:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/restoration-of-gbt-52nd-street>

ON THE WEST SIDE



University City Then & Now: 33rd and Powelton Avenue



Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Archives.



Photo by Joseph Minardi.

Pictured here is the home of Frederick August Poth (1841-1905), built in 1887. Poth's life was the classic rags-to-riches story. He emigrated to the United States from the Rhenish Palatinate in modern-day Germany at the age of 20. He started working at a brewery in Philadelphia immediately upon his arrival in America and by 1870 owned his own brewery, which he named Frederick A. Poth Brewery located in Brewerytown at 32nd and Jefferson Streets. By the 1890s Poth was one of the leading brewers in Philadelphia.

In 1887 Poth built for himself a large house in the Powelton section of West Philadelphia. This commodious dwelling, constructed on the southwest corner of 33rd and Powelton Avenue (216 North 33rd Street), is pictured above. The architect for Poth's mansion, Albert W. Dilks, chose the popular Queen Anne-style, although this house is often referred to as "German Beer Baron Gothic." A simplified version of this style can be found in many extant residences throughout Brewerytown.

Not just satisfied with conquering the world of suds, Poth set out to become a prominent builder of homes in Philadelphia, a path chosen by many other businessmen of his time.

Just a few years after building his dream home in West Philadelphia, Poth began building speculative dwellings on the north side of Powelton Avenue. These were twin houses on 3301 to 3311, and 3315 Powelton Avenue and are still standing. The architect chosen for these dwellings was Otto C. Wolf (1856-1916), an architect that was well acquainted with Poth, as he was the leading designer of buildings in Philadelphia's nineteenth century brewing industry. The Poth speculative houses were described in the *Philadelphia Real Estate and Builders Guide* of 1890 as being "brick, with brownstone trimmings, in the German Gothic style, with mansard roof(s), open halls, with separate entrances, hard-wood finishes, and all modern interiors." The Poth speculative houses were added to the National Register of Historic Places on April 19, 1979.

Some of Poth's most lasting contributions to West Philadelphia's architectural legacy were the magnificent homes designed by architect H.E. Flower in the Parkside section.

The Poth Residence is now the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity house. The historic house was placed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places on November 4, 1982.

University City Historical Society

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