



Announcing

The 2016 University City Historical Society

PICTURESQUE POWELTON

Join other old-house enthusiasts for the UCHS's spring house-tour featuring the fabulous homes of the Powelton Village section of University City.



Saturday, May 21st

11am-3pm
\$20 per ticket
purchased
online in advance
at UCHS.net
\$25.00 day of tour at
The Dornsife Center
3509 Spring Garden St.

HOUSE TOUR

Join other old-house enthusiasts for the University City Historical Society's spring house-tour featuring the fabulous homes of the Powelton Village section of University City.

Homes featured on this year's tour include a stunningly restored Queen Anne mansion, an airy artist studio loft, a converted Victorian carriage home, a modern family home brought back from the brink of collapse, and one of the oldest wooden frame houses in West Philadelphia.

Powelton Village is well-known for its wide array of stunning Victorian architecture with Italianate, Queen Anne, Second Empire, and Colonial Revival styles found throughout.

The houses on the tour will be revealed on the day of the event when you pick up your tickets.

Advance tickets online: \$20 or same-day at the door: \$25 cash.

Tickets bought in advance online can be picked up **ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT** at 3509 Spring Garden Street, The Dornsife Center of Drexel University, from 11am to 2pm.

This is a walking tour, involving many staircases, wear comfortable shoes!

WHEN

Saturday, May 21, 2016 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM (EDT)

STARTING POINT

The Dornsife Center of Drexel University (The Philip B. Lindy House) - 3509 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

News From Around U-City

The Gables, the venerable old B&B at 4520 Chester Avenue, is up for sale with an asking price of \$1.575 million. The Willis Hale-designed house was built in 1889 for Dr. Daniel Egan. The 11-room mansion underwent a number of various uses (and some hideous alterations) before it was trans-



formed into a bed and breakfast in 1991. It is the hope of the UCHS that the future owners of this grand Victorian home maintain it in its current condition.



Another stunning house that is up for sale in University City is at the northeast corner of 46th and Pine (331 S. 46th), a former bed and breakfast (formerly The Spruce Hill Manor) that is now a private resident again. The large dwelling was built on March of 1909



by Herbert H. Downsbrough. The architect was W. Frisbey Smith (this issue's featured architect). The asking price for this beautiful home is \$825,000.

A circa 1879 twin home at 3935-7 Chestnut (between HUB and the Ronald McDonald House) has been demolished recently, highlighting the importance of preservation on University City's blocks zoned for higher density. The Ronald McDonald House purchased the houses in 2014 and 2015, reportedly paying millions for them. The tragedy in this story, aside from the razing of the two houses, is the lack of protocol in the process leading up to the approval for demolition.



Photos by Joseph Minardi.

Did you know?

Early in his career, prominent architect Horace Trumbauer designed sixteen houses on the 4800 block of Windsor Avenue and four more on the southeast side of 49th Street in 1894. The builders and contractors for these twin homes were William McCoach and Robert Johnston.

Trumbauer began his career by working for the Hewitt Bros. before opening his own office in 1890. He would draw from a wide range of styles, from French to Georgian Revival, for his projects. Trumbauer is also notable for hiring Julian Francis Abele, the first African-American graduate from the Penn's School of Architecture. Trumbauer's more recognizable works are the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Free Library on Logan Square, and the Irvine Auditorium at Penn.



Twin houses on the 4800 block of Windsor Avenue. Photo by Joseph Minardi.

Ask the Experts

HANGING A CHANDELIER

Q: How do you hang a chandelier when an old gas pipe protrudes through the center of the medallion?

A: You hang the fixture from the gas pipe, but you have to know the trick, because there are no standard fittings for hanging the electrical box. First, be sure the gas pipe is secure enough to bear the weight:

- Disconnect gas to the gas pipe (you may need a licensed plumber for this step).
- If there's a cap on the end of the pipe, remove it.
- Run any required electrical cable to the medallion. If necessary, widen the hole around the gas pipe to pull cable through.
- Connect cable to a shallow box (half-inch deep), and slide box onto gas pipe.
- Hold box firmly against the medallion with a collar adapter from an EMT (electrical metallic tubing) coupler. If hole in medallion is so big that box slides up pipe into the ceiling, provide backing by attaching another EMT collar above the box.
- Attach a hickey (fitting used to mount a lighting fixture) that fits threads on gas pipe.
- Hang fixture from gas pipe. Use a five-inch deep canopy to cover box, pipe, and electrical connection.

From *Old House Journal*, Clem Labine, August-September, 1983.

University City Then & Now: 42nd and Spruce Streets



1901
Photo by Moses King.



2010
Photo by Joseph Minardi.

On the southwest corner of 42nd and Spruce Streets is a handsome single home that once belonged to financier and clubman Clarence Howard Clark, Jr. The house was once described as "an attractive combination of English Gothic and Queen Anne." His father, Clarence Clark, Sr., lived across the street on one of the largest private estates in West Philadelphia.

CARPETS & RUGS: A GLOSSARY

The descriptions below unravel the mysteries of floor covering from about 1750 to the twentieth century. Familiarity with common terms makes it easier to find the right carpet or rug (or at least a facsimile). Also, knowing the vocabulary is a big help when you refer to period decorating books: Next time you read Harriet Beecher Stowe, you'll know just what she means when she recommends an "ingrain" for the parlor.

Aubusson Carpet: From the Middle Ages until recently it was produced in a small town (of the same name), near Limoges, France. It's woven on a vertical loom with a thick-thread tapestry weave (without a pile) in large scale, muted color patterns. Until the 19th century, the warp was a combination of flax (linen) and wool, when it became cotton; the weft has always been wool. Now used to refer to any rug with a heavy, coarse tapestry weave - usually a French floral or scroll design.

Axminster: Originally a mid-19th century worsted English carpet imitating colorful Turkish carpets. Unlike Brussels or Wilton, this sumptuous cut-pile carpeting was woven in one piece (to room-size width) by hand-knotting on a vertical loom. By 1790, most wealthy American households boasted a Scotch, Wilton, or Brussels carpet in the parlor. Yet Axminster, the most expensive of fine carpets, was seldom found this early in America. But by the 1870s, they were machine-woven, still in wide widths without seaming, and readily available. Good-quality Axminster is still sold, but the term is now applied even to narrow widths in synthetics.

Braided Rug: This ever-popular covering is made of strips of used cloth or remnants. Initially used in frugal households, and upstairs halls and bedrooms, by the mid-19th century it added the popular "hand-crafted" touch to the fireplace hearths and plain rooms.

Broadloom: Seamless carpeting, which, as its name implies, is woven in broad widths, usually 9, 12, 15, or 18 feet. Readily available today in a variety of weaves, including velvet and Axminster, the quality is determined by the closeness of the tufts and the number of rows per inch. Borders of finer carpeting can be added to a broadloom center to give the look of a more expensive carpet.

Brussels: Still sold today, this long-wearing carpeting -- the pride of many American parlors -- was characterized by a woven, not hand-knotted, uncut worsted loop pile in 27 to 36 inch strips. The weaving process was invented in Brussels, Belgium, in 1710, but the carpet didn't become popular until 1740 when it was produced in Wilton, England. Comparable to a Wilton, but less costly, the Brussels weaving process allowed for elaborate designs in bold, vibrant colors which became even stronger with the introduction of aniline dyes in 1850 and chemical based colors after 1869. It was, and still is, sold as borders which could be sewn to a solid color or patterned broadloom rug.

Carpet: Usually "carpet" refers to a soft floor covering which is room sized or wall-to-wall, while "rug" is somewhat smaller.

From *Old House Journal*, Joni Monnich, August-September, 1983.

To be continued in next issue.

ON THE WEST SIDE



PROFILES IN ARCHITECTURE

W. Frisbey Smith

The architecture of W. Frisbey Smith can be found throughout University City, from Race Street to Springfield Avenue. W. Frisbey Smith was active as an architect in Philadelphia for nearly four decades.

Selected Relevant Commissions, continued from previous issue:

1895: Residences (13), northeast corner of 34th & Race

1896: Field, W.T., residences (4), SW side of Parkside, NW of 42nd

1897: Moore, J. Clark, residences (6), 46th & Chestnut area

Metzger, Charles S., residences (11), 44th & Pine area

1898: Brown, Henry L., residence, 39th & Spruce

Residences (2), South side of Walnut, 100' West of 38th

1900: Metzger, Charles S., residences (6), 44th & Spruce area

1902: Field, W.T., residences (6), North side of Cedar, West of 46th

1903: Metzger, Charles S., residences (11), North side of

Catherine, 100' west of 49th

1904: Field, W.T., residences (10), South side of Cedar, East of 50th

Wilson, Alexander, Jr., residences (3), 5141-5 Baltimore Av

Metzger, Charles S., residences (9), South side of Pine,
200' west of 42nd

1905: Downsborough, Herbert H., residences (16)

5134-5148 Hazel, 5135-5149 Hazel

1906: Metzger, Charles S., residences (8), South side of Spruce, 55'

west of 46th

1907: Residence, Southwest corner of 53rd & Springfield

Residences (8), North side of Baltimore Av, northwest of 45th

1909: Downsborough, Herbert H., residences (12),

46th and Pine area

Maguire, James F., residences (10), East side of 46th,
32' N of Locust

Spring in University City



Photos by Joseph Minardi.



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to get all of our updates and info about future events. It's fun and free! Also be sure to check out our evolving homepage at UCHS.net. Now you have two new ways to connect to your favorite historical society and all the goings on in your neighborhood.

The UCHS is now on Instagram!
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