



HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

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Historic Brighton to meet Sunday February 15:

‘TWELVE CORNERS SUBURBAN ARCHITECTURE’



A 1944 newspaper ad featuring Brighton and other suburban homes

Darrell Norris, professor of Geography at SUNY Geneseo and enthusiastic speaker about the built landscape, will be our featured speaker at the annual meeting of Historic Brighton. The meeting will begin at 2 pm on Sunday, February 15 at the Brighton Town Hall.

Professor Norris, who lives near Twelve Corners, will give an illustrated talk about Twelve Corners Suburban Architecture. He will talk about the styles, their variants and the periods in which they were built. Over 3000 houses were part of his field survey. The houses date from the 1920's to recent construction. No doubt some of our members will recognize their own properties. Will yours be one?

Before professing Geography, Norris studied at Cambridge and McGill universities. He is the author of numerous publications on those aspects of geography that include humans in the built environment. The talk is free and open to the public, so: invite a friend. Refreshments will be served. The room where the meeting will be held is handicapped-accessible from the rear of the building.

In this issue of Historic Brighton News, we feature the Brighton architecture of Syracuse architect Ward Wellington Ward. What many residents may not know is that Brighton as an early automobile suburb had many neighborhoods that featured architect-designed houses, both large and small.

In 1918, the Houston Barnard Realty Company, located in the Powers Block and at the corner of East Avenue and Grosvenor Road, advertised that the following architects had plans that prospective buyers could adapt for their own homes. Houston

Barnard—a real person, not two people, and famous in his own right as the engineer of the Lincoln tunnel—owned property that now comprises Grosvenor and Pelham roads as well as Ambassador, Sandringham, Trevor Court and Georgian Court.

Houston Barnard's architects included C. Storrs Barrows, Claude Bragdon, Gordon & Madden, Leon Stern, J. Foster Warner, Frederick Brockett, Foster & Gade, Crandall & Strobel, J. Mills Platt, George Hutchison, and Howard Nurse.

WARD HOUSES ARE BRIGHTON TREASURES



The house at 168 Grosvenor Road was designed by Ward Wellington Ward and built in the 1920s for Richard Finucane.



By Elizabeth Brayer

Ward Wellington Ward (1875-1932) was a gifted and prolific Syracuse architect whose "Arts and Crafts" designs for Tudoresque houses dot Brighton, particularly in the Houston Barnard Tract.

Ward practiced architecture from 1908 to 1926 and while two-thirds of the 250 or so houses which he designed during that period are found in the Syracuse area, a surprising number (38) were for locations in Brighton, Pittsford, or Rochester.

In the early 1920s, developer Houston Barnard of Rochester opened up the Ambassador-Sandringham and Grosvenor-Pelham (between East and Highland) areas.

Ward was noted for his large output of pen and watercolor sketches that presented his ideas of "the small house made into art." Today, these houses would not be considered "small." One of Barnard's enterprising salesmen, Irving Hames, used Ward's quick renderings to win commissions for the Syracuse architect.

Ward houses eventually built in this area include Nos. 42, 75, 165, 168, and 191 Grosvenor Road and Nos. 40, 110, 115, 125, 150, 155, and 165 Pelham Road in Brighton. Also attributed are 26 and 39 Sandringham Drive, 30 Trevor



Court Road, and 50 and 165 Ambassador Drive, all in Brighton.

There are Ward-designed houses at 40 Douglas Road and 310 Seneca Parkway in Rochester, and at 22 and 26 San Raphael Drive, as well as 2351 and 3977 East Ave. in Pittsford.

Many more are problematic: Either no house exists at the address on the drawing or the one that does is so unlike a Ward design as to make it an unlikely attribution. Some drawings have incomplete addresses.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

Founded in England in the mid-19th century by William Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement

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Ward Wellington Ward

was a protest against the perceived poor design that resulted from the Industrial Revolution. Morris proposed a totally designed and handcrafted environment that looked back to the Middle Ages for inspiration and technique.

Morris and his colleagues, the pre-Raphaelite painters, saw medieval times as a paradise where everything was beautiful but in trying to return to the purity of hand craftsmanship in the face of the machine age, their cause was ultimately doomed. Nineteenth-century innovations in technology such as the balloon frame, standardized lumber, and machine-made nails resulted in lighter, cheaper houses.

Thus, the typical Arts and Crafts house was a product of the Industrial Revolution—no wattle and dung here—with hand detailing.

The early momentum did generate a stylistic revolution in English and American architecture, however, and the international flourishing of Art Nouveau.

This impulse continued to be felt long into the Art Deco and Bauhaus era of the 1920s.

International exponents of the Morris principle that the total environment should be a work of art included English architects Philip Webb, Richard Norman Shaw, M.H. Baillie Scott, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the American Frank Lloyd Wright, and a group of California architects.



The house at 150 Pelham Road was designed by Ward Wellington Ward and built in 1924 for Peck Farley.

Among those who continued the tradition were Ward Wellington Ward and among those communities affected well into the 1930s was Brighton.

Tudoresque residences are everywhere—not just in the Barnard tract, but in Home Acres, Meadowbrook, Browncroft, and along Clover Street.

So pervasive was the style that even firehouses, a country club and a gas station had to be “Tudor” so as not to disrupt the scale and definition of the Town of Brighton.

Domestic architecture of the American Arts and Crafts movement followed the English cottage style that made even the largest house appear small.

Visual delight and mood were created by careful attention to craftsmanship and the use of indigenous, vernacular sources. It incorporated

ARCHITECT-DESIGNED HOMES DOT BRIGHTON



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All of these houses, at the addresses listed on page 2, have been attributed to Ward Wellington Ward. If any of these attributions are incorrect, or we missed a Ward house in Brighton, let us know at 244-0402.



HISTORIC BRIGHTON

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WARD HOUSES ARE BRIGHTON TREASURES



The house at 165 Grosvenor Road was designed by Ward Wellington Ward and built in 1923 for Mr. and Mrs. Walter Will.

such features as bay windows, gables, ornamental brick and tile work, stone carving, leaded glass, ceramic mosaics, elaborated chimneys, copper down spouts, carved finials, and finely proportioned brackets, porticos, and balustrades.

An Arts and Crafts house could be based on sources as diverse as the English yeoman's cottage, a New England colonial house, a Pennsylvania Dutch farmhouse, the California mission style, or even a Japanese teahouse.

Midwest architects, lacking a regional source, developed a style based on the Arts and Crafts-inspired Prairie School of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Tudor and New England colonial are the most popular sources for Brighton. New York State became a center of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

In New York City, Louis Comfort Tiffany produced spectacular Art Nouveau pieces. In the Eastwood suburb of Syracuse, Gustav Stickley built his "Mission Oak" furniture and published *The Craftsman*, bible of the movement, while the Robineaus of Syracuse similarly published *Keramic Studio*.

In Rochester, architect Harvey Ellis developed a subtle variation of the style, distributing his sensitive renderings through the magazine *The Craftsman* and founding, with architect Claude Bragdon, a local Arts and Crafts chapter.

Bragdon's own style was broadly based on the 1920s manifestation of the style, sometimes incorporating Art Deco elements.

In Syracuse and beyond, Ward Wellington Ward designed residences, factories, and apartment

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buildings as well as extensively remodeling historic houses and their interiors.

Ward's work and reputation were almost entirely limited to Upstate New York, but his houses bear the characteristics of the international movement and he would draw on many historical sources for a single design.

Although this made his houses picturesque and eclectic, he was quite selective and reworked the sources to achieve a very personal style.

He constantly consulted his clients and came up with functional plans that spoke to their needs, habits, tastes, and lifestyle.

and alcoves and bays that break the four-square symmetry.

Leaded glass medallions are found in cabinet doors and windows. Moravian tiles decorate fireplace facings and pavings, and the focus of the living room becomes this handcrafted inglenook, a showplace for built-in crafts.

Ward used the work of craftsmen that thus far have achieved greater reputations than he has. Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), a tilemaker enamored of lost Pennsylvania Dutch pottery processes, founded the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, PA in 1898. Storybook

The Ward House expresses the spirit of an ideal of the Arts & Crafts movement: "The small house made into art."

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These dictated exterior forms such as the size and placement of windows and doors, but even those elements were placed irregularly. Ward's genius for creating balance without resorting to symmetry prevailed.

Ward achieved the small-house look by various design illusions, notably the use of a low overhanging roof and a minimum of gables and dormers in the front elevation. Because of this, the size of a Ward house and his skill at handling masses is more evident in the rear elevation. The storybook house at 168 Grosvenor Road is an excellent example of this.

Ward interiors feature built-in details—inglenooks with tiled hearths and fireside benches, breakfast nooks, pantry cupboards, tiled vestibules with motifs that continued in geometric borders along a hall, linen closets of dressers, French doors leading to a sun room or porch,

tiles are bright colors glazed over parts of the unglazed natural red clay. Ward used more Moravian tiles than any other architect: more than 200 installations are found in central and western New York State residences.

German-born Henry Keck (1873-1956) was a Tiffany-trained glass designer who joined Pike's Stained-Glass Studio in Rochester in 1909. Ward started commissioning glass works from Pike then, and continued with Keck after he opened a studio in Syracuse in 1913—primarily to do church windows but with a small "house business" on the side.

Keck glass featured bright and opalescent compositions of naturalistic figures, trees, and other details arranged in mosaic patterns and stylized by thick black lead outlines.

In 1920, there were 200 glass studios in the country, an indication of the widespread popularity of the Arts and Crafts tradition.

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THE WILL HOUSE

The house at 165 Grosvenor Road, built in 1923 for the Walter Will family, is perhaps Ward's masterpiece of English styling. A 1978 catalog of Ward houses notes that "The Wills were ideal clients—artistic and well-informed. They cooperated fully with the architect in furnishing the interiors, to the extent that Mrs. Will handpainted the ceiling beams and Mr. Will carved the fronts of the built-in dressers himself. The gardens were planted in the English manner to relate to the house. Ward himself had a passion for the art of English gardening and often included drawings

Another unusual feature is the windows; so many different and unusual size makes for great aesthetic interest but also requires custom-made storm windows.

The Reicharts didn't realize they had Ward's plans and elevations for the house until they started searching in drawers in preparation for an exhibition featuring Ward houses at the Everson Museum in Syracuse in 1978.

Other Ward houses in Brighton were not as fortunate as the well-preserved examples in the Barnard tract. A large house built for Arthur Ingle in 1923 at 2200 East Ave. lies buried under the Can of Worms.

Ward was a selective eclectic, drawing on such diverse design sources as the English Arts & Crafts house, American vernacular styles (from Colonial New England to California Mission), and the Prairie School of the Midwest.

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for the plan of the landscape along with those of the house. The Will house became the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Reichart. Barbara Reichart is the Wills' daughter.

She once noted that "the joy of living in the house is in the beauty of the unusual materials used—the interior wood paneling and wide peg floors polished to a glow, the cork that was used in the kitchen, and the handmade fixtures and hardware." Lighting fixtures, hinges, latches, hasps, and sconces were handcrafted by Boronza of New York. Only one dining room fixture is electrified; the rest are outfitted for candles. "We've always thought the house was lovelier from the rear," Mrs. Reichart said.

The earliest known Ward house in the Rochester area is far removed from those in Brighton. The 1916 Rodenbeck residence stands at 310 Maplewood Drive off Seneca Parkway, nestled deep in a woody lot. The house is modeled after Ward's own, Lemoyne Manor. Located in a Syracuse suburb, Lemoyne Manor has been partially destroyed. Remnants exist as part of a motel-restaurant complex of the same name.

This article is based on an exhibition catalog "The Arts and Crafts Ideal: The Ward House, An Architect and his Craftsmen," by Cleota Reed Gabriel. It is adapted from four articles by Elizabeth Brayer that appeared in the Brighton-Pittford Post, June 29, 1978, January 4 and 11, 1979, and in 1993.

HISTORIC BRIGHTON TO PRESENT

Gideon Cobb Days

June of 2004...Friday 25, Saturday 26, Sunday 27

A three day celebration of Brighton History



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Gideon Cobb, (1791-1864), possibly Brighton's most illustrious resident, was born on June 26, 1791, in Pewlet, Rutland, Vermont. He moved to Brighton and dominated the early days our town's existence. Representing the acme of citizen involvement, Gideon was selected by Historic Brighton to lend his name and define our days of celebration.

The theme for 2004 will be

Brighton's Brick Industrial History

Details of the days are now being formulated, but we expect to have a

History Luncheon, History Picnic and History Walk,

All intended to create an awareness of the importance of Brighton's History and the fun of community. Save the dates!