

HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

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Historic Brighton's 10th Annual Meeting The Harley School's Wilson Gallery and Auditorium 1981 Clover Street Sunday, January 25 2:30-5 PM

HISTORIC BRIGHTON CELEBRATES TOWN'S ARCHITECTURE: SALON I: Brighton's Country Homes and Their Architects

he Town of Brighton saw extensive growth during the first quarter of the 20th century. Rochester's population was spilling over into Brighton as more people sought a quiet, tranquil country life away from the city's hustle and bustle. The more common use of the automobile by the middle and upper middle classes was another factor that influenced the growth of the new suburban towns. Now people no longer needed to live near to their workplace. East Avenue became the gateway to the Brighton suburb and beyond.

Neighborhoods, such as Home Acres, the Houston Barnard tract, and Browncroft boast many examples of fine architect-designed homes. These neighborhoods defined Brighton during the last century and continue to bring pride and sustaining value to the town today. One can find examples of nearly every early 20th century architectural style in these neighborhoods. The quality of construction used in these homes has made them irreplaceable.

Historic Brighton is proud to bring you a closer look at some of America's finest country homes and the architects that designed them. We were fortunate to have some of the nation's most talented architects working locally. Their designs have certainly withstood the test of time.

We have selected fifteen local architects who worked with Brighton clients during this time.

They will be presented in three Salons beginning with the January 25th event:

In Salon I, we will look at four of these architects: J. Foster Warner, who was one of Rochester's most prolific designers; Claude Bragdon, nationally famous for his passenger train station for the New York Central Railroad in Rochester; Ward Wellington Ward, Syracuse's famous Arts & Crafts architect; and Carl R. Traver, the least-known, but equally well-represented local architect.

Future Salons will focus on Herbert and Leon Stern, James B. Arnold, C. Storrs Barrows, Cyril Tucker, Don Hershey, Otis and Harwood Dryer, Walter Vars Wiard, Thomas Boyd and Conway Todd.

We hope that you will enjoy our lush pictorial essay on these talented gentlemen.



Carl Traver



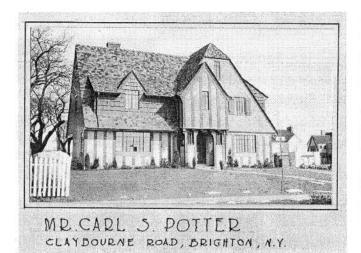
Ward Wellington Ward



J. Foster Warner



Claude Bragdon





Renderings at the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.

Carl Traver

By Arlene Vanderlinde

The town of Brighton boasts some of the finest early 20th century homes in America. Neighborhoods such as Home Acres, the Houston Barnard tract and others have some of best examples of the Tudor, Colonial Revival and Mediterranian Revival styles found anywhere. The finest materials were employed and thesehomes have beautifully withstood the test of time, both in style and condition.

Some of the most prominent architects of this period designed locally. Many even called Rochester or Brighton home. One such architect was Carl R. Traver (1890-1985). His name isn't known to most, but Mr. Traver made wonderful contributions to the quality of life in Brighton through the many substantial homes he designed for his clients.

Carl R.Traver (pronounced Trayver) was born in Rochester in 1890. He graduated from West High School and studied at the University of Pennsylvania College of Architecture from 1914-16. His work began in the architectural offices of Gordon and Madden. From 1911 – 1914 he worked as a draftsman at Hutchins and Cutler. Back at Gordon and Madden in 1917, he was a delineator and draftsman until World War I beckoned him into the service in the Construction Division of the U.S. Army Air Service. Following the War, he worked briefly in England in construction.

In 1920, Traver earned his registration as an architect in New York State and entered professional practice here in Rochester. He designed Gleason

Works, Graflex, the Ritter-Clark Memorial at RIT, the main Central Trust Company building downtown, the Castle-Wilmot Company, the Temple Building, the now demolished North Side Furniture House, Irondequoit District School #5 and the Irondequoit Fire-house on Culver Road. Most of these were designed when he worked for Gordon and Kaelber and John B. Pike & Son (1942-65).

Traver also designed dozens of exquisite homes in Brighton, Rochester, Irondequoit and Toronto, Canada. His work can be seen on Sandringham Road, Ambassador Drive, Trevor Court, Southern Parkway, Claybourne Road, Pelham Road and others. There is no doubt that the owners of these homes appreciate the fine detail that was incorporated.

Carl Traver designed each property to be unique. He put his signature on his designs by specifying quality construction techniques and materials that have withstood the test of time. He had a great aesthetic sense and thought it very important to have each of his designs be unique.

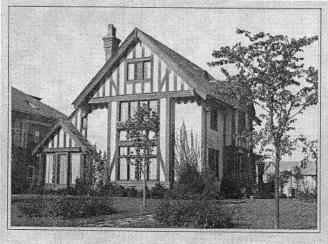
The comfortable interior layouts still work for today's families even though they were designed more than 75 years ago. There is no wasted space in a Traver house. All rooms are bright and cheerful and boast large closets and dressing areas in an era when closets were all but an after-thought. The rooms are spacious, but there is no wasted space anywhere. Carl Traver quietly designed some of Brighton's finest homes and some of Rochester's finest buildings.

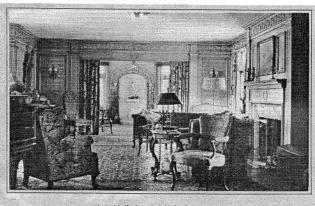
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CARL TRAVER SCRAPBOOK

Renderings at the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.







LIVING & SUN ROOMS

Historic Brighton board

Founded 1999

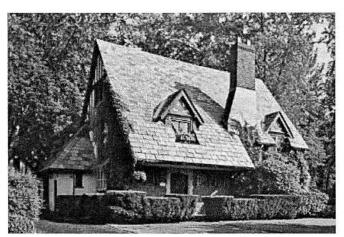
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Mary Jo Lanphear, Town of Brighton Historian

Thanks to **REMAX** First for underwriting the First Salon Celebrating Brighton Architecture and Architects







WARD WELLINGTON WARD

By Arlene Vanderlinde

ard Wellington Ward (1875-1932) was a gifted and prolific architect whose "Arts and Crafts" designs for Tudoresque houses dot Brighton, particularly in the Houston Barnard Tract. Ward practiced architecture in Syracuse, NY from 1908 to 1926 and while two-thirds of the more than 250 houses which he designed during that period are found in the Syracuse area, a surprising number (38) were for locations in Brighton, Pittsford, and 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.

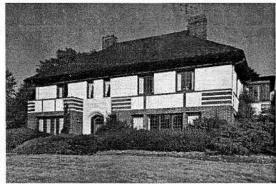
Ward houses eventually built in this area include

Nos. 42, 75, 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, and 50 and 165 Ambassador Drive, all in Brighton.

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 in a deep woodsy lot. This house is modeled after Ward's own home, LeMoyne Manor, located in the Syracuse suburb of Liverpool. LeMoyne Manor has been partially demolished but remnants exist as part of a motel-restaurant complex of the same name. There are Warddesigned 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 Avenue in Pittsford.

Ward's last known design, dated 1926, was for Dr. F. K. Holzworth in Rochester. In that year his career ended abruptly. He became ill and was hospitalized for six years before he died at the age of 57 in 1932.



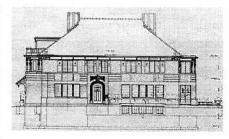




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WARD HOUSES ARE BRIGHTON TREASURES

Homes designed by Ward Wellington Ward express the spirit of an ideal of the Arts and Crafts movement: "The small house made into art." 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.

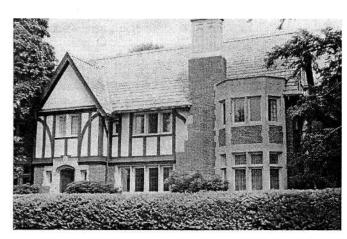
Ward thought it important to bring his clients into the planning process and thus came up with functional plans that spoke to their needs, habits, tastes and lifestyle. These dictated exterior forms such as the size and placement of windows and doors, but even these elements were place irregularly. Ward's genius for creating balance without resorting to symmetry prevailed.

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, 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. The focus of the living room becomes this handcrafted inglenook, a showplace for built-in crafts.

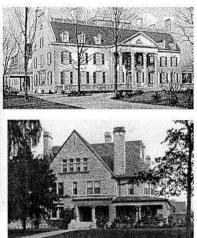


Ward employed the use of craftsmen with reputations far greater than his at the time. Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), a tilemaker enamored with lost Pennsylvania Dutch pottery processes, founded the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, PA in 1898. Mercer's company hand-stamped red clay tiles with motifs based on medieval designs and glazed them with bright colors revealing some of the red clay underbody. 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 Stained Glass Studio in Rochester in 1909. Ward began commissioning glass works from Pike at that time and continued with Keck after he opened a studio in Syracuse in 1913. Keck's Studio primarily did church windows but had 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.









A house for Frank Ellison, donor of Ellison Park, is located on East Avenue in Brighton

J. FOSTER WARNER

By Elizabeth Brayer

Jesus Foster Warner (1859-1937) was one of the area's leading architects of the first half of the 20th century. He also represents the third generation of a family of distinguished architects. His father, Andrew Jackson Warner (1833-1910), was the leading Rochester architect of the 19th century—designer of the Powers, Academy, and Wilder buildings, city halls for Rochester and Buffalo, and many churches and homes in Western New York. His maternal uncle, Henry Austin, was the leading architect of New Haven, CT in the early 19th century, while Uncle Merwin Austin came to Rochester in 1845, where he became the architect of the first city jail, the county's second courthouse, and introduced the English cottage style popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing to Rochester. Foster Warner's brother, Pete, and two cousins, Frederick and William Brockett, were architects too. All four apprenticed in A. J. Warner's office and in 1884, Foster Warner opened his own office.

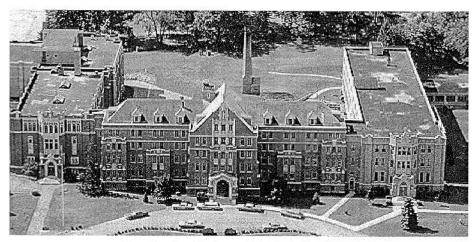
Foster Warner was elegant, dashing, tough, stubborn, contentious, and generous—a bon vivant, a ladies man, and a lover of fast cars. New York license plate number "5"—first on a steam car, then a Marmon—signified that he was fifth person in New York State to own a car. His favorite diversion—in goggles and duster with terrified passengers in tow—was to race the crack Empire State Limited along the corduroy roads between Buffalo and Syracuse. Each winter, he motored to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. His unique formula for measuring the worth of a car by the amount of steel used to fabricate it translated into architecture measured by the amount of marble, granite, brass, and precious woods.

Clients were as much in awe of the architect as the Marmon passengers were. Helen Ellwanger, a founder of the Landmark Society, recalled that "when Foster remodeled our house, he assigned each family member the bedroom *he* thought most suitable. It was years before we decided that we could choose our own rooms."

A perfectionist who supervised the smallest job as if it were Eastman House, Warner had a favorite phrase: "Get the maul, Leo." This was the signal for Warner's colleague, Leo Ribson, to retrieve the five-pound maul from the trunk of the Marmon so that Warner could hack out the poorly installed marble before the eyes of the offending craftsman.

His long friendship with the Rev. Frank L. Brown, pastor of St. Simon's, began when Warner saw the black minister gazing longingly into an automobile showroom. The architect took the minister inside, bought him a car, and paid for its gas and maintenance from that moment on. Later he presented Mr. Brown with architectural plans for a new church on Oregon St. In 1937, Mr. Brown officiated at Foster Warner's funeral. A friend read a poem:

Gone is our friend the architect, From his drawings, stone and steel; His loves were his home, the country roads, And the sound of the automobile.



Our Lady of Mercy High School

By Mary Jo Lanphear

he educational and religious buildings of the Sisters of Mercy at 1437 Blossom Rd. comprise one of the largest, non-commercial complexes in the town of Brighton. Designed by a famous architect and erected on historic land, the complex is one of great importance to the town. On May 25, 2002, the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission designated it a Brighton Landmark.

J. Foster Warner was the architect of the original building completed in 1928. Three stories high, it housed the Sisters on the third floor and the school on the first two floors. In 1931, the Sisters moved into the new Motherhouse, freeing the third floor for additional classrooms. Leo Ribson, of the J. Foster Warner firm, signed the Motherhouse blueprints with Warner.

In 1941 the auditorium and gymnasium wing was added to the east side of the complex. From 1941 to 1945, civilian air raid wardens gathered on top of the school, the tallest building in Brighton, to watch for enemy aircraft. Since its completion, the auditorium has opened its doors to the community for a

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Monroe County Court House, 1896

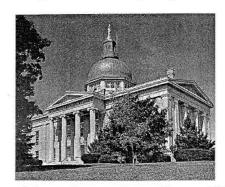
variety of educational and cultural events. The name of the architect for this part of the complex has not been determined.

In 1951 John Flynn and H.H. Bohacket are the architects of record for the chapel that was added to the south side of the Motherhouse. Terence O. Dugan of Boston designed the stained glass windows that warm the marble interior.

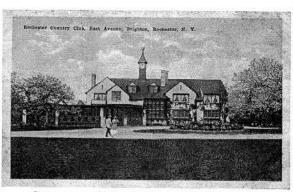
The most recent addition is the Catherine McAuley Junior College wing on the west side of the complex. The college opened in 1951 in the Motherhouse as a three-year junior college, predating Monroe Community College's Brighton campus and making it the first college-level institution in Brighton. The college wing was completed in 1959 under the direction of architect Walter Nugent.

The campus includes two important historical features: the stone grotto on the hill behind the complex and the 1935 marker commemorating the 1679 construction of a bark church, the first worship site in the Rochester area.

Mary Jo Lanphear is Town of Brighton Historian.



Canandaigua County Court House, 1910







Country Club of Rochester:Drawings date from 1903 and 1907. Built and standing, 1905-1972. So pervasive were the revivalist styles in the early 20th century that even country clubs, firehouses, and gas stations had to be tudoresque so as not to disrupt the scale and definition of the town of Brighton.

CLAUDE BRAGDON: MORE LIVES THAN ONE

By Elizabeth Brayer

The title of the 1938 memoir by Claude Fayette Bragdon (1866-1944) is an apt description of the man who many called the "Upstate Leonardo." Bragdon applied his multiple talents to architecture, philosophy, writing, drawing, painting, illustration, bookplate and poster designing, lecturing, mathematics, music, theosophy, and stage and costume design. A highly spiritual man, Bragdon wrote that his interests were united by "a single urge: the desire to discover, to create, or to communicate beauty."

FORMATIVE YEARS

Born at the Oberlin home of his maternal grandfather, young Claude and his mother soon joined his newspaper editor father in Adams, NY, one of the father's 22 moves. Claude always credited his Upstate heritage for making him a Yankee stoic—a trait that would help him endure later tragedies. His mystical interests began early too as his father was a member of the Theosophical Society.

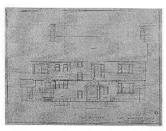
His mother wrote a column for children, "Aunt Katy's Cupboard." At age 8, Claude published his first magazine complete with ornamental designs on the title page and at the beginning and end of each chapter. He drew constantly and quickly, often buildings. As a child, he created a model theatre that he and his only sibling, May, who adored him, played with constantly. Both his mother and May thought him a genius and Claude agreed. Later Bragdon would write: "I did not choose to enter the profession of architecture but found myself in it without effort. I was a natural." His artist friend Fritz Trautman would call him "a genius with a child-like enthusiasm for whatever engaged his attention at the moment."

Bragdon was the valedictorian of his Oswego High School class and there his formal education ended. In 1902 he married Charlotte Wilkinson of Syracuse, sister of a fellow architect. They had two sons, Henry and Chandler; Charlotte died in 1907 giving birth to Chandler.

In 1912 he married Eugenie Macauley, a half-French widow who as the Oracle of the Delphic Sisterhood that came to rule their lives suggested that her stepsons would be better off in boarding school. Off the boys went to Kent. When Claude and Eugenie became bored with Rochester social life, they threw one great big whirl of a farewell party and therein lay the seeds of Bragdon's later *Song and Light* ventures in Highland Park and Central Park, New York City.

PRACTICING ARCHITECT

Bragdon was hired by Charles Ellis, whose brother Harvey was another one of the superb draughtsmen of the period. Bragdon finagled an introduction to Louis Sullivan and subsequently edited Sullivan's autobiography and *Kitchen Chats*, thereby introducing that important architect's ideas ("Form follows Function") to the world. When Charles Ellis failed to pay his salary in 1890, Bragdon worked for a Buffalo firm for two









A house for Junius Judson on Highland Heights is one of the few Bragdon homes in Brighton. Plans and photograph of the railroad station at Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library. Bevier Building for Mechanics Institute and the Chamber of Commerce.



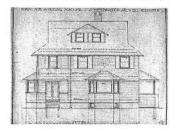
Charlotte and Henry Bragdon



Italian church



House on Castle Park



years then opened his own Rochester office with Edwin S. Gordon and William H. Orchard, 1892-1895. The firm subsisted by entering competitions—for the Carnegie Library, Copley Square in Boston, a courthouse for Baltimore—reaping petty cash as prize money but never a major commission. They won a \$2000 for a city hall design for New York but had to sue to collect it. Bragdon called the 1890s his "purple cow period...a time when life did not make sense and nothing seemed important." It was followed by a *wanderjahr* to England, Italy, and Paris.

Cro Nest

Bragdon's own house on Castle Park to which he took his bride in 1902 was a melding of artist, bungalow, and Japanese tradition, the first of his "small but fit" houses. He chose the outside color based on the trees that surrounded it. His goal was to make a small house a work of art by melding traditional forms in innovative ways. Because of his own conservatism as well as his clients', his Rochester architecture was never revolutionary. His modest, family-centered "happy little homes" were designed with a free flow of space and light. He liked well-lit welcoming atriums inside of side entrances, kicked up eaves, careful attention to detail, textured but unobtrusive ornament, unusual fenestration, ornamented banisters, and fine workmanship. Today's owners of Bragdon houses often say they feel "a special atmosphere and serenity in the homes he designed."

He soon turned his attention to making simple but pleasant houses such as Cro Nest available at low cost. Articles published in *The Craftsman* and *Country Life in America* illustrated houses for others to copy. The Ellwanger and Barry Realty Co. commissioned him to design "small but fit" houses and variations of these may be found in the 95 area houses that he designed, particularly along Linden Street between Mount Hope Avenue and Meigs Street.





Above: Rochester's Universalist Church Left: Plans for Cro Nest, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.

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This membership list, assembled by Janet Hopkin, represents the largest number of members of Historic Brighton in its ten-year history