



April 1993 Hour-Tour

SCHENLEY FARMS

A City's Legacy

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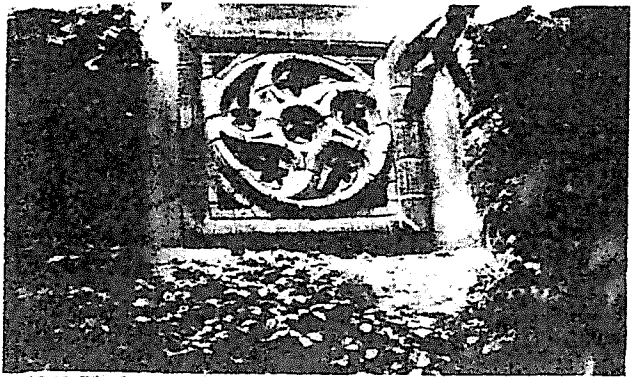
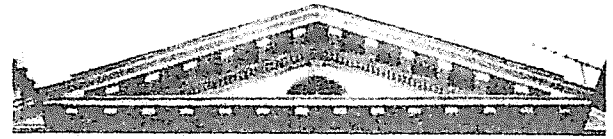
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4303 Bigelow Boulevard



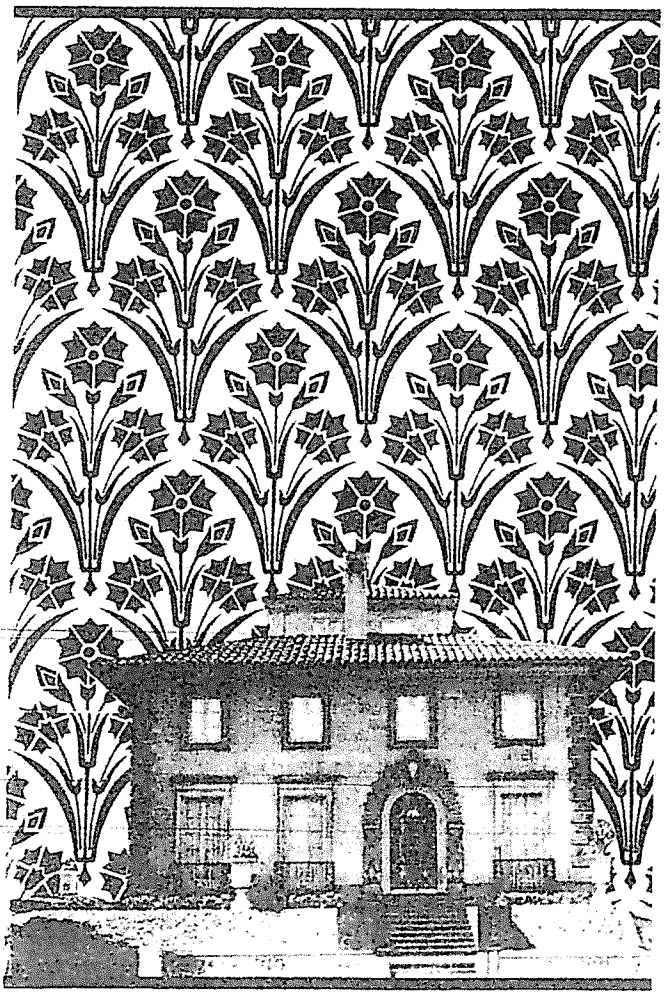
4040 Bigelow Boulevard, detail

The Historic Review Commission

The Historic Review Commission of Pittsburgh was established in 1979 to administer the historic districts (and structures) designated by the Pittsburgh City Council. It is made up of seven citizens, appointed by the Mayor, who meet once a month to review all proposals for exterior alterations, new construction, and demolition of buildings in the historic districts. Property owners are not required to make any changes to their buildings. However, if any exterior work is desired whether or not it requires a building permit, it must first be reviewed and approved by the HRC, which then issues a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work. Interior alterations and the use of buildings are not subject to the review of the Commission.

All owners who wish to make exterior alterations (including repairs, cleaning, and painting) must apply with the historic preservation planner on the staff of the Department of City Planning. Minor and routine work, such as repairs, can sometimes be approved by the staff, all other items must be reviewed by the Commission.

The Commission uses the federal Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as the basis of its review. The goal of the guidelines is to retain the distinctive and historic character of the neighborhood without placing undue financial burdens or time delays on building owners and residents. For example, the guidelines recommend that windows and door openings not be enlarged or fitted in, that exterior replacement items (such as doors and windows) be similar in design and materials to the originals, and that new exterior paint colors be compatible with other building colors in the neighborhood. The guidelines can be used as a guide to planning an exterior renovation project; in addition, the Commission and its staff are ready at any time to personally assist building owners and residents in the neighborhood.



The Fabric of Pittsburgh A Walking Tour



April 1993



Boundaries

The Schenley Farms residential area is a "tea kettle" shaped neighborhood located approximately 2-1/2 miles east of downtown Pittsburgh. Three distinct sections lie on land that rises up a hillside toward the northwest. The first section consists of properties bounded by Bigelow Boulevard and Parkman Avenue. Above are houses bordering the south side of Centre Avenue, and above them is another row of dwellings along Schenley Farms Terrace.

Location

Schenley Farms is part of the North Oakland area of Pittsburgh. To the northwest lie Schenley Heights and the Upper Hill District; to the east, Bellefield and Shadyside. The Oakland civic and cultural center, including the University of Pittsburgh campus, lies to the south.

Community

The distinctive character of Schenley Farms was established around 1905 through the design of real estate developer Frank F. Nicola. Since 1920 the Schenley Farms Civic Association has represented neighborhood interests, and along with the Historic Review Commission of Pittsburgh, has been instrumental in perpetuating the historic quality and character of the neighborhood.

Amenities

Immediately adjoining the Schenley Farms district is the campus of the University of Pittsburgh. Beyond it, to the west, lie Carlow College and a medical arts complex consisting in part of Childrens' Hospital and Magee Womens Hospital. St. Paul's Cathedral, WOED TV, and RodefShalom Temple lie to the east. Carnegie-Mellon University and Schenley Park (which encompasses Phipps Conservatory) are nearby to the southeast.

Directly south of Schenley Farms, is an assemblage of civic, institutional, and cultural attractions dominated visually by the Cathedral of Learning, culturally by the Carnegie Institute, and architecturally by monuments in the Beaux Arts and Classical, Gothic, and Renaissance Revival styles. Within this compound

are located, among other structures, the Bellefield Presbyterian Church, Allegheny County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hall, the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, and the Masonic Temple.

History

Until the turn of the century, the land upon which Schenley Farms is situated remained open and undeveloped. In 1905, F. F. Nicola (1860-1938), the promoter of Oakland and Pittsburgh's industry, purchased Schenley Farms and adjacent choice property from the estate of Mary Schenley (d. 1903) in whose family the land had remained for over a hundred years. Nicola, in turn, created a model suburban upper middle class development. By 1910 one half of the lots had been sold and by 1923 development was nearly complete.

Schenley Farms serves as a model of early twentieth century interest in land use policies, planning techniques, and urban design. Much of this interest emanated from the City Beautiful movement, which was ushered in by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. Additionally, the influence of the English Edwardian Era (1890-1914) can be felt in terms of building design and a proper and orderly social environment.

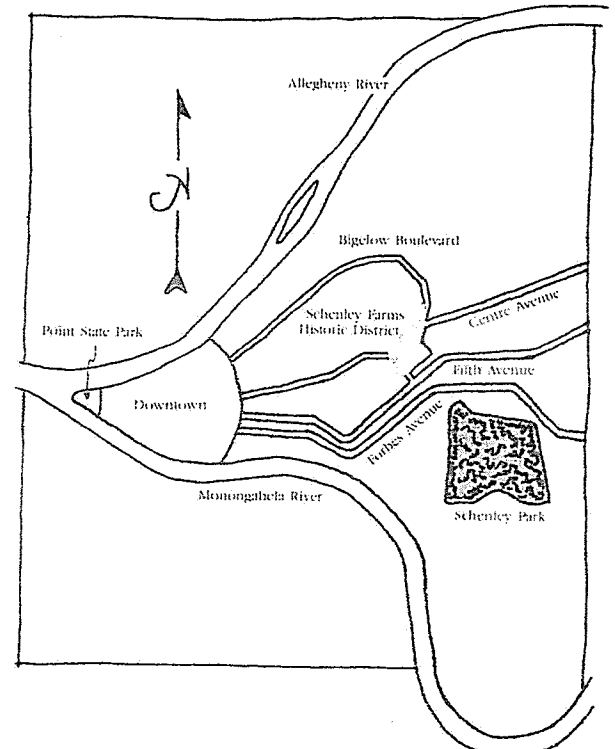
Architectural Styles

The 124 houses in Schenley Farms are predominately 2-1/2 story brick single-family dwellings of varied architectural design and detail having multiple interior and exterior chimneys, slate or tile roofs, and stone foundations. Roof forms and floor plans are complex. Windows contain in many instances leaded or stained glass. Most of the garages are compatible with the design of the houses to which they belong.

Schenley Farms is a showcase of the Eclectic styles, which were popular, in varying degrees, from about 1875 to 1940. The Eclectic Movement drew inspiration from traditional English, French, Mediterranean, and Colonial American architecture. Simultaneously, "proto-modern" forms evolved from this genre as designs became freer of earlier precedents. Some secondary details, such as wide unenclosed eaves with

exposed rafter ends, derived from Craftsman Style houses (popular 1905-1930). Other secondary details, including wide enclosed eaves and geometric decoration applied to exterior walls, windows, and doors, stem from the Prairie Style houses of Frank Lloyd Wright. The influence of interest in old English cottages and country houses, as expressed in the work of English Arts and Crafts architects (ca. 1880-1914), is particularly apparent.

The landscape of Schenley Farms received a great deal of attention as well. Building lots were terraced. Plantings—including the rows of sycamore trees—and street furniture (such as streetlights) were tastefully selected and arranged. Sidewalks and retaining walls, like the houses themselves, were well constructed. All utilities were placed underground. Visual unity in the neighborhood was based on the landscaping and the complementarity of scale and proportion.



Schenley Farms Walking Tour

4338 Bigelow Boulevard (1)

The facade of the Italian Renaissance-style Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, constructed of white brick, is highlighted by two-story corner pilasters. The composition is remarkable in that the windows, doors, and their surrounds are all gathered into a central bay while the flanking bays are largely blank. This whole assemblage is capped by a heavy classical cornice. Ingham & Boyd, architects, 1912.

4205 Bigelow Boulevard (2)

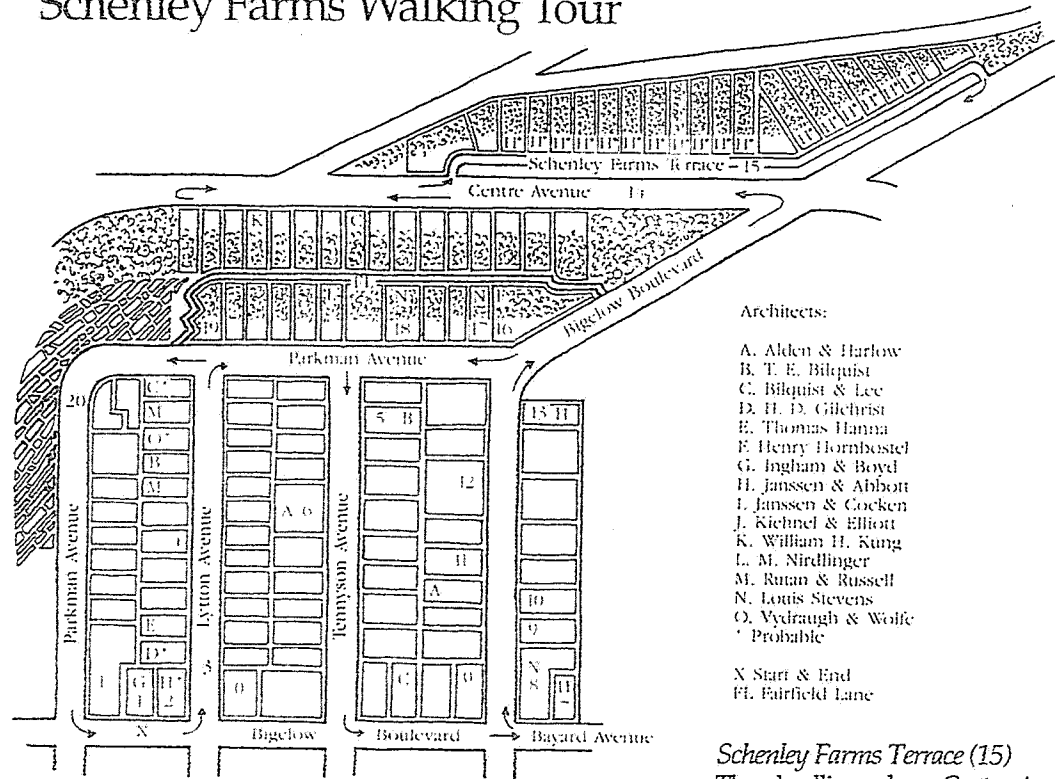
The brick and half-timber house, dating from ca. 1910, is an interpretation of English architectural themes. The asymmetrical combination of hipped and gabled rooflines is punctuated by dormers and massive corbeled chimneys. The arched main door set under a bracketed hood serves as the focal point of the architectural composition.

Lytton Avenue (3)

The eleven houses located on the west side of Lytton Avenue were the first houses constructed in Schenley Farms. They were built by F. F. Nicola and appear in a prospectus dated ca. 1907, where they were priced between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Several of these houses are in the English Tudor Style found throughout Schenley Farms. In general, Tudor-style houses, which derive from fifteenth and sixteenth century English architecture, feature steeply pitched roofs; tall, narrow windows, usually in groups; half-timbering; and massively large chimneys.

209 Lytton Avenue (4) (Below)

The exterior of this side-gabled Colonial Revival house is clad in gray pressed brick laid up in English bond. The pedimented dormers have arched windows. Porch supports consist of brick piers at the corners flanked by classical columns. Of particular interest are the first-story windows set in blind arches filled with brick "nogging" of herringbone design.



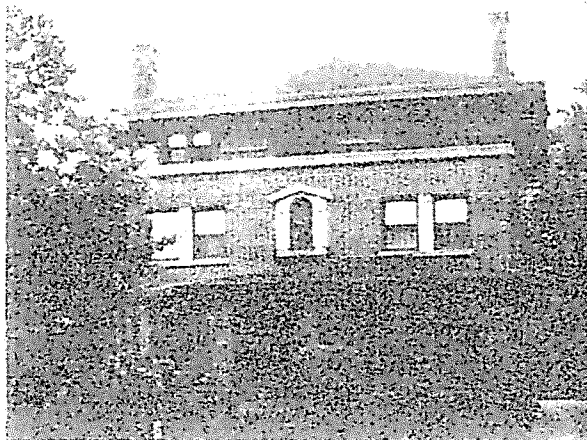
Architects:

- A. Alden & Harlow
- B. T. E. Bilquist
- C. Bilquist & Lee
- D. H. D. Gilchrist
- E. Thomas Hanna
- F. Henry Hornbostel
- G. Ingham & Boyd
- H. Janssen & Abbott
- I. Janssen & Cocken
- J. Kichmel & Elliott
- K. William H. Kung
- L. M. Nirdlinger
- M. Rutan & Russell
- N. Louis Stevens
- O. Vydraugh & Wolfe
- * Probable

- X Start & End
- Fl. Fairfield Lane

4143 Bigelow Boulevard (10)

This residence is a two-story stucco Spanish Colonial house with a low pitched gabled roof. The first story is highlighted by a recessed porch with triple arched openings and twisted column supports. A porte cochere is located on the south side.



Schenley Farms Terrace (15)

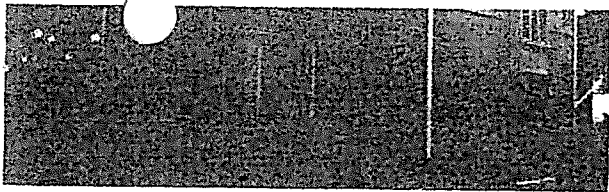
The dwellings above Centre Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard are smaller, squarer, and less elaborate than the houses below. These cottages are almost all variations on a four square theme, and most have little or no historical ornament. Most of them were built around 1913, and seem to have been designed by the firm of Janssen and Abbott.

4040 Bigelow Boulevard (16)

Built around 1912 for Arthur Hammerschlagg, the first president of Carnegie Institute of Technology, this home was designed by the architect Henry Hornbostel (1867-1961) who was responsible for the original design of the campus of Carnegie Institute of Technology, now Carnegie Mellon University. The house is shaped to fit the corner lot. The first story is clad in uncoursed rubble, and the second story is stacked brick.

4323 Parkman Avenue (17) (Below)

The design of this house is based on the design of the English architect Edwin Lutyens' (1869-1944) Deanery Gardens, free interpretation of Elizabethan (ca 1600) country house located in Berkshire, England. Note the irregular slate roof



218 Tennyson Avenue (5)

This house was designed in 1911 by the architect T. E. Billquist in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. This style, which was inspired by sixteenth century Italian architecture, is characterized by low-pitched tile hipped roofs, wide overhanging eaves, arched windows and doors, and a symmetrical facade. Additional details in this house include terra cotta inserts and small third-story windows set in a decorative frieze.

209 Tennyson Avenue (6)

The Renaissance Revival style house, designed by Alden and Harlow and built ca. 1920, exhibits a richness of design based on the restrained arrangement of building elements on a smooth ashlar facade finish. A belt course that defines the first and second stories and a stone balustrade emphasize the horizontal character of the building. (Note the metal and glass entry canopy on the right side.)

4411 Bayard Avenue (7)

Directly across the street from the First Baptist Church (designed in the Modern Gothic style by Bertram Goodhue, 1909) stands the picturesque Tudor house, designed by Janssen and Abbot, architects, and built before 1910. Note the massive molded chimneys, oriel window, and distribution of brick and stucco.

4405 Bayard Street (8) (Cover)

The formal Italian Villa features a rooftop belvedere and ashlar masonry exterior with rusticated quoins. Note the stone griffins on either side of the massive front entranceway and the loggia and balcony on the Bigelow Boulevard side. This house, designed by Louis Stevens (ca. 1915), is an outstanding example of the Renaissance Revival style.

4147 Bigelow Boulevard (9)

The long-lived Georgian style, recognized for its simplicity and symmetry, is revived by this house. The gambrel roof is pierced by three pedimented dormers with arched windows. Brick window lintels are broken by keystones and stone voussoirs. A pedimented portico with coved ceiling supported by Doric columns frames a delicate fanlight door.

4136 Bigelow Boulevard (11) (Above)

This is a block-like three-story house that does not make the historical references that most of the other houses do. To its relatively plain form have been added the exposed rafter ends of the Craftsman Style and ornament, window designs, and stucco panels influenced by the Prairie Style. The architects, Kiehnel and Elliott, used a similar progressive design the previous year for the Central Turnverein (1912; now the Steel Conference Center of the University of Pittsburgh).

4116 Bigelow Boulevard (12)

This home has a semi-octagonal bay, triple stone chimney stacks turned diagonally, and window groupings that suggest Tudor influence. Inspiration for the full-length pent roof with gable might have come from the Georgian style.

4107 Bigelow Boulevard (13)

Designed in 1908 by Janssen and Abbott, architects, for D. H. Hostetter, Jr., who manufactured Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, this is a striking example of a Tudor Revival house. Note the robust chimneys, linked gables, cascading roof, and geometric half-timbering on the second story.

Centre Avenue (14)

A panoramic view of Oakland and Schenley Park is shared by the houses built along Centre Avenue in Schenley Farms, which face south toward Fairfield Lane, a footpath that jogs between Parkman and Centre Avenues. The elevations facing Centre are actually the rears of the houses. Because of this, it is difficult to describe the buildings properly. However, certain architectural features can be inspected at close range, such as the chimneys of 4220 Centre Avenue; the trio of dormers and the stonework of 4320; the Flemish bond brickwork and dentils at 4338; and the hooded doorway and the corner balcony supported on two large wooden brackets at 4360 Centre.

The Colonial Revival was a dominant style during the Eclectic Period and was based on English and Dutch antecedents from the American colonial era, in which many of the details are derived from classical sources. It typically featured a symmetrical facade and an accentuated front door with fanlights and sidelights. Examples built prior to 1910 are usually free interpretations of original designs, while later examples tend to be truer copies of colonial precedents.

grouped in twos and threes. A hipped gable bay is accented by ribbed and herringbone nogging.



4309 Parkman Avenue (18) (Below)

This ambitious work, designed by Louis Stevens in 1915, is an attempt to create for a prosperous client a replica of a "modern" English country house. It features an asymmetrical brick facade accentuated by limited half-timbering and skillfully ordered window arrangements. The end chimney rises in stages and is adorned by a sundial.



4231 Parkman Avenue (19)

While Schenley High School (Edward Stotz, architect, 1915-16) anchors the eastern end of upper Parkman Avenue, a Herculean retaining wall (ca. 1905) secures the other. Appearing to be set into this wall is this romantic Tudor style house. Sunporch and main entrances are arched. Above the entry is a high relief medallion of a winged Liberty or Mercury; the recess of the entry is lined with colored tiles and decorative brickwork. Buttresses serve as corner devices.

A walk down Parkman Avenue, overlooking the Oakland civic and cultural district, concludes the tour.