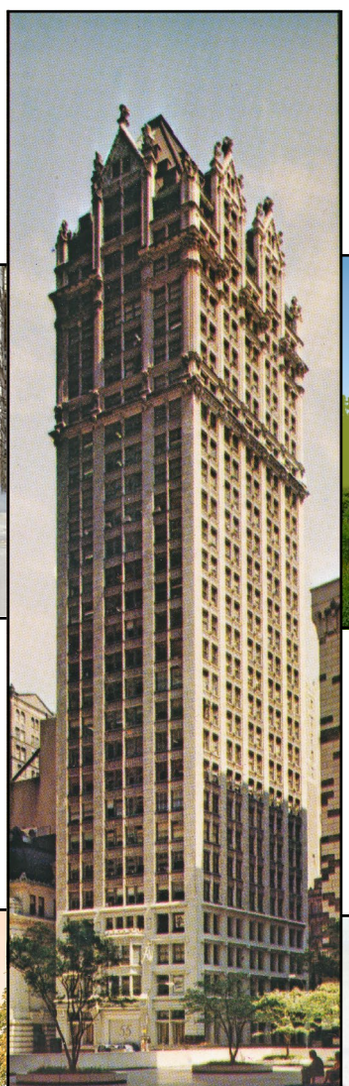
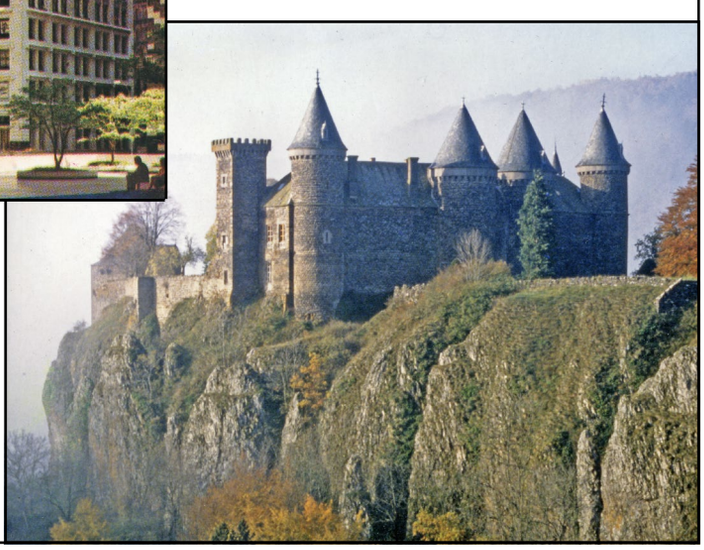
Homes

By

Joseph Pell Lombardi





HOMES

By

JOSEPH PELL LOMBARDI

Like an architectural Sherlock Holmes, Mr. Lombardi patiently unravels houses' secrets, then fervidly restores them. To say that the 49-year-old New York architect and developer has a commitment to historic preservation is an understatement. The man is obsessed.

Some people collect salt and pepper shakers. Joseph Pell Lombardi collects houses.

—The New York Times, July 5, 1990

Contents

Introduction

You can't get rid of the past, Mr. Cox. The past is not a matter of time. It's a place. Somewhere just out of reach.... It's right here, rearranged, hiding like the face drawn into a tree in one of those children's puzzles.... The world is divided into two kinds of people, Mr. Cox. Those who, when they pass a house, wonder who lives there, and those who, when they pass it, wonder who used to live there. I belong to the second group. . .

— Dewey Defeats Truman, by Thomas Mallon

I have always been obsessed by houses -- old houses. When I say obsessed, I simply mean that I think about houses most of my waking hours and they also occupy my dreams. My earliest memories are about houses and I cannot remember a time when I wanted to do anything other than to take care of them.

I am a restoration architect and a owner of residences. For 50 years I have specialized in the conversion of commercial buildings to residential lofts, the conservation of historic houses and the creation of contextual residential buildings. Weekdays are spent on my architectural and real estate investments. Early mornings, evenings and weekends are devoted to my homes. My libraries are filled with books about houses; I visit endless old houses each year and serve on numerous boards of historic house organizations. Houses give me great satisfaction, but few things make me happier than the restoration of a missing feature or the finding of appropriate furnishings for one of my homes.

My propensity for homes began with an intense affection for a childhood summer home which evolved into a lifetime focused on the conservation, restoration and creation of residences.

My passion has meant, at times, putting myself at serious financial and professional risk for a house. There also have been physical risks (having witnessed numerous job injuries, I developed rigid rules -- never step backwards, always hold onto a stair rail and never assume a floor is sound). But rules aside, on September 11, 2001, I would walk back into a vortex from hell in order to guard one of my homes.

When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, most people nearby fled down stairs and uptown, but Joe Lombardi did the opposite: despite injuring his leg in the tumult, he headed to Liberty Tower, one block from ground zero, and took an elevator to his penthouse apartment on the 29th floor.

—The New York Times, October 18, 2001

Over the years, I have been involved in thousands of residences professionally and have owned nine homes. The five homes presently in my stewardship have become a lifetime passion. Each home is a very different form of architecture with little similarity in original purpose, function or contents. Because of their complexity, the homes will continue to be subject to further investigation and conservation efforts and, as opportunities arise, additions will continue to be made to their individual collections. As such, my homes are works in progress that will never have a completion.

Narrated within are my adventures with the creation of residential lofts and the story of the conservation of my five homes.

Joseph Pell Lombardi
January 14, 2017

Beginnings

One thing hastens into being, another hastens out of it. Even while a thing is in the act of coming into existence, some part of it has already ceased to be. Flux and change are forever renewing the fabric of the universe just as the ceaseless sweep of time is forever renewing the face of eternity. In such a running river, when there is no firm foothold, what is there for a man to value among all the many things that are racing past him?

— Marcus Aurelius, Mediations (VI, 15)

I grew up in Harlem in the 1940s and 1950s. Harlem contains endless rows of intact nineteenth-century town houses executed in a wealth of styles. As a child, I loved wandering the side streets exploring and discovering Romanesque, Italianate, Moorish and Renaissance Revival houses and comparing them to the original examples in my 1948 edition of Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture.

I was obsessed with my childhood summer lodge at Lake Valhalla in Putnam County, 60 miles north of New York City. Although the lake lodge was only used during the summer, it was considered the family home because, unlike our rental apartment in the City, it was owned by my parents. My time spent with my parents, my sisters, Carole and Phyllis and my summertime friends, at the lake lodge was the antithesis of the City. In New York I attended a strict Catholic military school, the streets had dangerous street gangs and there were few outside activities other than playing stickball in the street and roller skating by clinging to the back of buses.

Lombardi Summer House 1940s (Author's Collection)

Lake Valhalla had been created in the Hudson Highland mountains in the 1930s as a summer community with 50 log-cabin style lodges on approximately 1,000 acres with a 32 acre lake. At the lake lodge, I had the freedom to roam the trails and camp overnight in the woods, to swim, boat and fish in the lake and play tennis and softball with my summer pals. The lodges and community buildings of Lake Valhalla were all built in the American log-cabin style of the late 19th/early 20th century with log siding, fieldstone chimneys and foundations, knotty pine paneled living rooms and screened porches. The lake lodge was my first love affair with a house. While I look back to the time spent at the Lake Valhalla community with happy memories enhanced by the opaqueness of time, my affection for the lake lodge is crystal clear because it is continuous.

Lake Valhalla, Cold Spring, NY. 1940s (Author's Collection)

Houses became my boyhood friends, foreshadowing the way I would live my life. I spent my childhood digging in foundations, examining abandoned houses and reading everything I could about houses — novels that took place in houses, How-to-Build text books, English country house mysteries, home magazines and even comic books. My favorite comic book hero was Scrooge McDuck, because he lived in a McMansion. I was even fascinated by haunted houses, not because they were haunted, but because they were houses with a unique story.

It was early on that I learned that the imprint of former occupants on the fabric of their houses could be read like a documentary and, that like a detective, I could piece together the story of a house and their occupants by studying

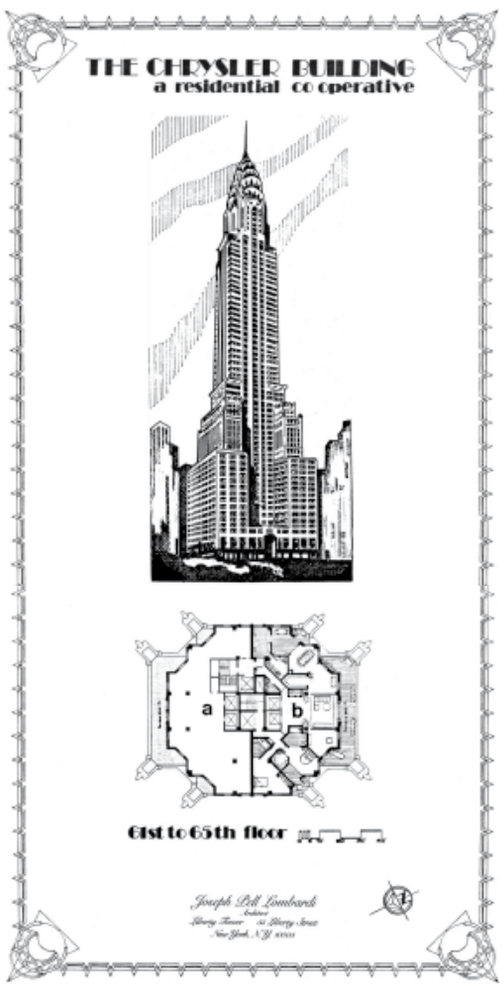
its configuration, decoration, furnishings and equipment in conjunction with the history of its occupants and go back in time to see what was -- the enigma and magic of the past. The remodeled bathroom symbolized the new job; the creation of a rental unit spoke of a shrinking family; a room divided to crate a second small room announced the new baby. It was all there in the big changes and in the details — the rear addition when the twins were born or the 1945 porch plant hook enthusiastically added by the GI Bill purchasers at the end of World War II.

In 1953, my family and I left the problematic Harlem of the 1950s for the suburbs and, after a high school education in the small Hudson River village of Irvington, I went on to Carnegie Mellon University for architecture school. I did what I could to advance my studies in historic houses. Unfortunately, in the early 1960s -- the heyday of modernism, I faced a lack of understanding from my professors and fellow students who couldn't imagine contemplating a career restoring old buildings instead of creating new structures. I was a heretic for my consuming interest in historic buildings instead of the new forms of Modern Architecture. My peers thought that my ideas for the continuing use and adaptive uses of existing buildings were radical, but not the "cool" radical of the 1960s. In that era, historic preservation in America was more an act of love than a profession, and there was yet to be special academic programs for the training of preservationists. I circumvented this limitation by adding history courses to my architectural degree schedule (to satisfy my curiosity I also added premed courses).

When the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture added Historic Preservation to their Master's Programs, I enrolled and obtained a Master's degree under the direction of the great preservationist James Marston Fitch. The Columbia University's Master's degree in Historic Preservation was the first academic program of its kind in the country. It was at Columbia that I had my first real opportunity to share my views with fellow preservationists and interface with specialists in the preservation community. To this day few things are more enjoyable for me than a quiet afternoon at Columbia reading about past architecture in the hushed reading room of McKim, Mead & White's, 1911 Avery Architectural Library.

Foretelling my future involvement in conserving and converting commercial buildings to residential use, my thesis was a proposal for the conservation and conversion of the then distressed Chrysler Building. Extraordinarily enough, several years later, I would be sitting in the office of Mass Mutual, the owner of the Chrysler Building, along with an investment group I had assembled, negotiating to buy the building. Based upon my thesis, I had put together the investment group which I was heading. The negotiations were unsuccessful because Mass Mutual ultimately decided not to sell, but I was commissioned by them to perform a historical analysis of the Chrysler Building lobby, which assisted in its designation as a New York Landmark and averted a planned desecration.

After graduation, I fulfilled my 3 year apprenticeship with a New York architect whose work included renovation of townhouses followed by CONRAD (Construction Research & Design), a firm that sought government grants to develop innovative solutions for the production of low-cost housing -- a very popular subject in the 1960s. CONRAD's interest was the off-site prefabrication and finishing of housing components to use in the renovation of deteriorated urban housing. This was an area where I could combine preservation with the building technology of mass produced housing components; the marriage of these two disciplines was of great interest to me.

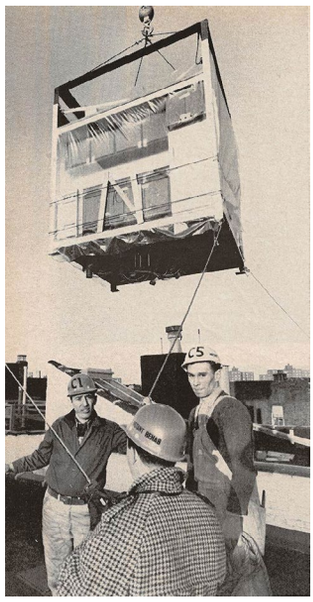


Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation.
Joseph Pell Lombardi Thesis (Author's Collection)

Working with Ed Rice and Richard Wickert, two innovative and dedicated West Coast engineers, we developed a rehabilitation concept which we called "Instant Rehab." The idea was to completely renovate a fully occupied late nineteenth century tenement building in 48 hours. The occupants would be moved to a hotel and their possessions stored in vans. Two days later, they would move back into their freshly renovated apartments. The project was exciting

and provided the high of finding a new methodology and, possibly, feasible solutions to major housing problems. After frequent trips to Washington, DC, we landed a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop the program and perform an actual "Instant Rehab" on three tenement buildings in Manhattan's Lower East Side.

The first, and only, Instant Rehab was performed in the Spring of 1967. We designed and produced prefabricated boxes that contained a plumbing and electrical chase between a bathroom on one side and a kitchen on the other. The prefabricated boxes were assembled in a large pier on the East River. After the tenants and their possessions moved out, we cut three square holes through the building for the three apartments that would be created on each floor. The prefabricated boxes were then trucked to the site where a crane hoisted them over the buildings and down through the holes, stacking them one on top of another. Pre-finished ceilings, walls and floors, that had been staged on scaffolding outside of each apartment, were simultaneously installed.



Instant Rehab
CONRAD 1967

Forty-eight hours later, New York Mayor John Lindsay, Secretary Weaver of HUD and several hundred cheering workmen on the fire escapes welcomed the tenants back to their newly renovated apartments. Unfortunately, critics said that the demonstration had cost too much and the program was soon forgotten. The Record offered up a satirical cartoon at the time with the tag line "It's marvelous -- you come back in 48 hours and find the rent has doubled!"

Instant Rehab
CONRAD 1967

The truth was that the program did work. The materials were the same cost as conventional renovation, but the labor and the short term mortgage was only a fraction of the usual cost. It was an idea that could have worked, then and now, but financing was not readily available for low-cost housing in the inner cities. Nonetheless, CONRAD had developed a name for itself in the field of innovative housing.

After the Instant Rehab project CONRAD joined with Moshe Safdie, who had just completed an extraordinary apartment complex known as Habitat 67 for the Worlds Fair in Montreal (Expo 67). The apartment complex was comprised of prefabricated concrete units stacked in a beautiful geometric form. CONRAD and T. Y. Lin, a structural engineer who had pioneered the use of prestressed concrete, had developed a lightweight chemically prestressed concrete allowing the walls and slabs of prefabricated concrete units to be thin and the units light. CONRAD married the concrete technology, known as "Uniment", to Safdie's designs and set out to convince cities to build low and moderate income housing using prefabricated lightweight concrete units. But the cost, even of the lighter weight units, was still to high for low and moderate income uses. CONRAD ultimately built a Uniment in Richmond, California without Safdie. I created an initial design for the building that relied on alternating geometric forms to create rhythm and terraces. At the last minute my design was changed to a mundane stacked form.

Uniment Design - Joseph Pell Lombardi,
CONRAD Engineers 1968

One of the members of the Instant Rehab team was Ben DeVino, our construction superintendent. After Instant Rehab, he went on to become a construction superintendent for the building of the World Trade Center. I would think of him again on a September morning thirty-five years later.

Ben's path and mine would cross once more before I lost track of him. After he finished the Trade Center he worked for DOMFAB, a Canadian firm supplying prefabricated cities to Saudi Arabia. DOMFAB had landed an order which required the production of mechanically ink-lettered drawings in metric and US Customary measurements with notes in English and Farsi. It was for a new city of 50,000 people to be built in the desert and the drawings had to be completed in two weeks. He felt New York was the rare place that could produce so many complex drawings in such short time. Working feverishly, I assembled an army

of architects, draftsmen, students and engineers from a variety of universities and large architectural firms. We labored day and night. Two weeks later I flew to Canada and delivered the drawings. Today, with Computer Aided-Drafting (AutoCAD) the feat would be impressive. But in 1977, the two-week production of a full set of hand-drawn construction drawings for a new city was quite extraordinary.

In 1966, Richard Wickert, my colleague at CONRAD, and I joint ventured on my first real estate investment, a rooming house conversion in the Kips Bay area of Manhattan. At only 26 years of age, the experience helped create and shape my career. We each put up $2,500 towards a $40,000 purchase price for a rooming house at 239 East 31st Street. The balance of the purchase price was provided by a mortgage held by the seller. Richard and I started in on the work, physically removing the rooming house aspects ourselves on weekends and during evenings after work. We sold the house before we even finished the conversion.

237 East 32nd Street, Manhattan, ca.1967
(Author's Collection)

With the proceeds, I was able to purchase another rooming house, at 237 East 32nd Street, to convert back to a townhouse for my growing family - my wife Nan and my son Chris, born in 1966. In 1969 my second son Mike would join us. The former rooming house was handsomely detailed in the Greek Revival style of the mid-19th century and it was part of a string of seven identical houses. True to a pattern that would continue throughout my life, before long I owned all seven.

The facades of the seven houses were all essentially intact. The unique situation of having seven houses, all identically built gave me a wonderful opportunity to study their shared features as well as their changes over time. The study of their similarities, research on the history of the families who had inhabited them and the use of furnishings of the era, including some which were original to the houses, aided me in restoring them to their former elegance.

The 32nd Street townhouses all had original classical brownstone columns and entablatures framing the entrances. The doors were made of walnut and there were inlaid marble vestibules. Almost all of the interior trim, marble fireplaces, plaster cove moldings and ceiling rosettes remained. Some of the houses of this era had originally been built with a roofed wooden tea room/porch overlooking the garden on the parlor floor which provided a covered work area open to the garden at the basement level. Rarely seen because of deterioration from exposure to the elements, four of the seven houses still had this feature intact.

#8 Sniffen Court, c. 1973

We used this first family house much like it had been used one hundred years earlier (the basement level, the location of the original kitchen and family dining room, was made into an income producing apartment with the upper levels remaining as in the 19th century). After six happy years in this fine house, I became eager to tackle another project.

A few blocks from our 32nd Street home in the adjoining Murray Hill neighborhood at East 36th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues, is an charismatic mews known as Sniffen Court. In the mid-nineteenth century, it had contained ten identical Romanesque-style carriage house/stables. At the turn of the century, when the need for carriages and stables had become obsolete, artists began to use the buildings for studios. During the 1920s and 1930s, most of the studios were then converted into private houses. The exteriors had been altered over time, but enough remained so that the original scheme was discernible. In fact, the individual changes of added skylights, planter boxes and different colors provides the court with a pleasant rhythm.

In 1969, I signed a purchase option for #8 Sniffen Court. It was the only carriage house/stable which had not yet been converted to a house. Last used as a garage with rooms for a chauffeur, in the 1950s a garage door had been installed interrupting the base of the beautiful main arch. Based upon the precedents of the surviving original examples, I restored the arched opening.

Since there was absolutely no historic interior detailing or partitioning

remaining, I maintained the artist's studio tradition by creating two-story high volumes with skylights. I was thrilled to present my plans to the newly established New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. My plans were reviewed by Frank Sanchis, chief of staff for the LPC, who became a life-long friend. Also a graduate of the Columbia University Preservation Program, he would go on to be Vice President of Historic Sites for the National Trust and, later, the Executive Director of the New York Municipal Arts Society.

Haldane House, Cold Spring, NY - 1973
(Author's Collection)

In 1969, After my architectural apprenticeship was complete, I obtained my license to practice architecture and established my own New York City firm. Professionally pursuing my passion for old houses, my new firm initially specialized in conservation and restoration services, focusing on the conversion back to townhouses of New York City rooming houses.

In 1972, with the proceeds from my burgeoning architectural practice and townhouse restorations, I bought a weekend retreat sixty miles north of the city. The house was a welcome escape for my family and, as an added feature, it was near to my childhood lake house, still owned by my parents, where we could swim and fish and I could revisit the sites of my childhood enjoyment.

Haldane House was built in the 1870s in then popular Second Empire style with a mansard roof and bonneted dormers. It sits proudly on top of a hill overlooking the small village of Cold Spring. Located on the Hudson River sixty miles north of New York City, Cold Spring is a picturesque village architecturally frozen in the nineteenth century due to the closing of the prosperous West Point Foundry at the beginning of the twentieth century.

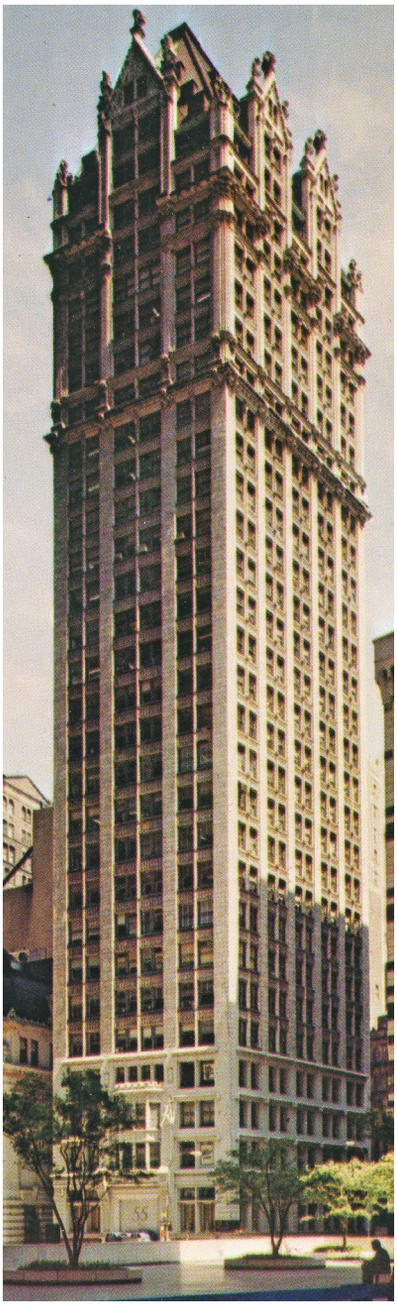
The Old Parsonage -- Peru, Vermont
(Author's Collection)

Nan Tina Cottage - Minocqua, Wisconsin

The foundry, which had its origins as an armament factory during the Civil War, had successfully expanded into the production of cast iron wares after the War. Cold Spring's Main Street contains a very handsome collection of buildings reflecting the nineteenth century success of the foundry. The hills surrounding the village contain superb examples of third and fourth quarter nineteenth-century houses built partially from the profits of the old foundry and partially by wealthy New Yorkers as summer retreats.

Haldane House had been built by James H. Haldane who was born in Cold Spring and, along with his brother John, had succeeded in the iron trade with their family enterprise, Haldane & Company. The house still stood on all of its original land and had a handsome complementing barn and carriage house at the rear of the property with board and batten siding (alternating wide boards with narrow strips covering the wide board seams).

I studied the history of the house and its occupants and emphasized its 19th century origins by furnishing and decorating it using contemporaneous objects found at the weekly auctions in nearby Dutchess County. Substantially intact on the exterior and interior, the only problem with Haldane House was that it was not challenging enough for me. I look back with a haunting nostalgia to that almost dreamlike



Liberty Tower -1970s
Photo Dave Sagarin

time spent with my small family in that wonderful house as one of the rarely granted interludes in the drama of life.

In the mid-1970s, I bought a marvelously intact, but badly in need of help, 1850 parsonage in rural Vermont to be used as a ski home for my family and a weekend conservation project for me.

In Manhattan, the Sniffen Court home was succeeded by an apartment created from the former board rooms of Sinclair Oil in Liberty Tower, a Gothic style skyscraper located in the Financial District of Manhattan; I had bought and converted the skyscraper to residential use -- the first significant conversion of its kind in the Financial District. For over twenty years, my family and I enjoyed summer holidays at Nantina Cottage, my wife's early 20th century family lake house in Northern Wisconsin.

The Octagon House - 1970s (Author's Collection)

My architectural practice parallels my predilection. In the 1960s I focused my professional career on the restoration of the deteriorating, former elegant, townhouses of New York; beginning in the 1970s my efforts shifted to the conversion of the neglected, magnificent buildings of Lower Manhattan into residential lofts and, after the 1989 fall of the Communist Regime in Central Europe, a substantial portion of my time was spent on the faded, majestic buildings of Hungary.

In the late 1970s, Haldane House, was sold so that I could purchase the extraordinary and challenging Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House in Westchester County, New York. In the 1990s, I added to the ensemble Erdödy-Choron Kastély, a moated Renaissance castle in Central Europe and Château du Sailhant, a powerful and romantic thousand year old château in central France.

Erdödy-Choron Kastély - 1990s (Author's Collection)

In July, 1990, the NY Times ran a lengthy article on my work under the caption "One Man, Three Homes, One Mission: Preserving Architectural Treasures. The article, written by Patricia Leigh Brown, a writer for the Times and architectural magazines was a very positive piece with quotes such as "unlike many architects, Mr. Lombardi has no desire to make a personal statement with his work, preferring to let history speak instead" and "everyone has their thing, mine

is the mystery of bringing it all back together." It spoke about the conversation efforts on the Liberty Tower apartment, Vermont Parsonage and the Octagon House.

In the 21st century, I returned Erdödy-Choron Kastély to the Hungarian Government and Nantina Cottage continues to be used by my family, but not by me. The Octagon House, the Parsonage, the apartment at Liberty Tower and Sailhant continued their place in my lifelong passion.

Château du Sailhant, Andelat, France - Photo Géraud Jarlier

Alfheim Cottage -- Lake Valhalla

Coming full circle, I went back to my first love affair with a house and began the reconstruction of Alfheim Cottage at Lake Valhalla in Putnam County, New York. My career with lower Manhattan lofts, houses, New York townhouses, conservation in Central Europe and my five homes are the subject of this chronicle.

Homes and Townhouses

Old buildings are not ours.
They belong, partly to those who built them, and partly to the generations of mankind who are to follow.
— John Ruskin

In 1969, after my architectural apprenticeship was complete, I obtained my license to practice architecture and established my own New York City firm. Professionally pursuing my passion for old houses, my new firm specialized in conservation and restoration services, focusing on the townhouse renovations done during my apprenticeship.

20 Willow Place,
Brooklyn Heights, NY

121 & 131 West 78th Street, Manhattan - Upper West Side

I had once read that being a specialist could lead to success, but in the late-1960s, my newly hatched architectural firm with an emphasis on preservation was too much of an anomaly in the industry, and I was in dire need of clients.

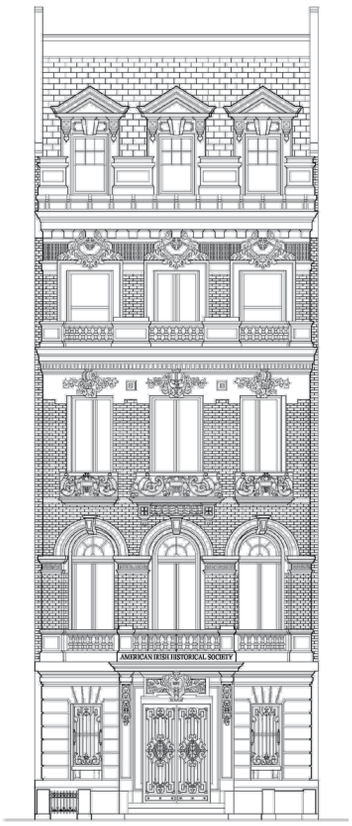
Cudner-Hyatt House, Scarsdale, NY

In order to develop business, I located rooming houses for sale which could be converted back to townhouse and, through introductions, recommendations and cocktail parties. I pitched my ideas to potential clients. Rooming houses are houses with separate tenants in each room sharing a common bathroom. They were a product of the need for cheap housing during the Great Depression and the housing shortages of the Second World War. New York still had many of these run-down rooming houses scattered throughout the city, including some in its most handsome blocks. These formerly gracious, 19th century townhouses had been hurriedly converted to rooming houses.The conversions had been cheaply and quickly done with the changes typically limited to lightly constructed partitions dividing the larger rooms and the installation of a sink and sprinklers in each room.

45 King Street, Manhattan

These rooming houses had a down-on-the-heels appearance, yet discernibly hidden behind the shabbiness, their former grandeur was evident in the remaining original fireplaces, ornate plasterwork, hardware, wood doors, trim and, in some fortunate cases, the early bathrooms. Since the changes had been cheaply and quickly done, they were easily reversible. In the 1960s, because the rooming houses were deteriorated and numerous, the prices were remarkably low. A rooming house could be purchased for $25,000 to $35,000

68 State Street,
Brooklyn Heights, NY



991 Fifth Avenue,
American Irish Historical Society
Upper East Side - Manhattan

with renovation costs being less than $50,000. Bank financing for 80% of the acquisition and renovation costs was readily available.

I inspected houses in every corner of the city and studied all aspects of urban rownhouses in America. A prerequisite to the successful restoration of townhouses was understanding their history. The classical 18th and 19th century New York City stoop is a tradition left over from Palladian architecture of the 16th and 17th centuries and the settlement of New York by the Dutch. Palladio advocated having the raised, high ceilinged, principal floor, the "piano nobile", formally accessed by an exterior staircase giving importance to an owner and his guests over a slightly below grade, secondary entrance for staff and, in Holland, houses were elevated to protect against flood damage.

141 Main Street, Nantucket, MA

451 Hudson Street, Manhattan

Beginning in the early 20th century stoops began to be considered old fashioned and many were awkwardly removed leaving scars on the facade and irregular openings. Restoring stoops to townhouses returned the original logic to the layouts and facades. Nineteenth century New York townhouses had a fairly standard layout. The partially below grade basement contained an informal/staff dining room at the front and a kitchen at the rear (the garden was usually lower than the street, so the kitchen was at grade in the rear). Above the basement was the first floor high-ceilinged piano nobile or parlor floor accessed by the stoop which lead to a pair of doors opening through a vestibule to a hall. From the hall one could enter the parlor facing the street. In the back was the formal dining room facing the garden. Sliding doors between the dining room and the front parlor could be opened to allow for a double parlor/large entertaining area. The second floor was invariably for a library/ sitting room facing the street and a master bedroom facing the quieter garden to the rear. The library and master bedroom were usually separated by a dressing room and bath. The third floor was for children bedrooms and servants or, in larger houses, there would be a separate fourth floor solely for servants. My work often was to simply revert the townhouse back it's original, logical layout.

Cartier, 653 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan

322 West 71st Street, Manhattan

121 East 65th Street, Manhattan - Upper East Side

By locating houses with good potential, I was able to convince clients to take advantage of particular opportunities and to speak about a development project ready to go, not the abstract idea of doing it. This wasn't the hardest of sells. Even people just out of college, like me, could swing a rooming house conversion.

Eventually I tackled groups of houses so that their restoration impacted entire blocks. Over the next few years, my acquisition, restoration and sale of townhouses increased dramatically and my architectural practice expanded rapidly.

This way of practicing architecture very much bucked against the norm. In the 1960s, architects were not developers. I thought that was ridiculous, given the long historical tradition of architect builders. Since antiquity, through the Renaissance and as recent as the 19th century architects had also been builders. Most of my peers were working at large firms and in spite of all of the beautiful houses that I restored, they still considered my way of practicing as not very gentlemanly. The difference between my type of practice and my peers was also mirrored in philosophy. The modernist would tear down a 19th century townhouse or gut it and put in modern interiors. Architects in the 1960s and 1970s strongly felt the need to leave their fingerprint on their work; I felt that the more successful project was when the intervention was indiscernible. I embraced the historic buildings inside and out.

129 East 17th Street,
Gramercy Park, Manhattan

45 East 74th Street,
Upper East Side - Manhattan

Today, it's quite different; architects now are eager to be architect-developers and they have a greater respect for preservation.

The antique homes I restored for myself and the rooming houses I located with the hope of finding clients eventually resulted in clients starting to seek me out. While I continued to seek out projects with the hope of finding clients, my experience and reputation resulted, towards the end of the 1960s, in a more traditional architectural practice with clients seeking me out for my restoration/conservation skills rather than my seeking them.

The townhouse and free-standing home commissions numbered over one hundred by the turn of the 20th century and they stand out very strongly in my mind. Intensely demanding, they were

138 State Street,
Brooklyn Heights, NY

also gratifying. The relationships with the clients were filled with the humor and richness of life. Being an architect for an individual's home is one of the most challenging fields in architecture. The client almost always becomes deeply involved in the project and requires substantial attention from the architect. Often the client has bought his first home and is working with an architect for the first time. The purchase of a house is a significant investment and the house is typically thought of as a home for a lifetime, finished out to reflect the owner's taste and position.

12-18 East 62nd Street, Manhattan - Upper East Side

As the client gets caught up in the activity, the client can place great demands on the architect's skills and time. This intense process can be satisfying or frustrating depending greatly on the architect - client relationship. As in all relationships, trust is paramount to being successful. Some clients will rely on their architect's every word and decision. Others will try to outdo their architect by arriving at decisions without input. The best relationship is somewhere in between – a mutual effort.

The commissions were throughout the City, in townhouses and cooperative apartments in Manhattan's Upper East Side, the West Side, Chelsea, Murray Hill and Brooklyn's Park Slope and Brooklyn Heights and free-standing houses in Westchester and Riverdale. Many of the commissions were executed in conjunction with an interior designer. Working in concert with enormously capable interior designers like Mark Hampton, Michael La Rocca and Robert Courturier was a pleasurable teamwork effort. Often my preservation clients were concerned that, as a preservationist, I would insist on the retention of too much of the original fabric making their home museum-like and unlivable. Fortunately, as the architect-client relationship became established, a mutual goal developed, in tune with preservation.

The New Colonnade, Manhattan

The cooperative apartment projects were no less interesting than the townhouses. While the exteriors of the grand cooperative apartment buildings were often understated, no detail was spared on the interiors. Hardwood parquet floors, classical plaster cove moldings, panelled libraries and numerous fireplaces are the vocabulary of these wonderful pre-World War II buildings. The careful detailing often extended to bathrooms with mosaic marble floors and scales consisting of a plate in the floor and a dial built into the wall.

Beginning in the 1970s the majority of my work became the conversion of commercial buildings to residential use. Nonetheless, I continue to serve as architect for two or three individual homes/townhouses each year, the individual commissions remain as one of the particularly enjoying aspects of my practice.

Ocean Beach House, Florida

Castles and Central Europe

Asia was the cradle of the Magyar (Hungarian)
— Ferenc Jankovich (1907-1971)

Introduction

One of the most important things in life is showing up
Unknown — the movie *Hardball*

For many years I provided pro bono services to the World Monuments Fund. Through planning, development and funding, the not-for-profit World Monuments Fund furthers conservation and preservation of architecture and art throughout the world. I had served on their Venice Committee in the 1980s.

In the early 1980s, I provided pro bono services on the adaptation of two Venetian palazzi from offices to a museum and residences for Venetians. In the late 1980s, I had assisted them and Comte Hubert de Commarque in the creation of public access to the twelfth century Château de Commarque in the Périgord region of France. And, in the mid-1990s, I gave them input on the conservation of traditional vernacular houses in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the town adjacent to the Ankor Wat temple sites, where the World Monuments Fund was performing archeological work.

Le Château de Commarque

In early December of 1992, I received a phone call from Bonnie Burnham, the President of the World Monuments Fund. She wanted me to meet with her, Marilyn Perry, President of the Kress Foundation and John Stubbs, Vice President of the World Monuments Fund to discuss a new project. Bonnie, Marilyn, John and I had become great friends over the years through our adventures in the intrigues and complexities of advancing international conservation and preservation, often in conjunction with enigmatic foreign government officials.

Our meeting would set in motion a series of events which would eventually bring me to Central Europe on a monthly basis, cause me to study Hungarian, make almost every corner of Hungary and the surrounding countries known to me and lead me to taking on another personal house.

Present vernacular house
Siem Reap, Cambodia

12th century vernacular house
Ankor Wat carving

The meeting was held at the handsome boardroom in the renovated townhouse on the upper eastside of Manhattan which the World Monuments Fund shared with the Kress Foundation. The subject of the meeting was Eszterháza, Hungary's grandest palace, a beautifully proportioned 18th century Baroque palace just across the border from Austria, 50 kilometers southwest of Vienna.

The World Monuments Fund had been asked by the European Mozart Academy to look into the feasibility of adapting Eszterháza into a music academy, museum, hotel and learning facility.

Two weeks later, disregarding my complex plans for the Christmas season and fighting one of the worst colds I have ever had, I flew to Budapest to inspect Eszterháza.

Eszterháza Palace -- Garden and south façade

Often called the Versailles of Central Europe, Eszterháza was built in the 1760s by Prince Miklós Esterházy, whose family had risen from relatively modest land holders to one of the wealthiest aristocratic families in Hungary. The palace consists of an eleven-bay facade flanked on the park side by two five-bay wings. On the court side, horseshoe-shaped wings curve in to create an enormous, fully enclosed

Eszterháza Palace -- Music Room

entrance court. The interior contains Rococo style elaborately decorated suites including a joined double height Gala-Hall and Music Room. Beyond the flanking wings, a projecting Winter Garden wing originally contained exotic botanical and aviary specimens and a projecting Picture Gallery originally contained exceptional works of art. Joseph Hayden was the resident conductor and composer for 29 years. He composed his most important works at Eszterháza.

The 800 acre park, laid out in the formal French style, contained a wealth of statuary, an artificial waterfall, a 400-seat Opera Hall, a Marionette Theater, a hermit's cottage and magnificent riding stables.

Family disuse in the 19th century and damage during and after the Second World War had somewhat compromised the palace, but it was a clear candidate for reuse. Over the next three years, the World Monuments Fund, the European Mozart Academy, the Hungarian National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments and my firm labored to advance this worthy project. This involved the preparation of reports, plans, cost estimates and several meetings each month in Budapest (with the Hungarian government), in Vienna (with consultants) and at Eszterháza (with local representatives and visiting dignitaries).

One Monday, after having just arrived back from two days in Budapest, I found I was needed in Vienna on Wednesday. I went out on Tuesday night and came back Wednesday night. The next day, as I was riding in a cab, I found myself wondering why all the shop signs in New York were in English!

Hungary, immediately after the end of the communist regime was a sorrowful but courageous place. There were extraordinary contrasts between the splendor of the past and the deterioration and banality of the present. This theme repeated itself throughout the country.

In Budapest there were endless streets with magnificent 19th century Neo-renaissance apartment blocks and private townhouses alongside 20th century Secessionist and Art Nouveau architecture almost all still carrying damage from neglect, the 1956 revolution and even the Second World War. Where buildings had been bombed away, they had been replaced by the extraordinarily ordinary buildings of the Communist Regime.

The villages had a slightly different theme. Here, the deteriorated Baroque and Neo-renaissance style dwellings sat side by side with the splendid, but also deteriorated, 18th century Baroque village church and the local noble's village manor house. The people were similar contrasted with their old world style formality in dress and manners, their passion for music and their elegant traditions driving small polluting Russian cars and working in huge antiquated factories. Humor, in the form of wonderfully droll stories, had helped them cope with forty years of Russian bear sitting on their land. The following is one of my favorite stories which was told over an elaborate lunch at Gundel's.

> *A Hungarian winds up in hell and finds it to be a very uncomfortable place. Having asked if there are any choices, he is told that he can select the country of his choice. So he looks in on the Slovak hell, but finds it filled with very unhappy occupants. He inspects the Romanian hell and finds it to be an equally unhappy abode. But when he looks in on the Russian hell, he finds everybody singing, dancing, smoking and drinking vodka. So he asks the Russian occupant "why, if this is hell, is everybody so happy"? The Russian occupant replies, "the Russian hell is, in fact, terrible, every day each occupant has to lay down on a bed of nails and be run over by a steam roller. But," he goes on, "we ran out of nails years ago, we are still waiting for a replacement part for the steam roller and the operator has been on maternity leave for seven years".*

Early in my efforts with Eszterháza I met Sélysette Somorjay, with whom I would be completely enchanted. A very special, fiery, brilliant young woman in her late 30s, she is an Art Historian for the Hungarian National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments. Fluent in English, German, French, Russian and, of course, Hungarian her professional specialty is wall paintings — a subject on which she has given lectures on throughout Europe. Both her father, Ottó, and mother, Ili, come from fine old Hungarian families and also have numerous languages. Her Budapest apartment is filled with her ancestors possessions representing many lifetimes, under varying circumstances, back to the wars with the Turks.

Aerial view of Prónay Palace from the South

In 1993, with the Eszterháza project well advanced, I decided to take on a conservation/restoration project in Hungary. I was given a list of 12 unused castles owned by the Hungarian government which might be available for lease or purchase. I was familiar with some of the castles, others were fascinating obscure properties in remote areas of the country. Touring and discovery of these forgotten treasure was an enormous pleasure. After several weeks, I narrowed my choice to two, Prónay Palace in Acsaújlak and Erdödy-Choron Castle in Jánosháza.

Baron Prónay's coat of arms with the ostriches which migrate to the region every year. Located on a ceramic wood stove in Prónay Palace.

Prónay Palace in Acsaújlak

Prónay Palace was reconstructed in a Baroque style between 1735 and 1740 from the ruins of a medieval castle which had been heavily damaged during the Turkish occupation. It was built by Gábor Prónay I, a nobleman to the designs of Giovanni Carlone Battista, a master builder from Italy working in Eger. With its four turrets and hilltop location, it is a late Renaissance interpretation of a castle. In the 19th century neo-Baroque details were added by Baron Pronay, further enhancing the palace.

During the Second World War, the Front passed through the village several times. The palace was used by the Russians for disabled soldiers.

From the end of the Second World War until 1989, the palace was under the auspices of the Hungarian army with the area being restricted.

In 1994, the palace was vacant, but substantially intact with much of its Baroque detailing in place, inside and out. Changes and insertions were minimal and easily reversed. The internal layout and exterior organization remained, including a bridge over the entrance drive leading to the former formal gardens, a popular method of garden access in the 18th century.

Being a magnificent building in a handsome, rural location only 26 miles from Budapest, returning Prónay Palace to its former grandeur was a very logical choice. The medieval origins of Prónay Palace were an opportunity for interesting research and the plain white walls most likely concealed wall painting to compliment the Baroque ceilings. I started planning research, a steadfast conservation and a campaign of furnishing and decoration.

Prónay Palace, Acsaújlak, Hungary -- South façade, 1998

In 1994, the property was still in the stewardship of the Hungarian Ministry of Defense. On December 27, 1994 and again on November 15, 1996, I submitted tenders. My proposal was for a 99 year lease with an option to purchase at the appraised value at the time of the tender after I had demonstrated my sincerity by completing specific conservation work. I would be required to meet a completion schedule.

Unfortunately, in response to both tenders the Ministry of Defense insisted that there be a clause that the lease could be terminated upon a 90 day notice without cause and without compensation for my improvements. Obviously, the clause was unacceptable.

I turned my attentions to Erdödy-Choron Castle in Jánosháza, which was in the stewardship of the Hungarian National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments.

"American": depicted in plaster ceiling
Prónay Palace

Erdödy-Choron Castle in Jánosháza
Jánosháza, Hungary

The land became known as Jánosháza, "the lands of Janos."

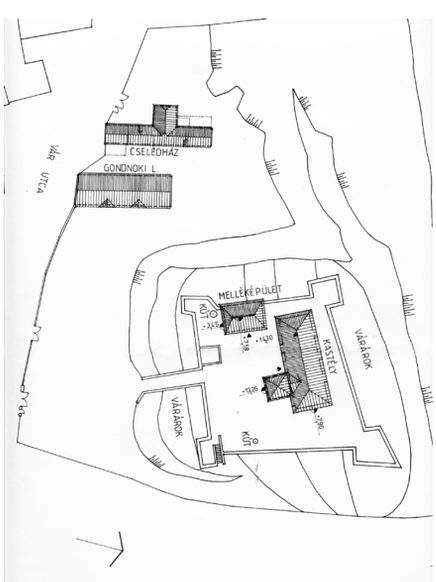
The Renaissance

The Erdödy-Choron Castle is located in the Transdanubia region of southwestern Hungary near the Austrian border. It stands on a hill at the edge of the town of Jánosháza overlooking a small river. It is one of the few surviving medieval castles in Eastern Europe, due to extensive obliteration in the region by the Turks from the 15th to the 17th centuries. The castle is encircled by a wet moat and fortified walls with angular bastions at each of the four corners. It is two-and-one-half stories high with five bays and a tower surmounted by an onion shaped dome.

Erdödy-Choron Castle -- South façade, 1998

In 1480, King Matthias of Hungary gave the Jánosháza estates to his chief commander Pál Kinizsi. A legendary general of great physical size and fearlessness for the Turks, Kinizsi often rode into battle brandishing a sword in each hand and was said to have fear for only one person — Benigna, his wife, who was half his height. In 1479 he had lead the Hungarian army in the battle of Kenyérmezõ in which the Turks lost 30,000 men. The first two stories and the cellar of the eastern wing date to the time of Kinizsi.

After Kinizsi's death in 1495, the property was given to János Zápolya and his sons, János (who became King of Hungary in 1526) and György. From them it passed to Tamás Bakócz, Bishop of Györ and later Archbishop of Ezstergom. Initially King Matthias's secretary, Tamás Bakócz amassed a fortune and campaigned, in 1513, with great splendor for the papacy. He is the only Hungarian bishop to have been proposed for Pope. At the end of the 15th century, Bakócz gave the castle, by will, to his cousin Péter Erdödy.

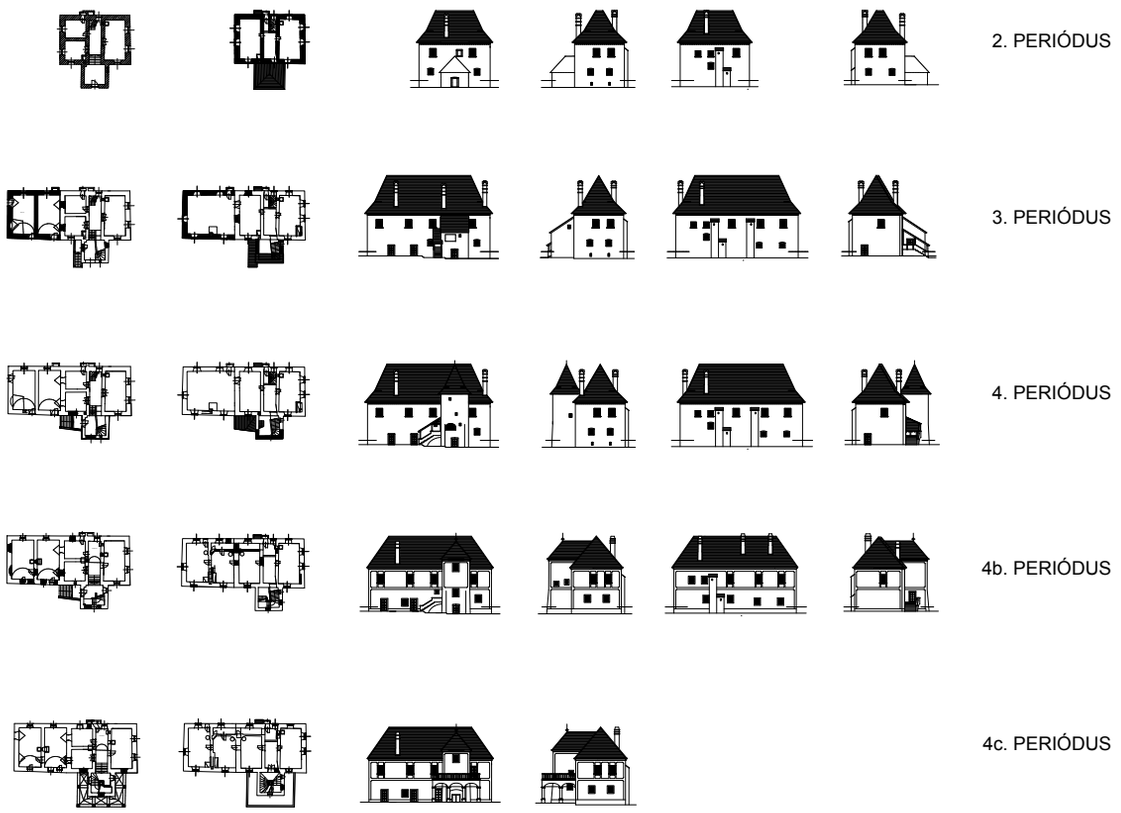


Erdödy-Choron Castle -- Plot plan

In the early 16th century, Péter Erdödy was given permission by King Wladislas to encircle the castle with walls and a moat. Erdödy further enhanced the castle by installing Renaissance window frames and a significant fireplace in the eastern room on the first floor.

In 1558, the castle was sold it to András Choron, another eminent commander. Choron had also gained fame and fortune by his sword. After the defeat of the Hungarians by the Turks at the great battle of Mohács in 1526, he joined Ferdinand, the Hapsburg King of Austria, who had sought the crown of the country against the elected Hungarian king, János Zápolya.

András Choron passed the castle to his son János, who was granted the title of Baron by the Hapsburg King Rudolf. He maintained a permanent army. His wife was a member of the family of Ferenc Batthány, Governer of Crotia. Jánosháza was not János Choron's permanent residence, but he did occasionally reside in it and made substantial improvements. He added the western two bay wing using Renaissance window frames that matched those installed on the eastern portion by Erdödy. He increased the height of the tower, installed terrazzo floors and placed privies on the northern facade.



Erdödy-Choron Castle -- Evolution of the elevations and floor plans.

When János Choron died in 1583, his properties passed to his two daughters, Margit and Anna. Margit Choron was one of the most distinguished women of her time. She married Kristóf Nádasdy whose family seat was Sárvár, a nearby late 13th century castle redecorated during the Renaissance. Kristóf was the younger brother of Tamás Nádasdy who was the Palatine (the highest office next to the King) of Hungary, In the early 17th century Margrit's son, Tamás, built two more corner brick bastions, erected a gate house with a drawbridge and built the present kitchen dependency on the southwest side of the court.

Erdödy-Choron Castle -- Interior, 1997

Erdödy-Choron Castle, 1998

Seventeenth & Eighteenth Centuries

In the mid-17th century, the Choron estates were distributed through marriage to several families. The new owners did not maintain the castle and it deteriorated during the latter part of the 17th century. In 1721 it was sold by János Chernel to Palatine Miklós Illésházy who, in turn, left it to his daughter Anna Illésházy, who later became the wife of László Erdödy III.

Anna Illésházy was very fond of the castle. She chose it for her permanent residence and made changes in accordance with the taste of the time. She erected new buildings in the court and richly decorated the rooms of the piano nobile with genre wall paintings. The old wooden ceilings were also covered with painted flowery ornaments. New fashionable tile wood stoves were installed in the principal rooms. The north wall latrine at the end of the first floor corridor was built at this time. Following the death of Anna Illésházy Erdödy in 1765, the castle passed to László Erdödy who in turn left it to Count Kajetán Erdödy in the 19th century.

Erdödy-Choron Castle, 1998

The Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries

The castle passed to his son Ferenc Erdödy VIII and, eventually, to his grandson Sándor Erdödy VI, who restored the it in 1935.

After World War II, the Castle, under the Communist Regime, became State owned and was used as a children's boarding school and kindergarten until 1979. Between 1979 and 1986 the Hungarian National Board for Protection of Historic Monuments performed research, archeological investigation and conservation work.

On April 14, 1994, I submitted a tender for a 99 lease with an option to purchase the castle and the land from the Hungarian government. After four and one-half years of negotiations, on February 16, 1998 the lease was signed. For ten years research was conducted, including a through analysis of its earlier configurations. Mechanical and structural drawings were prepared and the package submitted to the Hungarian government. After much discussion, approvals were granted. During the process, I stabilized the uninhabited castle by sealing the openings and repairing the copper clad onion dome.

Onion Dome repair, 2000

Upon completion of the construction drawings and specifications, I solicited bids from contractors to perform the work. But the prices were astronomical. I needed to spend far more time in Hungary to properly complete the work, but the demands of my busy office made this impossible.

Finally, in 2008, with great reluctance, I returned the property to the Hungarian government, fully stabilized, extensively researched, with a complete set of restoration/conservation drawings and specifications and all approvals in place.

Onion Dome repair, 2000

Erdödy-Choron Castle demonstrating its appearance after completion of the work.
Oil painting by Bela Toth

The Old Parsonage in Peru, Vermont

Some people collect salt and pepper shakers. Joseph Pell Lombardi collects houses.
—The New York Times, July 5, 1990

Introduction

While visiting friends in southern Vermont for the 4th of July weekend in 1976, I pursued one of my favorite diversions -- touring local houses for sale. This time my diversion resulted in the purchase of another house.

The trip to Vermont had not been with the intent of buying a country house. My family and I were celebrating America's Bicentennial in traditional Vermont by visiting friends with sons the same age as ours at their rural nineteenth century country home in Windham County, Vermont.

Whenever I visit a new locale, my curiosity for houses inevitably results in visits to local house museums and viewing houses for sale. House museums are usually informative, but houses for sale, however ludicrous an acquisition may be, adds the enticing possibility of ownership. Contacting a local realtor and explaining that I'm a preservation architect looking for an old, un-renovated house, in poor condition can lead to fascinating top-to-bottom tours, including areas usually inaccessible in house museums. Once the realtor understands my quest, I often will be shown houses not being marketed, because of their derelict condition.

My friends introduced a local real estate sales agent and Nan and I toured knowing that house-hunting and long discussions with the agent would be tedious for the boys. It is never my intent to mislead agents, since I know I'm rash enough to jump into an untouched, historically intact, house rescue that is slightly conceivable just short of bankruptcy. When it comes to houses I follow the adage to buy first and then figure out how to pay for it. And, it's always possible that it might be suitable for one of my architectural clients.

Among the homes the realtor showed us was a marvelously intact, 1850s parsonage in the quintessential New England town of Peru. Still owned by the Congregational Church; without a resident parson the parsonage had been rented out in recent years. The town consists of a tiny triangular commons with only ten houses, a church, a general store, a minute post office, the foundation of an old inn and the Parsonage.

The old Parsonage, weekend of July 4th, 1976

Surrounded by the Green Mountain National Forest, Peru is across the valley from Stratton, the best equipped ski resort in southern Vermont, a few minutes drive from Bromley, one of the earliest ski centers in the country and within walking distance of Wild Wings, a first rate, rustic cross-country skiing center with ski trails that wind through the beautiful, dense Green Mountain forest. The town of Manchester, with its significant architecture and extensive shops, is ten miles down the mountain.

The Parsonage was sorely in need of intervention, had a price of only $24,000, with 25 percent cash and the annual taxes were $250 per year (at first I thought the agent meant $250 per month). It all seemed quite do-able.

The Parsonage was in a very poor general condition, with significant roof, structural and mechanical systems issues, a collapsing barn and overgrown, unattended grounds. But it had the significant advantage that it was historically intact; it had never been compromised by loss of material by a significant alteration.

Four hours from New York City, it would provide weekend skiing for seven-year-old Mike and ten-year-old Chris and an old-fashioned country kitchen and garden for Nan. For me, it was a hands on opportunity to delve into the architecture of rural New England. There was something for everyone.

Early 20th century view of Peru looking southwest towards Stratton Mountain

I was able to justify the purchase since we were between house projects. Our current home was an apartment in a 1920s building in Carnegie Hill on the upper east side of Manhattan which we had rented while looking for another townhouse after the sale of the house I had restored on Sniffen Court. (The rental apartment turned out to be a lucky choice, within a short time the building converted to cooperative ownership and our insider price was substantially less than the market).

The Parsonage quickly became a home filled with memories of country weekends being together as a family, often shared with friends, enjoying winter skiing, spring fly fishing, summer swimming and the colorful autumns.

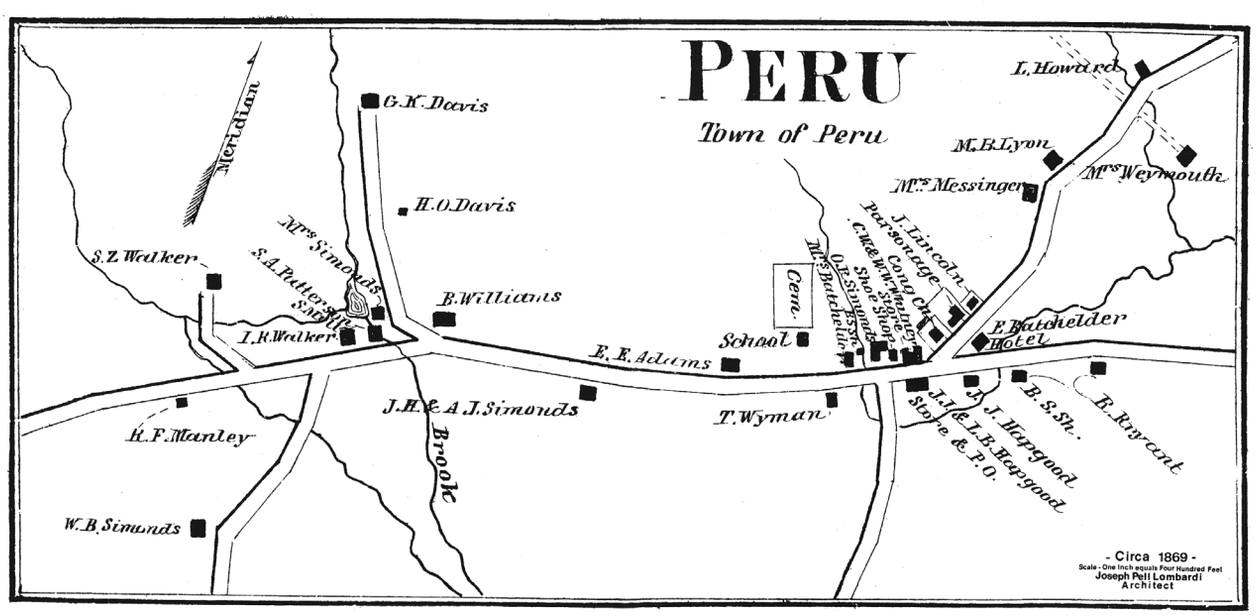


Fig. 3- 1869 map of Peru Author's Collection

Peru, Vermont

In 1804 the residents changed the name of the town from Bromley to Peru because they associated Peru, South America, with gold and riches. They felt that their community, with a more positive image, might attract more settlers.

— Phoebe Ann Lewis, Peru, Vermont

"Old Home Day" on the front lawn of the Old Parsonage, c. 1914

Peru's population is presently 70; at its peak, in the mid-19th century, the population approached 200. The early habitants were farmers who deforested the surrounding hills for sheep grazing. Peru encompasses an area of one square mile. Roads, edged with 150-year-old sugar maple trees, lead to the center of the town where there is a triangular commons used, in the 19th century, for grazing of travellers horses and gathering for civic events. The roads leading to the commons are lined with the original 19th century architecture.

The Congregational Church, flanked by the Parsonage, stands on the north side of the road. On the south side is the general store, the post office and the former creamery. To the east is the foundation of an 1822 brick hotel/tavern, destroyed by fire in 1974. To the east and west is a string of ten white wooden clapboard houses.

In the 19th century, the dirt road which runs though the town, ran east-west across Vermont from Manchester on the west to Chester on the east with branch roads to the towns to the north and south. In the 1800s, Peru was a day's journey 10 miles up the steep mountain from the bustling town of Manchester and the road went through the middle of Peru. With the advent of the automobile, Peru was by-passed by a new paved road leaving the town frozen in the 19th century. The limited establishments fulfilled the small town's needs—the hotel and tavern provided food and drinks, as well as place to interact with travelers; the general store provided a wide range of goods and the Congregational Church and the parsonage provided for the town's spiritual and social gatherings.

Until the mid-1950s, the church employed a parson, with the Parsonage's principal rooms being used for church dinners, bible readings, sewing circles and a small lending library. These few multi-purpose establishments met most needs of the town's populace.

A substantially intact 19th century house and town in a tranquil location by-passed by the main road was a wonderful attribute. Unlike many of the houses and ski chalets on the outskirts, the houses in the town center were owned by full-time local residents. We were the only flatlanders.

Peru, VT -- early 20th century view

The Old Parsonage 1850-1976

The Congregational Church in Peru, Vermont, was completed in 1846. The Parsonage followed in 1850. The new American Republic had looked to classical Greece, the highest symbol of democracy and independence, for its architectural inspiration. In the mid-nineteenth century, archaeological discoveries resulted in the publication of pattern books depicting the classical orders of architecture and their application to vernacular architecture. The classical architectural details finding their way into American buildings was known as the Greek Revival style; the exterior detailing of the Congregational Church and the Parsonage were designed in this prevalent style of the time.

The Barn, 1976

In 1850, the parsonage was constructed of large, hand-hewn posts and beams held together by wooden pegs. The roof was covered with grey-black slate from local quarries. The walls were lapped clapboards over wide pine board sheathing on the exterior, and lime plaster over wood lath on the inside. The floors were wide pine planks. Although the less labor-intensive balloon-frame* construction had been in use for more than then 10 years, the frame of the Parsonage continued the traditional use of post and beam construction. This form of construction lingered because of inexpensive labor, habit, and, perhaps, a lack of confidence in the new system amongst people living in rural areas like Peru, who had yet to see the success of newer technologies.

Builders of this period adapted the new architectural fashions to the requirements of the region by preserving traditional usages, employing local building materials and conforming to the local exigencies. The Greek Revival style is noted for a homogeneous expression with lessening regional variations. The wide spread use of the Greek Revival style was found to be appropriate even for the more reticent and conservative developers of the era.

Restoration of the Barn

The porch was built under a later campaign. But, the porch detailing indicates that it was likely added within a decade of the original construction. At a later date, probably during the last quarter of the 19th century, the porch posts were changed and scrollwork trim was added.

The 19th century parson used the

* Balloon-frame construction consists of light wood studs held together with nails instead of the more massive post-and-beam construction joined with wood pegs. In the 1840s, balloon frame construction became feasible with the mechanization of sawmills and the mass production of nails. The location of its invention is attributed to Keene, New Hampshire, just 40 miles from Peru.

house in a quite formal manner. He had a clear delineation between the service areas, the personal living areas and the areas used for community functions. A secondary staircase, surprising in a house of such relatively small size, enabled servants to go about their activities without interfacing with the parson, his family and the parishioner guests. A slight hierarchy in the degree of trim work further distinguished the formal areas of the house from the secondary areas. The highest and most intricate level of detailing was used in the parlor and the dining room. A medium level of trim work was used in the three upstairs bedrooms (the north bedroom may have served as a library). The remaining portions of the house have the simplest form of trim, signifying the importance the parson placed on community function spaces.

While often reluctant to integrate new or developing construction methods, 19th century vernacular New England houses did rely upon newly available paints for their decoration. Paint was applied on all surfaces, including the ceilings, walls and woodwork. Likewise, the simple pine floors and furniture, typically unwittingly stripped and stained by later owners, were originally painted.

As was prevalent after the invention and mass production of the wood stove, there were no masonry fireplaces. On the first floor of the parsonage, cast iron wood stoves and hearths provided heat, with a system of flues and vents supplying heat to the second floor. A traditional wood cook stove was used in the kitchen.

In addition to the house and barn, the Parsonage came with its original 1/2 acre of land. The field in the back was surrounded by the original stone walls and all four sides of the property were marked by regularly spaced Sugar Maples.

The Old Parsonage, 1976-1987

The Acquisition:

Legal procedures move slowly in the more rural areas of New England. Even though a contract was signed with the Congregational Church a few weeks after our 1976 initial visit, it would take two years to conclude the transaction. Surveys, decrees, petitions, recordings and hearings concerning the sale and shared water pipes and septic lines were all necessary. Finally, in 1978, on a brilliant late September day with just a hint of coming autumn in the air, we took title.

The Restoration:

Occupied by parsons for over 100 years, by the time I acquired the Old Parsonage, it still remained substantially intact, including some original furnishings and the books forming the 19th century Peru library.

Chris, Mike, Nan & Joe -- 1978

Essentially still in its 19th century configuration and condition, the Parsonage needed an enormous amount of work. Nearly everything that could be wrong was wrong. The roof leaks had caused damages to the roof beams and there was significant sill rot. Since the house was located on the side of a hill, the spring run-off from the mountains flooded the cellar. As a result, the main sills on which the house was resting were compromised. The slate roof was repaired using slate from local quarries and the beams and sills replaced as needed.

The electricity was insufficient and the lines were not fully functioning. There was some rudimentary plumbing, and a simple, but insufficient, forced air heating system. Having been rented to tenants, the house needed an owner to cherish it back to being. The local electrician and plumber were enlisted to redo the electrical and plumbing systems

and a new heating system, with ducts carefully concealed in the walls, was installed.

The barn, also of post and beam construction with mortise and tendon joints, had a failed foundation. The structural members had pulled apart, and it was in the final stages of collapse. My neighbor even offered to cart it away for firewood. Instead, I rebuilt the structure with wood members of the same size. In order to distinguish the repair from the original, I used present-day joinery for the repair work. I then had the barn raised six feet with hydraulic jacks so I could install new foundations.

I did a great deal of the early physical work myself and obviously all the architectural work. My family was energetic, and we travelled to the Parsonage as often as we could. In the early years, we made the four hour trip almost every weekend. As the house inched along to completion, my neighbors grew to respect my efforts.

Dining Room - Photo by Billy Cunningham

The Decoration and Furnishings:

Master Bedroom - Photo by Billy Cunningham

Once I had completed work on the structural components and mechanical systems, my next step in conserving the Parsonage was its furnishings. The parsons and their wives had made only decorative changes and, fortunately, under the many layers of paint and wallpaper, the original painted surfaces and wallpaper remained. These discoveries served as my template as I began to conserve the original state of the interiors.

Paint analysis determined that rich and colorful schemes had been used in the formal areas of the house. The parlor had a dark grey-blue floor with cream-colored woodwork. The dining room floor had been painted ochre and then covered with varnish to imitate oak. The woodwork had originally been painted a silver-grey. The first layer of the dining room wallpaper had a background that matched the ochre floors and small leaves that matched the woodwork paint.

Based upon fragments, the wallpaper was reproduced and all surfaces re-coated their original colors. The furniture and accessories wanted to be as they had been in the 19th century. In rural New England, local furniture makers used inexpensive pine, instead of expensive mahogany and walnut. To give the furniture the look of the more costly wood, the furnishing were typically grain painted and stencil decorated, giving them greater expression than the costly woods.

In the 1970s, 19th century New England paint-grained furniture was still available at reasonable prices. From local auctions and shops, I was able to furnish the house with this decoratively

Dining Room High Country Shearton Sideboard

painted pine furniture thus giving an inexpensive simple elegance to the Parsonage in the same manner as the early occupants.

From the picturesque landscape painters of the 19th century to the abstract and realists painters of the 20th century, Vermont has always been a center for art. Within twenty miles of the Parsonage, dozens of artists had lived, painting local images. I added their works to the walls of the Parsonage, favoring the most local of views.

Parlor - Photo by Billy Cunningham

The Gardens:

The meadow behind the Parsonage had been used for the grazing of the parson's horse and cow. At the back of the meadow I dug a small farm pond, a typical method of supplying water for the animals. In Vermont, with its high water table from the spring run off from the mountains, the pond consisted of simply having a large whole dug with a backhoe. Here it became a picturesque frog pond.

The traditional New England garden is an English style perennial garden that annually grows better as it becomes more established. The borders were planted with colorful perennials and the beds in the meadow planted with wild flowers. My neighbor, Dr. Roger Fox set up a bee hive that took advantage of the wild flowers. The simple gardens are one of my great pleasures.

In the center of the area immediately behind the house, I installed a traditional cistern consisting of fieldstone walls capped by a one piece granite circle easily obtainable from the local Vermont quarries.

The Old Parsonage -- Farm pond

Cistern

Present Use of the Parsonage

While I fastidiously restored every detail, the Parsonage was not merely a show house, it is a heavily used weekend getaway.

While I initially viewed Vermont primarily as an ideal family ski retreat location, the Parsonage's year-round uses quickly became apparent. In the summer, Vermont provided contrasts for my New York City based family. Swimming at the nearby lake in the National Forest, fireworks, county fairs, church dinners and country auctions were the antithesis of our subway-riding Manhattan lives. New England autumn colors and spring fly fishing learned at the nation's fly fishing center in nearby Manchester enriched the Parsonage experience. The Parsonage also was a haven to which my sons could bring their friends; it often seemed more like a fraternity house than a parsonage.

The Parsonage corresponded to a particular time in my life, a weekend retreat for a family with young children.

My grown sons and I still use the Parsonage, although not as frequently as when the boys were young. Separately or together we are drawn back to re-enact the many happy days at the Parsonage. Each year I usually organize a ski weekend, typically on President's Day weekend. It starts with an informal dinner on Friday followed by Saturday

skiing. Saturday night, we traditionally perform a play joined in by my neighbors. Everyone is given a script, with an assigned character. There are costumes, props, and a director. We've tried our hand at light British comedies, mysteries, Shakespeare and Russian farces. The Russian farces, played with a wonderfully humorous Russian accent by Asya Reed, my Ukrainian neighbor are some of the best. Saturday night is always a formal black tie dinner.

This sense of tradition is what makes the Parsonage a completed work. It doesn't just sit in Peru, immaculately restored but unused. It is a home with stories, personality and history, both my family's as well as the those of the former parsons' families.

Only flatlanders need snow tires in the winter and swimming suits in the summer.
— A Vermont saying

The Old Parsonage, oil painting by Fred Swann

Lofts

Pioneering in the Urban Wilderness
— Title of a 1977 book by James Stratton

Introduction

"He adored New York City. He idolized it all out of proportion.
Uh, no, make it he, he, romanticized it all out of proportion".
—The movie *Manhattan* by Woody Allen

I have always sought out the older, forsaken buildings of New York City. In the 1940s and 1950s, as a child, I observed the then deteriorating residential areas of Harlem. In the 1960s, as a young architect, preservationist and investor, I became immersed in restoring multi-tenant rooming houses back to one family townhouses in the Upper West Side and the Kips Bay/Murray Hill areas of Manhattan.

1970s - South Street Seaport, Manhattan
Author's Collection

At the beginning of the 1970s, as I began to discover the fading magnificent commercial buildings of lower Manhattan, my focus shifted to converting warehouse and commercial buildings to residential use. At that time, lower Manhattan had hundreds of spectacular buildings which were physically and economically distressed. Like the townhouses of the 1960s, exploring lower Manhattan was the discovery of treasures; behind the beautiful, but dusty and poorly maintained, facades of lower Manhattan were magnificent lobbies, high ceilinged spaces with large windows, top floors with multiple skylights and, often, fully detailed interiors — it was a preservation architect's dream.


1970s - South Street Seaport, Manhattan
Author's Collection

At first there was little competition in the residential conversion field from other architects because it was an off-beat specialty consisting less of conventional architecture and more about preservation, retrofitting, zoning obstacles and building code issues. It was also a waiting opportunity. As a New York architect and a preservationist already focused on creating residences from old, historic buildings, I was in the right place at the right time. My knowledge and understanding of the history of architectural development of Manhattan added to my ability to see opportunity for these architecturally rich, neglected commercial buildings and help


1970s - South Street Seaport, Manhattan
Author's Collection

pioneer the development of what came to be known as loft living.

Being one of the few architects focused on the intricacies of loft conversions, as the loft phenomena grew, my architectural practice mushroomed. I devoted all of my energies to this type of work, learning everything I could about loft buildings and the districts in which they occurred. I studied the zoning and building code regulations and puzzled out how they could be applied to loft conversions. Like the townhouses of the 1960s, I was often both architect and owner in these endeavors.

In a 40 year span, I witnessed the loft phenomena broaden from fulfilling the needs of economically struggling artists with large, inexpensive, minimally finished live-work studios to supplying luxuriously finished, multimillion dollar, widely popular "lofts". Ultimately, the new names of the lower Manhattan districts, SoHo, TriBeCa, NoHo, Flatiron, Ladies Mile became household names synonymous with this new, vibrant, domestic form.

The popularity of lofts eventually spread throughout the world. In 1970, it was impossible to imagine that 30 years later, in the winter of 2000, lofts would become so popular that I would be asked to collaborate with a Paulistanos architect on a new 16-story residential building in São Paulo, Brazil with open loft-like apartments. It was aptly called "Grand Loft".

▪ Lombardi, criador do conceito do loft em Nova York, ao lado da maquete do Grand Loft: empreendiment está em lançamento em São Paulo

Sao Paulo Gazeta Mercantil March 23, 2001

LOWER MANHATTAN

"Wanted: Woman to sew buttons on the fourth floor."
— On a New York loft building:

19th Century View - 565 Broadway
Ball, Black & Co., SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

People have been living on the island of Manhattan for at least 10,000 years. The early occupants built their communities in the river coves and inlets, relying upon fishing, farming and hunting for their sustenance. Living relatively lightly on the land, little evidence of this early indigenous population remains.

In 1609, the Dutch established a fort and simple trading post at the southernmost tip of the island. Ringed by shipping activities on the two rivers, there was a central commercial street, which remains as present day Broad Street. Private residences lined the side streets. Rapid expansion began to occur after the island was taken over by the English and, by 1699, the defensive wall at present day Wall Street, which had constricted northern development of the island, was removed.

1925 - Atalanta, 17 Varick Street
TriBeCa - Manhattan

This new expansion continued throughout the 18th and the early part of the 19th centuries. As in most urban growth, the expanding mercantile

needs pushed the earlier residential quarters outward; for the narrow island of Manhattan this meant northward, but development was not without setbacks. During the American Revolution (1775-1783), a massive fire destroyed much of the settlement halting expansion for nearly 10 years. In 1835, another disastrous fire again destroyed much of the city, followed by a financial crisis in 1837 which further slowed development and reconstruction. But in the following decade, rebuilding resulted in the crystallization of the tip of Manhattan as a center of commerce and it became appropriately known as the Financial District.

1970s - 131 Mercer Street, SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

1970s - 6 Varick Street, TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

In the middle of the 19th century, as the Financial District became even more established, the displaced warehouse and factory districts expanded to the north. This greater area, known broadly as lower Manhattan, pushed the residential districts even further north causing the shopping districts to fall out of favor. For the first part of the 20th century, the warehouse and factory districts of lower Manhattan, continued to thrive. In the side streets of these districts, the five and six story 19th century buildings mostly remained, but along the avenues the smaller buildings were largely replaced by 10 to 12 story buildings with elevators.

1970s - 640 Broadway
NoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Following the second World War, New York City's ports began to wane because cheaper labor could be found elsewhere and growing congestion made transportation in the City increasingly difficult. The diminution of New York City's warehouse and factory use followed its decline as a port. Furthermore, rising labor costs caused multistory mercantile buildings to become obsolete due to the inefficiency of moving goods both horizontally and vertically instead of just horizontally in a one story facility.

1970s - 450 Broome Street, SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

In lower Manhattan, by the latter half of the 20th century, as mercantile businesses continued to move elsewhere and first floor shops became nonexistent, there were sizeable areas with a wealth of substantially vacant, deteriorating 19th and early 20th century buildings. The buildings had large open spaces for storage or assemblage purposes and, because they had been built at the verge of the electric age, they also had high ceilings and large windows for natural light and ventilation. As was traditional in the 19th and early 20th centuries, all of the buildings had handsomely articulated exteriors with extensive details and fine workmanship. Some of them, built for showroom purposes, also had equally superb interiors. Paradoxically, while the neglected, deteriorating buildings were very inexpensive due to their economic failure, they were typically well constructed and architecturally significant -- reflecting their previous status and economic success.

1970s - 565 Broadway, SoHo, Manhattan


1970s - 102 Prince/114 &116-118 Greene St.
SoHo, Manhattan

The upper floors in storage and assembly buildings were called lofts, an ancient word meaning "an upper chamber." For several hundreds of years, long before anybody thought of them as living spaces, New York lofts were shipping and receiving spaces to and from the ships in the harbor.


1970s - 644 Broadway, NoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Beginning in the mid-19th century mercantile loft buildings were also places for the production, storage and sale of wholesale goods. The upper floors of a 19th century loft building were typically the manufactory for a store on the first floor selling the goods made on the upper floors. Since many of the goods were being sold to an upper income shopper, the buildings were designed to reflect dignity and importance with the classical orders being highly favored for fenestration. With residential areas moving ever north, the retail aspect of lower Manhattan diminished and the buildings became neglected. In the 20th century, loft buildings were less maintained and their location was no longer in a thriving areas. The 19th century phrase "sweat shop" is synonymous with the loft. Sweat shops in New York City are typically for the production of goods in large open areas filled with machines operated by the most recent wave of immigrants to the City.


1970s - 24 East 21st Street
Gramercy Park, Manhattan
Authors Collection

In the middle of the 20th century, in the heart of the greatest city in the world, stood substantially empty districts containing some of the most architecturally distinguished 19th and early 20th century buildings in the world, for sale at a fraction of their replacement cost. Confined Manhattan is too valuable to have for too long waning districts with fine under-used, low-priced buildings. The districts were too close to thriving districts and the buildings were too architecturally significant and substantial to be

permanently in disfavor. In the last quarter of the twentieth century lower Manhattan reinvented itself by discovering new uses for these buildings and their declining districts.

1970s - 59 Fourth Street
Greenwich Village, Manhattan
Authors Collection

Lofts — The Beginning

"who sat in boxes breathing in the darkness under the bridge, and rose up to build harpsichords in their lofts,"
— Howl by Allen Ginsberg 1955

1936 - 37 Great Jones Street
NoHo, Manhattan
Courtesy of The New York Times

The conversion of manufacturing lofts to residential use in New York City began in the 1950s when artists first began to illegally occupy loft buildings in the loft districts of Lower Manhattan and the Brooklyn waterfront. The word "loft" used in a residential context almost assuredly had its origin in New York City.

The early lofts were large, high-ceilinged, inexpensive, unheated spaces with grand windows rented by artists to satisfy the artists' needs for studios for the creation of art. With the few added amenities of a hot plate, refrigerator and a bathtub or shower, the lofts became an inexpensive living space as well. The commercial stove also first found its way into residential use at this time.

1970s - 140 Fifth Avenue
Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Photo by Gilbert Ortiz

In lower Manhattan, the nearby Bowery was the home to establishments selling used restaurant equipment. It was popular amongst early loft dwellers to buy on the Bowery large, old, inexpensive restaurant stoves resulting in lofts with culinary equipment to handle any cooking challenge. The advantages of lofts for artists heavily outweighed any inconveniences. The antiestablishment combination of living in a work space with functions overlapping in one large open space created a particular style of living for these early loft occupants with the occupant typically making improvements at his own expense, often with his own hands. All designed and handcrafted to fit the artists' own design.

1970s - 889 Broadway
Flatiron District, Manhattan
Authors Collection

However, living in a work space was illegal, being contrary to the New York zoning and building codes. The districts in which this early phenomena occurred were, for the most part, not zoned for residential use. The buildings themselves typically did not comply with the rules and regulations of the Department of Buildings because their original purpose did not require residential standards

1970s - 76 Laight Street TriBeCa, Manhattan
Authors Collection

for egress, light and ventilation. The early occupants were usually rent paying tenants, so the illegal use was a violation that fell to the owner of the building. With the city-wide decline in manufacturing use, landlords were eager to rent to anyone and if they were artists intent on also living in the space, the landlords simply turned their backs on the illegal use. For the most part, landlords rarely took steps to legalize their buildings for residential use and the occupants, as tenants, did not have the authority to change the legal use of the buildings they occupied.

1990s - 79 Laight Street, TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

In the 1960s, organizations began representing the common interests of loft dwellers. The first organization, the Artists' Tenants Association (ATA), was comprised primarily of tenants who wanted protection for their illegal tenancy, but did not want rezoning fearing that rezoning would lead to higher rents. In response to the eviction of artists by the Department of Buildings, in 1961 ATA convinced the city to establish a short-lived Artist-in-Residence (A.I.R.) program. The artists had pressured the City by threatening to withhold their art from exhibition at museums and art galleries. The A.I.R program limited occupancy to two artists per loft building and it required an inspection by the Department of Buildings for safe egress and the placing of a sign on the building's exterior to alert the Fire Department that the building was occupied. The A.I.R. program required the artists to register their occupancy with the city. However most artists, not trusting the city, did not register their occupancy, preferring to keep their occupancy secret. The A.I.R. program was short lived, ending in 1963.

1990s - Atalanta & The Ice House, TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

In 1964, the New York state legislature passed an amendment to the state Multiple Dwelling Law entitled Article 7-B, . Article 7-B defined the physical requirements for legalizing loft buildings for residential use. The amendment made it possible to fit residential requirements, such as rear yard sizes, width and type of stairs, use of fire escapes and other health and safety issues into the prevalent characteristics of loft buildings. Article 7-B was enormously helpful in providing the first minimum standards for loft living, but it did not overcome the underlying zoning issues facing almost all loft buildings which typically were in zoning districts which did not permit residential use.

9 & 73 Greene Street
SoHo, Manhattan

SoHo Building 110 Greene St.
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

The SoHo Artists' Association (SAA) was established in 1968. SAA was primarily comprised of loft dwellers in the early SoHo co-ops who favored rezoning to protect their investment. SAA and another coalition of artists called the Artists Against the Expressway (AAE) successfully helped fight off the proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway which would have cut through the middle of SoHo, destroying most of the present SoHo Cast Iron District.

In 1971, SoHo became the first loft district to be rezoned by the City Planning Commission, followed by NoHo and TriBeCa in 1976. The rezoning established a new type of "use" called Joint Living-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) which permitted artists "certified" by the Department of Cultural Affairs to live and work in the upper floors of buildings with small footprints. Artists who were already occupying buildings with large footprints were allowed to stay.

W&J Sloane Building 649-683 Broadway
NoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

The rationale was that buildings with small footprints (3,600 square feet with frontage on Broadway and up to 5,000 square feet elsewhere in SoHo, NoHo and TriBeCa) were considered less suitable for industrial use. The certification by the Department of Cultural Affairs was limited to artists "engaged in the fine arts", "demonstrating a serious, consistent commitment" who could "demonstrate a need for a large loft space in which to create". Many artists objected to the requirement of being certified as an artist, but the rezoning certainly provided reasonable solutions to some of the zoning issues.

W&J Sloane Building 649-683 Broadway
NoHo, Manhattan
Image: Suzanne Opton

Similar to the issues with converting loft buildings to residential use, the 1971 rezoning also prohibited retail uses, including art galleries and restaurants, except in buildings with footprints less than 3,600 square feet located in the nine square blocks south of Houston Street, east of West Broadway, north of Broome Street and west of Mercer Street. In the other thirty five blocks, including all of NoHo, retail, gallery and restaurant uses were prohibited. The prohibition remains to this day. Clearly JLWQA conversions necessitated stores, restaurants and art galleries; their prohibition borders on the bizarre.

W&J Sloane Building 649-683 Broadway
NoHo, Manhattan
Image: Suzanna Opton

In 1975, J-51, an existing real estate tax program to encourage renovation in the City, was extended to loft conversions. The J-51 program provided a 12 year exemption from increases in the assessed valuation (building value for taxation purposes) of buildings which would have increased because of the renovation, and up to a 20 year forgiveness period of property taxes in an amount equal to 90% of the renovation costs. The J-51 program required rent stabilization, which controlled rent increases. Since rent stabilization had no impact on buildings being converted to cooperative ownership, it was a bonanza for loft conversions to residential co-op ownership.

448 Broome Street
SoHo, Manhattan

26-30 West 38th Street
Garment District, Manhattan
Author's Collection

An organization called the Lower Manhattan Loft Tenants (LMLT) was established by loft tenants in 1978 in response to landlords who were evicting them despite the fact that the loft tenants had improved their spaces at their own expense. The LMLT membership grew rapidly. To assist the plight of the loft tenants, New York State established the Loft Law, a program to legalize properties with loft tenants. The Loft Law gave rights and responsibilities to both landlords and tenants. Landlords were required to bring their loft buildings into compliance with residential codes within three to five years, but allowed them to collect rent while doing so. Once legalized, the loft apartments would come under rent stabilization, with landlords being entitled to pass along most of the cost of their legalization work to tenants in the form of temporary rent surcharges to be implemented after obtaining a certificate of occupancy.

210 Fifth Avenue
Madison Square North
Manhattan

Loft tenants were granted a one-time right to sell, at market value, the original fixtures and other improvements that they had installed at their own expense, thus giving an opportunity to tenants to recapture the expense of their improvements.

Finally, the Loft Law established the New York City Loft Board to resolve disputes between tenants and landlords and to work with them to help facilitate bringing buildings up to code before a ten-year expiration date. Initially the Loft Law was heavily challenged in the courts by the landlords, who saw their buildings being subjected to strict rent regulations as a seizure of their property, but the courts upheld the law. The legalization deadlines were extended several times and even today, a large percentage of the buildings still have not been brought in compliance. Nonetheless, legalized or not, the Loft Law currently protects approximately 10,000 tenants living in New York City loft buildings.

9-11 East 16th Street
Flatiron/Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission began designating the lower Manhattan

249 West 29th Street
Garment District, Manhattan
Author's Collection

loft districts beginning with 26 blocks of SoHo in 1973; followed by Ladies Mile in 1989; TriBeCa in 1992 and NoHo in 1999.

The 1973 designation of SoHo as a landmark district coupled with media articles about lofts began to bring widespread notice to the loft phenomena. In 1974, New York Magazine called SoHo the "most exciting place to live in the city." The silent, secret artist lofts began to become less hidden and, suddenly, lofts were the rage. In 1978 a tourist guide to SoHo was published listing 85 art galleries, 15 restaurants and 65 shops, yet most residential occupancy was still illegal.

In 1981, the City Planning Commission approved a further zoning change establishing relocation benefits for displaced business tenants and restricting 72 million square feet of loft space from conversion to living lofts (and offices).

With the increased attention, loft living became increasingly more difficult to conceal. In 1981, the Mayor's Office of Loft Enforcement (MOLE) was established to ferret out and prosecute illegal loft residents in lower Manhattan. The MOLE employees, known un-affectionately as "Moles", would forage at night, looking for lights in buildings and jotting down addresses and names on door buzzers. Once discovered, violations would be issued for illegal living pushing landlords to legalize their buildings. In cases where the building was owned by loft dwellers, they were forced to pool their resources to make their building code compliant.

874 Broadway, Flatiron/Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

684 Broadway
NoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Even though the regulations haven't changed that prohibit retail uses in large swaths of Soho, SoHo has become so famous, as an international shopping center and destination, that its streets are clogged and the rents compete with the best retail streets in Manhattan.

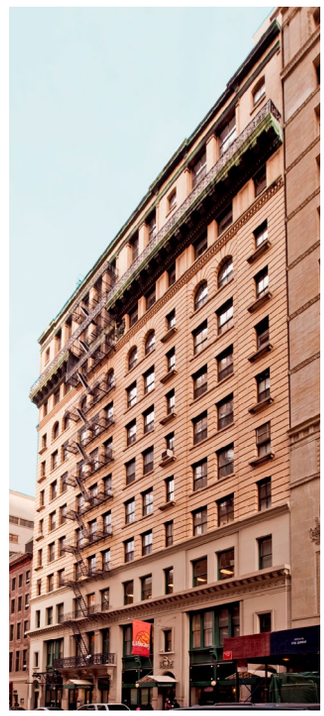
The loft movement was, like most things in New York City, subject to many opinions and positions. I've read in accounts of the time, that the city had a laissez-faire attitude, but that was not my experience. All of the residential conversions and retail uses I have worked on, right up to the present, were and are a great struggle to achieve. Even the smaller buildings with less constraints are difficult because variations in existing

652 Broadway
NoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

73 Fifth Avenue
Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

buildings make it difficult to fit into the mold of the zoning and building codes. New York City is unique in having manufacturing districts in the central city. The clinging to the notion that buildings suitable for manufacturing need to be preserved for returning manufacturing is a tired myth. Yet, every conversion is a test of the zoning regulations and the New York building codes with every nuance of their complex, and often multiple, meaning being weighed.

The open space concept continues to characterize the lofts of today, though the majority are no longer artist work/live spaces. Present day lofts are typically fitted out with every amenity imaginable, cost in excess of a million dollars and are inhabited by people from every walk of life, yet they are still considered a somewhat Avant-garde style of living. The best of the lofts continue to avoid becoming fully domesticated by retaining characteristics not found in conventional apartments. Their vocabulary is large open spaces with columns not imbedded in walls, exposed sprinkler systems, oversized elevators opening directly into the unit, high ceilings with exposed beams, industrial type wood floors and units that run through the building with exposures both to the street and the rear yard.



9-15 Murray
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Chelsea Flats
126 West 22nd Street
Chelsea, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Forty years ago, the underground off-beat nature of the downtown art scene was stylish, attracting rich and famous visitors. The quiet nighttime streets of downtown would have the seemingly incongruous celebrity and art-patron limousines in front of rundown, semi-occupied beautiful old buildings. A late night, crowded party in a vast, high ceilinged loft accessed via an oversized manual freight elevator was the place to be and to be seen. Black clothing was de rigeur, loud music, a strobe lit dance floor and a wandering video cameraman rounded things off. The partygoers were artists, celebrities, models, art dealers and art patrons. The romanticism of the early loft movement still lingers albeit the beautiful buildings are now fully restored and the partygoers are more typically stock brokers, bankers, lawyers and hedge fund managers.

43 East 19th Street
Flatiron/Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Getting Ready

"But I'll know my songs well before I start singin'"
— *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* Bob Dylan Summer 1962

Prior to the rezoning of the loft districts, the obstacle to all early residential conversions began with zoning problems. Loft buildings were almost always in zones which did not permit residential use. Residential use was only permitted in such zones by a variance of the zoning regulations. In New York, this is a complex procedure through a court-like agency known as the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA).

The Grable Building
44 Laight Street, TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

40 West 24th Street, Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

An important step in advancing the pioneer loft movement was having the ability to navigate through the zoning code. A basis for granting a variance of the zoning regulations is that the permitted uses in a building are ill-suited for a viable economic return. Loft conversions were ideal candidates for proving the need for a zoning variance at the BSA. The lower Manhattan districts contained primarily buildings with open lofts limited by zoning to manufacturing and office uses. But, manufacturing uses were dwindling, office uses were not appropriate for much of Lower Manhattan and manufacturing and office uses were adversely impacted by the recessions of the late 60s and early 70s. An excellent case could be made at the BSA that buildings built for manufacturing uses which were restricted by zoning to nonexistent manufacturing and office uses had a true hardship. The case could be further made that the characteristics of the buildings were highly suitable for a living loft which, through a variance, could provide a viable economic return. Further to the strength of the BSA case was the fact that many of the applications concerned buildings that had recently failed economically, many having gone through foreclosures, been acquired by the banks and resold at a loss by the banks.

32-4 West 20th Street
Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Applicants to the BSA were usually represented by a lawyer, but my early shoe-string loft conversions could not afford a lawyer. My father had presented cases to the BSA and, through his guidance and my perseverance, I developed the necessary skills to obtain zoning variances from the BSA in the early 1970s. It was highly unusual for a young architect to practice in front of the BSA, but my father counselled me. He advised that of the five BSA commissioners, it was required that there be an architect, a planner and an engineer and that these fellow professionals would respect an applicant who is an architect.

Prior to making my presentation, I prepared myself by going to hearings to watch what others were doing, to see how cases were presented, how the commissioners reacted and how they were addressed. As a young architect unaccompanied by a lawyer, I was a novel and refreshing sight for the BSA commissioners. Soon, the regular zoning lawyers noticed my frequent appearances and began giving me well-appreciated pointers. Since my loft cases were an unusual subject, they considered me as more of a curiosity than a competitor. Even though my loft conversion cases were logical, I had to work hard to hone my skills to present a compelling argument. The skills, developed in the more

144 Wst 27th Street
Flower District , Manhattan
Author's Collection

473 West Broadway, SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

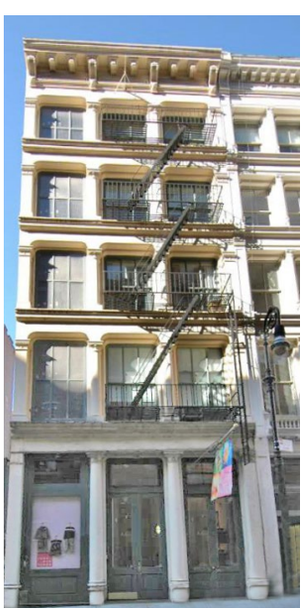
than sixty cases which I successfully presented to the BSA, continue to be useful to this day and give me an expertise that few other architects have.

Most loft buildings were in historic districts protected by the regulations of the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission. Since I had presented to the Landmark Commission in the 1960s during my townhouse stage, the required procedures of presenting and obtaining approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission was a routine for me not a new obstacle. Being both an architect and preservationist with a Masters Degree in Historic Preservation, I was not only familiar with the Landmark Commission's principles, I was a disciple. In my mind, the recognition of the architectural significance of loft buildings added to their worthiness for reuse.

Additionally, the New York City Department of Buildings has a procedure in which a difficulty in conforming to the law because of an existing, unique condition can be reconsidered and an interpretation of the zoning regulations and building codes can be applied to the particular condition. Typically the interpretation is granted by the Department of Buildings substituting an alternate, but more feasible, approach such as allowing the installation of a special sprinkler system in an existing undersized stairway which would need reconstruction to comply. Having presented a wealth of interpretation requests over the years gave me an expertise as to what would be permitted in particular conditions and the ability to cite these as precedents in subsequent conversions. Each reconsideration I obtained, increased my ability to obtain approval for the next project.

11 West 20th Street
Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Finally, because loft buildings were often financially failed buildings, they involved complex real estate issues. I developed skills in real estate with courses at Columbia University and by attending the New York University Real Estate Institute.



83 Mercer Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

In 1971, I began to work, on a free lance basis, for Helmsley-Spear. At that time Helmsley-Spear, under the driving force of Harry Helmsley, was the largest real estate firm in the city and principals of the firm owned a significant number of commercial loft buildings south of 34th Street. In the 1970s, most of the commercial loft building holdings were economically distressed because of declining manufacturing use aggravated by the recession of 1969-1971. My thinking was to convince the Helmsley-Spear principals of the efficacy and value of converting their buildings to residential use and, in exchange, obtain architectural commissions doing the conversions for them, obtain a financial interest in the deals for my ideas and to learn, first hand, the practical aspects of the real estate business. There were benefits for both of us. Helsmley-Spear gained an introduction to loft-living as a solution to a number of their distressed loft buildings. I, in turn, learned exactly what I hoped I would learn from Helmsley-

12 West 17th Street
Chelsea/Ladies' Mile,
Manhattan

252 West 30th Street
Garment District, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Spear, the mechanics of large-scale real estate deals, the ins and outs of the brokerage business, and, as an added bonus, I made lifelong invaluable business acquaintances for the years to come.

For several years I balanced my architectural consultation business with my work for Helmsley. A fear I had that I would totally forsake my architectural skills for real estate never materialized and, as my development activities increased, I happily meshed the two disciplines and continued to be an architect-investor. I had started my career as a restoration architect working on historic townhouses and becoming familiar with Landmarks Preservation Commission presentations. By developing the ability to obtain zoning variances at the Board of Standards & Appeals, obtaining an education in real estate, gaining the expertise to process code interpretations at the Department of Buildings and gaining practical skills the real estate business, I gave myself further tools to play a major role in loft conversions.

106 East 19th Street
Gramercy Park, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Lofts 1970s

"a land full of hazards, true pioneer stuff: instead of Indians, there were fire inspectors, instead of cowboys, artists; and no on knew where to put his trash."

— SoHo: Laurel Delp of the SoHo Weekly News in 1975

In the 1970s, bank financing was not available for the acquisition and conversion of lower Manhattan's loft buildings because approval for residential use was unsure and it was difficult for bankers to understand why someone would want to live in a distressed, run down building in a seemingly failed district. Everything needed to be self-financed without banks. Each step was a hurdle: the cash for the contract, enough people and money to take title, and the further money needed for the building infrastructure.

461-3 Broome Street, SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Adding to the financing problems was the pessimism of the 1970s generated by the continuing race riots, the Kent State shooting,

109 Spring Street, SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

121 Greene Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

a severe recession, the Oil Crisis, Watergate, Nixon's resignation, the painful end of the Vietnam War and New York City's near bankruptcy.

In the midst of the economic and social chaos of the 1970s, loft buildings were purchased by groups of like-minded individuals or developer/sponsors. Either way, buildings were typically bought with the seller accepting only a portion of the purchase price in cash with the balance in the form of a mortgage called a Purchase Money Mortgage. In fact, sellers were often the previous lender, having gained ownership through foreclosure after the economic failure of the building.

The loft spaces were then bought as "raw space" with the purchaser putting money in escrow for upgrading the central infrastructure and common areas. Raw space meant that a buyer would receive the space in an as-is condition with no improvements other than an electrical panel box and basic plumbing lines. There were no bathrooms or kitchens. Buyers would then design their own interiors in accordance with their individual taste and budget. It permitted freedom of design and allowed purchasers to pace and quantify the work based upon their budgets.

The Decker Building
33 Union Square West
Union Square, Manhattan
Image: New York Piblic Library

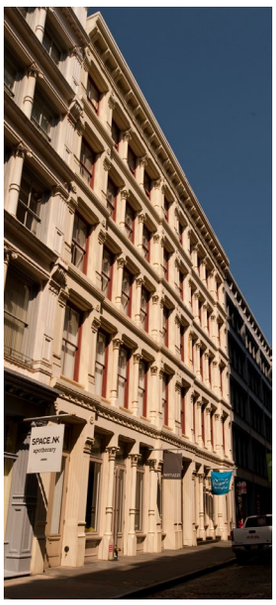
Purchasers of raw space with funds could build-out fully finished spaces, but more typically lower Manhattan occupants moved into unfinished lofts by simply installing a hot water heater, a used cast iron tub, the emblematic used restaurant stove and a second hand fridge. It was improvisational and analogous to buying raw land in a subdivision, pitching a tent and then building you house by hand as time and money permitted.

The raw space concept contributed greatly to the advancement of the conversion of lofts to residences. The concept was both practical and innovative. As owners continued to apply their creativity and ingenuity to these blank canvases, the status of lofts quickly rose. Open raw space lofts fit neatly into the theology of the Modernist architects of the mid-twentieth century. One can easily draw comparisons between open flowing loft living with the work of Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier.

54 White Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Raw space was also marvelously affordable. In the 1970s, buildings could be bought for $5/square foot (like your SAT scores, you never forget numbers like that). A reserve fund of $5/square foot would be established for infrastructure improvements such as plumbing risers, electrical service and the upgrading of elevators and heating systems. The building could then be resold as individual raw space co-op units for $15/square foot with a $5/square foot mortgage held by the sponsor. A 2,000 square foot loft would sell for $30,000. The $15/square foot sales price covered the $5/square foot acquisition cost, the $5/square foot common area reserve fund for infrastructure improvements and $5/square foot for soft costs such as legal, architectural, and the co-op offering plan. The remaining $5/square foot mortgage held by the sponsor was the profit. Once

5 Worth Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan



101-3 Greene Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

107-11 Greene Street, SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

the building became operational and obtained a certificate of occupancy, the sponsor's hope was to replace his mortgage with a bank mortgage.

The buildings were generally magnificent, inside and out, because they had started life as high-end retail buildings with the lower floors being used for sales and showrooms and only the very upper floors for production of goods. The typical SoHo first floor had finely-detailed, classical capitals atop cast-iron columns with beautifully decorated cast iron radiators encircling the columns. The windows frames, doors, door trim and transoms were of golden oak and the ceilings had decorative plaster trim, ceiling medallions for the gas fixtures and cove moldings. Broadway had the most extraordinary buildings because Broadway had been considered the best shopping street, home to the grandest stores.

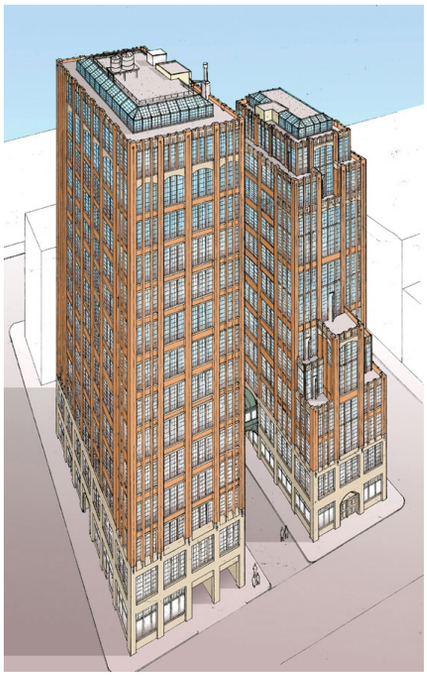
There was also true discovery. Prior to the Landmarks Preservation Commission designation reports and architectural guide books, the history of the buildings and there interior treasures were obscure, there was no ready reference to consult. It was extraordinarily exciting researching and learning of the origins of the grand buildings of lower Manhattan and discovering their magnificent lobbies and beautiful interiors.

114-22 Leonard Street, TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

The majority of the loft buildings were built on the standard 25' x 100' New York City lot. With an approximately 10' rear yard and a stair case and elevator, each floor had approximately 2,000 net square feet, an excellent size for living and working. The ceilings were invariably high and each floor had an elevator that opened directly into the unit and a staircase. With only one unit per floor, there were no shared hallways, and all were double-exposure units with windows facing onto both the street and the yard in back. This description, to a great extent, generally defines the word "loft."

152 & 154 Spring Street
SoHo, Manhattan

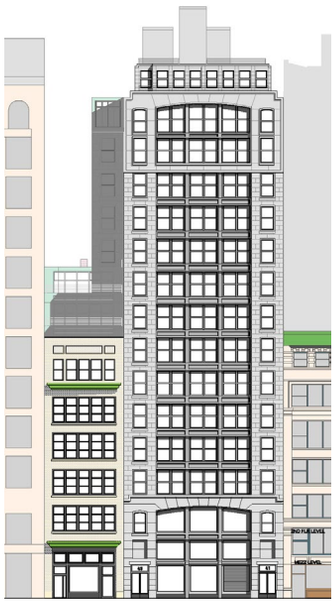
With wider buildings, many architects installed corridors to serve multiple units on a floor. I preferred keeping the loft characteristic by installing elevators which opened in two directions so that a 50' wide building would have a 25' wide loft on each side with each loft extending from the street facade to the rear yard. Thus, the desirable direct access elevator and exposures in two directions were maintained. For even wider buildings, I installed multiple cores.



145 Hudson Street/7 Hubert Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

As the official architect, I laid out the divisions between the units, specified the upgrading of the infrastructure and obtained the necessary approvals of the city agencies, but I only designed some of the interior layouts in each of these early conversions. For their own space, the unit owners could execute their own design or hire a designer, an other architect or me. Instead of cookie-cutter apartments, where somebody else decided how one would live, raw space gave owners the ability to create their own design; an unheard of freedom for urban dwellers of modest means.

Many of the raw space conversions not only delivered the space as-is, most were still in the process of seeking a variance to permit residential use, so the use was also as-is. City and state officials were generally opposed to raw space conversions because of the uncertainty of residential use and the potential pitfalls if the developer/sponsor failed to complete the infrastructure and common areas after closing. Even though the co-op offering plans required a developer/sponsor to fully disclose the need for residential approval and the raw space procedure, the concern was that approval for residential use would not be granted and a developer would walk away from his obligations to complete the infrastructure and common areas. Bold capitalized warnings were required to spell out the potential pitfalls.



38-40 West 18th St./
41-3 West 17th St.
Flatiron/Ladies' Mile, Manhattan
Author's Collection

In light of these strict warnings, cautious lawyers talked many clients out of buying the early raw space lofts, but those that did buy wound up with incredible space that rapidly appreciated in value as lofts became more and more popular. While there were the usual delay problems and workmanship issues, the enormous rise in value offset the headaches, and I do not know of any conversion which didn't get residential approval nor do I know of a sponsor walking away from his obligations.

The Loft 30 Crosby Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

96 & 98 Greene Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

155 Wooster Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

70 Greene Street
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

LOFTS 1980s

"Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'."
The Times They are a-Changing
— Bob Dylan January

459 Broadway
SoHo, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Although I always prevailed, the early cases were not easy. The city officials and the local community boards believed that reusing empty manufacturing buildings for residential use would eliminate buildings suitable for manufacturing thus adding to the decline of manufacturing in New York City and its associated jobs. Even in the districts that had long been abandoned by industrial tenants there was opposition.

A further obstacle was that most members of the local community boards did not understand why anyone would want to live in manufacturing zones. They were concerned for living standards in the mixing of manufacturing uses with residential inhabitants and the lack of services, such as schools and shopping. Lofts were a completely new idea and many of the concerns were valid. But the buildings prevailed because, though failed, empty and inconveniently located, they were beautiful, solidly built and they contained extraordinary interior space readily adaptable to residential use. The idea of living and working in the same neighborhood—much less in the same physical space as in a loft—was foreign. Much of this was because it simply had not yet been done.

Once I legalized my first few buildings, word got around that I was not only an architect, but one who recognized the potential in many of the city's uninhabited buildings. The newspapers, too, started noticing my efforts in lofts. As articles appeared identifying lofts as my specialty and my success in obtaining zoning variances, my phone began ringing. The New York Times was particularly favorable to bringing life back to Lower Manhattan and frequently quoted me, thus adding to my exposure.

45-7 Warren Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

From the onset of my career, I had been both an architect and a real estate investor. Like my townhouse activities in the 1960s, in exchange for discovering projects, providing the architectural services and obtaining the necessary approvals I found investors for the loft development projects. My development skills benefited both my development partners as well as my clients where I served only in the role as architect; to both, I provided the latest development strategies and legalization possibilities.

Ice House 27 North Moore Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

LOFTS 1990-2012

I'm in a New York state of mind.
— Billy Joel song:
New York State of Mind

117 Hudson Street, TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

At first, zoning variances at the Board of Standards & Appeals were the only way to obtain approval for residential use in districts not zoned for residential use. But in 1997 the City gave greater recognition to the Landmarks Preservation Commission by giving them authority to assist an owner in getting a special permit from the City Planning Commission to allow a change of use in a building in a landmark district if there was a preservation purpose. The section, known as Section 74-711 of the New York Zoning Regulations, fit the loft situation perfectly. The extraordinary buildings of lower Manhattan needed conservation and restoration which could only be afforded if economic viability could be restored. Economic viability could not be achieved through nonexistent manufacturing use, but the newly emerging residential use for the aging loft buildings could provide the economic viability to pay for conservation and restoration.

Section 74-711 allowed conversion to residential use for logical reasons. I completed my first project utilizing Section 74-711 in 1994. Since almost every building I work on is in a landmark district, conversions having zoning issues are now mostly done through the somewhat simpler special permit procedure instead of a zoning variance at the Board of Standards & Appeals.

Atalanta 25 North Moore Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan

Although the first conversions provided large economic living-work loft spaces for artists and aficionados of historic buildings, prices soared as lofts became more fashionable. Eventually the value of lofts rose to a level which made new construction in the loft districts economically feasible.

Districts went from having existing buildings with a value which was a small fraction of their replacement cost to a value which justified new construction on vacant lots. Since the districts were mostly designated landmark districts, the new in-fill buildings needed the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.The creation of appropriate in-fill buildings in historic districts is very challenging. The new

165 William Street
Financial District, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Pearline Soap Atelier 414 Washington Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan

buildings need to be contextual without pretending to be an old building. Their newness needs to be apparent, yet they must comfortably coexist with their old neighbors. Loft opportunities continue in both good and bad economies. In the strong economy, high-end conversions are plentiful and new in-fill buildings are justified. During recessions, the value of commercial buildings decline, permitting less costly residential conversions. Because of this, the momentum in my office is relatively stable.

By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, in addition to a dozen in-fill buildings, my office had converted to residential use over five million square feet of space in over 150 commercial buildings in lower Manhattan. For many decades I've been asked, "what is the next step after lofts?" While, I have clear thoughts about a "next step", now being worked on in two projects, the fact is that in any block in lower Manhattan there remains a half dozen buildings suitable for residential conversion, more than enough for another 45 years.

Fairchild & Foster Atelier 415 Washington Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan

Mohawk Atelier 36 Hudson Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Glass Atelier 401-3 Greenwich Street
TriBeCa, Manhattan
Author's Collection

Liberty Tower

The 'World's Tallest Building on so Small a Plot'. . . it introduced the Gothic style to skyscrapers and is one of the earliest of the romantic skyscrapers which changed the skyline of Manhattan in the early 1900s

— New York City Landmarks, Preservation Commission Wall Plaque

The Financial District

Cathedrals of Commerce

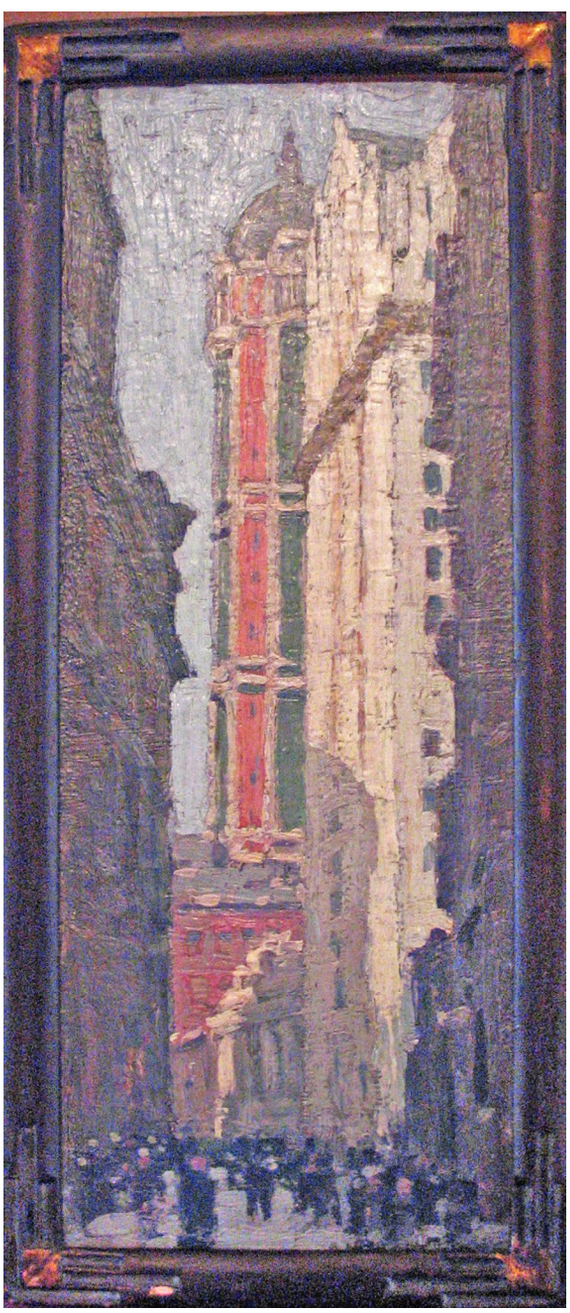
In the middle of the 19th century, as the Financial District became more established, mercantile interests simply reused the existing dwellings and shipping related warehouses. As the 19th century drew to a close, steel became readily available, and its structural strength permitted taller buildings. Additionally, the newly invented elevator permitted ready access to the upper floors of these taller buildings. These budding technologies allowed businesses to adapt to new structural layouts which permitted expansion upward, maintaining the same amount of space on the ground while providing greater space above.

Eventually commercial buildings developed into a new form of architecture, the office building, whose intent was to provide an infrastructure where people could conduct their daily business independent of facilities for the handling of goods. The office buildings were different from the open lofts in that they were compartmentalized into individual spaces, allowing workers to have privacy from each other.

In the 20th century, the ever-taller office buildings became known as skyscrapers. Their height limit was tested, economically and practically, as each developer tried to outdo the previous. New York became known as a city of skyscrapers. By the end of the 20th century, zoning regulations and the impact of skyscrapers on their surroundings and the environment began to control their popularity. At the beginning of the 21st century a new concern, the terrorist, caused a rethinking of the prudence of their existence.

On September 11, 2001, for the third time in Manhattan's history, a significant portion of the Financial District was destroyed and the District was again severely adversely impacted. Although the directly impacted area was about the same size as the earlier destructions, this time the loss of lives was enormous and, being an attack, it brought international attention to the Financial District.

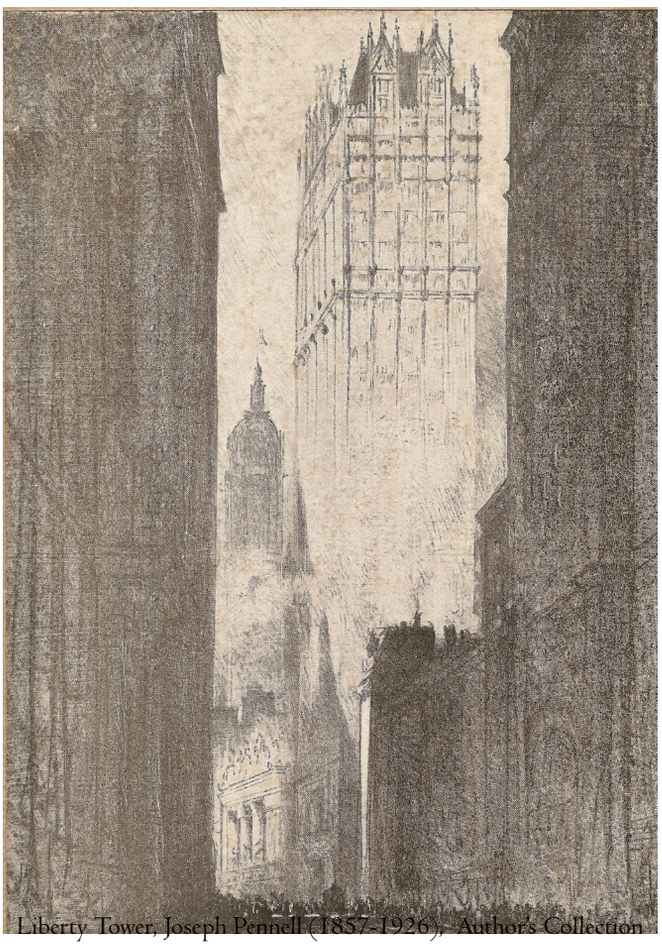
While this catastrophic event could have stigmatized the Financial District, instead it has emerged more popular than prior to the attack. Restaurants and shops abound, as well as families with strollers and hoards of tourists. While still a work-centric part of city, and one that still does not have a significant nightlife, the Financial District is now yet another embodiment of New York reinventing itself.



Downtown Cavern, 1913, George Herbert Macrum (1888-1970)
Author's Collection

The Financial District in Lower Manhattan, is the unique-to-the-world home of the most extraordinary collection of 19th and 20th century masterpieces of financial architecture. Each year, millions flock to the canyons of Lower Manhattan to view these "Cathedrals of Commerce" with names known in households throughout the world. The skyscrapers and, at one time, twin 110 story monoliths are built in almost every architectural style including Gothic, Neoclassical, Art Deco, Modernism and Egyptian revival styles. They are uniquely set side by side with a 19th century seaport, 18th century churches all laid out in a 17th century street pattern.

In the 21st century, the early skyscrapers are becoming 100 years old. Lower Manhattan is the first location which will experience the phenomena of a multitude of huge ancient buildings. These monuments are not unlike the pyramids. They are mammoth, practically indestructible and were built for very specific purposes. And, like the pyramids, they will remain forever because they are structurally sound (concrete hardens as it ages), they are increasingly historic (protected by law) and uneconomic to replace (destruction would be costly and replacement buildings under current zoning regulations would be smaller).



Liberty Tower, Joseph Pennell (1857-1926), Author's Collection

Civilization existed for thousands of years without special buildings to which people went daily to conduct a commercial activity. New communication devices are changing this concept. Tomorrow's devices may result in old office buildings becoming even more redundant. The only way to assure that old skyscrapers do not become the dinosaurs of the future is through continuing use and adaptation. Economic recessions, natural catastrophes and human acts like the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack result in substantial vacancies in commercial buildings. The older buildings are usually the most vulnerable, but are wonderful opportunities for residential conversion.

During the recession of the late 1970's, the vacancy rate in the Financial District soared and, in 1978, my associates and I purchased Liberty Tower, a seventy year old, almost vacant, thirty-three story neo-Gothic skyscraper which I converted to residential use. The residential conversion of Liberty Tower created a lonely residential outpost, but it also introduced a whole new activity to the Financial District. Over the next several years, the old, tall needlelike towers and the upper portions of the great skyscrapers began to be converted to extraordinary residences. This was followed by residentially orientated shops and markets.

Converting commercial buildings to residential use had been a Lower Manhattan phenomena. Now it would become a Financial District phenomena.

Liberty Tower, 1909-1978

A skyscraper with "romantic pictueequeness".
— Cobb's work: Montgomery Schuyler, architectural critic

In 1909, at the edge of the horse age, the architect, Henry Ives Cobb received the commission to design Liberty Tower. Cobb's design presaged Cass Gilbert's famed 1913 Woolworth Building and advanced the use of the Gothic style for skyscrapers. At 33 stories, it was one of the world's tallest buildings. Along with Ernest Flagg's 47 story 1908 Singer Building, it was one of the first of the spectacularly tall buildings which eventually enhanced the entire Financial District skyline.

Potter Palmer Residence 1885 Detroit Photographic Co. Author's Collection

Henry Ives Cobb (1859-1931), was a prolific architect who completed many important commissions throughout the country. Born in Massachusetts, he studied architecture at M.I.T., graduated from Harvard in 1881 and spent a year at the Ecoles des Beaux Arts in Paris. He began his practice in Chicago, ten years after the Great Fire. While many architects flocked to prosperous and growing Chicago, few were as well-trained as Cobb.

Cobb's first major commission was from Potter Palmer, a Chicago millionaire who had made a fortune in the dry-goods, real estate and hotel businesses. Cobb's design of a large castellated neo-Gothic mansion for the socially prominent Palmer quickly lead to numerous other residential commissions.

Cobb's celebrity lead also to a number of important commercial buildings and early Chicago skyscrapers including the Chicago Opera House, the University of Chicago for John D. Rockefeller and the fairy tale castle-like Owings Building. In 1895, he completed the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin in a Romanesque design with Saracenic details. The entire facade is a maze of ornamentation and the interiors are equally opulent. By the end of the 19th century Cobb became known as an expert in steel construction. His design for the Fisheries Building at the Columbium Exposition of 1893 in Chicago was considered one of the triumphs of the Fair. After Chicago, Cobb first moved to Washington, D.C. to work as an architect for the United States Government and then, in 1902, he moved to New York where he designed numerous commercial buildings primarily fenestrated in historical styles. In 1906, the architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler stated:

> *Mr. Cobb works in styles and takes thought for academical correctness. But it is not classic purity but romantic picturesqueness that is the object of his quest, certainly in his successes.*

Drawing on the verticality of Gothic Architecture and the"aspirations to reach Heaven and God" which symbolically drove the Gothic form, Cobb re-appropriated these elements and ideals to create a, then modern, translation of Gothic Architecture to emphasize the heights that architects could now achieve through steel.

Cobb use of an adaptation of English Gothic for the ornamentation of Liberty Tower was highly praised. The

exterior is divided into a classic tripartite division with a richly decorated four story base, a 23 story shaft body with generally repetitive detailing surmounted by an elaborate peaked roof head with numerous dormers.

Liberty Tower is essentially a freestanding tower, rising 33 stories without a break in its verticality. It was built prior to zoning regulations which would have required setbacks. On a plot of only sixty by eighty feet, it had the distinction of being the "World's Tallest Building on so Small a Plot." It is primarily clad in cream colored glazed terra-cotta in the form of flat panels, decorative trim and applied pieces of sculpture. Liberty Tower was one of the first buildings to utilize terra-cotta, a material which eventually became the vocabulary of early skyscrapers. It is one the most beautiful of the early romantic skyscrapers.

Liberty Tower, 1910 Underhill
Author's Collection

LIBERTY TOWER, 1978-1979

I'm like a one-eyed cat, peepin' in a seafood store.
— Charles Calhoun for Big Joe Turner, later
Bill Haley & His Comets *Shake, Rattle & Roll*

Liberty Tower postcard 1976 Photo by David Sagarin
Author's Collection

On the first day of May, 1978, Dave Waldman called and said. "Listen Joe, I just got in a troubled piece downtown. When I looked at it and saw the gargoyles, I could see that it had your name written all over it". Dave was an old friend from my Helmsley-Spear days and knew well my affinity for old buildings. My excitement was hard to contain.

In 1978, Liberty Tower was still a marvelous skyscraper with one of the most beautiful facades in the world. It had high ceilings and large windows on all four sides, but, it was an economically failed building. Substantially vacant, it was in a rundown condition with antiquated mechanical facilities and only one stair (two were required). New York was in the midst of a severe recession and soothsayers were again predicting that the Financial District would never recover.

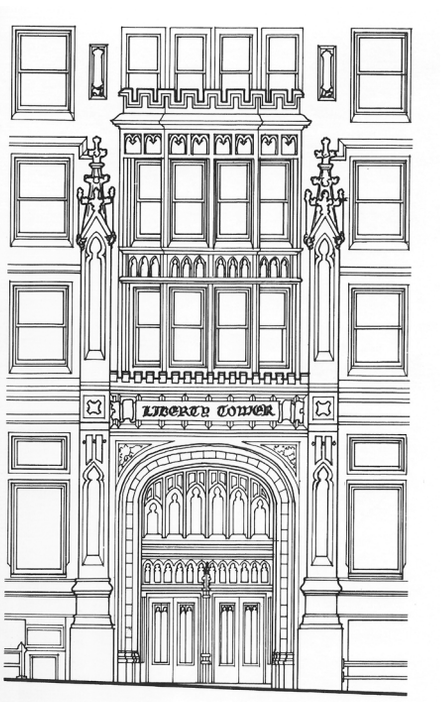
Liberty Tower was in a foreclosure action which meant that payments to the bank were not current. Within a week a public auction was going to be held with the building going to the highest bidder.

Rather than waiting for the auction, I visited both the owner and the bank. I offered the owner $25,000 for the ownership with my assumption the mortgage. I told the bank, I would pay the past-due $50,000 mortgage payments. Both parties agreed to my proposals; the owner because he was on the verge of losing everything and the bank which did not want to own a deteriorated, empty skyscraper in the financially distressed Financial District.

I reached out to people familiar with my work who had said that I should contact them if I saw an opportunity. In 1976, I had met the Globus brothers, Steve, Rick and Ronnie: they lived in three different loft buildings. I had helped each of them with their buildings. Their father, Morty Globus, an equally interesting entrepreneur, had made a fortune on Wall Street investing in unusual upstart companies. They would continue that tradition. The brothers and their father were my most logical potential investors.

The Globi (they liked using this word to describe themselves collectively) quickly saw the same thing I had seen -- the opportunity to create apartments in a unique-to-the-world beautiful, old Gothic skyscraper.

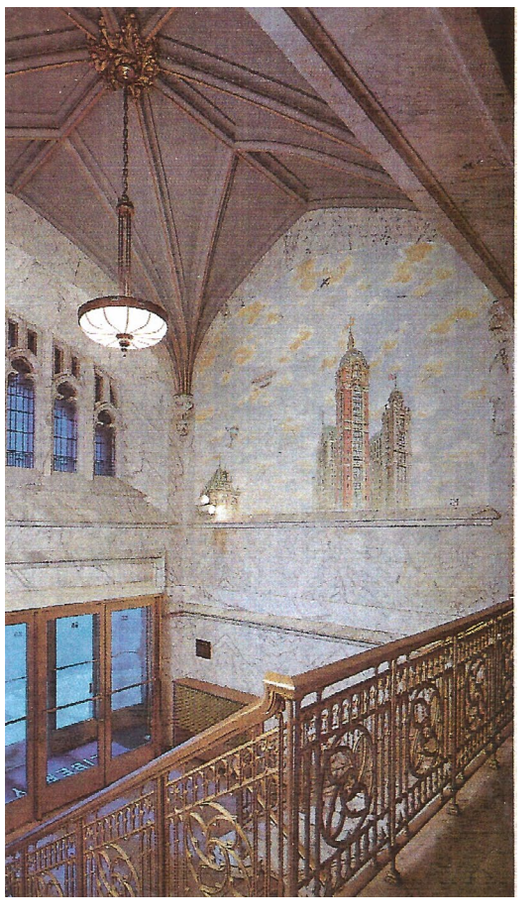
Following the same procedure I had used in the loft districts to the north, I installed the common area improvements and sold units as "raw space," totally unfinished without bathrooms or kitchens. Like a SoHo or TriBeCa loft, this allowed the purchasers to create their own individually designed interiors to meet their design inspirations and their budget. Purchasers also had freedom as to the size of their unit. None of the 89 units were the same. On any floor an apartment door lead to a California modernism, a neo-Gothic or a Oriental style interior — all in a different size and layout.



Liberty Tower Entrance, (Drawing by the Office of Joseph Pell Lombardi, Architect)

Even in that deep recession, great excitement was generated by the notion that one could own, create a home and reside in such a venerable structure. Liberty Tower was the first major residential conversion in the Financial District. Much to my critic's surprise, and to my delight, owning an apartment in an historic, beautiful skyscraper was sufficiently appealing to overcome the then strangeness of living in a nonresidential district.

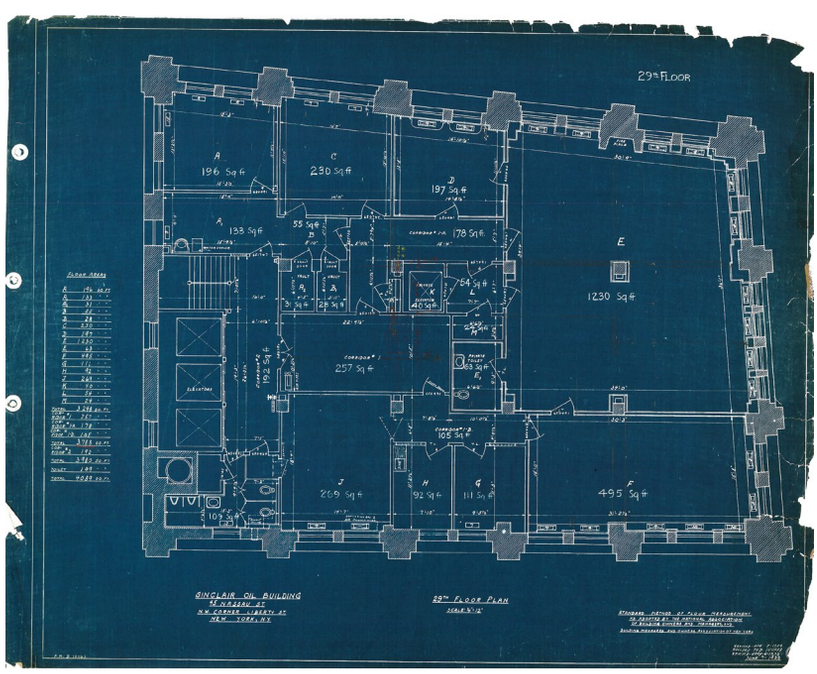
Liberty Tower would ultimately prove to be a great financial success for myself and my investors, but it would take its personal toll. The completion of the 10 year Liberty Tower project coincided with the end of my 25 year marriage. Totally exhausted in every respect, I could only selfishly think of a vacation from life, a highly irresponsible idea for a man with a family, a devoted wife and a large active architectural practice. I let slip any opportunity to resolve the problem.



Liberty Tower, Entrance Vestibule

No common failure, whether it be sickness, or bankruptcy, or professional misfortune, will reverberate so cruelly and deeply in the unconscious as a divorce. It penetrates the seat of all anguish, forcing it to life. With one cut, it slices more deeply than life can reach.

— Botho Strauss



1919 - 29th Floor Plan, Henry Ives Cobb (Author's Collection)

Liberty Tower 1979-2000

A residential Gothic skyscraper
— The New York Times, July 11, 1979

In 1919, ten years after Liberty Tower had been built, it was bought by the Sinclair Oil Company. On the 29th floor, Harry Sinclair, head of the Sinclair Oil Company, created his private offices with a boardroom, dining room, sitting room and reception room. The floor looks out over Lower Manhattan and has views of both rivers. Finished out with floor to ceiling walnut paneling, grain painted steel trim, pressed glass doors with gold lettering, hanging globe light fixtures and brass hardware in a Gothic design, it is an early definition of an executive office suite. I decided to adapt it, without changing its character, to be my apartment.

Rotunda - 29th Floor Author's Collection

The furnishings are gathered up early twentieth century tables and chairs found throughout the building. The former kitchen remained where it had been and the vice president's offices became bedrooms. The principal missing ingredient was a central room to connect the living room (former board room), dining room, library (former sitting room) and entrance gallery. Whatever existed in this central location had been removed at the time of Sinclair's Oil's departure in 1945. Because of the complexity of the space, a circle was the most suitable shape, above which I installed a plaster dome. For flooring I used traditional green and white terrazzo in a checkerboard pattern. With the interiors now almost a century old, this Manhattan aerie speaks of an earlier time. The best compliment so far was from an upper East Side matron (a guest at my annual Christmas Party) who whispered somewhat loudly to her companion that "it looks like a rundown men's club!"

Living Room looking east - 29th Floor Author's Collection

From the late 1970s, the neighborhood that surrounded my home at Liberty Tower changed dramatically. The Financial District slowly evolved into a livable residential neighborhood. After my 1979 conversion of Liberty Tower, a number of smaller and medium sized buildings had been similarly converted. But, it would take the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s to result in further skyscrapers being converted to residential use. That recession was so deep that building prices plunged to practically nothing. As businesses contracted, there were simply no office tenants and entire skyscrapers became vacant. Ownership of the buildings eventually wound up with the holders of the mortgage. Faced with accumulating real estate taxes, the lenders saw no solutions. Huge buildings were for sale at as little as $10 per square foot (at a time when it would have cost over $100 per square foot to build a new building). The City reinstituted a real estate tax abatement program

Living Room looking west - 29th Floor Author's Collection

to encourage conversions. The program and the low prices of buildings resulted in Liberty Tower being joined by other residential Financial District skyscrapers.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the empty land fill created from the World Trade Center excavation became Battery Park City, with 7,500 residents and residential related shops. Enlargement of Battery Park City and conversions continued to occur during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Baby carriages became a common sight and the first supermarket arrived. Battery Park City and the conversions were joined by several new hotels. All of which resulted in further residentially related shops and restaurants and services. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Financial District had become a very comfortable place to live.

Library - 29th Floor Author's Collection

At the same time, the Financial District became the main destination for New York City tourists. A 1986 celebration of the centennial of the Statue of Liberty included a highly visible parade of tall ships, a magnificent harbor celebration and a worldwide televised firework display. The birthday of the Statue of Liberty and its restoration along with the 1990 opening of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum made the tip of Manhattan a destination for most New York City visitors. In the mid-1990s, the enlargement of the South Street Seaport on the East River, with its historic ships, restaurants and shops, gave tourists another reason for visiting the Financial District. But clearly the World Trade Center was one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world and one of the greatest tourist attractions, especially for foreigners. With a name symbolic of capitalism, the tallest buildings in New York sported a panoramic observatory and restaurants in the sky. The World Trade Center had 2 million visitors each year.

Library - 29th Floor Author's Collection

These two 110 story monoliths were not without critics. Their "fuck the sky" attitude was a powerful symbol of America proudly sporting not one, but two side-by-side tallest buildings in the world.

Initially catering to daily office workers, the addition of residents and tourists resulted in the World Trade Center shops and underground mall remaining open seven days a week. A large bookstore and a huge multi-screen cinema opened. The American Indian Museum moved into the Customs House at the tip on Manhattan, the Guggenheim Museum announced the construction of a spectacular Frank Gehery designed annex on the East River and the Museum of the City of New York began planning work on their new home at the magnificent old Tweed Courthouse.

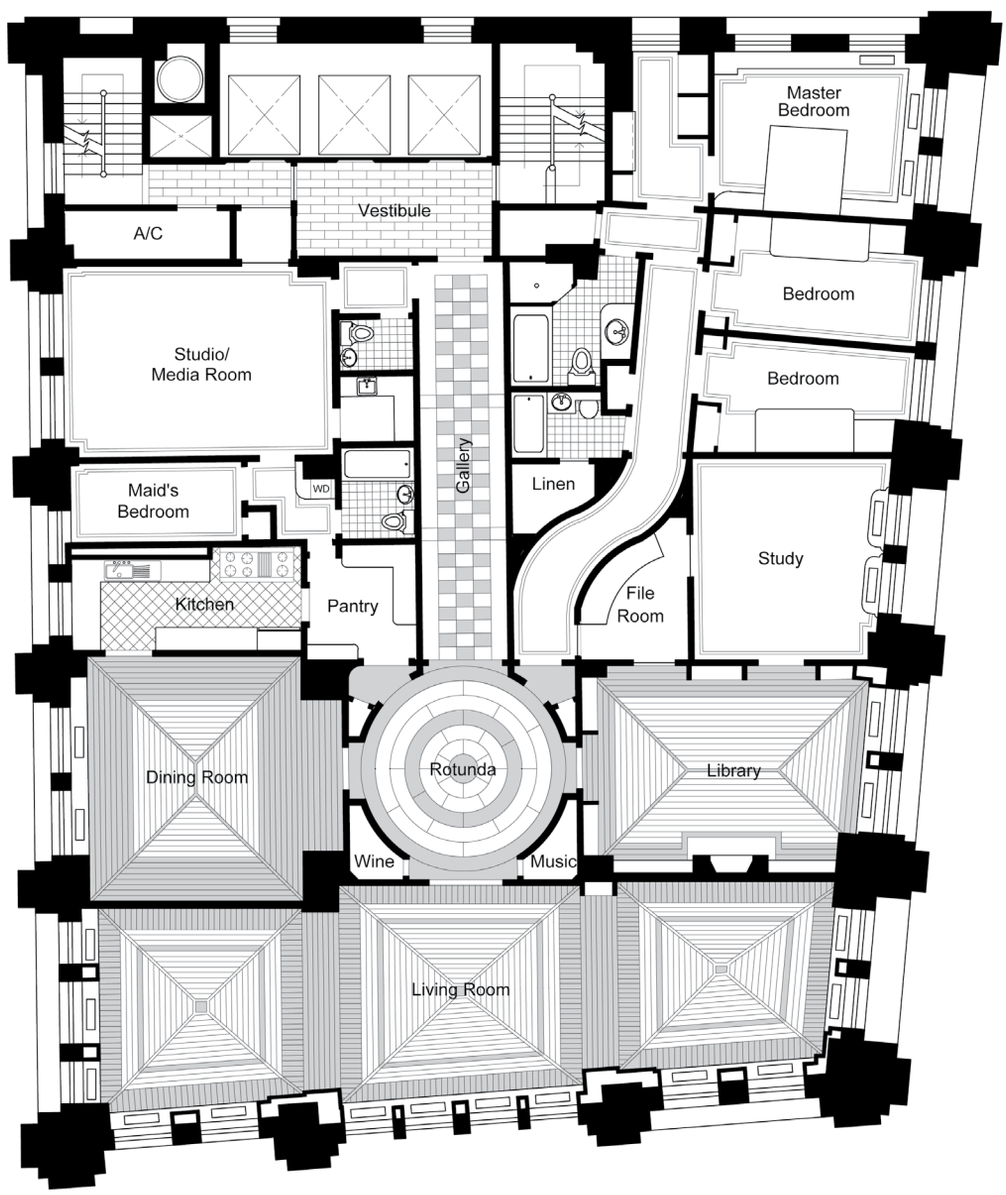
The tip of Manhattan had been the residential and commercial center of New York City from its establishment in the mid-seventeenth century to the beginning of a dramatic northward growth in the mid-nineteenth century. For the next hundred years, it was

Dining Room - 29th Floor Author's Collection

Kitchen - 29th Floor Author's Collection

the center of commerce for the world. The end of the twentieth century saw its aged buildings being reused for residential and cultural uses. At the beginning of the twenty first century it had come full circle as both a commerce, residential and cultural center.

On September 11, 2001, the advancement of the tip of Manhattan seemed to be irretrievably damaged. The plans for the Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of the City of New York were abandoned. But, as in the past, New York showed its resiliency and by the end of the first decade of twenty first century the Financial District's prominence as a commerce, residential and cultural center was even more established than any other time in its history.



Floor Plan - 29th Floor Author's Collection

Liberty Tower, 1978 (Photograph by Author)

Twenty First Century

Technique is long, life is short, opportunity fleeting, experiment perilous, judgment difficult
— Hippocrates

September 11, 2001 – 8:00am

Perhaps he knew, as I did not, that the earth was made round
so that we would not see too far down the road
— Isak Dinesen, the film *Out of Africa*

Liberty Tower is one and one half blocks from the World Trade Center site. On the morning of September 11, 2001 I left my apartment and walked north to TriBeCa to a meeting with contractors at the Julliard Building, one of the loft buildings I was then converting to residential use. It was one of those warm, clear Indian Summer days that enhance the cultural and social happenings of autumn in New York.

In the meeting I tried, unsuccessfully, to offset melancholic thoughts regarding the end of a recent relationship by thinking about my evening plans. I was to have dinner with a Pulitzer Prize winning Washington Post reporter. She and I had met when she was in New York writing an article about an Algerian Muslim accused of a possible Osama bin Laden terrorist plot to blow up American landmarks in the name of Islam.

My dinner plans for that evening never materialized. My guest viewed the Twin Towers horror from a halted train in New Jersey which returned to Washington and I was engulfed by a whirlwind of events which overshadowed and, at the same time, intensified my melancholy.

The World Trade Center with Liberty Tower in the foreground.
Photograph courtesy of the New York Times

September 11, 2001 – 8:46am

Try to remember the kind of September
When life was slow and oh, so mello
— Jones & Schmidt, *Try to Remember*

Shortly before 9am, my meeting at the Julliard Building was interrupted by a huge jet plane flying over us at an impossibly low elevation, followed by an enormous noise. I moved to a location on the roof that enabled a clear view of the Twin Towers. The plane had completely entered the North Tower. Only a slightly smoking opening in the shape of the wings and tail were discernible on the face of the building. But within moments the igniting jet fuel engulfed the upper portion of the Tower in flames and smoke.

I watched in horror as workers in the Windows on the World restaurant desperately waved tablecloths in what would be a fruitless effort to be rescued. Their plight was impossible to accept. This was New York City in the 21st century, somehow they would be rescued, they wouldn't all die, there had to be a solution. But this was not to be.

Some moments last forever. Seeing people, including a couple holding hands, jumping from the North Tower is permanently etched in my mind. One desperate daredevil managed to get below the impact area on a fire hose.

He scuttled across the face of the building seeking a way back into the building. I prayed for his success, but the roaring fire burnt the hose before he could reenter through the sealed-from-the-inside windows.

Fifteen minutes later, when the second plane was flown across the Hudson River and banked sharply north to undermine a corner of the South Tower, the word "attack" first came into my mind. I instinctively decided to return to my Liberty Tower apartment. This instinct was rooted in the need to protect my home. It surely was not a rational choice but, upon later reflection, I realized it fit the pattern of my life — the desire to safeguard a home. My deeply rooted obsession was causing me to put my well-being at risk!

9:45am - World Trade Center from Vesey Street & Broadway
Trilogy Photo Lab Author's Collection

The walk back to Liberty Tower was against large crowds escaping from the Trade Center and the neighboring buildings. There were pedestrians on the streets that had been injured by fallen airplane and building debris. The upper floors of the Twin Towers were now being consumed by intense fires and the sky was filled with a large intense black smoke flume. When I arrived at the Liberty Tower lobby, I found the chaos of people fleeing with their children and possessions.

Shortly after my arrival in my apartment on the 29th floor, the South Tower collapsed with enormous noise and obliterating black smoke. This was followed, one half hour later, by the collapse of the North Tower which caused Liberty Tower to shutter. Each collapse took thousands of lives in only fifteen seconds.

The smoke and dust from the collapses caused a total blackness. All communication ceased with the failure of the mobile phones, land lines and e-mail. The last word from the television newscaster was that there were possibly as many as eight hijacked planes in the air. Later that afternoon, my television began to provide a weak picture and the voices of the CBS newscasters. The apartment remained filled with smoke and all surfaces were covered with an inch of dust. Throughout the day and while sleeping, I wore a dust mask.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2001

The number of casualties will be more than any of us can bear.

— Mayor Rudy Giuliani, 9/11/01, 2:38pm, First televised press conference after the attack

At dawn, I struggled down the twenty nine flights of Liberty Tower stairs. Unlike any previous New York City morning, there was utter silence. Everything was covered in a 12" blanket of dust and ash. Arriving at what would eventually be known as "Ground Zero", I found the despair of exhausted rescue workers. All that was left of the twin 110 story monoliths were two huge piles of rubble surrounded by portions of exterior walls without floors. I again felt compelled to return to my apartment.

I had a great sense of peacefulness sitting alone in my apartment that first day after the Attack. A greater sense of peacefulness than I had felt in years, much like when I was a child secure in the fold of my family. A terrible ordeal had happened, but now the struggle was over. I could relax, rest, my life was no longer in my control. The second night there was a loud thunderstorm. Many New Yorkers awakened thinking more buildings were being hit.

Two days after the attack, 1 Liberty Plaza (a huge building across from Liberty Tower) was reported to be unstable. The failure of that building would have unequivocally compromised Liberty Tower, so I finally left.

I moved into a loft in TriBeCa where there was great camaraderie. People cheered when firemen entered the local smoky hangouts. A waitress embraced me after seeing my Liberty Street address on a magazine I had left behind in her cafe. TriBeCa was in a sealed zone with visitors being barred by soldiers at its northern boundary. The streets, heavily covered in dust, were only occupied by the remaining local residents, rescue workers and soldiers. The restaurants,

fancy and modest, had free buffets for all. Food was supplied by the restaurants and by residents in the nearby lofts.

Deep emotions gripped us. Utter sorrow for the hopelessly dead - the despair was in everybody's eyes. A disbelief that such destruction had instantly happened - it would take only two or three seconds each awakening morning for the dread to arrive. A guilty elation for being alive - a need to hold someone and to make love for hours. A recklessness for having been invincible - traffic lights and huge speeding trucks were disregarded. Empathy for all - everybody hugged each other and politeness ruled. Continuing fear - activities stopped when a plane flew overhead.

We were displaced from our homes. We had warships in the harbor, fighter planes above us, soldiers in battle gear on every corner, armed Humvees on the streets, acrid smoke in the air and gritty dust covering all, but none of it mattered and nobody complained. We were alive.

For weeks, the sealed off sections of Lower Manhattan remained removed and isolated from uptown Manhattan and the rest of the world. The despair remained in the streets. Nobody who had to be near the World Trade Center site can ever forget the images that became etched in one's mind. On the sidewalks their were scores of desperate husbands, wives, family members and friends holding up photographs of their missing loved ones. In passing, even distant acquaintances would embrace.

Two weeks after the attack I went to a meeting uptown and was amazed to see a normal New York day with smartly dressed hurrying pedestrians, busy shops and restaurants and streets jammed with cabs and ordinary cars. Unshaven and dressed in my escape outfit of worn chinos, a turtleneck and sneakers, I felt like an alien amongst my colleagues in their neatly pressed business suits.

A shadow passed over my life. The sense of peacefulness I had felt in the first days vanished. It was a huge effort to concentrate on anything and there was great difficulty in sleeping, I remained hypervigilant. A few days after the attack, I sent an e-mail to friends and relatives which concluded, "While much is in chaos, I remain the eternal optimist. But, I have a great emptiness within me that I have to overcome." In fact, it would take months for that "great emptiness" to diminish.

In the ensuing weeks and months, life was slow to return to any form of normalcy. In fact, many things would never be the same and nothing was ordinary. In October, the Yankees were again in the World Series. I shall never forget sitting in cold, windy Yankee Stadium waiting for the first home game of the Series. Instead of throwing from the stands, President Bush walked out to the pitcher's mound to throw the opening ball. Jet fighters flew overhead to assure his and our protection. At that time we needed such assurances to allay our fears.

The Attack had caught me in a very precarious economic position. I was scheduled to close title on September 28th on a large property overlooking the Hudson River in TriBeCa. I had worked intensely on the project for ten months and had over one million dollars at risk. But, it needed one hundred million dollars in financing. In the

View from the 29th Floor, Liberty Tower
September 12, 2001 Author's Photograph

weeks immediately following the Attack, banks refused to make loans on large Lower Manhattan development projects. Like most real estate "wild catters", my one million dollars in cash was my liquidity.

When September 28th came and went, I had to forgo any hope of recovering my cash leaving me without liquidity. These were dark days. My clients were slow in paying, my partners slashed the prices on a project that was about to produce a substantial profit and no new projects were beginning - everybody was scared.

I approached the emergency loan agencies of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the SBA (Small Business Administration). But the process started to drag on for weeks and I needed immediate cash to pay my employees and meet my current obligations or else everything would start to unravel. Conventional business loans and mortgages on my houses were possible, but everything would take time. My sense was that if I could buy some time, eventually projects would begin again and my clients would get back to business. But there was no one to turn to for some cash to tide me over and nobody was paying.

In 1999, in a moment of exuberance, I had traded up from my old Ferrari to a new top of the line beauty. But, like everything else, the Ferrari market was stalled. Fortunately, I was able to find a finance company that would give me a loan for half of its value. Every owner rationalizes that a Ferrari is good investment, but they rarely are. However, if I had not bought that Ferrari, I would have put the cash in the project with the tied up liquidity. The car loan helped tide me over and eventually new projects began.

At Liberty Tower there was no reprieve from the reminder of the recent horror. For endless months when one heard the keen sound of an ambulance siren, it often meant that another victim's body had been discovered. The newspapers and television provided a constant sadness. Each day the New York Times published a picture and a small biography of victims. In October, the front page of the Daily News had a haunting photograph of the fire truck of fire station Ladder 118 speeding across the Brooklyn Bridge with the Twin Towers aflame in the background. All six fire fighters in the truck would perish -- not until January would some of the bodies be found

My melancholy lingered.

That Christmas a huge American flag covered the facade of the New York Stock Exchange and every subway car carried our nation's emblem. The workers at the World Trade Center site continued to toil day and night removing the ashes of the dead and the wreckage of the buildings. Gigantic cranes filled the sky and huge spotlights made night the same as day. Three months after the Attack, pedestrians in Lower Manhattan would still halt to look up when a low flying jet plane passed overhead. The fires burned for 99 days.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2001

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe.
— *Rip Van Winkle* - Washington Irving (1783–1859)

Months before September 11th, I had agreed to hold a benefit at Octagon House to raise money for a bronze statue of Washington Irving's legendary character, Rip Van Winkle. Octagon House is one mile south of the small village of Irvington which lies on the east bank of the Hudson River, twenty miles north of New York City. Irvington contains the 19th century home of Washington Irving. The statue was to be placed on the Main Street of the Village.
Ten days after the attack, I was still temporarily living in a loft in TribeCa in surreal circumstances. Lower Manhattan, south of Canal Street, was still covered in dust, without phone service and sealed off from the rest of the world. If I went north of Canal Street, I had to pass through checkpoints in order to get back to my loft and office. Occasionally I would think about my house, but they seemed indulgent and irrelevant.

A station wagon I kept in Manhattan was inaccessibly parked in a garage in the totally sealed off area across from the World Trade Center. Months later, when I finally retrieved it, I found it completely covered in dust, alone in the 600 car garage.

In the first few days after the Attack, I had not thought about the Octagon House benefit, much less attending. The Attack was in the forefront of all our minds. When I first thought of it, the benefit seemed to me to be almost disrespectful. But, the day before the event, I boarded a train in Grand Central and took the beautiful ride up the Hudson River to Irvington. As the train wound its way along the Hudson, away from the city, I realized that not postponing the benefit was the right thing. That all of us must start back with our lives. But arriving at the station, I couldn't help looking back down the river at the empty skyline and the still smoking Lower Manhattan.

View from the 29th Floor, Liberty Tower September 25, 2001

The party was a success. Most guests, like myself, were delighted to have a reprieve from the heavy weight of the past days. At the end of the event, I asked that we all join in to sing America. As I looked through the house, I realized I was seeing it differently than in the past. My twenty three years of ownership had always seemed to be an architect's assignment to conserve this extraordinary monument. I did not think of myself as an owner free to enjoy his home. But because of the complexity of the house and my unwillingness to compromise on quality, it had been an architectural assignment without end.

I was well aware how fate had treated each of us on September 11th. My departure time from Liberty Tower that morning had been based on chance. I resolved to complete my "assignment" before my decades of work went unfinished. I was now in a rush.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER, 2001 — LINGERING

I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory.

— Shakespeare: *Hamlet II.ii.295*

One morning, in mid-December, I awoke with a sense of well-being, a sensation that I had not felt since prior to September 11th. This new sensation, which only stayed with me a moment, startled me. I suddenly remembered well-being as a typical sensation, but I couldn't understand how I had not missed it. Something was terribly wrong. I became concerned that I was unaware of other missing aspects of my behavior.

Usually slim, by mid-December I had lost twenty pounds. Travel, south of Canal Street, could only be accomplished by walking -- roaming cabs were not permitted. The exercise was wonderfully healthy, but I was also not eating.

I visited a psychiatrist who advised me that I was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In February he would write a report stating that my "prognosis was poor." My internal despair was causing any sense of well-being to regress. When asked, I was startled to hear myself saying that I was having recurrent dreams about airplane attacks and spending hours each day reliving the experiences of the victims - dreaming up ways they could have fled to safety. I was in a fog and, I would shortly learn, unable to share my emotions with anybody. Strangely I was not aware of these problems, until somebody asked about them.

FEBRUARY, 2002 — OCTOBER, 2002

There's no off switch

— Anonymous

In early 2002, my drive began to return. I started to seek new projects to develop, encourage my clients to keep going and, with extra time afforded by my still slowed practice, I began to intensely prepare for the completion of my houses. But the Attack was never far away.

New York City celebrates St. Patrick's Day with an energetic parade up Fifth Avenue followed by much celebration in the crowded upper East-side Irish pubs. The parade includes our Mayor, Governor, Senators and the New York Cardinal. With their large Irish constituency, the firemen and policemen are always very well represented.

Dr. Kevin Cahill, an old family friend, invited me to watch the first St. Patrick's Day Parade following the Attack from the windows of the American Irish Historical Society. Housed in a handsome bay windowed and balconied townhouse across from the Metropolitan Museum; there is no better place to be on St. Patrick's Day. Kevin, as President of the Society and past Grand-Marshall of an earlier parade stands on the balcony and is greeted with waves and salutes from the marchers.

At 12:30pm, the parade stopped and then turned around to face downtown. The marchers and the large boisterous crowd went completely silent. It was a dramatic and poignant moment. After the cadence of the marching bands and the cheers of the multitude of onlookers, the silence was very loud.

At Ground Zero on September 11, 2002, at 8:46am, Rudolph Giuliani tolled the names of the victims: Gordon M. Aamoth, Jr....Edelmiro Abad...Maria Rose Abad...Andrew Anthony Abate...Vincent Abate. It would take two and half hours to read all of the names of the victims.

It would not be until February 15, 2003, seventeen months after the Attack, that I could break away from my efforts in New York and visit my fifth house - the Erdödy-Choron Castle in Jánosháza, Hungary. Prior to 2001, I would visit Hungary every few months. The interlude brought into focus the undone work. Here too, I resolved to finish what I had started.

A differenza dei pesci che possono vedere lateralmente e delle mosche che possono vedere in tutte le direzioni, gli umani possono solamente guardare avanti

(Unlike fish who can only see sideways and flies that can see all around, humans can only look forward)

—The movie, *Caterina va in Città* 2005

NOVEMBER, 2002

from now on even begonias are amazing
— Jim Moore

By Thanksgiving of 2002, I had found a project to develop. The Mohawk Building is a prominent landmark in TriBeCa. It was Designed by Babcock & Morgan for Wood & Selick, wholesale confectioners. In the 20th century it housed the Mohawk Electric Company, a wholesaler of electric devices.

The adjacent building to the east started life as a single family house in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the second half of that century, a fourth floor was added and for many years it housed a whalebone cutting establishment. When it closed in 1873, it was the last of its kind in the country.

In 1996, the two buildings had been acquired by the prominent chef, David Bouley and the famed restaurateur Warner LeRoy to use as a restaurant and a cooking school. But with an economic slowdown after the Attack and the death of LeRoy, Bouley decided to sell.

I had always thought of the building as a wonderful conversion - in fact Bouley and LeRoy had outbid me when they had bought. I had stayed in contact with Bouley and, in late 2002, I signed a contract for the purchase.

During that winter and early spring, the plans were created by my office and approvals obtained at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. By mid-2003, the project was in high gear.

Mohawk Atelier - Hudson Street Facade

Mohawk Atelier - Duane Street Facade

The Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House

Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

An arrested carousel
— A viewer

Introduction

The story of a house is the story of life. Just as the history of a country is written down in architecture, so is the history of individuals to be traced by the houses in which they have lived. There it all is -- their beginning, their growth, their development or deterioration, the realization or thedestruction of their dreams, the very pattern of their destiny as it was etched line by line.
— Elise de Wolfe

The Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House is one of the most visually unique houses in the world. It is the only known residence constructed in the domed colonnaded octagonal form of an ancient classical temple. The exterior decoration of the Octagon House is as distinct as its shape and adds to the unique-to-the-world appearance of this melodic structure. The exterior embellishments are decidedly festive with floral details in the cast iron cresting and railings and extensively carved wood scrollwork and capitals - all polychromatically painted in shades of rose, blue, violet, gray, tan and red. The interiors are equally embellished with stenciled and decoratively painted ceilings, gold, silver and bronze leaf trim, specially carved eight-sided motifs in the woodwork, magnificent etched glass and highly detailed brass hardware. The exterior and interior of the house, its decorations and its 1870s furnishings all reflect the late 19th century interest in exotic decoration. Here, in a colorful display, is one of the very few American examples of Pavilion Architecture — buildings created in a distinct form or coloring with the purpose of amusing viewers.

The Armour-Stiner (Octagon) was the first house to be bought by the National Trust and resold to a private citizen. Since 1978, I have undertaken a complete conservation of the interior and exterior of the house and the grounds, furnished the house with original and contemporaneous furniture and corrected extensive structural problems, including separation of the dome.

My goal was not to remove all traces of age, but to hold together the fragile exotic beauty of this lyrical home.

The Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House Author's Collection

The Armour-Stiner (Octagon House), c. 1882

Irvington-on-Hudson

A noble river, running majestically along, always imparts life and spirit to the scenery of its banks.
— Richard Brown

In the third quarter of the 17th century, Frederick Philipse began purchasing large tracts of this land. Philipse had been born in 1626 in the Netherlands and had emigrated to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam (later New York) in the mid-1650's. He prospered through successful business activities and a marriage to a wealthy woman. Philipse bought the land from the Indians and patroons, early Dutch entrepreneurs, who had been granted land by the Dutch.

Tappan Zee - John Williamson 1875 Octagon House Collection

The patroons, and now Philipse, leased portions of the large tracts to Dutch settlers who cleared the forests and established small farms. In 1693, the British, who had taken over the colony, confirmed the Philipse holdings.

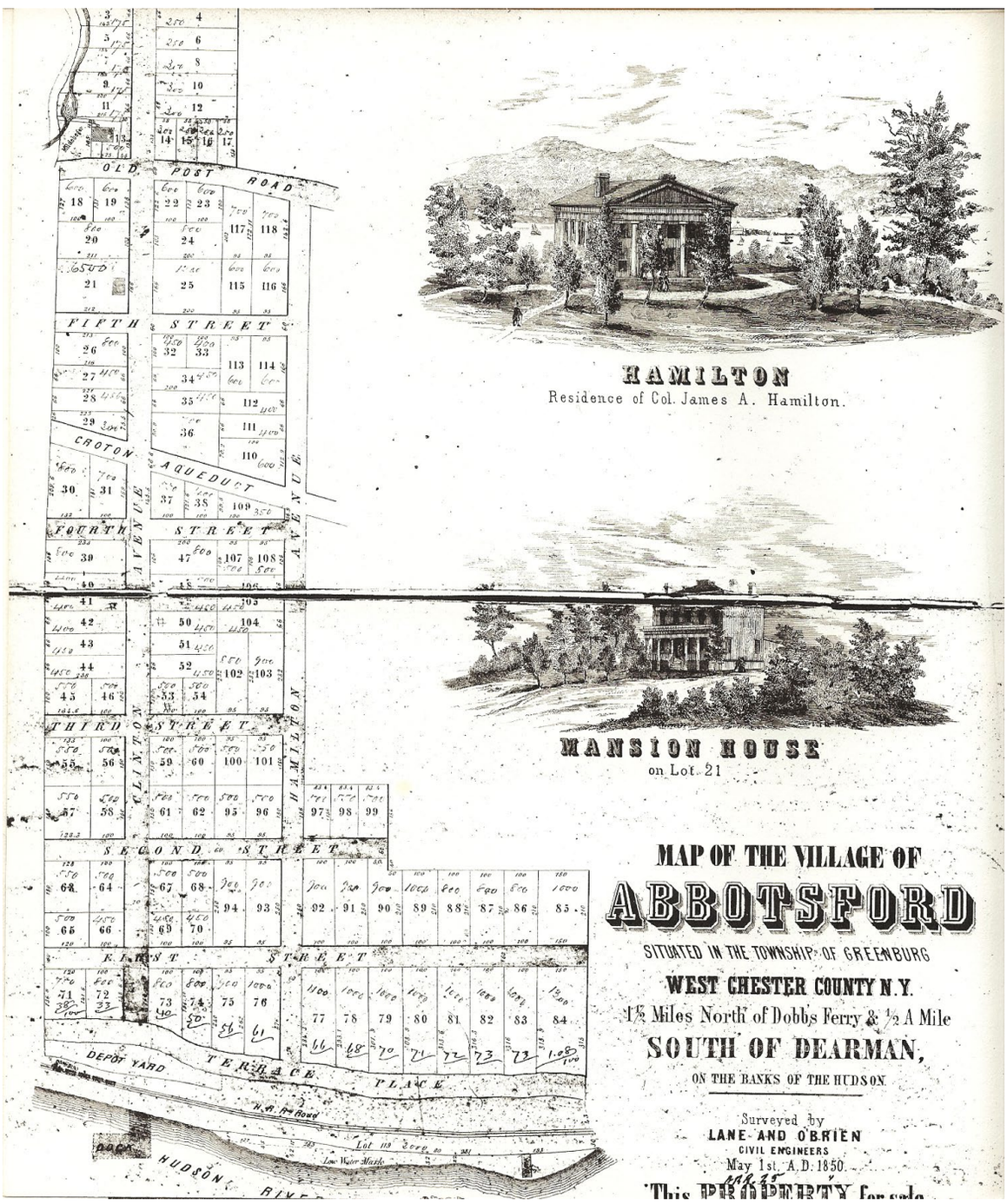
Through continuing acquisitions, the Philipse family became lords of a vast manor of 90,000 acres. When the Revolutionary War began, the Philipses chose loyalty to the British Crown, a decision that resulted in forfeiture of the manor, after America's success. At a public auction of 1785, the tenant-farmers were able to buy their farms.

In 1849 a railroad was placed on the east bank of the river, which allowed passengers traveling from the City to reach the area in less than one hour. With the tracks, being on the edge of the river, travellers enjoyed delightful, direct river views. The surrounding old Dutch farmland began to be purchased by prominent New Yorkers who erected country seats and summer residences overlooking the picturesque Hudson and the Tappan Zee.

Twenty miles north of New York City, in 1850, the small village of Irvington-on-Hudson was created from one of the farms. Its main street became lined with small shops and large trees which formed a long tunnel stretching up from the glimmering river. The area eventually became home to numerous noted residents, including Cyrus W. Field, John Jacob Astor III, Charles L. Tiffany and, its most celebrated resident and namesake, Washington Irving.

In the 1850's, entrepreneurs bought a tract of farmland one mile to the south of Irvington-on-Hudson. They planned another small community to be called Abbotsford. The sale of building plots resulted in several houses built with the notion that Abbotsford would be a separate village with its own main street, but with only a few plots sold, the idea of a separate village was eventually abandoned and the area became the outskirts of the present-day village of Irvington-on-Hudson.

Pallisades. W.G.Wall, No.19 of the Hudson River Portfolio 1826
Octagon House Collection



The proposed village of Abbotsford

Orson Squire Fowler

Man's greatest knowledge is HIMSELF to know
— O.S. Fowler

The octagon house fad in 19th century America was inspired by the publication of an 1848 book, *The Octagon House, a Home for All* by Orson Squire Fowler, a phrenologist, sexologist and amateur architect. Orson Squire Fowler was as extraordinary as his book. Patriarchal in appearance thanks to his luxuriant beard, high forehead and piercing eyes, he was by nature the epitome of the nineteenth century individualist. Born in 1809 on a farm in upstate New York, he began his studies for the ministry at Amherst College, but he soon found himself captivated by the phrenological doctrine recently introduced to the United States by Johann Kaspar Spurzheim, a Viennese doctor who held that character could be analyzed by examination of the cranium. This nineteenth-century vision of psychiatry so appealed to Orson Fowler that, with his brother Lorenzo and sister Charlotte, he established himself as a practicing phrenologist. In 1835, Orson Fowler described his profession:

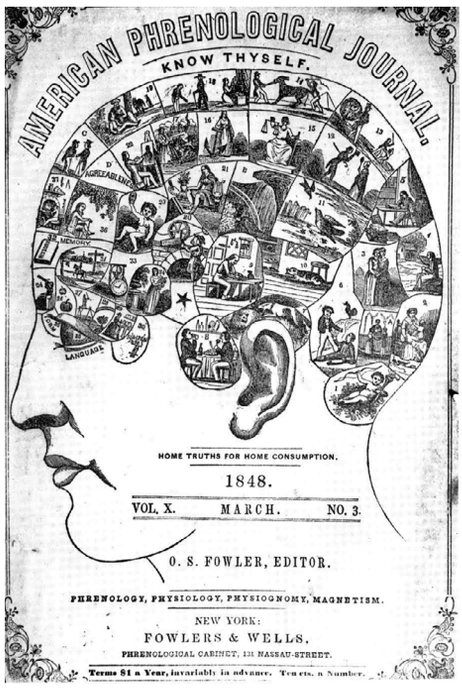
Orson Squire Fowler Engraving
by Max Bachert

Phrenology teaches that the mind, instead of employing the WHOLE brain for EACH mental function, uses one particular part of it for one class of mental functions, and another for another, just as it does the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, etc.; that it uses that part under 12 for an affection of fear, that under 13 for kindness, etc. Now the exercise of any corporeal organ increases its size as well as strength. If then one part of the brain is used more often than another, it will grow more, and of course elevate that portion of the skull above it; so that if a person exercises the feeling of benevolence more often than he does that of apprehension, the portion of the brain under 13 will be larger and more elevated than that under 12, as much more so as he is more benevolent than apprehensive. So of all the other organs, if we can tell what portion of the brain the mind uses for each mental function, and how much larger one portion is than another, we can tell just how much the person exercises certain classes of mental functions more than he does others. This has been done by practical observation.

Phrenologists believed that, like muscles, there was a correlation between the exercise of a mental functions and elevated and depressed areas of the cranium. They would examine the contours of a head comparing them with elaborate diagrams and three-dimensional models of the human head, to determine which areas of the brain were being used more often than others. The bumps and crannies, they assumed, manifested peculiarities of behavior. The phrenologist would then recommend cultivation or restraint of a particular behavior. Subsequent observations for changes in elevations would determine if the recommendations were being followed.

Although Phrenology was enormously popular in the mid-nineteenth century, it was not absent of critics. The New York Times in August 2, 1878, comments on the science.

In fact, but one fault can be found with phrenology, and that is that it is not true, and there is not the trace of a shadow of a ghost of a reason for believing it to be true.



Phrenological Chart

And the Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle reports on February 6, 1874, on the departure of Professor Franklin after a phrenological lecture in Fishkill, New York:

He departed from the village by the milk train on Sunday evening, and as he left he was presented with a few eggs, and in order that he might not have the trouble of breaking them, they were hurled at his noble cranium.

Often overlooked, the practice of Phrenology prescribed ways in which to improve behavior. This was accomplished by recommendations as to how to restrain or cultivate a problematic behavior. For example, Fowler's recommendation for the cultivation of individuality was to "notice whatever comes within range of your vision." To restrain individuality, his recommendation was to "look and stare less, and think more.

Besides examining the heads of the nation's philanthropists, criminals, artists, statesmen and writers, Orson Fowler published the American Phrenological Journal and Miscellany, which survived well into the twentieth century and issued, over his imprint, a stream of phrenological, health and sex manuals. As author, marriage consultant and sex scientist, Orson Fowler may be said to have foreshadowed Sigmund Freud by looking for answers to the question of why we are what we are. In time, Orson Fowler advocated most of the reforms of his century and advised on a wide range of subjects such as woman's suffrage and wages ("equality with men"), cohabiting ("enjoyment is the test of nature") and enemas ("decidedly agreeable").

In 1848, Orson Fowler published The Octagon House, A Home for All or a New, Cheap, Convenient and Superior Mode of Building, In his book, Fowler advocated the use of the octagonal plan for houses on the suppositions that it encloses one-fifth more space than the square plan, creates rooms more accessible to each other, is more beautiful because it approaches the shape of a circle, receives twice as much sunlight by having eight sides instead of four and gives square rooms with triangular closets between them just where they are wanted. The book went on to make numerous further recommendations regarding ventilation, water filtration, central heating, construction detailing and planting. Fowler's ideas on domestic architecture caught the imagination of the country.

An interesting parallel to the advocating of the octagon enclosing more space is Orson Fowler's comments on head shape:

> *There is much more brain in a round head of a given size than in long and narrow one of the same size.*

Phrenological Head Octagon House Collection

During the 1850's, Fowler began work on his own octagon house near Fishkill, New York. His extraordinary house, perched upon a knoll overlooking the banks of the Hudson River with the Catskill Mountains beyond, was three stories high and contained sixty rooms. The main floor boasted four large rectangular rooms — parlor, sitting room, dining room and amusement room — along with four triangular side rooms, all connected by doors. Each of the upper floors contained twenty rooms, among them a playroom, a dancing room, a gymnastic room for unlaced female dress reformers, a dressing room for every bedroom, a library, a room for minerals, shells and portraits, an author's study and a

Octagonal Home of Orson Fowler, Fishkill, New York (A Home for All, 1854 edition)

prophets chamber. Verandahs at three levels surrounded the house and the house was topped by a glass roofed octagonal cupola.

Fowler received many prominent visitors including the journalists Horace Greeley and Charles A. Dana and the women's liberators Amelia Bloomer and Lucretia Mott. None gave a more vivid description of the monumental octagon than a reporter for Godey's Lady's Book, who wrote:

> *The appearance is noble, massive, grand and imposing, especially as seen from a distance. It has piazzas all around at each story, which makes delightful promenades. Its main, or through entry, is in the ground or first story, devoted to work and storage; and its stairway is in the center, which greatly facilitates ready access from each room to all the others, and saves steps and which is lighted from the cupola, in the center of which is a glass dome, which also lights its stair and the center rooms.*

In his octagonal dwelling he lectured on phrenology, entertained his bemused visitors, dined at his vegetarian table and wrote articles for his Phrenological Journal. The waning of the phrenological fad and the "Panic" of 1857, with its mounting unemployment and bank failures, brought an end to Orson Fowler's resources. In September of that year Fowler rented his octagon house, with its 130 acres, to a New York real estate operator. The house survived only four more decades, passing through a series of ill-starred owners. By 1880, the house stood empty with broken windows, decayed roof and rotted verandas, It was condemned as "a public hazard" and, in August of 1897, Fowler's octagon house was razed by dynamite.

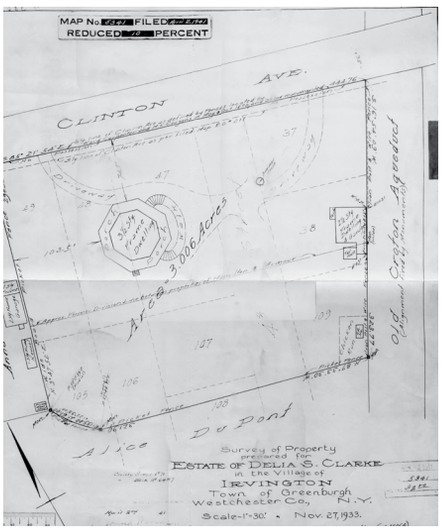
The builder of the octagon was spared the sight of its final destruction. Orson Fowler, the celebrated phrenologist, sex educator and amateur architect had died in 1887, ten years before the demise of his ambitious house.

Paul J. Armour

Near some fair town I'd have a private seat, built uniform,
not little nor too great; Better if on rising ground it stood,
On this side fields, on that neighboring wood.
— Promfret's Choice

In 1858, Paul J. Armour, a Manhattan banker, purchased four plots along West Clinton Avenue, the then proposed "Main Street" of Abbotsford. Since it had been last used as fields for farming, the site was free of structures and vegetation. The open fields permitted sweeping views of the Hudson River valley.

Armour carefully selected the site on which he would build his new house. The site, if Abbotsford was fully developed, would have a double corner with a neighbor on only one side. The north boundary was the existing West Clinton Avenue; the south boundary, a proposed new street and the eastern boundary, the Croton Aqueduct. This 1830's, subterranean water tunnel connected upstate reservoirs to New York City. Atop the Aqueduct was an inland foot and bicycle pathway connecting the Hudson Valley villages.



Plot Plan, Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House

Armour constructed a flat roofed two story house with an octagonal floor plan, a porch and a main entrance facing the proposed "Main Street" of Abbotsford. Based up probes and the roof which still remains between the 2nd floor ceiling and the 3rd floor of the current house, Armour's octagon house was probably very similar to a 2 story octagon house in Montvale, NJ. In 1860, 56 year old Armour moved into the house with Rebecca, his 38 year old second wife, five of his ten children and two Irish servant girls. Paul J. Armour died in 1866 and, in 1872, Rebecca sold the property to Joseph H. Steiner for $27,000.

Armour's choice of an octagonal shape for a house was most assuredly based on an 1848 book, The Octagon House, A Home for All, by Orson Squire Fowler.

The Paul J. Armour Octagon House (1858-1872)

Why continue to build in the same SQUARE form of all past ages.
— Orson Squire Fowler

The several hundred octagon houses that rose in America during the mid-nineteenth century can be attributed directly to Orson Fowler's inspiration. The octagon house which Paul J. Armour had built in 1858-60 consisted of two stories and a raised basement. No views have ever been found of this early house, but it may be supposed that its appearance would have been very similar, although on a larger scale, to an engraving of an octagon house which appeared in a pattern book of the time.

Implicit in Armour's Octagon House are Fowler's tenants of "convenience and delight" derived from the "compactness within and generous light from without" of the octagonal form. Extending five feet above ground level, the basement had numerous windows affording indirect light and ventilation. The basement also received the delivery of staples to the house, which were processed and then supplied to upper floors by a mechanical lift. A central, vertical stairway spine served a dual purpose as circulation core and ventilation shaft, permitting hot air to rise and disperse in the summer and to heat upper floors in the winter. Windows on eight sides provided continuous daylight and views in all directions. The color scheme of the original house consisted of tan siding, dark tan trim and deep green window sashes.

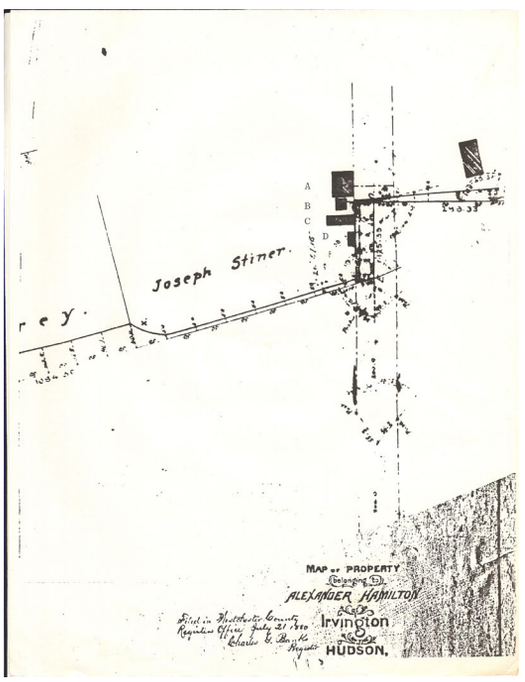

Two story 1850 octagon house Montvale, NJ
(Author's collection)

Due to the expansion of the property by Stiner in 1872 and the reorientation of the entrance to the house, the landscaping of the Armour period is obscure and no outbuildings remain from that period.

Joseph H. Stiner

We boys at times wondered if Mr. Stiner came over to buy goods or tell stories.
— Abraham Wakeman in History and
Reminiscences in *Lower Wall Street*

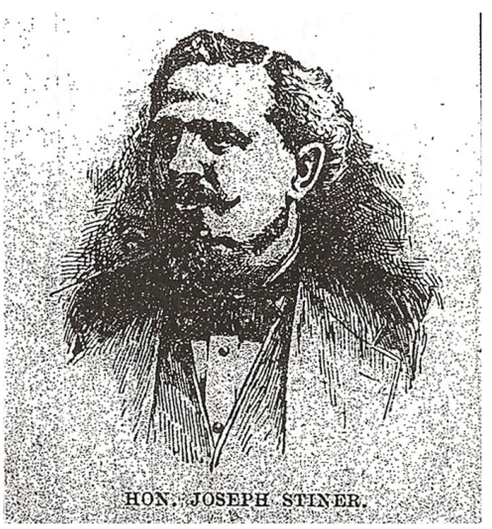
In 1872 the Armour house was purchased for $27,000 by Joseph H. Stiner, a prominent New York City tea merchant. Stiner, acting with great confidence, immediately extended and improved the property by acquiring land to the south from James Alexander Hamilton (son of President Alexander Hamilton), substantially reconstructing the interiors and adding the elaborate dome and verandah to create an elaborately detailed, classical Roman Temple.



The increased height made it possible take fuller advantage of the pastoral site with its extensive prospect over the Hudson Valley. Stiner, his first wife Hannah, and their six children used the house as a summer and weekend retreat. The ornate details added at this time gave the house a festive summery nature.

Stiner had been born in Hungary in 1827. After college, he served in the Austrian Army in the War of 1848 with France and Italy. He later emigrated to the United States in 1852. On his way to the United States, he visited Jamaica, W.I. where he met for the first time his stepbrother's daughter and future wife, Hannah, whom he would marry in 1856. Born in Jamaica in 1836, Hannah's mother was Esther Henriques, a member of an aristocratic West Indian family.

Stiner began a small chain of tea and spice shops in New York City in 1853 with his stepbrother and future father-in-law, Jacob Stiner, who had been in the trade in the West Indies. The business partnership ended in litigation in 1867. Joseph Stiner retained over a dozen stores upon settlement and continued to market spices, condensed milk, cocoa, flavoring extracts as well as tea and coffee. In 1871, he attempted unsuccessfully to establish a wholesale tea enterprise and suffered heavy losses.



Joseph Stiner, Dobbs Ferry Register, July 9, 1987

This financial failure did not prevent Stiner's purchase of the Armour property in 1872, its spectacular rebuilding and enlargement and the acquisition of an additional one-and-a-half acre parcel from the Hamilton estate to the south for $16,700.

Stiner traveled extensively throughout the world, and was noted as a connoisseur and collector of art. A breeder of horses and dogs, he had the head of "Prince", his prize winning White English Terrier, cast in iron in the center medallion of each bay of the cast iron railing of the new verandah.

In 1878 Joseph Stiner was a member of a real estate pool losing $135,000 by speculation and, in 1881, Hannah Stiner died. Amidst these unhappy circumstances, Stiner sold the Octagon House on January 3, 1882, for $22,250 an amount that was less than what he had paid ten years earlier for the unembellished property without the additional land. The family moved to neighboring Dobbs Ferry, where he died of cancer of the larynx in 1897. His obituary in the New York Times described him as:

> *"at one time the largest retail dealer in teas in the world, his firm owning seventy-six large stores in the City and Brooklyn. He owned and occupied a beautiful villa at Irvington-on-Hudson, but more recently removed to Dobbs Ferry, where he had a handsome place."*

The Joseph H. Stiner Octagon House (1872-1882)

. . .seek for a design at once original, striking, appropriate and picturesque
— Samuel Sloan

Of the hundreds of octagon houses constructed in nineteenth-century America, none were more distinctive than the Irvington-on-Hudson structure after its 1870's rebuilding by its new owner, Joseph H. Stiner. Except for the foundation, portions of the exterior walls and some of the interior partitions, his campaign resulted in a completely rebuilt structure.

Stiner's most visually striking contribution was the addition of a two-story dome surmounted by an Observatory and a colonnaded verandah reached by paired sweeping stairs flanked by cast stone lions, The verandah has fifty-six columns with capitals carved in the shape of flowers local to the grounds and an ornate cast iron railing.

Here, in nineteenth century America, Stiner created in wood, slate and cast iron the ultimate American exotic villa. The concept of a villa goes back thousands of years to the Romans who built countryside pleasure houses in a classical form for occasional use. Gerase Wheeler, a nineteenth century American architect, defines villas in his 1867 book, Homes for the People:

> *The word originated with the Italians, who applied it to those pleasure houses built in the vicinity of their larger towns, by men of wealth and leisure. They were not houses of constant residence. . .the villa should resemble the early buildings which gave it birth. . .*

The notion of houses that "were not houses of constant residence" has 18th century precedence in the German lustschloss, the English country house and the French maison de plaisance. Jerome Zerbe in his book Les Pavillons of the Eighteenth Century described a maison de plaisance as the pavilion that provided an escape from the trying duties of Court life and pavilions de rendezvous or folies d'armour as the pavilions which sprang up all over Paris for the installation of a mistress.

We take our title from these garden-houses, if big enough to be lived in, t
hat have a particular garden quality and were constructed out of a desire to get away.
— *Les Pavillons*

George Earl. White English Terrier, "Prince" (c. 1856).

"Prince," cast-iron railing

Lion at the south stair

Lion at the north stair

Folie in French and folly in English, suggest a building which is either bizarre or extravagant.

The most interesting of this type of eighteenth-century building is the Desert de Retz which took the form of an oversized ruined column and base. It was built in 1771 by the rich dilettante, Chevalier Francois Racine de Monville, who was both owner and architect. Like the Octagon House one hundred years later, it was a marvelous merger of classical architecture in a romantic context.

The classical form of Stiner's house was given its romantic quality by coloring. A half dozen shades are employed to highlight the various applied moldings, decorative scrollwork, capitals and consoles. The main siding is light rose, the window sashes are deep red and the surfaces within the circular moldings are crimson. The stacked moldings and fasciae framing windows and walls are cocoa-tan and two shades of gray. The finer details of the capitals, railings and porch ceiling are picked out in red, white, violet, light blue and several shades of gray. The dome is festooned in patterned red, green and black slate accented with gold painted cast iron cresting and elaborately carved, painted wood scrollwork.

The configuration of an octagonal structure surmounted by a dome and surrounded by a colonnade has ancient origins as in Greece in the Phillipeion at Olympia and the Tholos at Epidauros both from the 4th century B.C. Vitruvius describes in his first century B.C. book, The Ten Books of Architecture, an eight-sided structure known as the Tower of Wind which was built in Athens at that time. Octagonal and circular forms, crowned with hemospherical domes and surrounded with a colonnade were actively used for early Roman temples of which several examples of the 1st and 2nd centuries remain. The octagonal shape has symbolism rooted in Medieval churches. Saint Ambroise explained that the 4th century octagonal baptistery at Milan symbolized salvation and new life. The number eight standing for the eight day (the day of Christ's resurrection), the eight day of the world (that of eternity, after the traditional seven ages) and the eight day of human life (that of eternal life). The inscription on the wall, credited to Saint Ambrose reads:

Eight-niched soars this temple for sacred rites
Eight corners has its font
Right it is to build this baptismal hall about the sacred number eight
For here the people are reborn.

During the Renaissance, it was rediscovered and used mainly as an ecclesiastical design. In eighteenth century England, the form was popular for garden pavilions in Country House landscapes. The Stiner Octagon House is the rebirth of an ancient classical form uniquely adopted for domestic use.

The popularity of classical forms in the third quarter of 19th century America was based upon redecorating by Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon III, who ruled France from 1852 to 1870. In the redecoration of her palaces, the Empress used a Louis XVI revival style which was widely publicized by the growing number of design books and magazines of the time. The original 18th century Louis XVI style had been a revival of interest in

Désert de Retz — *The Broken Column*, Michael Kenna 1988

the classical arts of ancient Greece and Rome inspired by the Pompeian and Herculean discoveries of the mid-18th century.

While the primary inspiration for both Armour's and Stiner's campaigns was Orson Fowler's renowned publication, his ideas had been expanded upon by architects of the time. The Philadelphia architect, Samuel Sloan, inserted an octagonal design for an "Oriental Villa" in his 1852 book, The Model Architect.

The illustrated design consisted of a two-story octagonal structure with a raised basement and an observatory crowned by a decorative bulbous cupola. In 1859, Dr. Haller Nutt of Natchez, Mississippi, engaged Sloan to employ an enlarged version of this design for his home which was to be called Longwood.

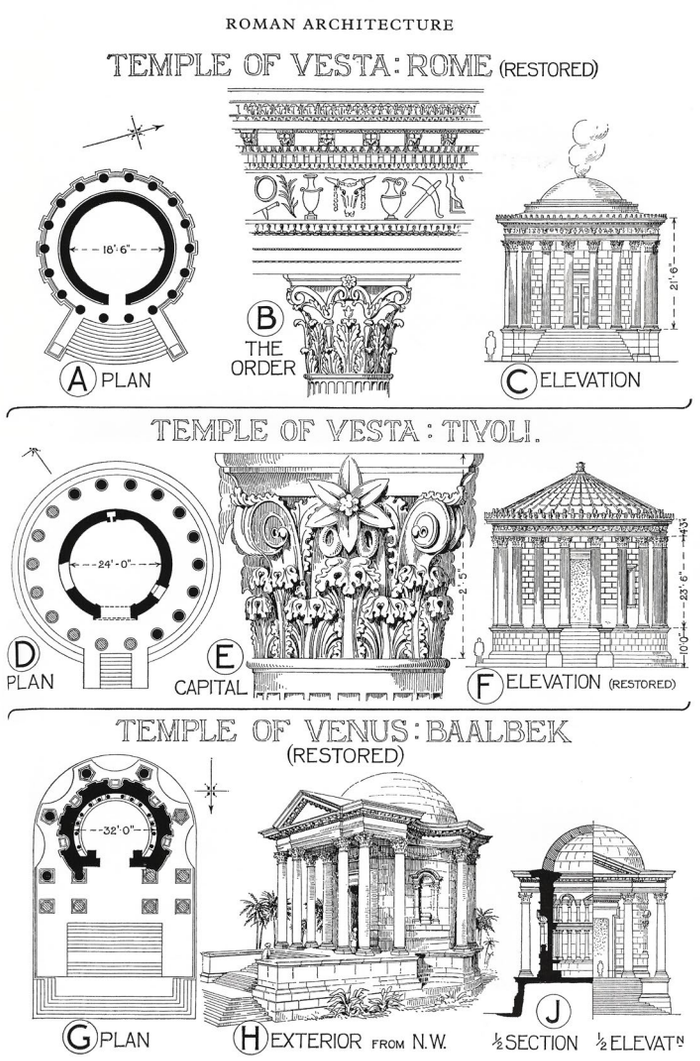
The final design consisted of two floors with piazzas on every other side of the octagon with rooms in between. Like the villa in The Model Architect, the core of the house was to be a great rotunda.

In 1861, Samuel Sloan described this revised "Oriental Villa":

The choice of style in this example was less a matter of caprice than the natural growth of the ground plan adopted. The Moorish arch employed in the balconies and the foliated drapery of the verandahs will fully sustain us in the application of the term "Oriental", despite the Italian details of cornice and window.

Unfortunately, the war between the States began in 1861, and the men working on the unfinished villa exchanged their construction tools for instruments of destruction, and never returned to the task of completing Longwood. Many of the orders for furnishings were canceled, and only the basement was made livable

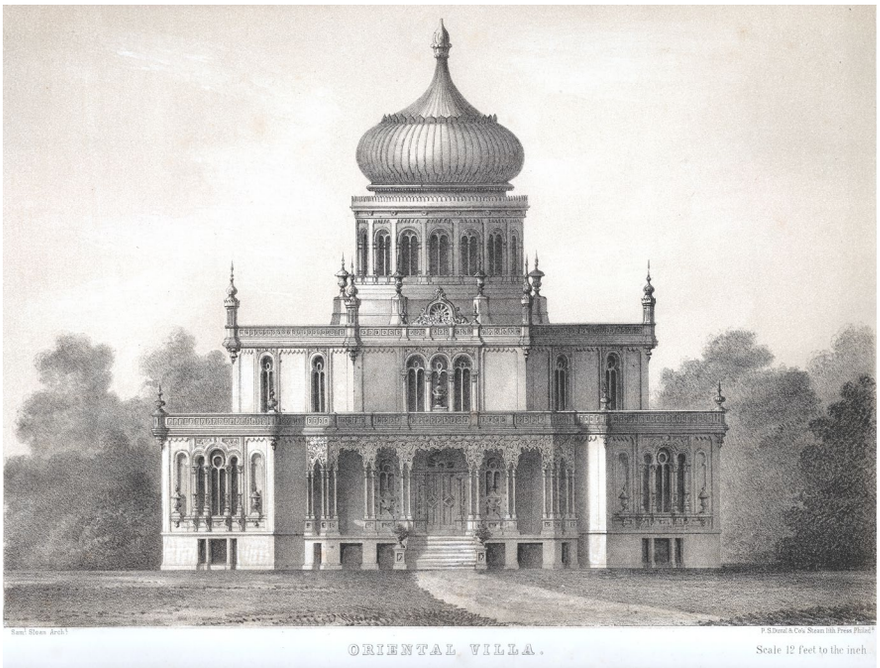
Stiner's 1872 building campaign uniquely weaves Orson Fowler's form and function philosophies with the exotic design recommendations of architects like Samuel Sloan.



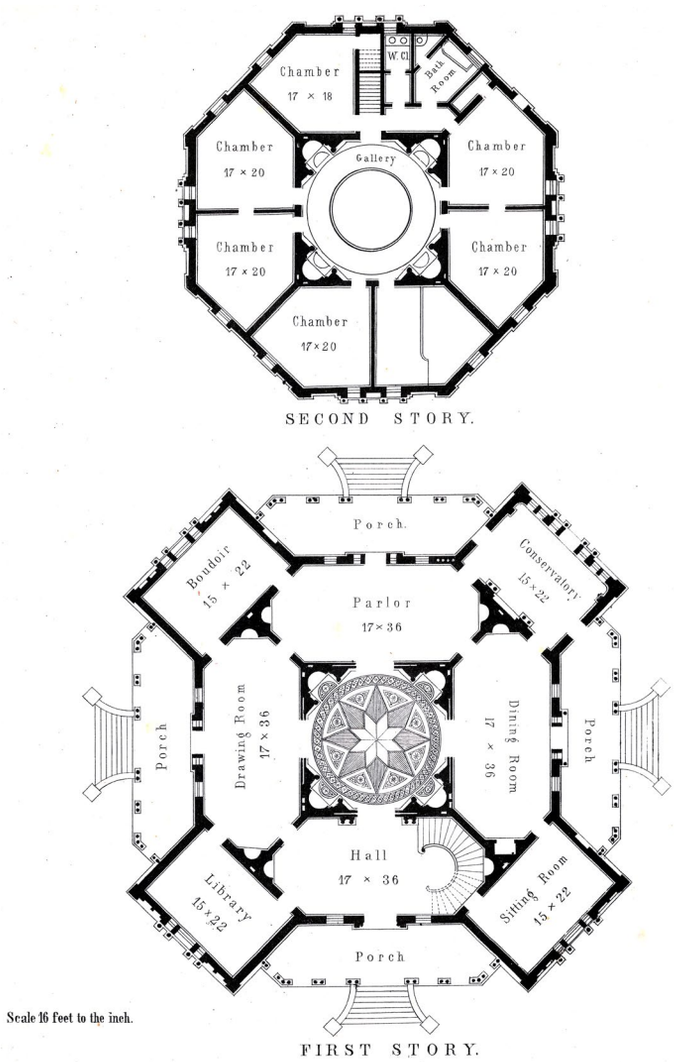
Stiner's Octagon House consists of a full basement, four stories and an Observatory. As in Armour's time, the basement is seven feet below ground level, but with a ceiling height of ten and one-half feet, there are high windows on all eight sides bringing indirect light and ventilation. Access to the raised first floor verandah and main entrance was now by means of the pair of magnificent curving stairs. A service stairway on the south facade gives access to the basement.

A central, vertical stairway spine continued to serve the dual purpose of a circulation core and a ventilation shaft and it is topped by an observatory with eight windows. When two of the windows are opened in the direction of the prevailing breeze a negative pressure is created within the house. In the summer this causes the hot air to rise and disperse out of the observatory which induces the cool air in from the basement. Victorians in general were deeply concerned with the relationship between health and architectural design. Like his contemporaries, "ventilation was", according to Fowler, "as important in a house as breath to human life and strength." The verandah encircled the entire first floor of Stiner's residence. As Fowler noted, 'the advantages of having them all around the house is considerable, allowing you to choose sun or shade, breeze or shelter from it, as comfort dictates."

The basement contains the billiard room, wine storeroom, service kitchen, larder, laundry



"Oriental Villa", Samuel Sloan, Architect, c. 1852



"Oriental Villa" Plans, Samuel Sloan, Architect, c. 1852

room and furnace room. The first floor, raised above ground level in the tradition of a piano nobile, contains rooms for formal and social functions. These consist of a main salon, dining room, tea room, solarium and library. A pantry, adjacent to the dining room, is linked to the downstairs kitchen by means of a dumbwaiter. Flanking the pantry is the upstairs kitchen with detailing and finishing that clearly indicate that, unlike the downstairs service kitchen, it was used by the family. This kitchen is indicative of the emerging women's role in family work in the middle and upper classes.

As Harriet Beecher Stowe stated in her 1869 book, The American Woman's Home:

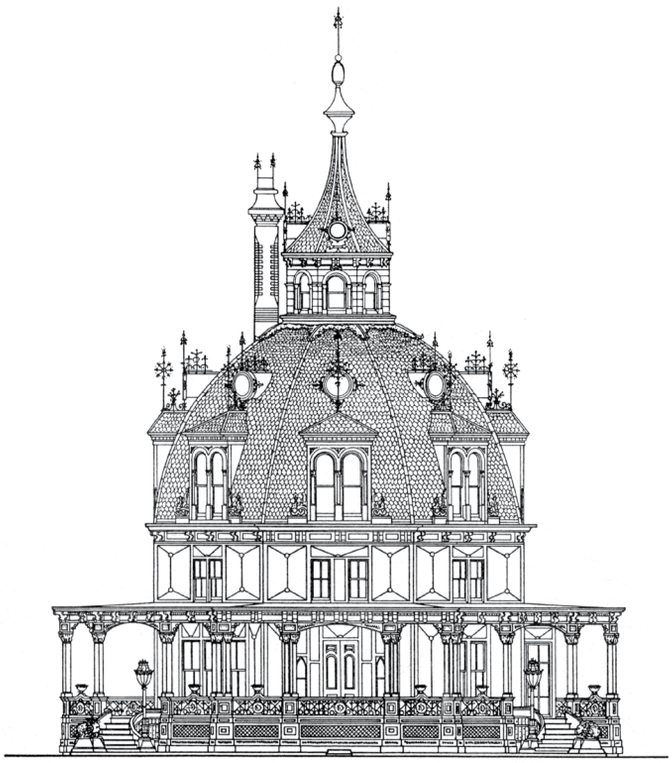
To the minds of most children and servants, 'to be a lady', is almost synonymous with 'to be waited on and do no work'. It is the earnest desire of the author of this volume to make plain the falsity of this growing popular feeling, and to show how much happier and more efficient family life will become when it is strengthened, sustained and adorned by family work.

All "the rough and bad smelling work of the family" was conducted in the downstairs service kitchen.

The second floor contains a three-room master bedroom suite with a sitting room, master bedroom and dressing room along with a master bathroom. In addition there are four more bedrooms, a full bathroom and a toilet room. On the third floor is the high ceilinged Egyptian Revival women's gymnasium/music room, a bedroom with a bathroom, an additional bedroom, a room for the exhibit of collections and a full bathroom accessed by the hall. The fourth floor consists of the unpartitoned dance room with eight windows and a spiral staircase up to the fifth level observatory. The floor plans displayed, as Fowler stated:

...all the peculiarities and the advantages of our octagon style, namely, compactness and contiguity of rooms, central stairway, closets, and small bedrooms.

Interior rooms of the Stiner residence are appointed in a hierarchical order befitting their stature. Door and window surrounds of the formal



The Octagon House

rooms are elaborately endowed with now extinct long-leaf yellow pine octagonal moldings and bases with florid Gothic Revival acanthus leaf capitals. Windows and doors of the upper floors maintain the same vocabulary, but with simpler detailing. The less formal chambers, closets and the basement rooms are lined with beaded-board wainscoting. In the bathrooms and basement the wainscotting has alternating long-leaf yellow pine and walnut slats. Similarly, the floors in the women's gymnasium/music room are alternating long-leaf yellow pine and walnut strips. The first floor rooms and the hallways throughout the house are long-leaf yellow pine strips. The bedrooms have sub-floors for wall to wall carpeting.

The town of Irvington had no central water system until 1883. Rainwater cisterns provided the then-considered-healthier rainwater to the kitchen and bathrooms. A cistern below the verandah dating to Armour's time continued to provide a reservoir of water for the kitchen and cisterns on the third and fourth floors served the bathrooms. This system is as Fowler had recommended:

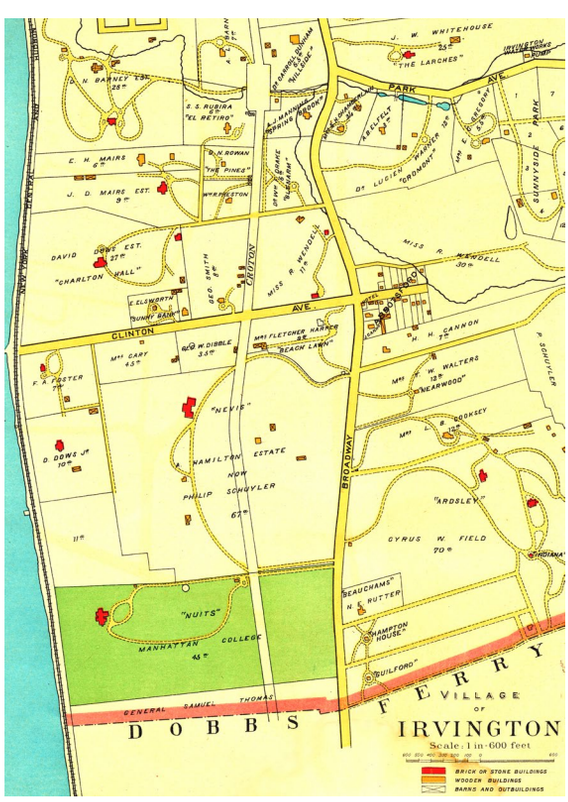
I should want these cisterns, because double-filtered rainwater is preferable to all other water for drinking and culinary purposes. And how much more handy to turn a faucet and draw water direct into a pail, than to raise it from the well, or from a cistern underground or below where you require it for use.

In order to provide hot water, a water line was run into the kitchen wood stove and then to an adjacent tank. A pipe led from the tank to the bathrooms upstairs, with the upstairs cisterns providing the water pressure to drive it back up.

Gas lighting, fed by the village system, was an original component of the house when it was built. In the 1870s, gas illuminated the house from cellar to cupola, including two exterior lanterns. Central heating was also an integral feature of this summer house. To take the chill off Spring and Fall evenings, a coal-fired cast iron furnace in the cellar distributed rising hot air through tin ducts to the upper floor rooms. A system of speaking tubes connected the principal rooms with the service kitchen in the basement.

Several outbuildings existed on the grounds in Stiner's time including a greenhouse and a surviving Oriental style octagonal well house. A 2½ story Carriage House/Barn with servant's quarters above and a shed, both in the polychromatic colors of the house, were destroyed by fire in the 1940s and are now rebuilt.

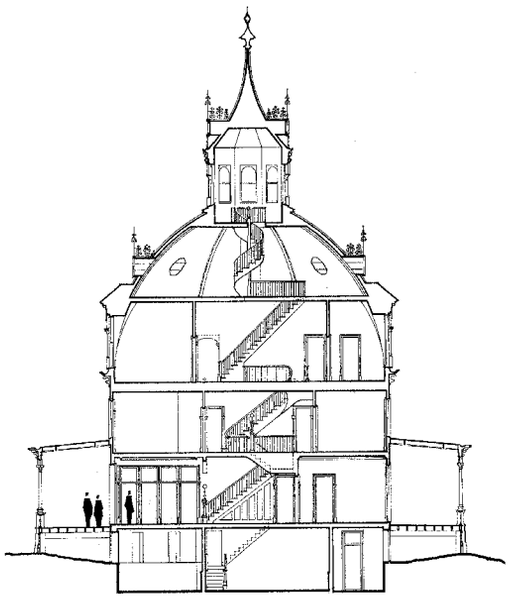
In the tradition of the time, the entire grounds were carefully planted in a picturesque natural form with exotic specimens. A Chinese Cherry Tree (Cornus Mas) defines the edge of the southeast lawn, pruned Norway Spruces line the driveway, West Clinton Avenue is lined with maples, a pair of Kentucky Coffee Trees flank the stairways and the west side of the verandah looks into, the now huge, Magnolias.



1870 Map -- Village of Irvington

George W. Dibble Family

George W. Dibble's family owned a substantial estate named "Nearwood" on South Broadway just a few minutes walk from the Octagon House. Born in 1848, George Dibble married Susie Hayt Parish in 1877. One year later their only child, Mable Elsworth Dibble, was born. The 1880 census shows George, Susie and Mable living in Irvington-on-Hudson, possibly at "Nearwood". George Dibble's business is listed as "no business". In 1882, Susie H. Dibble bought the Octagon House from Joseph H. Stiner. Under its new ownership, the house apparently reverted once again to being a year-round residence.



Section

In 1897, Susie Dibble died at the age of 43 of tuberculosis at Saranac Lake where she was probably being treated for the aliment. In 1899, George Dibble married his second wife, Susie's younger sister, Annie Falls Hayt of Mt. Vernon, New York. George died in 1917 in Mt. Vernon, where he had lived since his second marriage.

Prior to George Dibble's death, ownership of the Octagon House property had gone to his first daughter, Mabel, who had married Floyd Blackwell Taylor and was living in Mt. Vernon. On May 28, 1902, she transferred ownership to Delia Stone Clarke and in November of the same year, at the age of 24, Mabel died of heart failure, just six weeks after giving birth to her second daughter.

Stone Family

In 1902, Delia Stone Clarke was a widow. She had been previously married to Charles S. Clarke. There had been no children. But from a previous marriage, Charles had a legally declared insane daughter, Jessie Clarke, who had been born in 1855. When Delia Stone Clarke died in 1909, the provisions of her will bequeathed the Octagon Houses to her executors and trustees for use by her insane stepdaughter, Jessie Clark, who used the house for 24 years until her death in 1933. The property then reverted to Delia's nieces who immediately after their inheritance sold it to Dr. Erwin Brand for $15,000.

Dr. Erwin Brand

One of American's most colorful and creative personalities in the field of biochemistry.
— 1953 obituary

In 1933, 42 year old Dr. Erwin Brand was an associate professor of biochemistry at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons where he was an authority on amino acids. Brand had been born in Berlin in 1891, studied in Germany and was credited with performing brilliant initial studies on oxazolidines at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute in Dresden. Brand immigrated to the United States in 1922, working first at Montefiore Hospital, followed by the New York State Psychiatric Institute and, from 1931 onward, at Columbia University where he continued his research on metabolism and amino acids.

When World War II broke out, under a contract with Columbia University and the Office of Scientific Research and Development, a federal agency created to coordinate scientific research for military purposes during World War II, Erwin Brand performed the first complete analysis of a protein in terms of its amino acid content. In the early 1940s, he began to devoted extensive energies to chemical societies. In 1952, he was invited to the India Science Congress in Calcutta. In the last ten years of his life, with the financial assistance of the Office of Naval Research and of the National Institutes of Health, he threw all his energies into turning his laboratory into a small polypeptide factory

demonstrating the additive function of the asymmetric carbon atoms of the constituent amino acid residues.

Brand's 1953 obituary stated "to many he appeared to be cantankerous, blunt, and forbidding. That despite these impressions he should have accomplished so much of value is a tribute to the very patent sincerity and unselfishness with which he fought for his causes. He was a creative and constructive force, and such people are usually angular and driven by a remorseless energy". He and his wife Florence, also a biochemist, (they had no children) were known for their entertaining at the house.

Curiously, 13 years before Brand's death, the contents of the Octagon House were auctioned off and, on January 17, 1940, title to the property had been transferred from Erwin Brand to the New York Lien Corporation as part of a foreclosure of a tax lien.

From the east - 1940s

John P. Cunninghan

First living person to be elected to the Advertising Hall of Fame.

In 1941, John P. Cunningham purchased the Octagon House from the New York Lien Corporation. Cunningham had started in advertising in 1919 as a artist and copywriter. In 1950 he was cofounder of Cunningham and Walsh, which became one of the largest advertising agencies in the world; he retired in 1961.

In the 1970s, Cunningham and his wife Patricia were living in Riverdale, New York. His house contained a bedroom suite and chairs from the Octagon House which, because of the large size of the pieces, had found no buyers at the furnishings auction at the time of the Brand. Being from the 1870s, and containing ocatagonal detailing, they were most likely Stiner furniture. Knowing that I coveted the furniture, when the Cunninghams died, they kindly willed the furniture back to the Octagon House with a codicil requiring that it remain forever in the house.

During the Cunningham ownership, the house was rented from September, 1945 to July, 1946 to Aleko E. Lilius, (1890-1977), a Russian-Finnish writer, photographer and explorer, who wrote of his experiences with Lai Choi San, a female Chinese pirate chief who, with several thousand buccaneers under her command, had looted ships off the coast of China in the 1920's.

In 1946, Cunningham sold the Octagon House to the noted author, poet and historian Carl Carmer for $8,500.

Caretaker's daughters 1930s? - 1940s

Aleko E. Lilius Winter 1945-6 (Compliments of Marit Lindqvist, Aleko E. Lilius Biographer)

Lai Choi San (far right) with her two amahs

Carl Carmer

For people who choose to live in octagon houses are mad and therefore unpredictable, and therefore sometimes worthy of psychic research.
— Carl Carmer

One of the most celebrated occupants of Octagon House was Carl Carmer (1893-1976), the author, poet and historian. In 1946, Carl Carmer bought the Octagon House. His wife, Betty, later described the day:

> *One day, when we were living in a brownstone in New York City, Carl saw the house in the want ads. He got up, went to the car, drove to Irvington and bought it, all in the same afternoon. It was in terrible condition. He came back and told me 'it's so ugly, it's beautiful!' He bought it without my even seeing it. . .*

Carmer resided in the house from 1946 to the time of his death in 1978. His legacy includes tales of a resident ghost. During Carmer's ownership the house was documented in magazine and newspaper articles, books and architectural treatises.

Carl Carmer had been born in upstate New York in 1894 to an old Dutch farming family. He graduated from Hamilton College in 1914 and, after earning a Master of Arts degree at Harvard University, taught English at Syracuse University and the University of Rochester. He served as a First Lieutenant in World War I. After the war, he obtained an appointment as Assistant Professor of English at the University of Alabama where he remained for six years. During that time he explored the Alabama backwoods areas, listening to native tales and lore and noting the peculiarities and characteristics of the region.

After a year as columnist of the New Orleans Morning Tribune, he became Assistant Editor of Vanity Fair in New York and later Associate Editor of Theater Arts Monthly. He married his second wife, Elizabeth Black of New Orleans, on Christmas Day 1928. Beginning his writing career as a poet with two volumes published in 1934; French Town and Deep South, he wove his experiences in Alabama into his first nationally noted book, Stars Fell on Alabama, a Literary Guild selection published in 1934. From that time forward, Carmer devoted most of his time to writing. He was the editor of the Rivers of America Series writing The Hudson in 1939 and editing a book of river songs entitled Songs of the Rivers of America. His lifelong interest in, and affection for, upper New York State are apparent in his books about the area including the 1936, Listen for a Lonesome Drummer: A York State Chronicle and the 1949, Dark Trees to the Wind - A Cycle of York State Years. His one novel, Genesee River, published in 1941, also a Literary Guild selection, sold over 100,000 copies. He wrote seven children's books, five of which were illustrated by his wife.

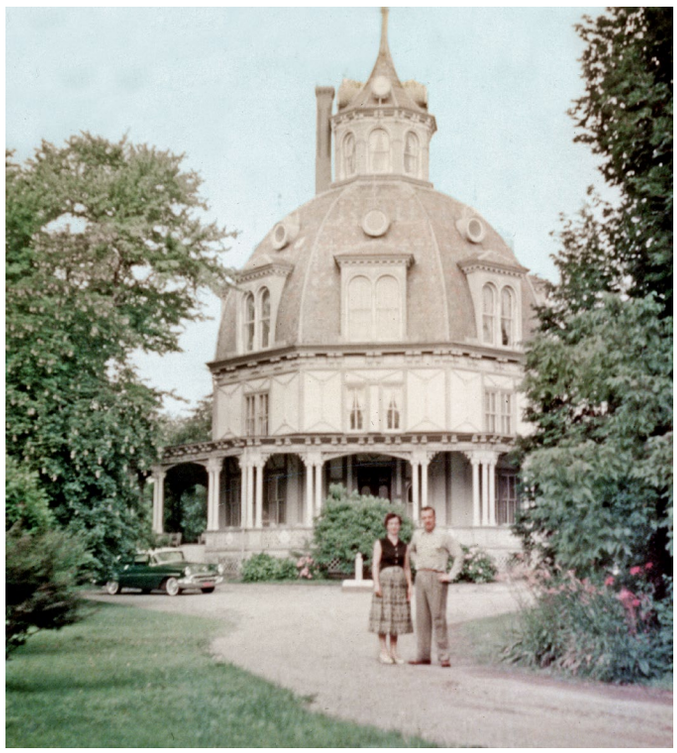
The Carmer's 1947 Lawn Party for Life Magazine


Croquet on the lawn 1947 for Life Magazine

During World War II, as a writer attached to the Army Air Force,

Carmer wrote The Jesse James of the Java Sea, a narrative of submarine battle service, The War Against God, an exposé of Nazi attacks on Christianity and Taps is not Enough, a radio drama V-E Day program for CBS. At a dinner for visiting British publishers he was introduced as "the completely American" writer. His own radio show dealt with national folk heroes and folk myths. He assembled four volumes of recordings of regional American Songs for Decca and worked with Walt Disney on a series of folklore shorts.

Carmer devoted much time to civic activities including serving as president of the Author's Guild, president of the Poetry Society of America, director of the American Civil Liberties Union and head of the American Center of P.E.N. Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference (later Scenic Hudson, Inc.) was founded in the living room of the Octagon House in 1963 to oppose the Consolidated Edison Company's proposed pumped storage facility at Storm King Mountain, near Cornwall, New York. He headed Boscobel Restoration which saved and restored an important 1806 neoclassical house which now overlooks the Hudson in Garrison, New York.



Carl & Betty Carmer, 1950s

Robert Boyle, author the ecological study of the river of The Hudson River, , said that "without Carl Carmer there would be no living river. He was the first to take an intelligent interest in it."

The Carmers lived full time in Irvington, with lengthy winter vacations in Florida when drafts made the house too uncomfortable. Every September, Carl's birthday was celebrated with a large house party attended by an array of New York City actors and fellow writers and broadcasters. A popular gift for the Carmers was a curiosity from the Victorian Era. The Carmers had no children, but the house, jammed packed with their esoteric collections, always bustled with friends and neighbors. When the Carmers had their great parties, Betty Carmer would usually dance on the top of the kitchen table which had a top that was a horizontal slice from a great Redwood Tree.

William Carlos Williams, Charles Sheeler & Carl Carmer1961
Elizabeth Black Carmer, Photographer - Smithsonian Institute

In 1947, one year after their purchase, the Carmers hosted a party at the Octagon House which was featured in an article in Life Magazine Life Goes to a Party in an Octagon House, Life Magazine November 24, 1947). Evidencing the disdain for Victorian House in the mid-twentieth century, Octagon House is described as "the magnificent monstrosity looming like a pastry chef's nightmare".

Carmer enjoyed relating tales about the Octagon House which appeared in his books:

High on the east bank of the Hudson River, and only twenty miles from New York City, stands a strange eight-sided house. It seems to have a park of its own, for it is surrounded by a high hedge in which the bushes were so planted that a number of them bloom in each month from March to October. The park has a unique atmosphere, and anyone who enters it through the winding driveway becomes aware that the trees are of unusual varieties and were planted long ago. Here stand tulip trees, magnolias, maples of Norway and Japan, and a tremendous giant called a

'Kentucky Coffee Tree' of a sort which was popular among Hudson Valley residents a hundred years ago. Perhaps the strangest of the trees are the Chinese ginkgoes, whose leaves in sunlight throw intricate shadows on the green lawn. Since the largest of these stands near the old well-house, which was made in the shape of Chinese Pagoda, the visitor gets a sense of Chinese influence before he reaches the end of the drive. The house, which is painted in two shades of gray and decorated with white trim, rises five stories high, the last one being a many windowed cupola which is higher than even the tallest trees. It surmounts a slate-roofed two-storied dome which curves upward from the walls of the second floor. The first floor is circled by a wide verandah bordered by an elaborately designed white wrought iron railing from which white pillars in groups of three rise to flowered capitals beneath the eaves.

The prosperous merchant to whom this mansion belonged completed it almost a century ago. He was an importer of Chinese teas, and he had recognized in a number of octagon houses then being built (for the building of eight-sided houses was an architectural fad at the time) a similarity to Oriental "summerhouses" which he had seen in his travels beside the lakes and rivers of China. Consequently, many of the designs of the decorations within the house are of Chinese origin, giving it an atmosphere not to be found in any other American dwelling.

The whole place looks as if it has been the scene of a mysterious story. It has been! And it is this story I am about to tell.

When his wife died, the merchant was heartbroken and left the house, which held many happy memories for him. He sold it to a French lady of noble family who, after her husband's death, had brought her only daughter to America. The girl had inherited from her mother great charm and a lively temperament. She was darkly beautiful with black hair and even blacker eyes and her form was slim and exquisitely modeled.

On a great estate near by lived a rich and aristocratic American family whose ancestors of English blood had lived for several generations in feudal splendor among the "Sugar Islands" off the southern coast of eastern North America. The eldest son of this family has no sooner seen his lovely young neighbor than he fell desperately in love with her. His parents soon discovered that he was making daily visits to the Octagon House whose cupola they could see rising above the hills and trees to the north of their home. Since they had already planned for his marriage to the daughter of another of the great-estate families of the valley, they disapproved of his interest in the French girl and forbade him to see her again.

Though he continued his visits secretly, the girl's mother soon became aware of the situation and, being a person of great family pride herself, ordered her daughter not to see her ardent wooer again. The young couple then took to meeting in a lonely spot on the bank of the river. They soon felt that the restrictions put upon them were intolerable and they planned to run away to New York and be married.

One morning in the spring of the year they met again by the river and hastened to Tarrytown to embark on a steamboat for New York, where they intended to be married. Unhappily for them, a servant of the young man's family saw them hurrying along the riverbank and reported the fact to his employers. At once the father set out in hot pursuit on a spirited horse. In the meantime, his wife ordered her carriage and went to the Octagon House, where she upbraided the girl's mother and accused her of conspiring with the lovers.

The pursuing horseman galloped onto the Tarrytown dock just after the gangplank of the steamboat had been drawn aboard.

The steamboat, it developed, was racing against a competitor owned by a rival line. As it entered the shadow of the Palisades, the boiler, which had been subjected to terrific pressure, burst, killing the young man instantly. The steamboat caught fire, and the remaining passengers were soon confronted with the choice of burning to death or attempting to swim from midstream to the shore. That evening when the bodies of the drowned lay upon the river's bank, the corpse of the girl was among them.

The next day a farmer's wagon approached the Octagon House bearing a pine box.To the consternation of the driver, however, he was met by an angry woman who bitterly refused to accept his cargo. Eventually the girl was buried in a potter's field near the river.

This should end the story of the fated lovers.

Nevertheless, a happenstance — possibly an unrelated coincidence — could be considered by the romantic-minded as having a late bearing upon it.

My wife and I now live in the old Octagon House. Twice in recent successive springs my wife has wakened at the end of a strange dream. In it she stands on the moonlit verandah and sees a young girl walking up the drive. She seems to be surrounded by mellow golden light. Suddenly from the shadows of the verandah darts an older woman, who bars the path of the girl and by stern gestures bids her be gone. The girl wrings her hands and weeps, but her companion is obdurate. At last the girl turns about and, still weeping, walks back whence she came. As she reaches the pagoda-like well-house, she turns about for one last look. As she goes so, the other woman beckons to her and opens her arms. The girl begins to run toward her — and the dream ends!

It seems to the present occupants of the house that the two have been reconciled, because whenever we have a visitor who claims to have psychic powers and to understand ghosts, we hear that Octagon House has a special feeling about it— a kind of aura from the past which bears with it a sense of happiness."

With Carl in his 80's and Betty in her 70's and the house badly in need of work, the Carmers offered the house for sale in 1975. On September 10, 1976, the National Trust for Historic Preservation took title to the Octagon House; the next day Carl Carmer died. He left knowing that his beloved house was in good hands.

Shortly afterwards it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places - one of only twelve hundred National Historic Landmarks - nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior.

Carl & Betty Carmer - Music Room

The Dibble (1882-1902), Stone (1902-1933), Brand (1933-1940), Cunningham (1940-1946), Carmer (1946-1976) Octagon House

While it is possible to attribute particular aspects of the Octagon House to Armour and to Stiner, it is less possible to differentiate the efforts and changes of the next five owners, Dibble, Stone, Brand, Cunningham and Carmer.

Under the Dibble family ownership (1882-1902), the house received a repainting. A black and white photograph of George W. Dibble in the New York Historical Society shows a dark and light contrasting paint scheme. Paint analysis determined that these ca. 1885 colors were light tan contrasted with dark grey-green and dark red. On the interior, a redecoration of the Tearoom can almost certainly be attributed to Dibble consisting of wallpaper with a flower and bird design surmounted by a gold leaf picture molding.

During the Stone, Brand, Cunningham, and Carmer ownership (1902-1976) most of the cresting and scrollwork, the chimney cap, the southern lamppost, the verandah urns and the first and second floor shutters were lost. The flanking curved front stairs had a simpler replacement and a section of the south side cast iron railing was removed and a straight stair installed. The exterior was been repainted several times. In 1976 the house had a gray and white scheme, painted by Carmer in 1959. On the interior all of the originally varnished wood trim had been painted white , all carpets removed and, except for the Tearoom, all walls and ceilings had been over-painted with a white paint. All furnishings and decorations of the Stiner era had been removed. Electricity had been installed and the Carmers had converted the Tearoom to a lavatory. The heating system, still the original cast iron furnace in a brick chamber, had been converted from coal burning to oil.

In 1945, a fire had swept through the two and one half story carriage house/barn/shed complex. Whatever remainders of the missing elements that were stored in the complex were lost at that time.

By 1976, the grounds were substantially different from the Stiner era. The few remaining original specimens were now mature and subsequent owners had made numerous additions. The flanking Kentucky coffee trees on each side of the house were gone. Only one Norway spruce, of the original twelve which had lined the driveway, remained and, contrary to its original

Carriage House/Barn February 3,1944

sheared condition, it had grown enormous. Originally mock orange, viburnum and lilac hedges defined the street and aqueduct boundaries, later generations remained. Over time, hemlocks and white pine had been planted to screen the property line, these had matured to full size. The Norway maple trees which had originally been planted along the street had, for the most part, disappeared.

North stair - 1970s

Music Room - 1970s

The Octagon House, 1975–1978

The Octagon House in 1975

Sad are the ruthless ravages of time! The bulwark'd turret frowning, once sublime.
Now totters to its basis, and displays. A venerable wreck of other days!
— Sir Walter Scott, The Bridal of Triermain, Images of Cumbria Penrith

One hundred and sixteen years after the original construction of the Octagon House, seven family owners, tenants, a foreclosure, an auction of the contents, a Panic, a Depression and time had all taken their toll on this magnificent structure. Its deteriorating condition with gray and white flaking paint, the curious shape, its missing elements with somewhat awkward replacements all coupled with unusual tales contributed to a less than happy image. The overgrown grounds with specimens choked by bittersweet vines did not help the setting. But the truly serious problem was a structural issue.

When Stiner had added the dome in 1872, his builder had failed to install a tension ring, a continuous band at the base of a dome which stops the downward force from moving laterally. This was not due to lack of knowledge; construction methodology books of the time clearly recommend this required element. Unless there is a tension ring or very rigid joints, a dome will fail. This was exactly what was occurring in the Octagon House dome.

The problem was an old one with the failure probably beginning within a few years of the initial dome addition. Over the years, the only reaction to the problem had been the sealing of the cracks with plaster. Stiner's builders had further compounded the problem by placing the dome on the unstable parapet walls of the original Armour house. The now structurally unsound dome was resting on an unstable support. In addition, Stiner's builders, when they had rebuilt the interior, had positioned the new partitions without regard to the floor beams. This was resulting in substantial deflection of undersized beams, which was apparent in the sloping floors and out of plumb doorways. Finally, the shifting dome had caused numerous openings in the exterior resulting in substantial water damage which was largely concealed in the exterior walls and behind the terne and slate roofs.

While the structural problems were unique, the house had all of the expected problems of a building of this age and condition except layout changes. Fortunately, the symmetrical self-contained form of the Octagon House did not lend itself to additions and its size exceeded the requirements of most twentieth-century occupants. In the interior of the house, there were essentially no changes to the 1872 layout. But the heating system, which was producing dangerous

fumes, only served the first two floors and one room on the third. The electrical system was insufficient and, in some areas, improperly installed. The 100 years old plumbing system had additions that had been installed outside the walls and ceilings.

The loss of the original exterior cast iron cresting and vulnerable wood scrollwork had most visibly affected the appearance of the house.

The 1885 photograph of George Dibble, shows areas of physical deterioration in the form of missing slate and dormer scrollwork only one decade after their installation. In 1976, no original scrollwork survived on the third, fourth or fifth floors — in fact early 1940's photographs showed that it had not existed for many decades. Wooden dormer supports on the cupola were replaced in this century, possibly in 1959 when the Carmers undertook a modest restoration. All of the third floor cast-iron cresting had been removed, no doubt as a safety precaution since these perilously tall and heavy poles were poorly fastened to the house. Cresting from the chimney cap and cupola finial had completely disappeared, as had the chimney cap itself. Asphalt shingles, in lieu of slate, had been applied onto several third floor dormer roofs and the original terne sheathing of the porch roof had received many coatings of tar.

Dance Room - 1970s

At some point in the early twentieth century, the exterior staircases had been completely rebuilt. While the new stairs somewhat maintained the shape and plan of the original Stiner effort, the stairway skirting had been rebuilt with beaded boards, and the trim was simply applied omitting the elaborate and difficult to reproduce kerf of its predecessor.

The entire property needed conservation efforts including every part of the utility and mechanical systems, the entire fabric of the house, the complete surface decoration and the grounds in their totality. While the house generally looked only very run down, the structural problems were in fact unique and extremely serious.

Opening in dome - Music Room, 1976

Opening in dome - Music Room, 1978

"I believe in my heart of hearts that it is better to have your ship sunk at sea than have it rot in the harbor."
— Cory Booker, mayor of Newark, New Jersey
Commencement address, Bard College May 26, 2012

The Acquisition 1975-1978

"...the law's delay!"
— Shakespeare, Hamlet III i 56

Observatory - 1970s

In the winter of 1975, there appeared to be insurmountable problems associated with the acquisition, stabilization and restoration of the Octagon House. First, it seemed that the best price for the property would be from a developer wanting to demolish the Octagon House and subdivide the almost four acres of land into ½ acre plots. The plots, in a superb area, on a beautiful road, would have been quite valuable. (The developer was prepared to call the subdivision "Octagon Park" if a zoning variance was granted to permit eight houses).

The Carmers were absolutely opposed to a sale to a developer, but the land was establishing the value. Second, even if a sympathetic purchaser could be found, the physical condition of the house made it unlikely that any bank would be willing to hold a mortgage. Third, and most significant, the unstable condition of the dome was on the verge of a complete structural failure. But it was prohibitively expensive to secure the dome by complete removal and rebuilding.

In order to protect the Octagon House from any possible demolition or compromise by future unsympathetic owners, the property was acquired by the National Trust for Historic Preservation on September 10, 1976, as part of its Limited Endangered Building Fund. This revolving fund had been formulated especially for this purpose and the Octagon House was to be its first application.

On October 2, 1976, the contents of the house were auctioned off. The furnishings were not original to the house, being a combination of Carmer family items and pieces collected by them over the years.

On October 24, 1976, The New York Times reported:

> *The new owner is the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which stepped in when it looked as if a potential buyer of the house and its three-acre site had a tear-it-down-for-development gleam in his eye. The National Trust paid about $100,000 for the property, the first outright purchase of a building under its Limited Endangered Building Fund. It now plans to resell the house to a buyer who will preserve it and hopefully, restore it as well. It needs work. For one thing, from the top floor daylight can be seen through parts of the roof. 'We'll have to figure out some way to make sure we can draw the eight sides of the roof back together,' said Fletcher Cox of the National Trust. 'It's going to be an interesting feat'. What will the National Trust ask for 'Octagon House'? 'Whatever we can get for it', Mr. Cox replied, laughing. 'The house is not in very good condition structurally and whoever buys it is going to have a tough time and a lot of expense putting it back into really good condition.'*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation was deeply concerned about the structural problems and the conservation of the property. They requested proposals for its sale with their decision being based upon structural repair methodology, price and willingness to accept a preservation easement. In November, the National Trust invited proposals to purchase the property and provided an Invitation for Proposals which outlined the conditions.

The outlined conditions in summary consisted of:

I. GENERAL AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF SALE:

A. The property shall be subject to covenants in perpetuity including:
   1. The exterior appearance shall be maintained and preserved.
   2. No buildings shall be built on the property except the present residence and outbuildings appropriate to it.
   3. The property shall not be subdivided.

B. The offeror shall provide proof that the offeror has the capability to:
   1. Repair the Property:
      (a) Stabilize the Dome including making it weather tight
      (b) Stabilize the Entrance Hall Floor
      (c) Upgrade the Mechanical System
      (d) Stabilize the Porch
      (e) Repair Exterior Woodwork
      (f) Rebuild and Repaint the Chimney
      (g) Repaint the Exterior
   2. Obtain approval of local officials at the National Trust
   3. Maintain the following schedule:
      (a) Submit to National Trust
         1) 60 days from closing of title a proposed program and specification for dome stabilization.
         2) 90 days from closing of title a proposed program for stabilization of entrance hall floor.
         3) 180 days from closing of title a proposed program for items 1c, d, e, f & g.
   4. Complete dome stabilization and make watertight 180 days from approval by National Trust of proposed program.
   5. Complete stabilization of entrance hall floor within 365 days from approval by National Trust of proposed program.
   6. Complete items 1c, d, f & g within 730 days form approval by National Trust of proposed program.

C. The purchaser shall accept normal title requirements.

D. The purchase price shall not be less than $75,000.

E. The terms shall be 10% deposit with 25% at purchase and the balance over a term of 20 years at 8% interest.

II. INSPECTION

The property can be inspected by appointment

III. SUBMISSION

All proposals must be received by January 3, 1977 and be in effect for 30 days.

IV. EVALUATION

A. The National Trust may accept any proposal which assures a maximum sales return to the National Trust but which at the same time, will assure repair of the property and perpetual preservation in a manner acceptable to the National Trust.

B. Offerer will be required to submit evidence of financial ability and technical competence.

My proposal to bring the dome back into position consisted of high tension steel cables with turnbuckles wrapped around the dome on the outside and running from one corner to the other on the inside. I proposed to pay the same price the National Trust had paid the Carmers. I fully embraced a preservation easement which would restrict exterior charges to the house and the land. There was no public access.

On December 22, 1976, I submitted a proposal to purchase the Octagon House for $75,000. I requested a limit on the expense of the dome but agreed to accept all the other conditions and to broaden them to include design control by the Trust of future outbuildings. I stated in my proposal that my intentions are to preserve within and without. I would restore and maintain all that is of the period that remains in the house to as close to their original state as possible. The preservation and restoration of this building should be to a prospective buyer a lifelong labor of love. On February 18th, I met with a National Trust representative in Washington, D.C., and discussed purchase price and terms and restoration and stabilization techniques. My proposal was essentially acceptable to the Trust except for the limitation on the expense of the dome repair.

Verandah - 1978

During this time, I was busy researching octagon houses and wood domes and consulting with engineers. I had devised a scheme for stabilization of the dome whereby I would attempt to bring it back into alignment by encircling it in two locations with high-tension steel cables and turnbuckles. Over a period of time, the turnbuckles would be tightened thus pulling the dome, against itself, back into position. The great size and enormous weight of the dome with its slate roof topped by an observatory made ultimate success questionable. The fact that such a technique had never been used before added to the uncertainty of the undertaking.

On April 14, 1977, after much consideration, I advised the Trust that I was dropping my condition that there be a limit on the expense of the dome stabilization. This would fully expose me to whatever financial requirements were necessary for the stabilization. Since I had only a finite amount of funds, I was gambling fully that my untried ideas would actually work. Numerous proposals were made, but in 1976 the National Trust decided in favor of my proposal.

After a number of months of clarification of legal issues by the various attorneys involved, on February 24, 1978, my wife, Nan, and I signed the Contract to purchase the Octagon House and sent them, on February 27th, to Washington for signature by the Trust. My notes for March 8, 1978, state: "Coughlin calls - we got it".

Two years and three months after we had first visited the Carmers, an agreement was signed which would enable us to purchase the property - an event which would not happen for another 10½ more months. It was the first house to have been bought by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and resold to a private citizen.

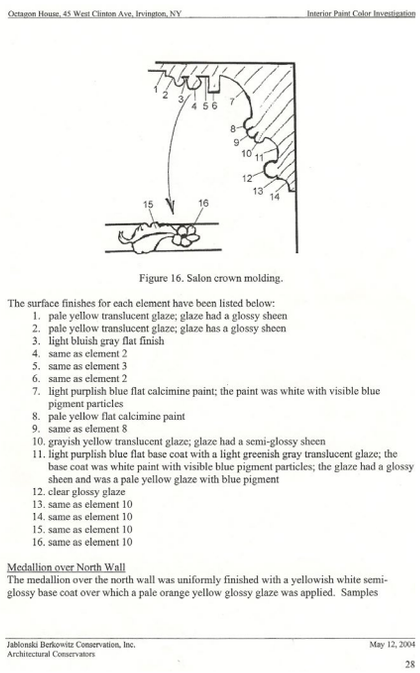
On Sunday, March 12, 1978, friends and I drove up to the Octagon House to examine again the project on which I was staking my financial resources and my reputation as an architect and a preservationist on the success of my structural repair concepts which had never been tried.

THE OCTAGON HOUSE 1978-2012

Come and see my shining palace built upon the sand!

— Edna St. Vincent Millary, Second Fig, A Few Figs from Thistles

From 1979 to 2012, I undertook a complete conservation of the interior and exterior of the house and the grounds, furnished the house with original and contemporaneous furniture and corrected the structural problems.



Octagon House, 45 West Clinton Ave, Irvington, NY — Interior Paint Color Investigation

Figure 16. Salon crown molding.

The surface finishes for each element have been listed below:

1. pale yellow translucent glaze; glaze had a glossy sheen
2. pale yellow translucent glaze; glaze has a glossy sheen
3. light bluish gray flat finish
4. same as element 2
5. same as element 3
6. same as element 2
7. light purplish blue flat calcimine paint; the paint was white with visible blue pigment particles
8. pale yellow flat calcimine paint
9. same as element 8
10. grayish yellow translucent glaze; glaze had a semi-glossy sheen
11. light purplish blue flat base coat with a light greenish gray translucent glaze; the base coat was white paint with visible blue pigment particles; the glaze had a glossy sheen and was a pale yellow glaze with blue pigment
12. clear glossy glaze
13. same as element 10
14. same as element 10
15. same as element 10
16. same as element 10

Medallion over North Wall

The medallion over the north wall was uniformly finished with a yellowish white semi-glossy base coat over which a pale orange yellow glossy glaze was applied. Samples

Jablonski Berkowitz Conservation, Inc. Architectural Conservators — May 12, 2004

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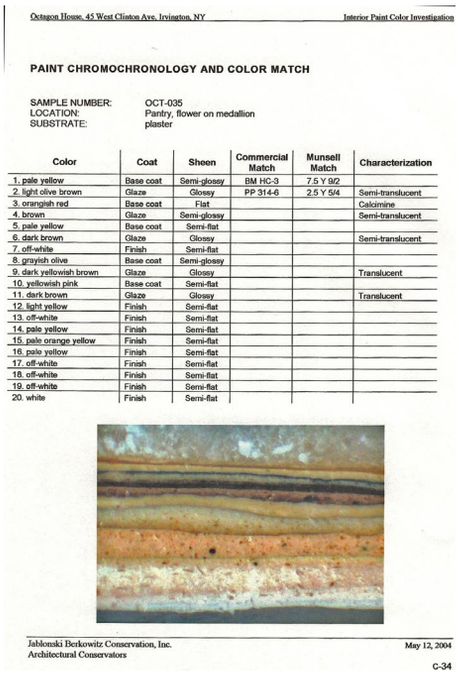


Octagon House, 45 West Clinton Ave, Irvington, NY — Interior Paint Color Investigation

PAINT CHROMOCHRONOLOGY AND COLOR MATCH

SAMPLE NUMBER: OCT-035
LOCATION: Pantry, flower on medallion
SUBSTRATE: plaster

Color	Coat	Sheen	Commercial Match	Munsell Match	Characterization
1. pale yellow	Base coat	Semi-glossy	BM HC-3	7.5 Y 9/2	
2. light olive brown	Glaze	Glossy	PP 314-6	2.5 Y 5/4	Semi-translucent
3. orangish red	Base coat	Flat			Calcimine
4. brown	Glaze	Semi-glossy			Semi-translucent
5. pale yellow	Base coat	Semi-flat			
6. dark brown	Glaze	Glossy			Semi-translucent
7. off-white	Finish	Semi-flat			
8. grayish olive	Base coat	Semi-glossy			
9. dark yellowish brown	Glaze	Glossy			Translucent
10. yellowish pink	Base coat	Semi-flat			
11. dark brown	Glaze	Glossy			Translucent
12. light yellow	Finish	Semi-flat			
13. off-white	Finish	Semi-flat			
14. pale yellow	Finish	Semi-flat			
15. pale orange yellow	Finish	Semi-flat			
16. pale yellow	Finish	Semi-flat			
17. off-white	Finish	Semi-flat			
18. off-white	Finish	Semi-flat			
19. off-white	Finish	Semi-flat			
20. white	Finish	Semi-flat			

Jablonski Berkowitz Conservation, Inc. Architectural Conservators — May 12, 2004

C-34

Research

Understanding a thing clearly is half doing it.

— Lord Chesterfield

A thorough research campaign was embarked upon. Every aspect of ownership was delved into. Photographs, images, accounts, and articles were sought out. Interviews of neighbors and prior owners and their descendents were conducted. The existing physical aspects of the property were examined and recorded photographically. Through microscopic examination and chemical paint analysis, the original 1872 extraordinary interior and exterior colors were determined. Based upon the 1882 photograph, drawings of missing wood and cast iron elements were made to enable replicas to be carved, cast and reinstalled. Original slate quarries were located to replace missing pieces of the slate roof of the dome, the observatory and the dormers. The grounds were subjected to and archaeological investigation including and analysis of old roots to determine the location of the original specimen trees and formal gardens.

Installation of exterior tension cable & turnbuckles

Stabilization of the Dome

A little stronger than strong enough.
— Old Builder

Interior tension cable -- meeting place from opposite corners

Obviously the dome needed to be the first work. I had been permitted to install devices to determine the movement of the dome. These devices, known as tell-tales, told an alarming story. Not only was the dome continuing to move, the movement was accelerating!

Immediately after purchase, I commenced a program to stop the movement and to bring the dome back into its original position. As outlined in my program to the National Trust, I had temporary high tension steel cables placed at the base and at the midpoint of the exterior of the dome. Both cables had a turnbuckle on each of the eight sides. Like a girdle, the dome was be compressed on the exterior as the turnbuckles were tightened. To pull the dome together while it was being compressed from the exterior, interior cables with turnbuckles were inserted from one corner to the other. The outside cables would be ultimately removed, the interior cables were left concealed above the ceiling line of the third floor.

As the dome had spread, it had also sunk approximately twelve inches. To raise the dome as it was compressed, jacks were placed in the top floor dance room. It was also necessary to brace the dance room floor with temporary posts placed under the floor. All of the elements had been sized by Eugene Avallone, an engineer who became devoted to the project.

Aerial View -- Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House

Once all of the components were in place, we began to slowly tighten the sixteen exterior turnbuckles and the eight interior turnbuckles and raise the top floor jacks. But would the scheme work? There was no shortage of skeptics. One engineer predicted that if a cable snapped it would create an explosive effect that would result in the total collapse of the dome. There were many sleepless nights. My reputation, my career and my assets were all at risk with an untried technique.

Over a three year period, the cables were slowly tightened. As the turnbuckles were tightened, they would develop resistance requiring too much pressure. After a few days the dome would adjust and the turnbuckles could be further tightened. The process was slow, suspenseful and worrisome, buffered with hopeful expectations of success. Midway through the process, the inevitable occurred. As one of the turnbuckles was being tightened, a connection failed and the cable, released from its high tension whip lashed like an angry snake. Fortunately nobody was injured. I yelled to the men who had been tightening the turnbuckle to immediately get down from the scaffolding. A silence fell on the site - this was the occurrence that was our most fearful concern. Fortunately the dome stayed put.

Those were tense times intensified by doubting observers, but finally it came back into position. After much celebration, a steel band was installed behind the 2nd floor gutter, permanently stabilized the dome.

The Restoration

Restoration is happiness

Woodwork, Stairs, Scrollwork. Slate work. Cresting. Railings, Urns, Paint, Structural Work, Electric, Plumbing, Heating, Plaster work, Finishing, Paint

The Grounds

Landscape gardening, which is an artistic combination of the beautiful in nature and art!

— A. J. Downing

The Interiors

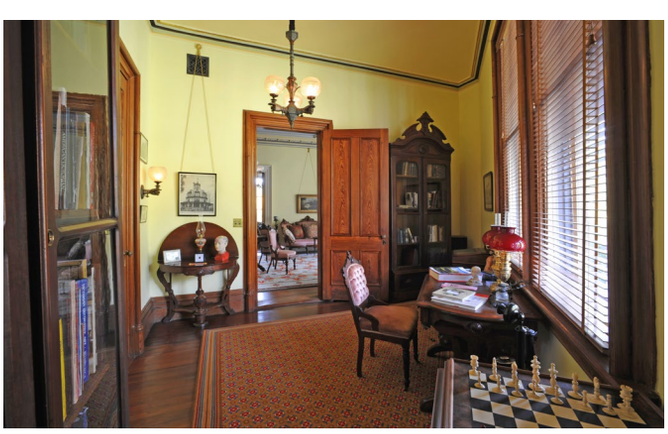
Architectural follies, like Chinese eggs, take on more savour with the passage of time.

— Clay Lancaster, Architectural Follies in America

Entry Hall

Salon

Dining Room



Library

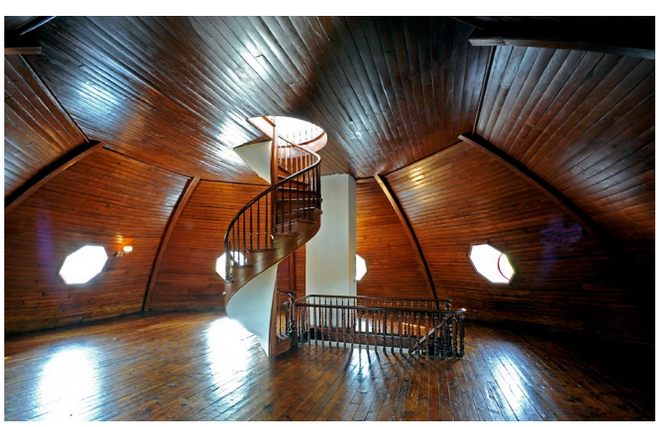
Solarium

Master Bedroom

Egyptian Revival Music Room

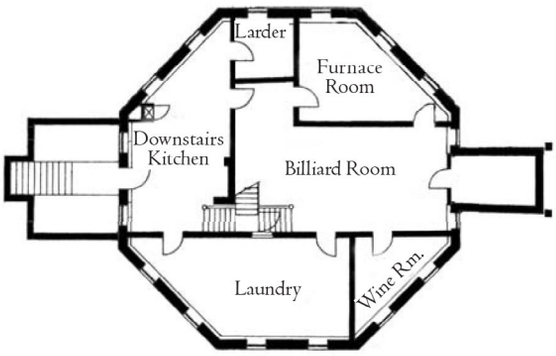
Kitchen

Dance Room - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

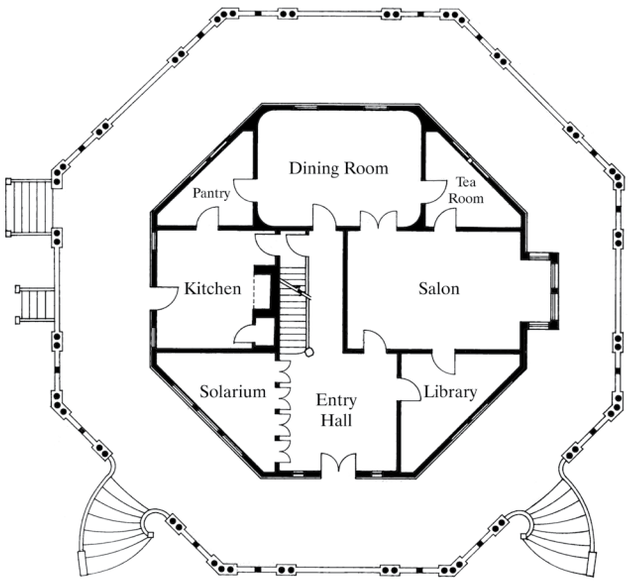


Dance Room

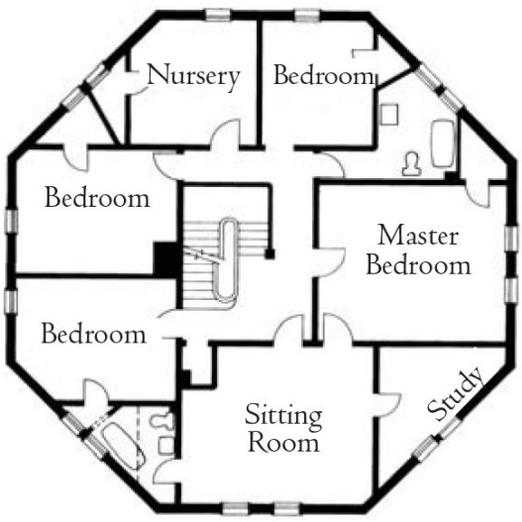
Observatory



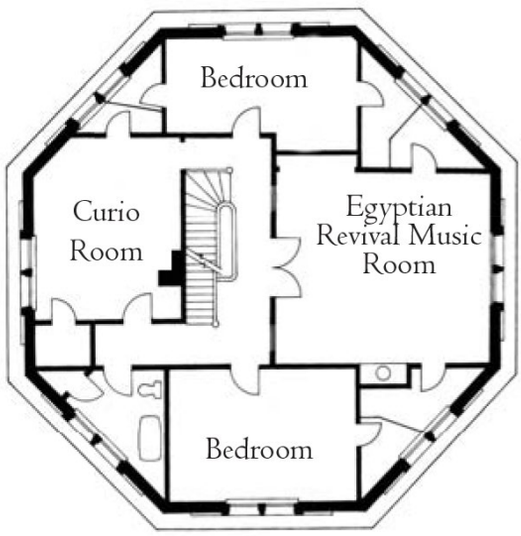
Basement



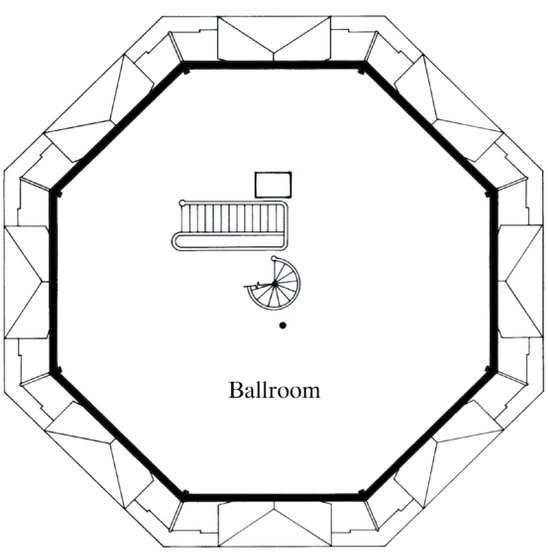
First Floor



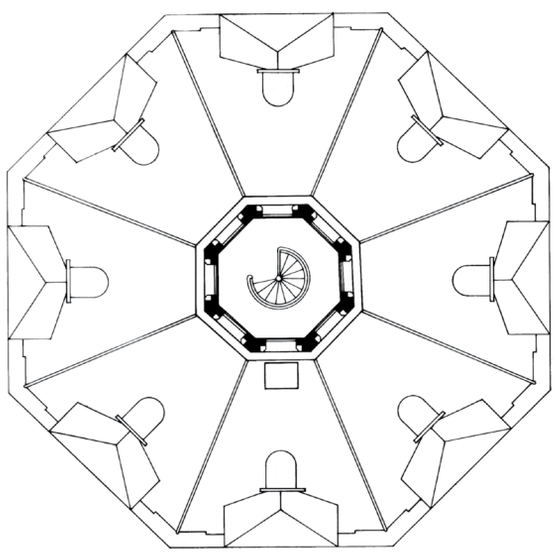
Second Floor



Third Floor



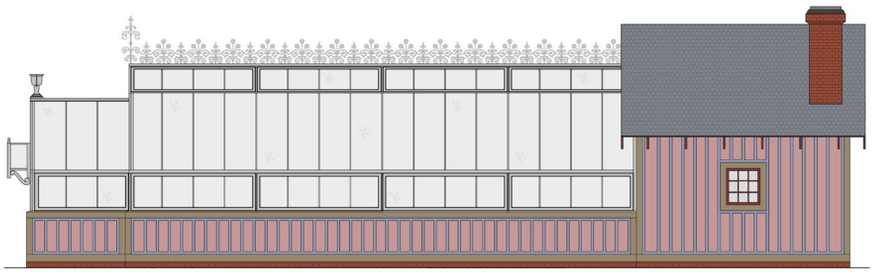
Dance Room



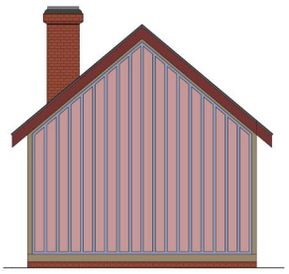
Observatory

Carriage House & Shed

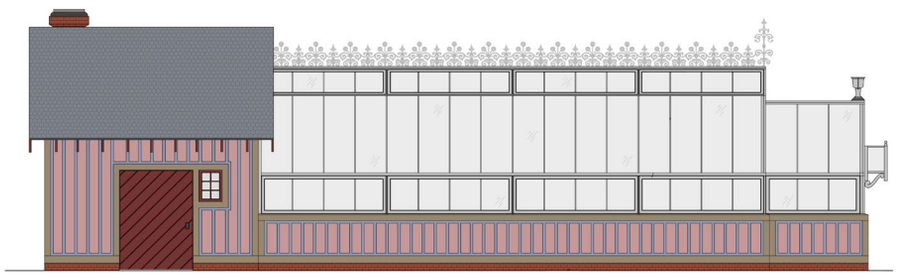
Garden Stairs



1 NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE : 3/8" = 1'-0"

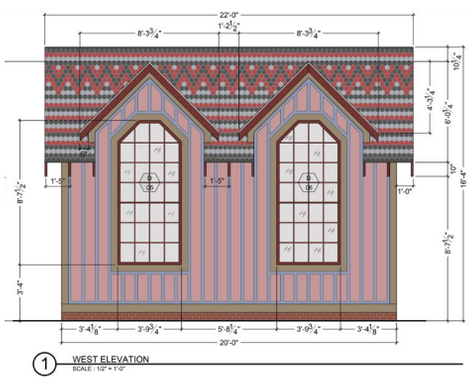


2 EAST ELEVATION
SCALE : 3/8" = 1'-0"

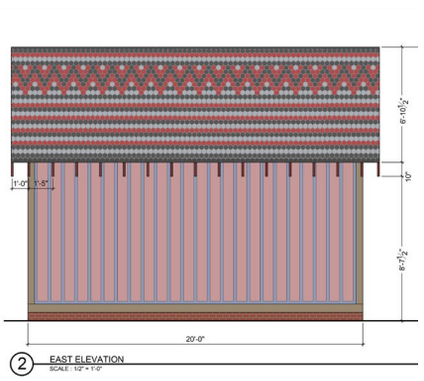


3 SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE : 3/8" = 1'-0"

4 WEST ELEVATION
SCALE : 3/8" = 1'-0"



1 WEST ELEVATION
SCALE : 1/2" = 1'-0"



2 EAST ELEVATION
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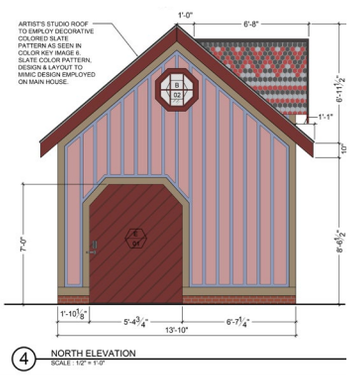
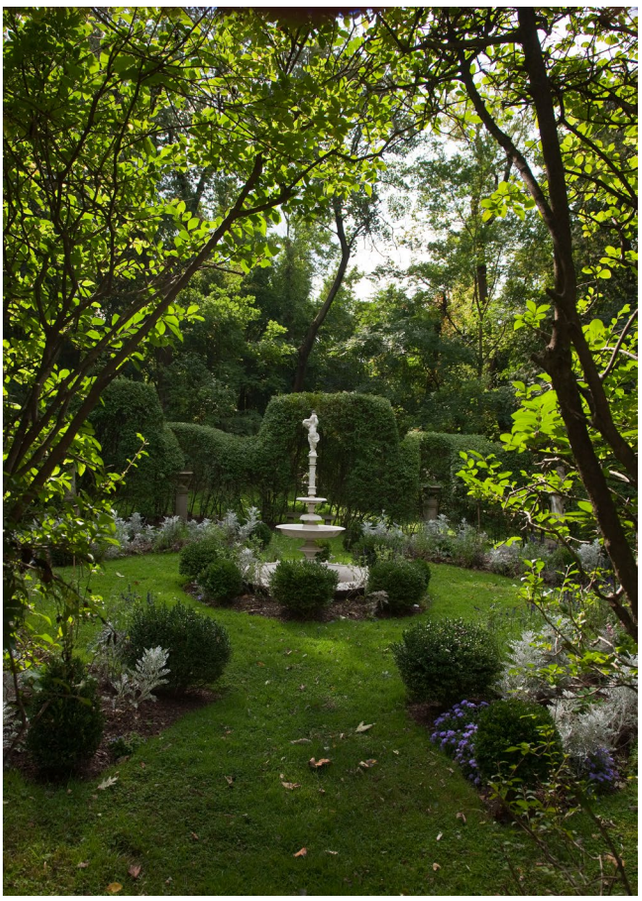


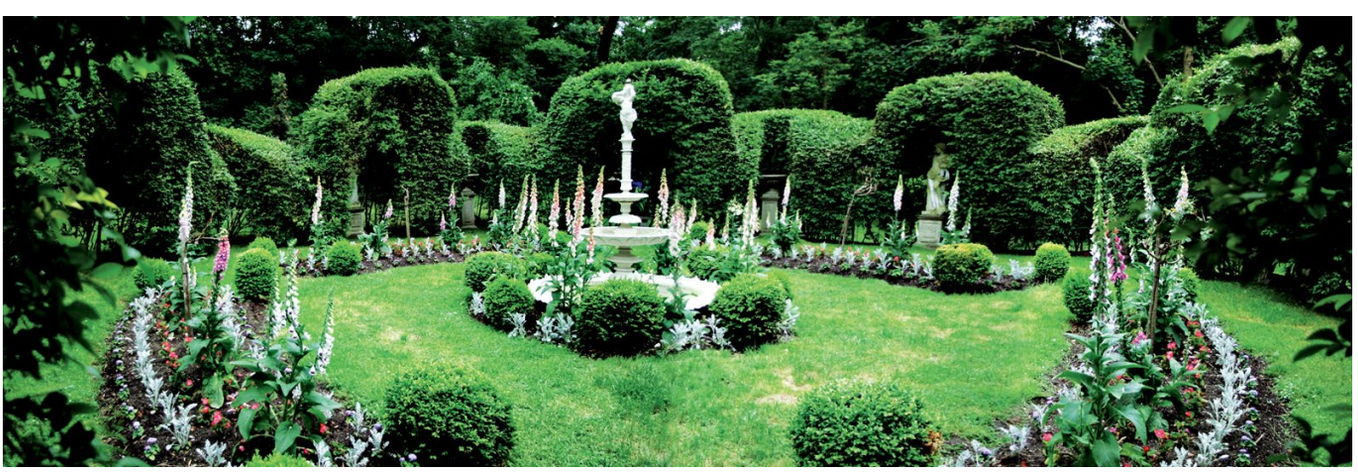
4 NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE : 1/2" = 1'-0"

Greenhouse & Artist Studio - Photo by Michael Lombardi

Octagon House -- Restored Gas Lamp

Octagon House — Elk weather vane & Cresting
Michael Lombardi Photographer





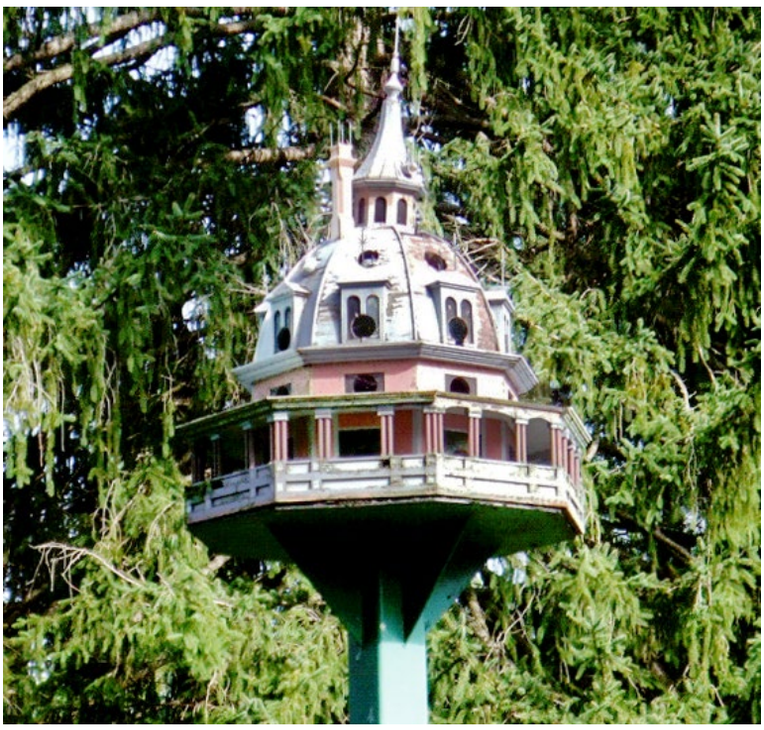
Octagon House , 19th Century

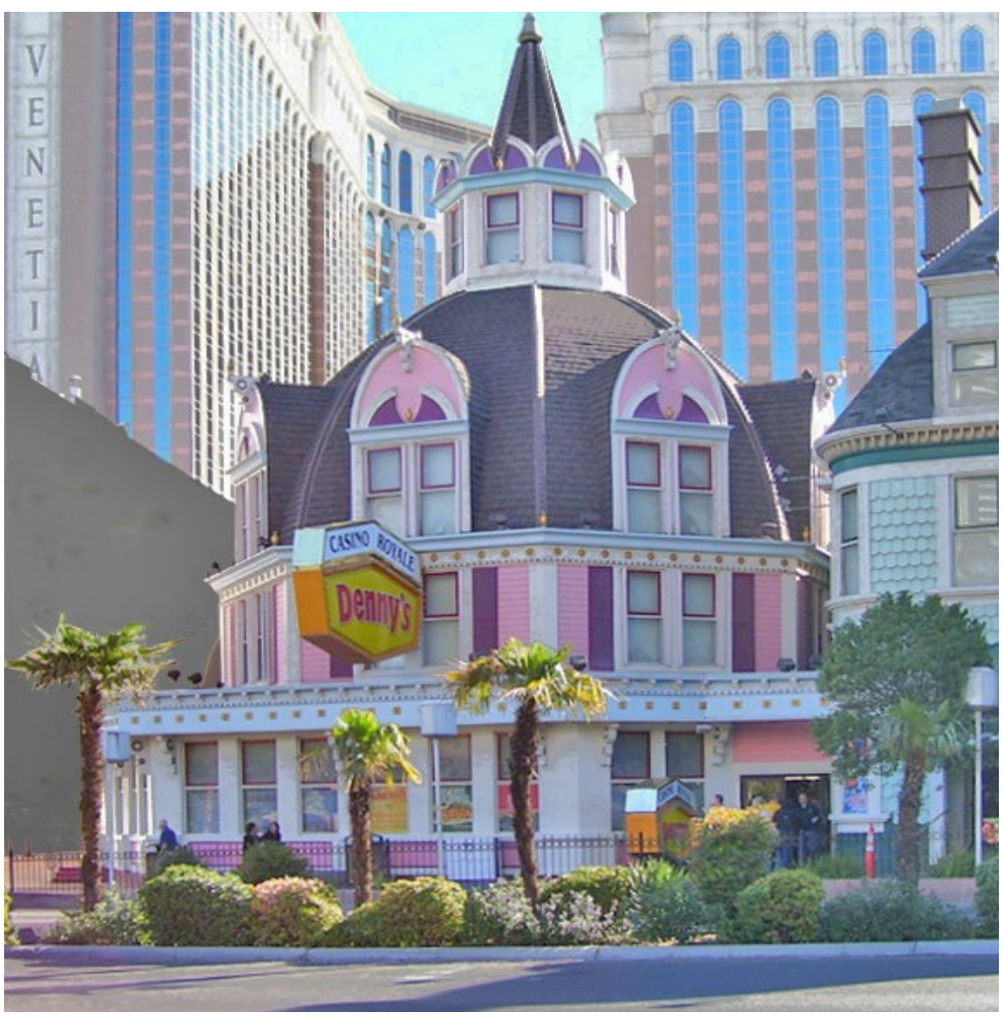
Octagon House Gingerbread House
1990 World Monuments Fund
Gingerbread House Competition

Octagon House -- 2010

Porch Column Capitals

Winter Scene
Michael Lombardi Photogrpher





Denny's at Casino Royale -- Las Vegas

Château du Sailhant - Andelat, France

Château fort du Xe siècle en pierres noires de basalte perché sur un haut rocher volcanique dominant un petit village.
— Demeures & Châteaux, Mars-Avril 1997

Introduction

A six kilomètres au nord ouest de Saint-Flour se dresse bâti sur un promontoire basaltique et taillé à pic: le Château de Saillans; l'étroite bande de terrain contrefort extrême du vaste plateau de la Planèze le rend seul accessible du côté nord. Non loin du château se trouve la cascade du même nom.
— Le Château de Saillans au Cours des Siècles

I looked for years for a project in western Europe that would utilize my professional background and could be used as a summer retreat. My criteria was that it had to be of an architectural period unavailable in America, have an unstudied architectural history, and be in need of conservation, in a remote location and affordable (although I had always followed the surely mad idea that you first bought a house and then figured out how to pay for it!). I had studied in depth European architecture during my education and had worked for clients on projects in Italy, France and Hungary. But, I itched to tackle a project in Europe for myself.

My fifteen-year house hunt was pure delight. It brought me to many remote locations and, through friends and persistence, I gained access to extraordinary houses, castles, palaces and ruins. And, like life itself, each had its own incredible story and entanglements. Although there had been many temptations, my demanding criteria ultimately resulted in each being rejected. But surely there's book on the experiences of warm hospitality, snarling mastiffs, sumptuous and ruinous interiors and incredible owners' stories (one château in France was so filled with tragedy and bad karma that the friend who was guiding me refused to join in the visit).

West entrance tower with shooting slits added in the 16th century
(Photogaph by Author)

Finally, on the trek of one more candidate, I arrived in central France in mid-April of 1997. On a cold, gray, rainy day I drove through the mountains of the Auvergne and when I turned the last bend in the road, I knew in an instant that Château du Sailhant and I had found each other. My diary for that day says: "It loomed atop the rock like a great bird looking for prey. I shouted egerem, ("my mouse" in Hungarian) as if the great bird was looking at a small rodent."

I knew from my college studies that construction of walls of a medieval château can be dated by analyzing shooting slits, the openings through which arms were deployed. The shape of the openings changed as the type of arms evolved from bows to crossbows to pistols and finally, to cannons. As I approached the château I saw that the tower to the west of the entrance contained sixteenth-century shooting slits and that they had been added to the wall. It meant that the tower dated the sixteenth century. I knew in an instant that I would purchase Château du Sailhant!

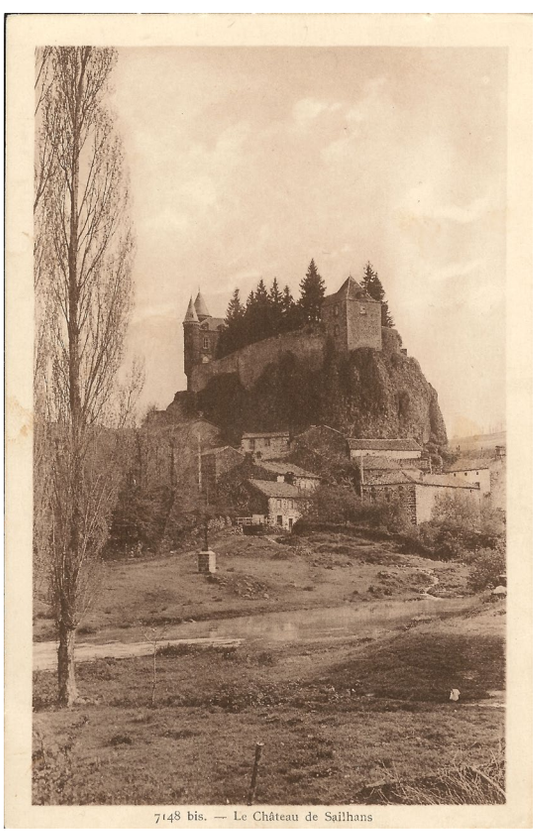
Château du Sailhant is a thousand-year-old château-fort, located in the mountainous Cantal department in the Auvergne region of central France. At an altitude of over three-thousand feet, it stands on a dramatic triangular volcanic spur with one-hundred-foot perpendicular cliffs on three sides overlooking a mystical sixty-foot waterfall that drops into a perfectly round prehistoric, volcanic crater lake.

The triangular promontory is formed by the valleys of two brooks converging at the point of a triangle. It is only accessible across a dry moat from the north side. Due to its almost impregnable topographical characteristics, the site of the château has probably been occupied from the most remote of times, ever since people started looking for secure places naturally easy to defend.

The walls of the château and its seven towers are constructed of blocks of black basalt, hardened lava from a volcano, and the roofs are stone slabs. The use of ancient dark-colored rough hewn stones creates a continuity between the works of man and the works of nature. Deborah Mitford, Duchess of Devonshire's description of Chatsworth in her book, Wait for Me! is an equally apt description for Sailhant:

From the Southwest (Author's Collection)

"The house looks permanent, as permanent as if it had been there not for a few hundred years, but for ever. It fits its landscape exactly. The stone from which the house is built comes out of the ground nearby, and so it is the proper colour, on the bird's-nest theory of using building materials that are at hand and therefore right for the surroundings."



Postcard view from the southwest
(Author's Collection)

During its long history, the château evolved under the ownership of prominent families of the Auvergne region including the members of the de Rochefort d'Aurouze, Dauphin, d'Amboise, Dubourg, and d'Estaing families. Its current state reflects its past involvement in battles and disputes and the social, economic and political changes that occurred throughout its existence. In the early medieval period it was a contested stronghold. During the Hundred Years' War, it was at the edge of the battlefield in a continuing tug-of-war between the French and the English resulting in numerous sieges and an increase in its fortifications. During the Renaissance, the château was enhanced with classical details while made even more defensible. Used as a farmhouse towards the end of the seventeenth century, it became a distinguished residence for a bishop in the early eighteenth century, and, after the French Revolution, was again used as a farmhouse.

In the late-nineteenth century a major renovation was commenced, but not quite completed, by an entrepreneur who had been born in the tiny village at the base of the château. In the twentieth century, it was used as a summer residence by a Parisian doctor whose family originated from a nearby town.

After complex negotiations and numerous trips back to the Auvergne to finalize the purchase, I finally closed title on a brilliant September day in Paris. My first step was to have a complete architectural history compiled and, based upon that history, to commence the conservation and restoration work.

Aerial view from the west (Author's Collection)

The Auvergne Region of France

It seemed to me that Auvergne was a country far, far away where one saw strange things,
and where one dared not go without making one's way under the protection of the Holy Mother.
— Chateaubriand

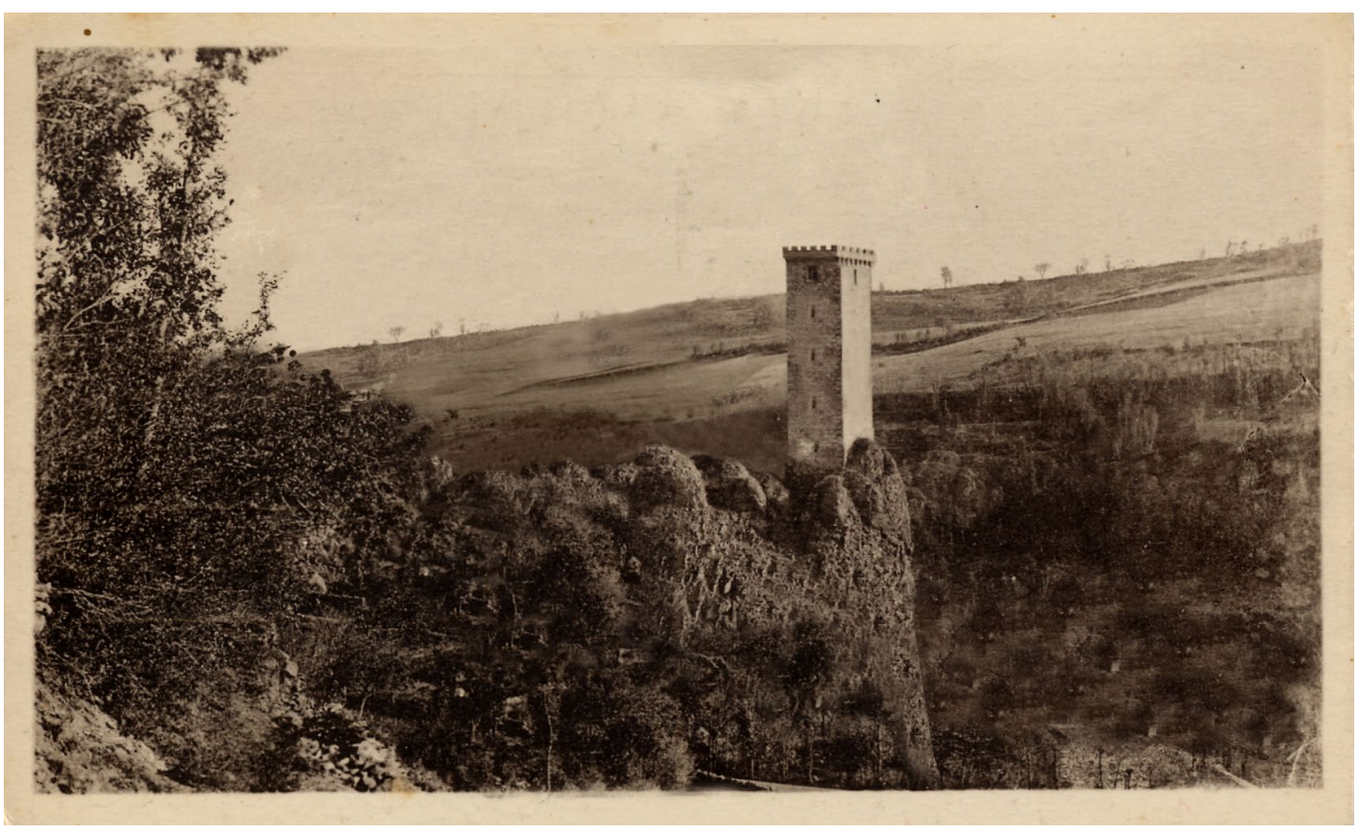
Mountains of Auvergne (Photograph by Loïc-Jahn)

The Auvergne region is a wild, isolated and scenically exotic region in central France. Practically a country within a country, its landscape, history, customs, architecture, inhabitants, food and weather are all very different from the rest of France and the rest of the world.

Formed by enormous volcanic upheavals, it is a ruggedly beautiful land with unique cone-shaped mountains, crater lakes, enormous cave systems and peaks that remain snow capped until early summer.

Auvergne's tumultuous history of prehistoric inhabitation, Celtic invasion, Roman occupation, regional wars amongst local nobles, the Hundred Years' War and the Wars of Religion produced heavily fortified châteaux. The countryside is populated with these château-forts which are coupled with France's most beautiful Romanesque churches and unspoiled villages with buildings built of basalt.

The Auvergnats are known for their resilience, self-reliance, superstition and belief in magic. The Auvergne has a deservedly worldwide reputation for its marvelous cheeses, charcuterie, specially prepared wild game, home-cured hams and raisin and nut breads. Château du Sailhant speaks of the region with its own rugged, sublime beauty perched at the top of a remote, volcanic promontory.



Sailhant in the 10th Century (Created digitally)

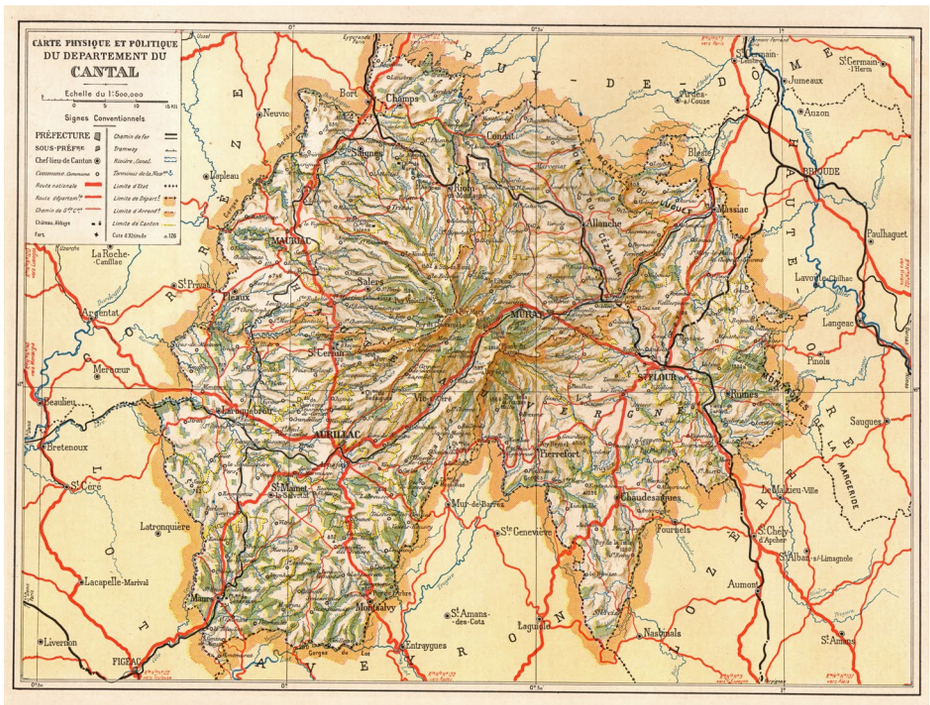
The Dawn of Time

The knob became known as Sailhant with the family in control of the knob known as the Sailhans, a word derived from the Latin salire meaning protruding.

Twenty million years ago, in the central region of what would become modern-day France, a group of volcanos began exploding spewing ash, molten rock and steam. The activity of the volcanos eventually blurred together to become a giant stratovolcano which erupted repeatedly. During several million years of activity, it became the largest stratovolcano on the continent rising 10,000 feet at the center and spreading lava out over 1,000 square miles.

After millions of years, at the perimeter of this great circular lava flow, a final top layer cooled and solidified into a fingerlike spur with one-hundred-foot perpendicular cliffs on three sides. At the tip of the spur, a small knob stood isolated from the rest of the spur by a crevice, twenty feet wide and twenty feet deep.

One million years ago, between successive Ice Ages, the first hominids arrived from the African continent. Not anatomically modern humans, these early hunter-gathers used stone implements and moved about in packs pursuing their quarry from temporary camps selected for their ability to provide security.



The volcanic heart of the Department of Cantal, France

During these most remote of times, the small knob at the tip of the spur was one of their most favored temporary camps. Protected on all four sides, it provided a perfect, naturally secure refuge. Twenty-five feet in diameter, the platform was sufficiently large to provide accommodation for the entire pack; at an altitude of over three-thousand feet, it was high enough to serve as excellent lookout. From its high craggy platform the occupants warded off beasts and other hunter-gathers. With a stockpile of food, water and throwing rocks, the knob successfully served its purpose.

One hundred thousand years ago Neanderthals began to roam the cold landscapes hunting mammoths, rhinoceros and other large beasts that congregated in herds on the tundra.

Forty thousand years ago when the first humans existed, a small volcano erupted to one side of the spur. This volcano was directly in line with a stream flowing from the distant stratovolcano which had now cooled. At first, the fiery emissions from the small volcano made the Sailhant knob temporarily uninhabitable. As the volcano cooled and the stream continued to flow, the emissions became a dramatic, but harmless, steam plume. The plume, five hundred feet from the knob and visible for miles, marked the site and gave it an extraordinary mystical quality. When the small volcano became completely dormant, the crater filled with water from the stream, overflowing on one side.

Over many further thousands of years, the overflowing side slowly eroded resulting in the lowering of the water level in the extinct volcano. The stream then became a seventy-foot waterfall dropping into the now lowered crater. The crater remained as a perfectly round lake continuing to be filled by the waterfall and surrounded by the remaining portions of the original perpendicular inner walls of the crater.

Because of their sensational activity, the volcanic landscape had a sacred reputation. In the region of the knob, the reputation was favorable because the volcanic landscape provided abundant water and a constant food supply. As temperatures rose and the Ice Ages ended, great forests began to cover the land. The wandering herds disappeared,

replaced by boar, deer, game birds, rabbits and other animals of the forest. Smaller volcanos continued to erupt; but the nomadic hunter-gathers were not greatly inconvenienced because of their mobility.

As the environment changed, the practices of the population changed dramatically. 7,500 years ago, a new pattern of life emerged -- the hunter-gather began to cultivate the land and domesticate animals. The volcanic eruptions ceased and the climate was warmer than today. Even though hunting and foraging would continue, it was supplemented, and then, after several thousand years, largely supplanted by farming done from a home base. Inherent in a permanent home is the need for security. While in the past one could flee from hostile people and beasts, now there was a need to protect one's shelter.

The Sailhant cascade -- 1910 postcard (Author's Collection)

Five thousand years ago the Sailhant spur began to be used on a continual basis. It became a settlement for early farmers. In valleys on each side of the spur, streams from the distant snow-capped dormant volcanos irrigated the rich volcanic soil. The early farmers cleared the forests, cultivated the land in the valleys, and herded animals on the surrounding hills.

For millions of years the small knob at the end of the spur had served as the temporary refuge for endless transient visitors to the region. A few volcanic rocks with a roof of branches had served to shelter the occasional visitors from the elements. At times of approach by hostile hunter packs and wandering tribes, the knob continued to serve its purpose as a refuge. Now, it was worthwhile making an investment into a more permanent shelter on the knob. A timber-framed structure with panels of wattle-and-daub* was erected. A palisade of wooden staves at the edge of the crevice completed the first true building on the site. A moveable wooden bridge spanned the steep, wide ravine, that separated the spur from the knob. At night and during times of trouble the bridge was pulled onto the knob.

In 2,203 BC an enormous comet filled the night sky. Ancient people would have been awed by its presence and, to some, it must have been interpreted as the omen of a special event. Four-thousand two-hundred years later, I would observe the next visit of this comet during my first trip to Sailhant. Now known as the Hale-Bopp Comet, I interpreted it as a good sign and it encouraged me to acquire Sailhant.

The Celts

"There stood a grove
Which from the earliest time no hand of man
Had dared to violate; hidden from the sun
Its chill recesses; matted boughs entwined
Prisoned the air within. No sylvan nymphs
Here found a home, nor Pan, but savage rites
And barbarous worship, altars horrible
On massive stones upreared; sacred with blood
Of men was every tree."

The Pharsalia of Lucan Book III,
The Grove in Gaul, 50 BC
Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39 AD - 65 AD)

* An infill between timbers of interwoven staves and twigs with a finish of clay daub.

Three-thousand five-hundred years ago the development of bronze followed by iron tools gave farmers the ability to further cultivate the land. But bronze and iron were also used for weapons. Around 800 BC the region was invaded by a Celtic tribe. The Celts were the first people of northwestern Europe to be recorded in history. The conquerors of Europe, in their time they dominated the ancient world from present-day Luxembourg, south to Geneva and from Turkey, west to Ireland. With their bravery, intimidation, ferocity and sophisticated weapons, they managed to sack Rome and invade Greece. The Celts were also the great artists of the ancient world. Their everyday objects were restlessly decorated for probable magical functions.

The Sailhant cascade (Author's Collection)

The particular Celtic tribe which invaded the region of the knob were called the Arverni, from whom the name of the region is derived.* Nomads who lived by grazing cattle, the Arverni Celts were also fearsome warriors. Over a period of several hundred years they gained control of the area. The knob at the end of the spur became the Celtic chieftain's residence. Fortified, it still served as a place of refuge for the settlement in times of trouble. Several stories high, it also continued to serve as a watchtower.

Religion and mythology were very important to the Celts. They worshipped deities and made a cult of their ancestors. Guided by priest-like druids, they worshiped in sanctuaries practicing ritual sacrifice of humans and animals. The sanctuaries were typically natural features, such as springs, wells and caves, which were perceived to be on the fringe of another world. The cascade on one side of the spur, surrounded on three sides by perpendicular walls, was an extraordinary natural feature which the Arverni Celts construed as having mystical qualities. The spur, adjacent to a mystical sanctuary and containing a safe haven was an ideal location for the Celtic settlement.

The Romans

> *The Romans...were terrified by the fine order of the Celtic host, and the dreadful din, for there were innumerable horn - blowers and trumpeters, and... the whole army were shouting their war-cries.... Very terrifying too were the appearance and the gestures of the naked warriors in front, all in the prime of life and finely built men, and all in the leading companies richly adorned with gold torcs and armlets.*
>
> The Histories, Polybius, c. 203 BC - 120 BC

By 300 BC, the Arverni were at their peak, extending beyond the boundaries of the region and making their own gold coins. But their control of the region was brief. The land inhabited by the Celts was called Gaul by the Romans from the Latin word Gallia, meaning barbarian. For hundreds of years, the Romans had fought with the Gauls. Finally, Julius Cesear led Roman forces that conquered Gaul in a series of battles. In 52 BC, fifty miles north of the Sailhant spur, Julius Cesear's armies won a decisive battle and gained control of the region. The Romans brought stability to the Auvergne region of Gaul,

Celtic Bronze Helmet c. 400 BC
(Collection Château du Sailhant)

* The immediate area surrounding the knob was called Cantal, a pre-Gallic word meaning rocky hill. Cantal is now the name of the French Department in which the knob occurs. It is one of the five Departments forming the Auvergne region.

ending local disputes and tribal attacks. The Celtic descendents, now known as Gauls, continued to occupy the land. Free from internal disorder and tribal fighting, the Arverni region became a flourishing Roman province. It was during this period that the strength of the aristocracy increased. In exchange for protection, the common people placed themselves under obligation to their local land holder.

The Gauls continued to farm and raise cattle. The more level portions of the land surrounding the Sailhant spur was cleared of natural vegetation and was used for animal grazing and crops. The elevation of the land determined its use. At the base of the spur, cultivation and hay meadows occurred; pastures in the hills were for grazing.

The Barbarians

All the land between the Alps and the Pyrenees. . . has been devastated.

— St Jerome 409 A.D.

The collapse of the Roman Empire (275 A.D.-400 A.D.) led to a period of great instability followed by invasions and settlement by Germanic barbarian tribes. A troubled period ensued. The kingdom of the Visigoths, centered in Toulouse, had the greatest influence on the Auvergne. The need for security and lookouts increased and was reflected in the strengthening of the fortifications on the Sailhant knob.

In the fifth century, the Germanic Franks expanded into Gaul. Under King Clovis, they defeated the Visigoths in 507 A.D. Clovis's descendents, the Merovingians, continued the expansion and eventually occupied most of Western Europe. The Merovingian dynasty ended with the rise of the Carolingians, a wealthy and powerful family from the northern Frankish territory. The Carolingian dynasty, under Charlemagne (747 A.D.-814 A.D.), extended Frankish authority over most of the Christian West, including Saxony and the Lombard kingdom of Italy.

Following the reign of Charlemagne, a final wave of barbarian invasions began. At the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries, Vikings, Saracens, Slavs and Magyers plundered the Carolingian empire. Their impact was substantial. In 843 A.D., faced with external threats and internal disputes amongst Charlemagne's successors, the Carolingian empire was divided into three kingdoms. The Auvergne kingdom was ruled by Charles the Bald. Charles, struggling with economic problems brought on by the continuing raids, rewarded his followers by giving away his land, thereby transferring power to the local aristocracy.

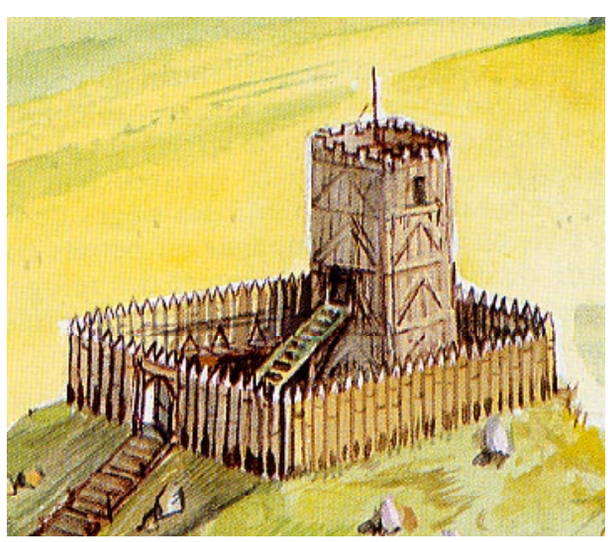
Feudalism

Il est malaisé de se figurer une époque plus troublée que les IXe et Xe siècles. Si l'on songe à la pénurie des moyens d'attaque au Xe siècle, où la poudre à canons était inconnue, on se rend compte facilement qu'une place pourvue de défenses naturelles aussi considérables que le château de Saillans, bien approvisionneé et défendue par une garnison déterminée pouvait prolonger un siège presque indéfiniment.

— Alfred Douët, Le Château de Saillans (1925)

As the ninth century drew to a close, central power continued to decline as whole regions of France were outside the control of the monarch. By the time Hugh Capet was crowned king in 987 A.D., France had been fragmented into a group of states. In the Auvergne, the lords were divided between their allegiance to the King of France and the semiautonomous Duke of Aquitaine. With mixed loyalties and feuding over their own ill-defined borders, the Auvergne lords failed to come to an agreement that would enable them to establish their own state.

The ninth and tenth centuries were extremely troubled times. Barbaric tribes were still threatening from all directions and families were fighting one another over border disputes. In this pre-gunpowder era, the wooden tower fort/residence, perched on the Saihant knob and overlooking all access, offered the protection required by the times. With its natural defense



Early wooden Tower/Fort

and stock of supplies, determined defenders could keep a siege indefinitely. The land grants, which became known as fiefs, included the transference of judicial, fiscal, and police power from king to lord to lesser lord in exchange for military service. In turn, the fief was tenanted by vassals who were obligated to their lord for services and homage. The need of peasants for protection and the emergence of fiefs contributed to the rise of the feudal system.

At the end of the tenth century,Guigonis de Saillans was the inhabitant of the tower fort/residence on the Sailhant knob. His ownership and authority extended over a large domain. Guigonis was now known as the Lord of Sailhant. Guigonis's son, Etienne de Saillans, became a crusader. On his return from the Holy Land, he, along with other lords of the region, established a monastery in the nearby town of Indiciac.* That act, through a series of events, led to a long and extremely savage war, the War of Planeze. Etienne's overlord, who was victorious, distributed further land to him.

The Middle Ages

What we do in life, echoes in eternit

— Maximus, from the movie *Gladiator*

The de Saillans, Lords of Sailhant, 1000-1300

Architecture is the scientific art of making structures express ideas.

— Frank Lloyd Wright

As the eleventh century began, the lords of Sailhant, living in their fortified, multi-storied residence/watchtower or "donjon,"** were the owners and overseers of a large fiefdom. From time immemorial, the natural remote features of the knob at the tip of the spur had provided sufficient security for temporary occupants. For the first permanent residents, a wattle-and-daub structure had provided the necessary further protection from arrows and spears. At the beginning of the second millennium, more sophisticated siege devices developed. Catapults were developed that could hurl large rocks sizeable distances to destroy wooden buildings with relative ease. The structure on the knob now had to become more defensive. The Sailhans replaced the obsolete wattle-and-daub buildings with a freestanding multi-storied stone tower.

Early stone donjon -- Château de la Clauze

The tower was built of blocks of black basalt, the same hardened volcanic lava that forms the spur. The roof were made of lauzes, flat stone slabs. The natural stone at the base evolves into the rough-hewn stone of man. This substantial stone donjon stood prominently on the knob. Its striking silhouette demonstrated the rising power of the Sailhans. In fact, donjons served two purposes; they were a defensive refuge during times of attack and they were symbolic of the status, wealth and power of their owners.

Though more secure, the newly built donjon was not more comfortable. It consisted of a single twenty-foot square room on each level, accessible only by ladders through small openings in each floor. The openings also provided ventilation for a warming fire. The donjon continued to be separated from the spur by a ravine spanned by a removable bridge. Over time, the natural

* Later renamed Saint-Flour

** Donjon is a word derived from the Latin dominatio, which means "lordship". The word donjon signifies that the building served as a domicile for a lord.

defensive features of the donjon ravine had been enhanced by digging it deeper and making its sides even more perpendicular so that it became a dry moat.

The donjon was not the first line of defense. The southern and northern parts of the spur were separated by another natural ravine. Like the donjon moat, the defensive features of this northern ravine had also been enhanced to become a dry moat. The people of the spur would first ward off attackers at the northern moat, retreating to the donjon and its moat only if they became overwhelmed. Over time, a wall had been constructed on the south side of the northern moat. Beginning around 1000 A.D. the wall rose higher, eventually becoming thirty feet high. Wooden ramparts were erected so the defenders of the spur had a platform immediately behind the top of the wall from which they could hurl objects and shoot arrows at their attackers.

Château du Sailhant Donjon from the southwest

In the beginning of the thirteenth century an interior stone building was constructed on the inside of this north front wall. Two-and-one-half stories high, its primary purpose was to provide a comfortable home for the Sailhants. In peaceful times, this seigniorial residence was regularly occupied. During a siege, the family would retreat back into the donjon. On the second floor of the seigniorial residence, an arrow slit had been built into the west wall to provide a shooting location to guard the main entrance.*

By the year 1250 A.D., the Sailhant château consisted of an inner court enclosed by high masonry walls with ramparts following the outline of the rocky spur, a multi-storied stone donjon on the knob, and a seigniorial residence in the northeast corner of the enclosed court. There were secondary service buildings to the west of the seigniorial residence. At the main entrance to the château and in front of the donjon there were moveable bridges spanning dry moats (see floor plan - pg. 128).

The high masonry walls gave the impression of a structure much larger than it actually was. This impression contributed to its architectural advertisement of the Sailhant's military strength as well as their social and political importance.

The part of the spur outside this enclosure was a basse-cour, or forecourt enclosed by walls and trenched on its north side. The approach to the château was lined with stabling, barns, utilitarian buildings and housing for people working at the economical activities of the domain and the château. An aqueduct, conveying water from a source in the hill to the north, travelled through this court. During the winter the cattle were housed in the barns of the forecourt. The cattle and their shepherds spent the summer together in the high hills making cheese from the milk in *burons*, small stone huts in the hills with minimum facilities. Fodder was harvested from the lower fields, filling the large hay lofts of the barns for winter feeding of the cattle.

Château du Sailhant - Grande Salle 13th century shooting slit

13th century shooting slit- detail

* The shooting slit in the west wall of the seignorial residence has a paired curved upper frame which can be dated to the first half of the thirteenth century. In an undisturbed wall construction, the shooting slit and the wall are contemporaneous.

The de Rocheforts d'Aurouze, Lords of Sailhant, 1300-1383

La terre du Sailhant est apportée à la famille de Rochefort d'Aurouze par le mariage de 'la Damoiselle de Saillans'.
— Alfred Douët, Le Château de Saillans, 1925

At the end of the thirteenth century, the Lord of Saillans was Béranger de Saillans. Through marriage, his daughter passed the Sailhant fief to Bertrand I de Rochefort d'Aurouze, head of a prominent Auvergnat family. A descendant of that family, Bernard I de Rochefort d'Áurouze, was present at Sailhant at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War.

The Hundred Years' War began in 1337 and lasted until 1453. This war, caused when England laid claim to the throne of France, had numerous repercussions for Château du Sailhant.

In the second quarter of the fourteenth century, Bernard I de Rochefort d'Aurouze reinforced Sailhant in preparation for war. As with much defensive work during the time of the Hundred Years' War, the work was hastily executed. In 1356, the English captured Sailhant for a short period. In 1380, English looters seized Sailhant again. The occupying captain demanded payment from the residents of Saint-Flour for their withdrawal. After many difficulties, negotiations, an unsuccessful siege in 1382 and the imprisonment of a Sanflorian in the Sailhant dungeon, a final payment for evacuation was made in June of 1384.

Burgundian kidney dagger circa 1450 (Collection Château du Sailhant)

Château du Sailhant, 1300-1383

L'Auvergne a été marquée par une progression très forte de la construction de résidencefortifiées pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans

— Jean Mesqui, Châteaux forts et fortifications en France

In the 1350s the first Hundred Years' War usurpation had occurred. It was typical during this period of adversity that the local, though inexperienced, residents exchanged their efforts on the reinforcement of a château for the right to use it as a refuge. In its eon-old tradition, the natural and man-made features of the Sailhant spur and knob were once again being prepared to provide safety for the occupants.

Bernard I's effort consisted of layering a new wall in front of the existing north wall and the construction of two great north-side towers, one just to the west of the entrance; the other near the northeast corner.* The two towers were semicircular and did not rise above the adjacent building block enabling them to be covered with roofs which were continuous with the main block. The towers were probably topped with semi-dome roofs similarly to Romanesque church apses. Sufficient shooting slits for crossbows were built into the semicircular wall to cover attacks from all directions.

Two almost superimposed shooting slits were installed in the north wall near the northwest corner of the château (a33 - pg. 128). They may have been part of a square tower at the northwest corner.

A drawbridge was installed at the entrance to the château to span the deep, dry moat.

Château Du Sailhant -- hand-held cannon shooting slit added to west entrance tower. (Photograph by Sélysette Somorjay)

The other tower stands near the northeast corner of the château. The northeast tower was built at the same time as the second outer masonry north wall was added to defensively strengthen the seignorial residence. At its lowest level, there is a vaulted room with a latrine and two tiny, simple slits for ventilation. At its second level, a shooting slit was installed directed toward the northwest to protect the entrance.

* The other two north-side towers, one just to the east of the entrance and the other at the northwest corner, were built at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Dauphins de Saint-Ilpize, 1383-1436

Unto the French the dreadful judgment day
So dreadful will not be as was his sight.
— King Henry V

While Sailhant was occupied by the English from 1382 to 1398, the château ownership passed through members of the de Rochefort d'Aurouze family.

In 1398, following the death of Françoise de Rochefort d'Aurouze Dauphin, her son, Béraud Dauphin I de Saint-Ilpize, became Lord of Sailhant. Béraud was a powerful man, being Lord of the châteaux of Saint-Ilpize, Combronde, Auroze, and Sailhant. An intrepid soldier and patriot, Béraud I took his two sons, Béraud II and Robert, to fight for their king at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. It was a tragic disaster for France and for the Dauphins. Henry V of England defeated the French nobility and all three Dauphins were killed.

The title of Lord of Sailhant then went to Béraud III, a child of four or five who had inherited several other fiefs and the name and arms of the Dauphins d'Auvergne. In 1436, he died at the age of about twenty-five.

Château du Sailhant - Northeast tower

The Dauphins de Saint-Ilpize de Lespinasse, 1436-1482

… the Castilian Rodrigo de Villandrando and his 'ecorcheurs'
inflicted hideous devastation…
— Desmond Seward, The Hundred Years' War

Upon the death of Béraud III, in 1436, the château went to his sister, Blanche Dauphine de Saint-Ilpize who transferred the main part of the her inheritance to the de Lespinasse family, the family of her husband. Blanche was the owner of a number of other châteaux and probably never resided at Sailhant since it was an uncomfortable fortress. Unoccupied by the châtelaine, it was not fully guarded and hence was susceptible to being taken by force.

Blazon of Villandrando

Helmet *"Bec de Passereau"*. Château du Sailhant Collection

Indeed, Sailhant was occupied by the English from 1436 to 1439 and then seized, in 1439, by Rodrigue de Villandrando, a famous Spanish pillager. Villandrando, probably the most legendary knight-brigand to occupy the château, was one of the great lords of Auvergne who, along with his famous brother-in-law Charles, duke of Bourbon and Auvergne, plotted against King CharlesVII. In the autumn of 1437, the château was the object of another unsuccessful siege. Finally, in 1439, the town of Saint-Flour again paid for an evacuation.

The last of the Dauphins was the son of Blanche, Béraud Dauphin IV de Lespinasse, a wealthy lord who had married (second marriage) Antoinette de Polignac. He died in 1482 without a male heir.

Château du Sailhant, 1383-1482

. . .au fond de ladite cour est un pavillon avec une tour ronde, le tout séparé par un fossé où il y avait pareillement un pont-levis...

— Archives Nationales à Paris (sans date)

Although subject to numerous sieges, conflicts and occupations, the château had managed to survive the Hundreds' Years War without major structural damage.

The seigniorial residence, a service west wing and the donjon enclosed in high walls with ramparts comprised the elements of the medieval château. It is traditional in France to have two grande salles "great rooms", one on top of the other.

At Sailhant, a grande salle occurred on the ground and second floor of the western portion (aII - pg. 128) of the seigniorial residence. Also in accordance with tradition, they had the same footprint, with the upper one having higher ceilings and richer details. The ground floor grande salle (grande salle basse) would have served as a general reception room and the second floor grande salle (grande salle haute) as a more important reception room for use by the seignior and his family. Both grande salles had monumental chimney mantles to heat the large spaces.

Sailhant from the north

To the east of the second

floor grande salle (a13 - pg. 128) was a square room with a window on the east wall overlooking the cascade and the cascade lake. It was most likely the private room of the seignior. The eastern portion of the ground floor also most likely served as a bedroom. There was a latrine in the lower level of the northeast tower with possibly another latrine in the upper level. There is no evidence that there was anything other than attic spaces in the top floor of the seigniorial residence.

To the west of the seigniorial residence was a structurally independent service/residential west wing, accessible through a door from the entry passageway (a21 - pg. 128) with a jamb with Gothic base moldings. Linked to the service/residential west wing was a vaulted stone chapel building.*

Sailhant donjon from the west

The walls of the square towered donjon at the southern tip of the promontory were probably rebuilt by Béraud Dauphin IV de Lespinasse, lord of Saillans between 1452 and 1482. After a long period of partial abandonment and military occupation, peace had returned. It seems possible that this lord found peace to be a good opportunity to give back to the château its dignity and to affix his mark by rebuilding the ancient square tower, a common practice of the time.

Originally the donjon had served as a watchtower and the final family refuge during a siege. In addition, it was the ancient symbolic stronghold of the family. Early texts refer to it as containing an auditorium for seigniorial justice, probably the floor which is one level below grade, and a prison, logically in the lowest level, which still contains chains for prisoners. The square plan of the donjon had been based upon a very early architectural tradition in the Auvergne.

Château du Sailhant -- Donjon Seignorial Justice Auditorium

Before rebuilding the donjon had a total of six or seven levels and may have been topped by a battlement, as was common in the Auvergne at that time. With a height of approximately ninety feet and being topped by a defensive crown, it would have had a very imposing appearance. But the narrowness of the walls, its freestanding position at the far extremity of the spur and the heavy crown were not exceptionally strong — thus the probable need for rebuilding in the fifteenth century.

The addition of the spiral stair connecting the floors probably also occurred at this time.

* Demolished in 1830

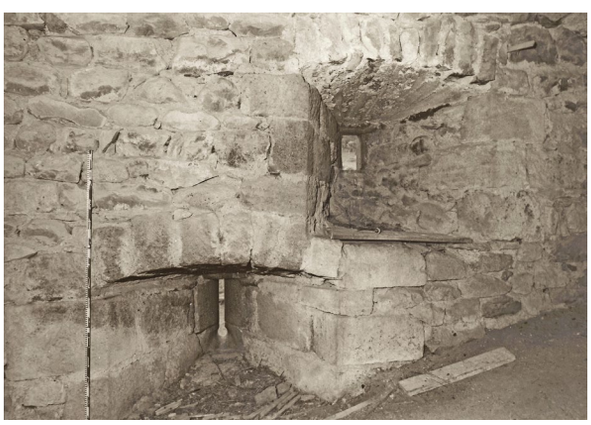
Donjon with moat partially excavated

At the lowest level, the vaulted prisoner's chamber is described in accounts as an oubliette "dungeon." On the east and west sides it is pierced with two shooting slits that are contemporaneous with the construction of the walls. These are archères-canonnières "slits with a circular hole at their base for firing small cannons." In the fifteenth century, due to the development of this type of firearm, they had become the most common form of shooting slit. This room is also equipped with an opening in the west wall above the shooting level. Its purpose was to provide light, visibility and to vent the toxic gas occurring from the cannons. The ceiling vault of this lowest level is pierced in its center with a nineteen-inch square opening used for lowering supplies into the space.

A single window with crossed stone mullions was installed in the west wall of the first floor room (one level below the grade level of the inner court).* The first floor room, probably the auditorium for seigniorial justice, had either a groined or a ribbed vaulted ceiling with a chimney.

At the second floor, the exterior entrance door was approximately at the level of the inner court. This door was the termination of a drawbridge.

At the top floor was a bedroom, its use confirmed by a cantilevered latrine.



Donjon archères-Cannonières and light/vent openings

Donjon east wall - latrine supports

* With undisturbed wall construction, the fifteenth century mullioned window and the wall are contemporaneous.

The Renaissance

The sun rarely shines on history what with the dust and confusion.
—Thoreau

The d'Amboise Family, c. 1482-1540

Antoinette d'Amboise se désintéressa alors de la baronnie de Saillans qu'elle vendit, peu de temps après la mort de son mari à la famille du chancelier Dubourg pour 200 écus d'or et 30.000 livres tournois payables en vaisselle d'argent.
— Déribier du Châtelet,
Le Dictionnaire Statisque du Cantal, 1850

After the death of Béraud Dauphin IV de Lespinasse in 1482, the château passed to his granddaughter, Françoise Dauphin de Lespinasse. Françoise brought her inheritance to her husband, Guyon d'Amboise, a great lord and the youngest son of Charles I of Amboise. As the lord of many other châteaux, Guyon d'Amboise and his family did not reside at Sailhant and instead placed a captain-châtelain in charge of the property. The château then passed to Françoise's daughter, Antoinette d'Amboise, who married Antoine de la Rochefoucault. In approximately 1540, Antoinette d'Amboise de la Rochefoucault sold Château du Sailhant. For the first time in over 500 years the Château du Sailhant left the descendents of the ancient Saillans family.

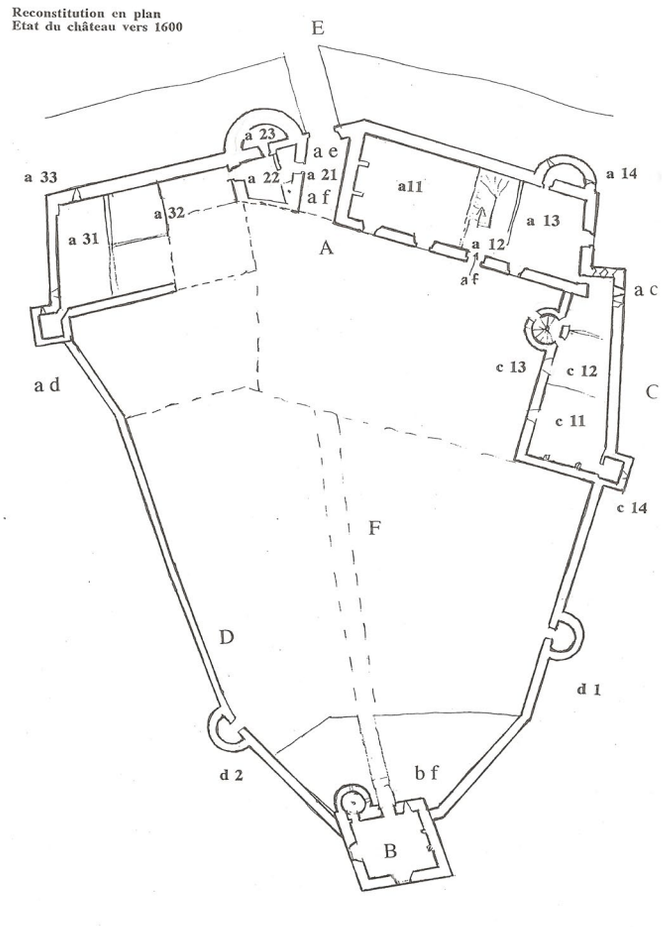
The Dubourg Family, c. 1540-1618

A la tête d'un poste, la femme de Dubourg, Nicole d'Andredieu avait bravement résisté aux catholiques; elle blessa même St-Hérem à la mai n.
— Alfred Douët, Le Château de Saillans, 1925

Around 1540, Anne Hénard, the widow of Chancellor Antoine Dubourg, purchased Sailhant from Antoinette d'Amboise. Antoine Dubourg had been chancellor of France and president of the parliament of Paris and had died in an accident in 1538. The château became the main residence of the Dubourg family, accommodating three generations — the widow Anne Hénard, her son, Charles-Antoine, the baron of Saillans, his wife, Nicole and their two sons Louis and Charles.

In 1562, France began to be torn apart by the bloody Wars of Religion. As a result of the Reformation, many Protestants, called Huguenots, were living in France. The Catholic population grew more and more hostile to the reformed religion and murderous violence eventually erupted. The Dubourgs were a Protestant family and Charles-Antoine maintained a garrison in his château, which provoked the wrath of the Catholic authorities.

One night in 1569, the Count de Montmorin Saint-Hérem, governor of Auvergne and leader of the Catholic party arrived at Sailhant from Saint-Flour accompanied by his troops. Charles-Antoine Dubourg was sick in bed. Upon arrival, they knocked so hard at the door of the château that Charles-Antoine's wife, Nicole, answered the door herself. When told that they had come to install a garrison in the château, she replied that there was no need for a garrison and that her husband was unwilling to receive it. As she tried to close the door, Saint-Hérem pushed it so



Floor plan of Château du Sailhant circa 1600

hard that she fell to the ground. Stepping inside in spite of her, Nicole began screaming. An arriving servant, seeing the châtelaine on the ground, fired a wounding shot at Saint-Hérem. With only five or six soldiers in residency at the château, Saint-Hérem's garrison took the château with little resistance. The troops searched the château until they found Charles-Antoine in bed, dragged him downstairs to the kitchen and forced him into a hot chamber where he died of asphyxiation. Nicole was jailed for the wounding of Saint-Hérem. The Catholics retained possession of Sailhant from 1569 until the Edict of Poitiers in 1576. Château du Sailhant was then returned to the Dubourgs.

Louis Dubourg, who became lord of Sailhant, headed the Protestants of the area. A dauntless soldier, he fought against the Catholic leader of the Saint-Flour region, Jean de Lastic. Lastic seized Château du Sailhant and Louis Dubourg took the Château of Lastic. Curiously, around 1588, Louis Dubourg married Jeanne, the sister of Jean de Lastic.

On May 15, 1588, a regional peace treaty was concluded. Lastic and Dubourg agreed to return to their own châteaux and Catholics and Protestants swore never to take up arms against each other. But early in the year 1589, Louis Dubourg again battled against the Catholics. The memory of his father's murder no doubt haunted him. In 1591 the Duke of Nemours ordered Jean de Lastic to raze Sailhant. However, for an unknown reason the order was never carried out.

The Wars of Religion lasted until 1598, when the Edict of Nantes created an uncertain truce between Catholics and Protestants.

Louis Dubourg and Jeanne de Lastic had only one daughter, Catherine Dubourg, who married Jacques d'Estaing in 1616.

Château du Sailhant -- Main entrance door

Château du Sailhant, c. 1482-1618

Les appartements du château ne manquaient pas de beauté. Ils avaient du être bien décorés suivant le temps, si l'on en juge par les traces existantes de peintures à fresque...

— Déribier du Châtelet,
Le Dictionnaire Statisque du Cantal, 1850

Inner court facade connection east ell wing

Unlike the Dauphins, great feudal lords who possessed several châteaux and would travel from one to another, the Dubourg family used Sailhant as their principal residence. The fortified aspects of the château became less important and its history as a country house began. The Dauphins caused numerous changes to be made to the château which had, up until now, been primarily a feudal fortress. They can be credited with the installation of the arched main entrance door, which probably replaced an earlier one of similar or slightly smaller dimensions.

On the ground level of the inner court facade of the seigniorial residence between the second and third bay from the east, are the remains of a large opening which would have been the primary opening to the seigniorial residence. It would have led to a hallway between the two ancient rooms on the ground level and to a stairway to the two oldest rooms on the second floor. According to Alfred Douet's Le Chateau de Sailhant et ses Seigneurs, "The apartments of the château did not lack beauty, they must have been well decorated judging by the remaining paintings and frescoes"*

West entrance tower with shooting slits added in the 16th century
(Photogaph by Author)

There is a band of basaltic stones on the tower to the west of the entrance which differ in size and shape from the stones above and below the band indicating a different construction campaign. Within this different construction there are four shooting slits of a type common to the sixteenth century. These four shooting slits are part of a later remodeling which responded to advances in weaponry at the time of the Wars of Religion. At the third level of the tower to the west of the entrance, the two fourteenth-century shooting slits remained. The mechanism and opening associated with the drawbridge was eliminated when the wall of the main entrance was replaced at the end of the sixteenth century.

Inner court facade

At the most northerly portion, overlapping the east gable wall of the seigniorial residence, a small bay (ac - pg. 128) projected from the east gable wall of the seigniorial residence linking the seigniorial residence to the east ell wing.

The north face of the linking bay provided protection to the northeast side of the château through shooting slits oriented toward the north. The

* Sadly, the frescoes were eliminated in the 1890s renovation.

Dubourgs added the large ell wing (C - pg. 128) to the eastern side of the enclosure in the last third of the sixteenth century.*

On the north side of the linking bay there are two juxtaposed rectangular shooting slits. One of the shooting slits, which is contemporaneous with the wall, was intended for late sixteenth or early seventeenth century fire tubes that were placed on the ground.

Shooting slit north wall linking bay from inside

The other two openings occur higher on the north elevation. One is a small simple window slit, the other is smaller, with a slit and a hole for shooting at the bottom, of the type used for shoulder arms such as an arquebus, "musket". It is very typical of the latter part of the sixteenth century at the time of the Wars of Religion, the period when the Dubourgs lived in the château. It also is contemporaneous with the wall.

Linking Bay from the north

In addition to contributing to defensive capabilities, the east ell wing provided additional service areas and principal rooms with a handsome outlook to the cascade. The kitchen was on the ground floor above the cellar (c11 - pg. 128). It terminated at the south gable wall of the east ell wing and encompassed the small projecting square of the surrounding wall. The oven in which Dubourg suffocated was most likely in the kitchen in the east ell wing. The facade of the east ell wing on the inner court side contained, at a point fairly close to the facade of the seigniorial residence, a circular turret (c13 - pg. 128) with small windows and shutters, which enclosed a spiral staircase with stone steps leading to the upper level which included at least two rooms and a cabinet ("study or closet"). The east ell wing was roofed with lauzes similar to the seigniorial residence.

East facade of linking bay

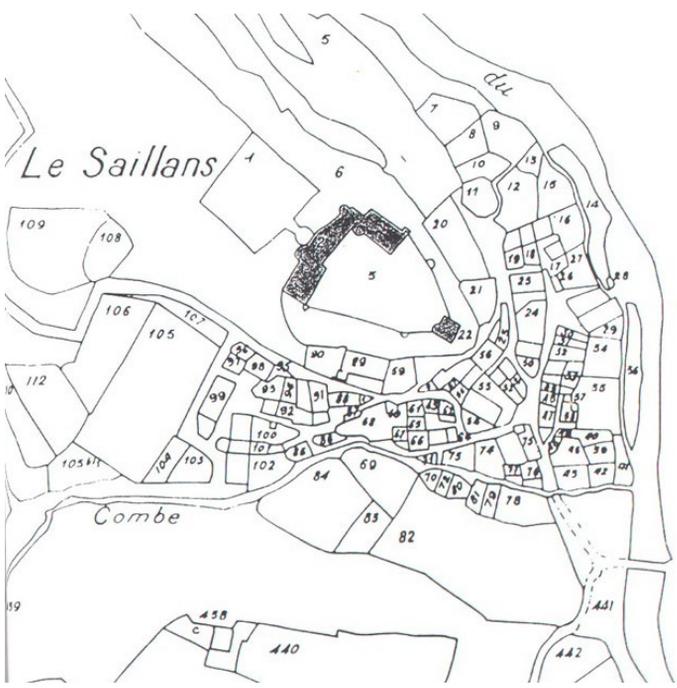
Shooting slit linking bay north wall

The service/residential wing on the west side of the château was also probably reconstructed by the Dubourg family.* This secondary building was somewhat larger than the seigniorial residence with a basement level at its far westerly bay.

* It appears on the 1820 Cadastral Survey and was destroyed in 1830. Today only the cellar (below c11) and a portion of the north end (ac) wrapping the southeast angle of the seigniorial residence survive. The linking bay, partially preserved during the 1830s demolition, was converted into a slender square tower during the 1890s renovation.

There are monumental fireplace mantles inside the château which date from the 1560s. They were originally on the west wall of the grande salle on the first floor and the west wall of the grande salle on the second floor. With their flat hoods supported by classic columns, these fireplaces are typical of the period. Executed in the regional gray basalt stone, they were originally polychromed.*

16th-century Dining Room fireplace mantle in its 19th century location



1820 Napoleonian Cadastral Survey

* The chimney on the west wall of the first floor grande salle was restored to its original location in 2001. During the 1890s remodeling, the chimney from the west wall of the second floor grande salle was relocated to the first floor Salon, where it remains.

Seventeenth & Eighteenth Centuries

Nothing is dearer to me than to do all I can to preserve my nobles

— Louis XIII (1610-1643)

The d'Estaing Family, c. 1618-1753

La mère de Jean d'Estaing, Catherine du Bourg, estant de présent en son château de Sailhans, baille le domaine à Michel Bouvlin, marchand bourgeois de Clermont. La dame promet lui bailler deux chambres, une cour et les greniers, une estable et fenils pour faire sa résidence tant qu'il demeurera audit Sailhans avec des meubles...

— Archives Nationales à Paris

After the death of Louis Dubourg in 1618, his daughter, Catherine Dubourg, through her marriage to Jacques d'Estaing, returned the barony of Saillans and Château du Sailhant back to the descendants of the original Saillans family. Jacques d'Estaing was the great grandson of Antoinette d'Amboise de la Rochefoucault who had sold the barony of Saillans to the Dubourg family eighty-five years earlier. Jacques d'Estaing's father, Jean III, had great power, prestige and wealth. As one of the main leaders of the Catholic Saint League in Auvergne, he had submitted to Henri IV and maintained the King's troops in the fortress of Murol. Through this maneuver, he preserved his family from suspicions that provoked the demolition of châteaux which could have been used against the State during the time of Cardinal Richelieu.

The marriage of knight frankJacques to the heiress of the prominent Protestant Dubourg family was characteristic of Henry IV's political policy of appeasement of religious passions. As a fifth son, Jacques did not inherit the large patrimony belonging to the family of d'Estaing. Although he had other domains, Sailhant was Jacques's fiefdom and his main family residence.

In 1654, Jean d'Estaing, a brigadier, succeeded to his father in the barony of Saillans. His patrimony was considerably increased in 1647 when he married Claude-Marie de Terrail, the daughter and only heiress of Jean de Combourcier, Lieutenant-General for the King in Basse Auvergne which brought him the seigniories of Ravel and Moissac in Auvergne and of Terrail in Dauphiné. The seigniory and Château de Ravel, which previously belonged to the Amboise and Rochefoucault families, were then durably linked to the patrimony of the lords of Sailhant.

The Château of Ravel then became the main residence of Jean d'Estaing. Jean's mother, Catherine Dubourg became the dame de Sailhans,"Lady of Sailhans." A widow and still alive in 1665, she resided most of the time at Château du Sailhant. It is during this period that the first farming leases occurred on the domain of Sailhant. Under the lease, an over-tenant collected rent from the farmers and then paid the seignior a fixed amount of rent. The tenant was responsible for the maintenance of the château and the property. The leases included living quarters within the château.

When Jean d'Estaing died in 1675, his son Gaspard d'Estaing became Lord of Sailhant as well as succeeding to the seigniories of Ravel, Terrail, Saint-Maurice, Nouvialle, Moissac, Montegut, and Spirat. This powerful lord resided in Ravel, renting at various times the domain of Sailhant to farmers, bourgeois and merchants from Saint-Flour while never personally managing the seigniory of Sailhant.

In the 1697 lease, Gaspard d'Estaing was represented by his brother, Joachim-Joseph d'Estaing, who had been bishop of Saint-Flour since January 1694.

The proximity of Château du Sailhant to Saint-Flour led Joachim-Joseph d'Estaing to use the château as his country estate after he took possession of the diocese in 1694. He was obliged to reside full-time at the château during the 1709 grain shortage riots. In that episode, the outraged townspeople of Saint-Flour chased the bishop from his Episcopalian palace because grain stored in the Episcopal domain was used to feed the royal army instead of the local population.

The bishop of Saint-Flour lived in his Episcopal palace during the last years of his long life. Beginning in 1714, Gaspard d'Estaing was the signatory on the leases. He continued to use Ravel as his main residence. Charles-Francois

d'Estaing succeeded his father Gaspard in 1731. He showed interest in his barony of Sailhant by increasing its size through the purchase of lands and the seigniory of Valuejols seven kilometers away.

In 1744, Charles-Francois d'Estaing leased Sailhant to Antoine Bardol, bourgeois of Saint-Flour. When Charles-Francois d'Estaing died in 1746, Charles-Hector d'Estaing, a minor, was the heir. But, the succession was crippled by debts with the main creditor being the famous writer Francois-Marie Arouet de Voltaire.

The debts led to a sale by auction in 1753. The lands of both Sailhant and Valuejols were adjudged to Francois Jean Roger, squire, Lord of Colombelle, financial advisor and secretary to King Louis XV and notary of Chatelet in Paris.

After the auction, in front of the lessors, a shot was fired by the notary in the courtyard of the château in the name of the possession by Sir Roger of the domain and the seigniory. The men and women from the village were summoned to acknowledge Sir Roger as the only lord of the land of Sailhant, seigniory and marquisate.

Château du Sailhant -- Donjon

Château du Sailhant, c. 1618-1753

> *Si l'aspect extérieur des murailles ne fut pas sensiblement modifié, en revanche toute la façade intérieure sur la cour fut refaite dans le style du XVIIIe siècle. L'écusson aux armes des d'Estaing qui fut placé au dessus de la grande porte d'entrée porte la date de ces restaurations: 1710.*
>
> — Alfred Douët, Le Château de Saillans (1925)

In 1633, the upper levels of the donjon were removed and it was made into a pavilion. This was most likely the result of structural problems associated with lack of maintenance, the thinness of the tower walls and its precarious position at the point of the spur.

At this time the donjon was aesthetically enhanced. A new entrance door frame in the classical style, used during the end of the reign of Henri IV, was installed. The installation of the chimney at the first floor (one level below grade), the windows with crossed mullions at the second floor (one level below grade), the two windows at the second floor (grade level) and the small shooting crenel can also be dated to this time.

This work, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, corresponds to the transfer of the château from the Dubourg family to the d'Estaing family, through the marriage of Catherine Dubourg to Jacques d'Estaing.

The transformation of the donjon into a debonair pavilion was an important step in the architectural domestication of the château. It probably occurred at the same time as the leveling of the surrounding walls (D - pg. 137), which further transformed the

Château du Sailhant -- Donjon entrance door

Inner court facade vestiges of arched opening to granary

fortified château into a civil residence. The leveling partially sacrificed the martial appearance of the chateau's architecture as well as its defensive system. The two long medieval east and west surrounding walls, each originally flanked by semicircular towers (dI & d2 - pg. 137), were leveled to a height of less than three feet, leaving only a parapet. The courtyard (F - pg. 137) was leveled and the moat (bf - pg. 137) in front of the donjon was filled.

For forty years, between the death of Catherine Dubourg d'Estaing in the third quarter of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century renovation for Bishop Jacques-Joseph d'Estaing, the château was not inhabited by its seigniors. During this period, the château was superficially maintained by the lessors and its principal function was farming.

Under the d'Estaing farming leases at the end of the seventeenth century, the old seignior room on the east side of the second floor was used to store grain for animals kept directly under it on the east side of the ground floor. In the tradition of typical Auvergnat farms, there was a dirt ramp for carts leading to the second floor. The vestiges of a large, semicircular arched door can be seen on the exterior wall of the second floor. There are curb stones at the base of each jamb to prevent wagon wheels from hitting the jambs. The two levels on the west side of the seignior residence probably remained as residential space.

Curb stone in vestige of arched opening to granary

Because a member of the d'Estaing family was to use the château, the residential portion was transformed through restoration, redecoration and furnishing into a comfortable dwelling. The 1710 date on a shield above the main entrance to the château memorializes the work.

Entrance door blazon

Sir Roger, 1753-1765

Je ne sais Monsieur, si vous connaissez, par tradition, la situation de votre château.
Elle est très forte et peu belle pour ne pas dire laide. Il est entre deux montagnes perché sur un rocher d'une est du côté du nord.

— Lettre de M. de Runes à M. Roger, datée de Sauges, le 20 Octobre 1753, Archives Nationales à Paris

Although rarely present at the château, Sir Francois Jean Roger was nonetheless an active owner for twelve years, maintaining a close relationship with his lessor, Pierre Bardol, a merchant from Saint-Flour.

The good administration and the important restoration work done at the château by Sir Roger enabled his son, Pierre-Victor to sell the domain at Sailhant for a good price after only ten years.

On July 20, 1765, the land and seigniory of Sailhant was sold to Messire Etienne de Serre de Saint-Roman, described by the sales contract as a "knight, baron of Merveis and Combret, lord of Saint-Roman, Ville-Juif and other places, advisor and secretary of the king of House of France and his finances, ordinary master in his chambre des comptes, living in Paris."

Château du Sailhant, c. 1753-1765

Monsieur Roger se proposant d'avoir au château deux chambres, deux gardes robes, un cabinet et une antichambre dans la grande pièce séparée par trois cloisons de bois. Et n'y trouvant que trois croisées, ce qui n'est pas suffisant pour remplir son objet, il demande si on peut aisément percer dans les murs de face ce qu'il lui faudra de plus de croisées; les murs ne sont-ils pas trop épais et trop difficiles à percer? En supposant qu'ils puissent se percer, celà ne causera-t-il pas de dommages au reste des murs dans lesquels ces croisées pourront être ouvertes?

— Réponses de M. De Runes du mémoire à lui envoyé par M. Roger sur la terre de Saillans, (non daté, début 1754), *Archives Nationales a Paris*

Immediately after his acquisition, Sir Roger had a condition survey performed followed by a repair estimate. The survey showed that the condition of the château had deteriorated in the forty years since it had been renovated. It mentions that the windows and doors were without enclosure and the donjon roof was in poor condition.

A principal transformation during the eighteenth century, substantially impacting the court side of the chateau, was the reconstitution of the facade of the seigniorial residence, the passageway bay and the bay to the west of the passageway.

The quoins still remain in the portion of the facade that was grafted onto the angle of the seigniorial residence. The erection of the three-centered depressed arch of the entry passageway was part of the reconstruction campaign of the facade.

Château du Sailhant -- Inner court

The reconstitution consisted of opening windows disposed into seven regular bays consisting of five bays in the seigniorial residence and two bays to the west of the seigniorial residence. The openings may have had a window surround installed at this time which was replaced in the nineteenth century.

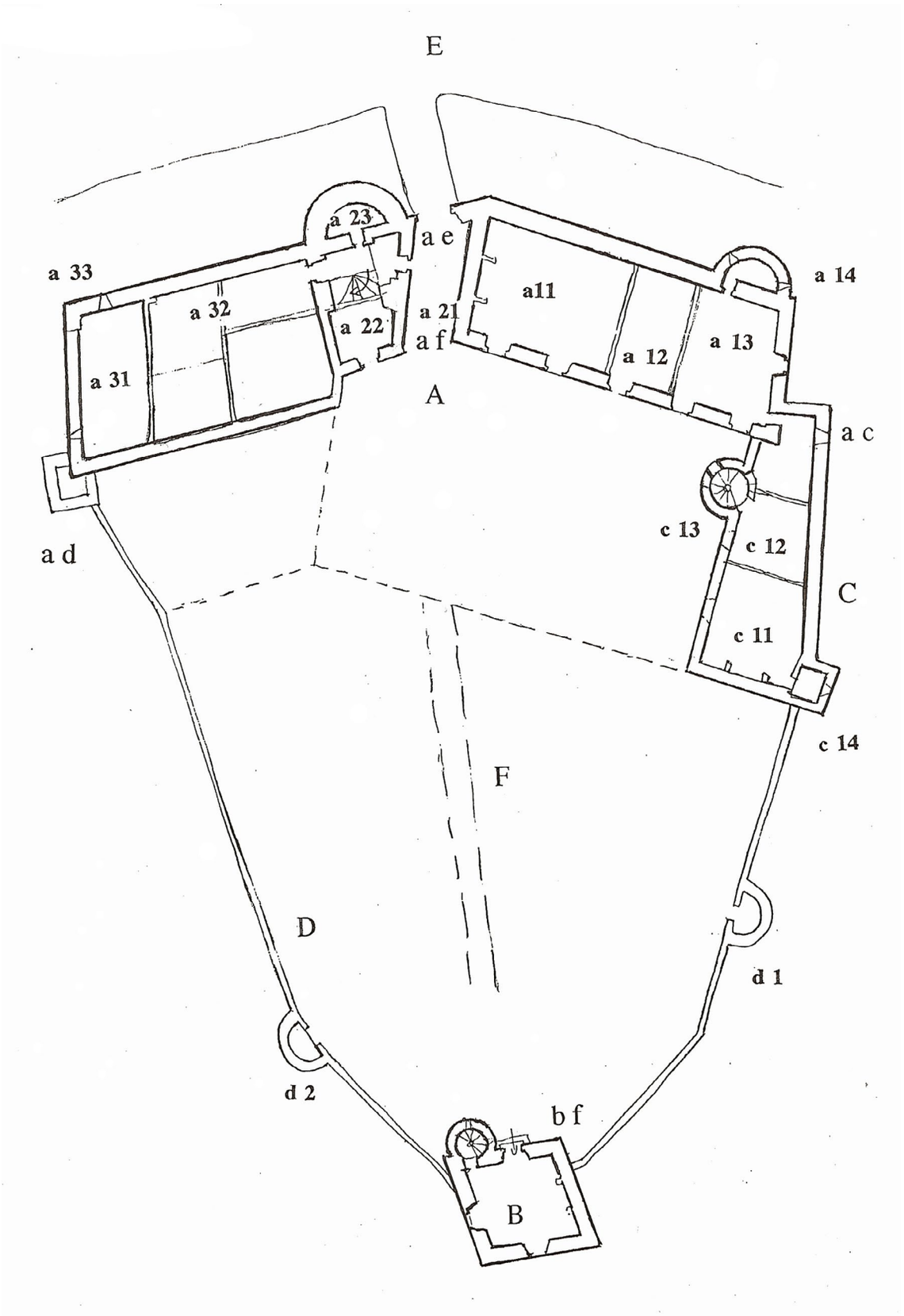
There are distinguishing characteristics between the eighteenth and nineteenth-century work. The entire nineteenth-century renovation is characterized by exposed stone facades without a rendering coat*. In the seven bays from the eighteenth century, remains of rendering occurs over the relieving arches of the windows and over the passageway arcade, indicating that these elements were in place at the time of the eighteenth-century rendering installation. Since the surrounds of all eleven bays are the same, it is assumed that they are a nineteenth-century installation.

The insertion of windows was not accomplished by simply creating openings. A substantial portion of the facade wall was actually demolished and rebuilt. There are traces of heavy intervention on the inner court facade of the seigniorial residence. At each bay, large vertical breaches were cut from top to bottom. This process obliterated traces of most of the original openings.

Sir Roger's work at Château du Sailhant between 1756 and 1758 also included obliquely cutting down the northeast semicircular tower to support a sloping roof as a continuation of the slope of the north side of the seigniorial residence. The semicircular tower to the west of the château entrance (a23 - pg. 137) was probably similarly lowered.

Inner Court facade

* Cement mortar covering the wall surface.



Floor plan of Château du Sailhant circa 1765

The French Revolution

Started by the patricians, finished by the plebians
— Chateaubriand (1768- 1848)

The de Serres de Saint-Roman, Last Lords of Sailhans, c. 1765-1793

"Art 6 - Le preneur aura la jouissance des greniers du château du Sailhans, de celui de l'écurie pour serrer les grains provenant du payement des cens et redevances, et, en cas que ledits greniers ne seraient pas suffisants, le preneur pourra les serrer dans les appartements dudit château qui lui seront indiqués par ledit sieur de Saint Roman, à la charge de ne point surcharger les planchers, à peine de répondre en son nom propre et privé des dommages qui pourraient arriver aux poutres et soliveaux du plancher."

— Bail à ferme de la terre de Sailhant de Etienne de Serre de Saint-Roman en faveur de Pierre Bardol, par acte passé le 31 Mars 1772, Archives Nationale de Paris.

The possession of the land of Sailhant by Etienne de Serre de Saint-Roman was announced by a ceremonial visit to the château similar to the Sir Roger's visit of 1753. Etienne continued to renew the farming lease with Pierre Bardol, the tenant-farmer under Sir Roger. The lease of 1772 permitted the tenant to store the rent payments of grain both in the stable and in the château.

Letters of Etienne de Serre de Saint-Roman to Pierre Bardol show that Bardol was having increasing difficulties meeting the requirements of his lease because of problems with the taxpayers of the seigniory.

In June of 1780, Etienne renounced the renewal of the Sailhant farming lease with Pierre Bardol. The Bardol family, who had kept the farming lease for more than forty years, lost their position at Sailhant because of French social evolution. In this period, immediately before the Revolution, the inhabitants of the seigniory were becoming less willing to pay the dues and taxes being collected by the lessee of the domain. The new Sailhant farming lease went to Pierre Rongier, a bourgeois living in Saint-Flour along with Sir Taillandier.

After his father's death, Jacques-Philippe de Serre de Saint-Roman administered the domain of Sailhant. In 1788, he renewed the farming lease in favor of Jean Baptiste Rongier, son of the then deceased Pierre Rongier.

The domain then went from Jacques-Philippe to his brother-in-law Jacques Mathieu Augeard, a resident of Paris, a knight, advisor to the state, secretary of the Mandaments of the Queen, lord of Buzancy in Ardennes and the husband of Anne-Sophie de Serre de Saint Roman. Count Augeard migrated during the Revolution. In 1793, there was an inventory of his belongings and his patrimony was sequestrated and sold.

Château du Sailhant, c. 1765-1793

"Je pourrais me dispenser de faire mettre des grilles de fer aux fenêtres dont vous me parlez puisqu'il n'y en avait pas lorsque nous avons passé le bail, mais je suis bien aise de contribuer à votre sûreté, aussy je vous prie d'y faire mettre de bons barreaux de fer que je payeray et à l'égard des volets, sy vous jugez à propos d'en mettre, nous les fairons à frais communs sy vous le voulez..."

— Une lettre de Etienne de Serre de Saint-Roman ã Pierre Bardol le 4 décembre 1777, Alfred Douët, Le Château de Saillans (1925)

Unlike the Roger family, the Saint-Roman family appear to have been less interested in increasing value by improving the condition of the château. In 1781, an inventory taken after the death of Etienne de Serre de Saint Roman, then known as the count of Fregeville and baron of Sailhans, showed that other than the chapel with its normal ornaments,

the rooms were either empty or furnished with only a few used pieces of furniture. The furniture may have been some of the furniture left by the d'Estaing family after the sale of 1753. Since the lessors, Bardol and then Rongier, were using the château for only occasional use, they had probably added little in the way of furnishings. In this survey, irons for the feet and hands of prisoners were still in the château, probably in a room which was used as a cell. However no weapons remained.

A survey completed in 1781 states "that all the château windows have no glass or interior shutters with only exterior shutters. The château needs to be roughcast completely. All the beams in the château, the attics and in all the apartments need to be propped up." These defects may have been caused by poor maintenance, but they may also correspond to unfinished work left by Sir Roger.

Donjon

The Nineteenth Century

"History - that excited and deceitful old woman!"
— Guy de Maupassant

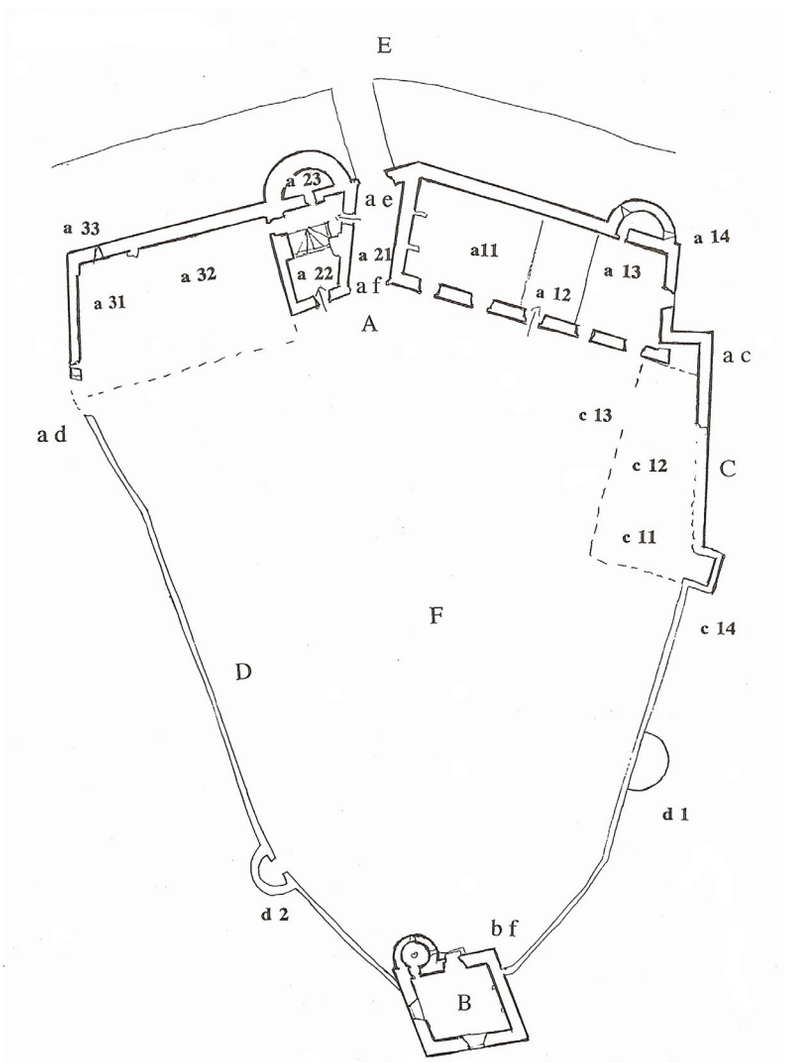
The Farmer Owners, c. 1793-1881

"Le château...fut racheté en 1793 avec une partie des terres par le fermier alors titulaire du bail, Jean-Baptiste Rongier..."
— Château du Sailhant, Monographie Historique et Architecturale, Étude Approfondie de Documentation et d'Analyse Historique et Archéologique, Christian Corvisier, 1999

After the 1793 Revolution, the incumbent tenant under the farming lease, Jean Baptiste Rongier, bought the château and part of the lands. The château was in disrepair, providing only very basic comforts, but it had not suffered any direct destruction during the Revolution. Rongier's home was in Saint-Flour, so it is unlikely that he made changes or improvements to the château in the nineteenth century. In fact, the château most likely continued to deteriorate.

Rongier died in 1816. In May, 1817, his heirs, including a daughter who had married a member of the Bardol family, sold the property for 1,400 francs to Pierre Laurier, a farmer living near Sailhant.

When his father died in 1857, Michel Laurier inherited the property. He continued to use the ancient château's attics for storage and the lower level as a barn. In 1874 he sold the property for 22,000 francs to his son-in-law Jacques Genestoux, a merchant living in Boulogne-sur-Seine with his wife Marguerite Laurier. On October 27, 1881, Genestoux sold the property to Hippolyte Mary Raynaud for 70,000 francs.



Floor plan of Château du Sailhant circa 1850

Château du Sailhant, c. 1793-1881

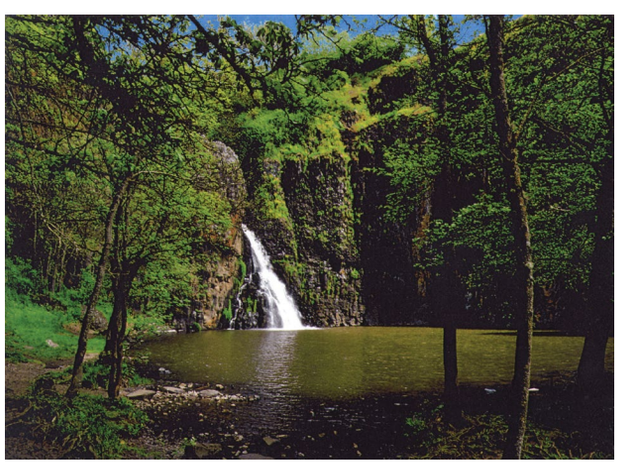
The Napoleonian Cadastral Survey of 1820 (pg. 131) shows the east ell wing and the service/residential west wing as complete and covered, but demolition of these two elements occurred shortly afterwards. The Survey does not show the stable in the outer court.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the château and its associated buildings had been diminished by both decay and an 1830 demolition campaign. Many elements had deteriorated entirely or had been removed. The large stable of the outer court had completely disappeared. The east ell wing (C - pg. 140) had been demolished except for a small portion of the eastern and northern wall preserved by a small sloping roof. The service/residential west wing had also been demolished with the exception of the old fourteenth- century curtain wall on the north side, a small portion of the west gable wall, and the two bays to the west of the seignioral residence. The seigniorial residence (including the passageway bays and vestibule) were preserved in the state it was after the work of Sir Roger. It was empty and in poor condition, though the ceiling between the ground and first floor were well preserved. The donjon was one of the few elements still in good condition.

Marie Athalina Laurier,
daughter of Michel Laurier

There is a legend that the Dubourg family treasure is hidden beneath the lake of Cascade de Sailhant. In the nineteenth century, the cascade water was diverted and the lake drained. Unfortunately for the organizers, nothing was found. A photograph recorded this exciting exploratory event.

Cascade of Sailhant, c. 1870



Cascade of Sailhant, c. 1957

Château du Sailhant from the northeast, late-nineteeth century

Château du Sailhant from the southwest, late-nineteeth century

Hippolyte Mary Raynaud, c. 1881-1904

"Mary Raynaud était un enfant ou un jeune homme tout particulier...sa tournure, sa démarche étaient d'une distinction, je dirais d'une élégance telle qu'entre mille on le reconnaissait; ses goûts, ses manières étaient tout aristocratiques."

— Le Finance Illustrée, 31 Août 1889

"Après la guerre, M. Mary-Raynaud, né pour les chiffres...où il a débuté plébéien, il devient prince."

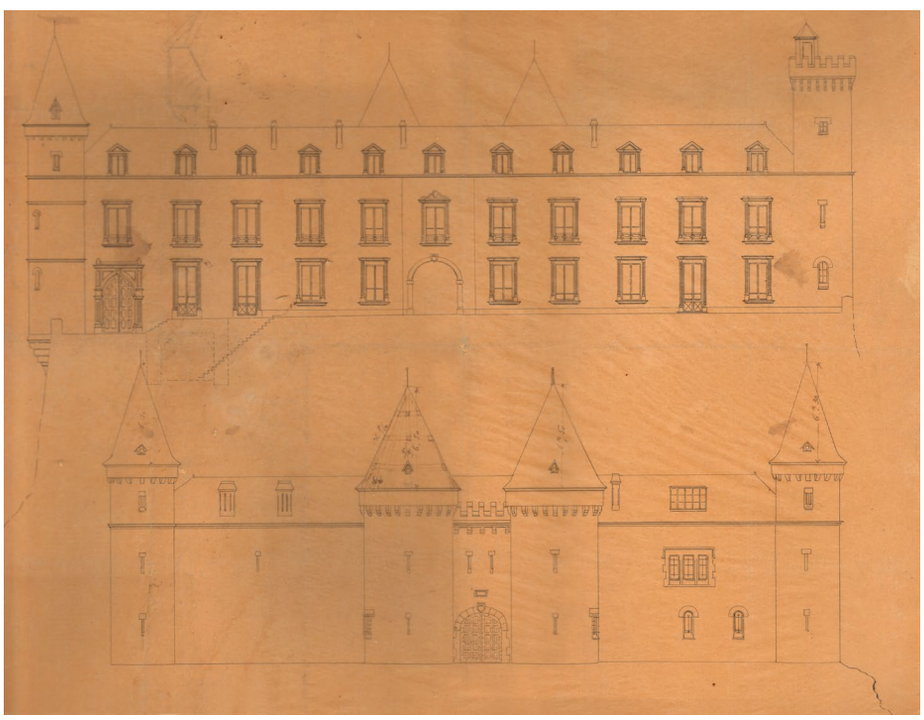
— Le Cantal, c. 1889

"...il se fait pour la cinquiéme fois arrêter en juin 1921, sous le nom de comte de Rockland."

— JOLLY (dir.), Dictionnaire des parlementaires français, Paris 1960-1977, notice biographique de Mary-Raynaud.

Mary Hippolyte Raynaud

Born to farmer parents in 1844 in Le Sailhant, the tiny hamlet at the foot of the château, Hippolyte Mary Raynaud was a fascinating character. An adventurer with grandiose ambitions, from daring financial setups to bankruptcies, he built a fortune with no future. After an initial failed business, in 1879 he established the Banque de la Bourse in Paris but had loses again during the Paris Bourse crash of 1882, the great French economic crisis of the nineteenth century. In 1886, he started a bank in Paris pompously named the Banque d'Etat,"Bank of the State." Soon after he was living a grand life in his town house on the avenue de Bois de Boulogne married to Marie Nathalie Martine, an actress of the Royal Palace.



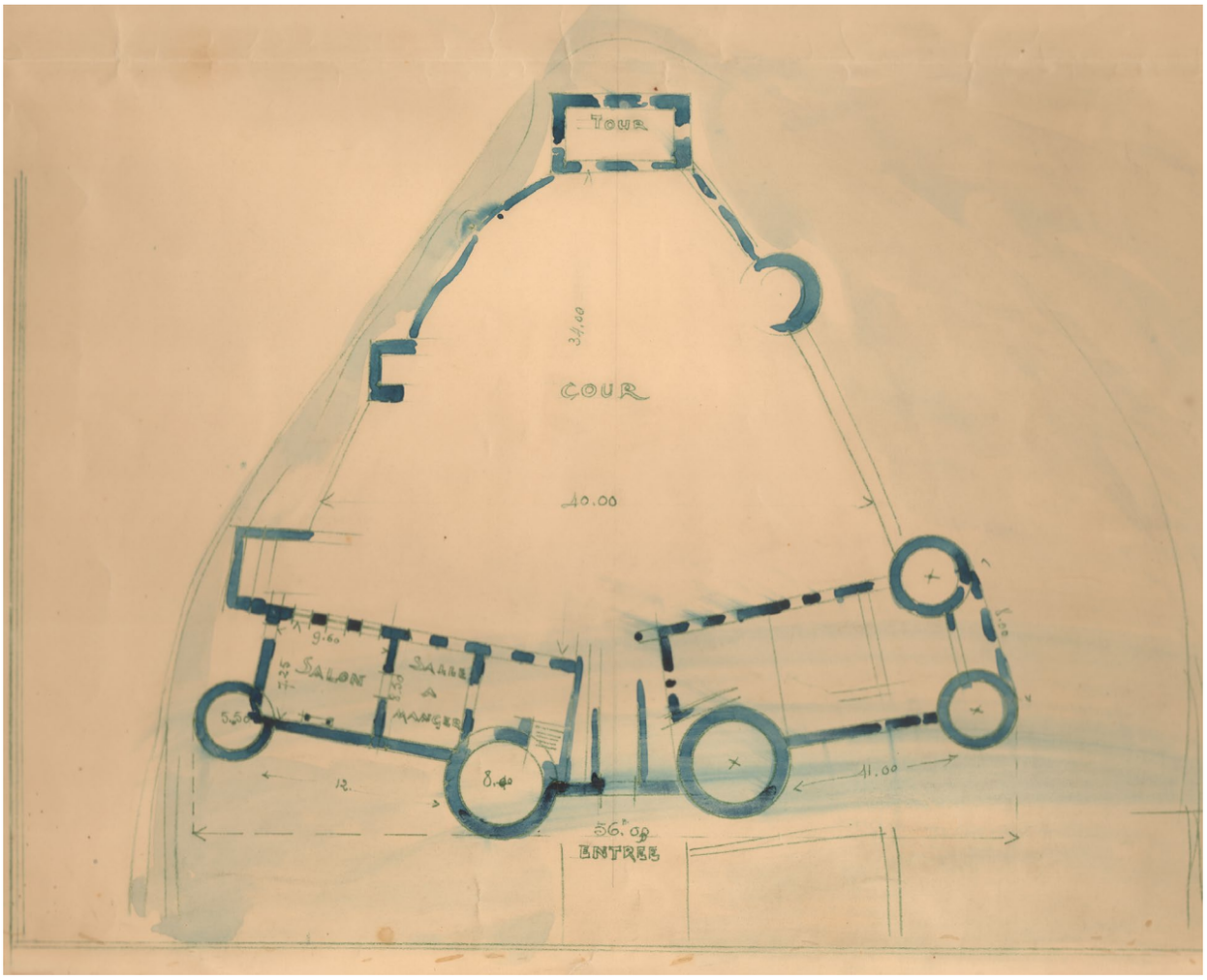
1888 south façade drawing of Château du Sailhant

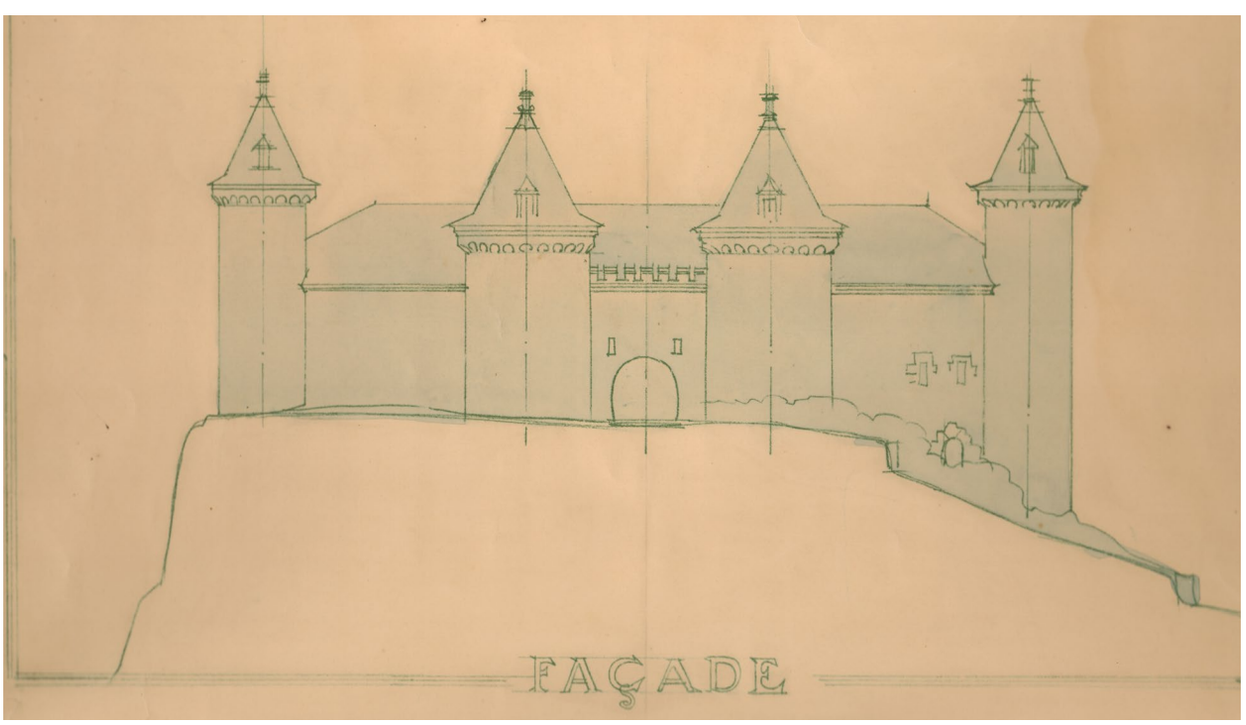
Probably nurturing a childhood dream of being the Châtelain du Sailhant "Lord of Sailhant," he bought Château du Sailhant in 1881. At first he gave the château's farming lease to his brother Jean Raynaud. The 1881 condition of the château is described "as half ruined and abandoned with the ground level used as the farming building of the property."

In 1888, Hippolyte Mary Raynaud began to take a more active role in the social and political life of the region, successfully running for local office.

At this time, he took back the exclusive use of the château and began a spectacular restoration. But the wind changed at the end of 1890. A bankruptcy was disclosed and Raynaud was violently attacked by the press. On November 25, he left his Parisian townhouse taking a revolver, but without emptying his safe. He left without leaving a forwarding address. His debt was assessed at 3 to 5 millions francs and the justice condemned him in his absence to a ten-year prison sentence.

In 1891, the work on the château was suspended before its completion. The unpaid contractors entrusted their

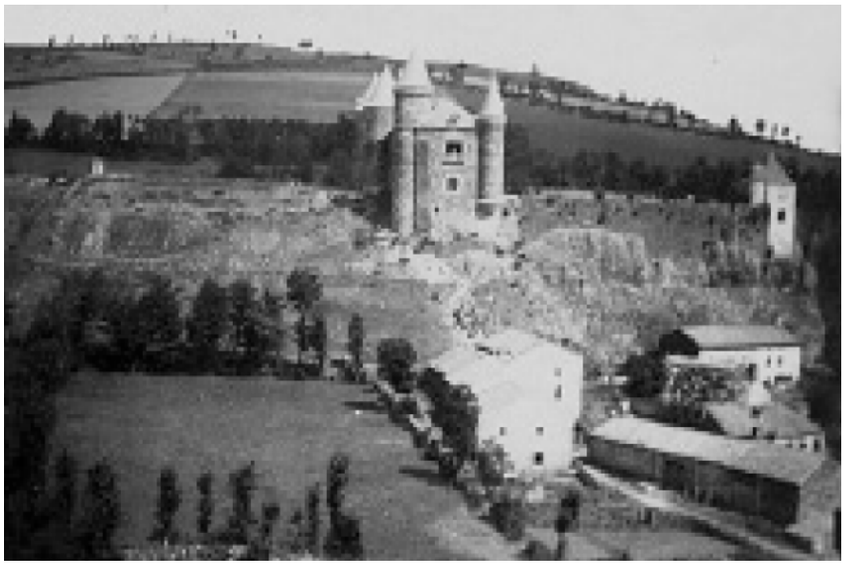




The design for Mary Raynaud's 19th century renovation

interests to an official and the château and its domain were seized, along with two other adjoining properties belonging to Raynaud, the mill of Blaud in Roffiac and a house in Andelat.

First the furniture was auctioned off and then, on April 13, 1892, the three properties, distributed into twenty-eight lots, were also put up for auction. The winning bidder for the château and its dependencies was Marie Nathalie Martine, the wife of Hippolyte Mary Raynaud, but her husband's creditors continued to pursue her. By 1896, Raynaud seemed to have overcome his difficulties and opened a new bank in Paris named the Crédit International. But, at the beginning of 1904 this establishment also declared bankruptcy.



Château du Sailhant from the west, c. 1890

Information concerning Raynaud's final years are obscure, rumors say he died in England in 1924-5.

Sold again as twenty-one lots at auction in 1904 by the court of Saint-Flour, the winning bidder was Doctor Paul Delbet, a Parisian whose family originated from Joursac, near the neighboring town of Neussargues.

Château du Sailhant, c. 1881-1904

> *"Un front d'entrée à quatre tours couvertes de toits à poivrière sur faux machicoulis a été crée, d'une part, en surhaussant les deux tours médiévales existantes, d'autre part en construisant à neuf deux autres tours conçues pour faire pendant à celles qui existaient."*
>
> — Château du Sailhant, Monographie Historique et Architecturale, Étude Approfondie de Documentation et d'Analyse Historique et Archéologique,Christian Corvisier, 1999

Raynaud initiated a number of significant transformations to the somewhat ruinous château. A new tower to the east of the entrance was constructed to match the medieval tower (a23 - pg. 140) to the west of the entrance, giving the illusion of a great medieval entrance with two symmetrical towers. A tower, matching the far easterly end tower (a14 - pg. 140), was built at the far westerly end of the exterior wall. This westerly tower blocks the outside of two fourteenth-century shooting slits (a33 - pg. 140) that may have been part of an early square tower at this location. Raynaud raised the two existing north side medieval towers above the roof line so that all four towers became the same height. The two old and the two new towers were covered with slate pepper pot roofs over simple machicoulis.*

All four north-side circular towers of the château were made to rise above the roof line. In order to extend upward the two medieval and the two new towers as a full circular tower above the roof of the main block, it was necessary to create a cantilevered support for the unsupported half of each tower.

On the second floor of the seigniorial residence, including the ancient second floor grande salle, all of the interior wall surfaces were stripped of their plaster thus eliminating the early frescos. The second floor grande salle of the seigniorial residence had probably been subdivided into small rooms by d'Estaing in the eighteenth century. These subdivisions may have been removed for grain storage in the late-eighteenth century or during the nineteenth century. In any case, during Raynaud's time, this floor had subdivisions for bedrooms with lowered ceilings served by a hallway against the north wall. The most easterly bedroom in the seigniorial residence (above a13 - pg. 140) was planned to be Madame Raynaud's bedroom and a bathroom was installed for her in the adjoining northeast tower (a14 - pg. 140), appropriately the ancient latrine tower. The sixteenth-century bay (ac - pg. 140) which linked the seigniorial residence and the disappeared east ell wing was closed on the south side by a wall aligned with the south facade. This element was raised to become a slender

* A slight projection above the main tower shaft with openings through which missiles could be dropped on attackers

Château du Sailhant from the southwest, early 20th century postcard

square tower crowned with a belvedere trimmed with battlements.

The ground floor of the seigniorial residence to the east of the passageway (a11 - pg. 140) was subdivided into an entrance hall with a stairway to the second floor, a dining room and a salon. Throughout, the eighteenth-century ceiling beams and joists were left uncovered, as they were originally. The monumental sixteenth-century fireplace mantle from the west wall of the second floor grande salle (above a11 - pg. 140) was relocated to the north wall of the new dining room (east portion of a11 - pg. 140) and the matching fireplace mantle from the west wall of the first floor grande salle (a11 - pg. 140) was relocated to the north wall of the new salon (a13 - pg. 140).

The old service/residential west wing (a31/a32 - pg. 140) was extended with four additional bays similar to the seven existing ones. A vertical line on the courtyard facade shows the location of this 1888 grafting. Basalt-framed dormer windows were installed at the attic level. This homogenized the south elevation and gives the interior court elevation a certain unity that is characteristic of military and monastic French architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the ground level of the rebuilt service/residential west wing, a series of service rooms were installed including a kitchen and a servant's room with a stair to the second and top floors. A separate stair was installed linking the kitchen to the basement which contained a furnace room, laundry room and wine storage. A chapel was built within the block at the most western end of the ground floor. Taking advantage of the sloping land, the chapel is almost three feet lower than the ground floor allowing for a high ceiling. Stained glass windows depicting Joan of Arc and Charles VII were inserted in the west wall. Copying the habits of the old aristocratic families who were building new medieval style châteaux in the nineteenth century, a room to the east of the chapel was built to be used by a resident chaplain.

Square tower from the path to the Cascade.

Châmbre de la Châtelaine

At the southwest corner, at the location of the old square tower that had been demolished between 1758 and 1830 (ad - pg. 140), a new round stair tower was constructed. This stair tower was designed to link the chapel to a large room on the western end of the second floor. Described in 1891 as the chambre de la Châtelaine, "room of the Lady" (a31 - pg. 140), it features a fifteenth-century fireplace, perhaps relocated from the donjon. A large leaded window with a narrow neo-Gothic balcony was installed on the west side of this room. The attic level was laid out to be extensive servant's rooms.

The restoration work of the château went quickly, and Raynaud was able to live there occasionally as early as 1889.

Newly installed small openings were given simple, chamfered, arched frames and a molded stringcourse on the towers that lined up with the cornice of the facades. These elements helped to unify the multiple campaigns of construction and alteration.

The Twentieth Century

"Work, Family and Fatherland"

— Marechal Pétain (1856-1951)

Doctor Jean-Paul Delbet and Germaine Camescasse, his first wife

The Delbet Family, c. 1904-1997

At the 1904 auction of Château du Sailhant, Doctor M, Paul Delbet, son of a doctor, was the successful bidder. His first wife, Germaine Camescasse, the daughter of the Préfet de Police of Paris, had died in Paris in 1914 without children.

In 1918, he married his second wife, Antoinette Emilie Silhol with whom he had four children: Anne-Marie Augustine, born in 1919 and died at the age of 22 just one year after her marriage; Jeannine Marguerite, born in 1921 and living in Montpellier with her husband Jacques Lafont (the widower of Anne-Marie); Jean-Paul, born in 1922; and Pauline Antoinette, born in 1924 and living in Bagneux with her husband Jean Louis Gohin. Paul Delbet died on November 2, 1924 at the age of 57, just seven months after his last child was born. In 1931, his second wife married Comte Édouard Claret de Fleurieu, who died in 1945 at the age of 68. Antoinette died in 1961 at the age of 72.

Paul Delbet's only son, Jean-Paul, married Gabrielle Borel in 1962 with whom he had two children: Marie, born in 1964 and Marguerite, born in 1967. In 1984, Jean-Paul entered into an agreement with his sisters whereby their mother's estate was divided up in a manner that gave Jean-Paul ownership of the Château du Sailhant and other local property. Jean-Paul died in 1996.

Antoinette Emilie Silhol (Delbet)
19 years old

Château du Sailhant, 1904-1997

"Or, il semble que la reconstruction de 1880 ait été trop légère, que les tours n'aient pas la solidité suffisante, qu'entreprendre des travaux sur la charpente risque de faire apparaitre des points faibles et des déformations."

— 1960s letter from Jean-Paul Delbet to Monsieur Jantsen

Germaine Camescasse Delbet - first decade of the 20th century

The château that Doctor Paul Delbet bought in April of 1904 had been substantially renovated by Raynaud in 1888-1892. The auction notice of 1892 describes an almost finished renovation of the château that had been inhabited by Raynaud as early as 1889.

Delbet applied the finishing touches to the château, but some of Raynaud's proposed renovations were never completed. The spiral stair in the southwest tower, which would have connected the chapel to the chambre de la châtelaine, "room of the Lady," was never installed. The chimney cap for the chimney in this room remains to this day in the garden of a house in the village of Le Sailhant. Delbet used the chambre de la châtelaine as a library (above a31 - pg. 140) installing linen fold paneling on the walls and furnishing it with French neo-Gothic furniture. His efforts were focused primarily on interior decoration. The fireplace mantles, millwork and hardware and the kitchen and the bathrooms had all been installed by Raynaud. It appears that Delbet carried out Raynaud's turn-of-the-century period-room style of interior decoration. Rooms were decorated in various French styles giving the impression of an ancient family château transformed by the tastes of succeeding generations. One room was decorated in the style of Louis XVI, another in the neo-Gothic style and a further room in the Art Nouveau style. Using wallpaper, paneling, fireplace mantles and furnishings, the Delbet family followed this popular practice.

Château du Sailhant from the west, c.1970s

During the twentieth century, Delbet replaced bathroom fixtures and kitchen appliances. The cast iron stove in the nineteenth century kitchen (a32 - pg. 140) was exchanged for a small propane one. In the ancient tower to the west of the entrance, a guest lavatory was installed on the ground floor and bathrooms were placed on the second and third floors.

With an apartment in Paris as their main residence, the Delbets used the

Antoinette Emilie Delbet de Fleurier, Ann-Marie Augustine, Comte Édouard Claret de Fleurier, Jeannine Marguerite, Pauline Anioinette & Jean Paul 1935 Collection of Marie Delbet

Château du Sailhant almost exclusively as a summer house. Some of the surrounding land that had been bought at the auction was sold off.

At the time of Jean-Paul Delbet's death in 1996, the château was in need of substantial maintenance work. Roof leaks in the main block had resulted in deterioration of the third floor plaster work and caused fungus rot to the second floor ceiling beams.

The roofs had areas without slate and there were large openings in the sheathing. On the north side, the two medieval towers and the two nineteenth-century towers had severe structural defects. Raynaud's work had resulted in four towers rising above the roof line as a full circle which rested only on a semicircular exterior wall. Three towers had their cantilevered semicircle portion supported by the wood floor beams and the fourth tower rested on a steel beam. Because the towers had shifted, the masonry work was unstable. The early twentieth-century electrical system had been upgraded in only a few areas and the plumbing was antiquated.

The Delbets can be credited with having kept the château without compromising in any way its historical features.

Château du Sailhant, watercolor by Frank Boggs (1855-1926)

Joseph Pell Lombardi, c. 1997-2012

"We fail far more often by timidity than by over-daring.
— David Grayson, The Friendly Road

Sailhant is a great, joyous project, but surely there were dozens of reasons for not buying another house in the Spring of 1997. Nonetheless, I never hesitated. From the moment I saw Sailhant, I knew I could bring much to this house and that it, in turn, would grant me great happiness. The complexity, the age, and the remoteness all appealed to me. I plunged in. A tutor was needed to upgrade my high school French so that I could tackle the French medieval architectural texts. I needed to visit the forty open-to-the-public Auvergne châteaux to determine precedents. I had to read and learn everything possible about French furnishings from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries (I was able, for the most part, to skip the eighteentth century when Sailhant was unoccupied by its seigniors). Like an intense love affair, for four years my thoughts were on Sailhant.

Entry Tower 1997

There is a Chinese saying: "May you live in interesting times." Surely all times are interesting and challenging, and any lifetime contains a wealth of events beyond one's control. At Sailhant, wars, revolutions, religious disputes, bankruptcy and death have all had their impacts. In 2001, the list of events that impacted Sailhant expanded to include a terrorist attack on New York City

On September 11, 2001, much was to change in my life and the progress on my houses came to a halt. Sailhant was most affected because it was where I was doing the greatest concentration of work. The Attack of September 11th would be both a financial and an emotional setback. For several months afterwards I was unable to concentrate on this remote house that seemed so distant in my mind. I found it impossible to read the weekly progress reports that had given me such pleasure in the past. The ongoing work -- analysis of historical paint colors, selection of bathroom hardware, installation of light fixtures, etc. -- all seemed irrelevant after September 11th. How could any of these things matter?

For the first few weeks, as the economic world spun out of control and my working capital became depleted, even the loss of ownership of Sailhant seemed to be a possibility. Was it history repeating itself? There were the occupations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries during the Hundred Years' War, the confiscation from the Dubourgs in the sixteenth century during the War of Religions, the mid-eighteenth century sale by auction of the d'Estaing ownership, the late-eighteenth sequestration forced be the Revolution, the Raynaud bankruptcies in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and the Delbet sale at the end of the twentieth century. Letting go of one's home is never happy and often tragic. Fortunately by mid-2002, New York City and, therefore, my financial affairs had stabilized and the work continued on Sailhant.

Library - 1997

Library - 1997

Salon, c. 1997

Château du Sailhant -- aerial view from the south with the Cascade to the right

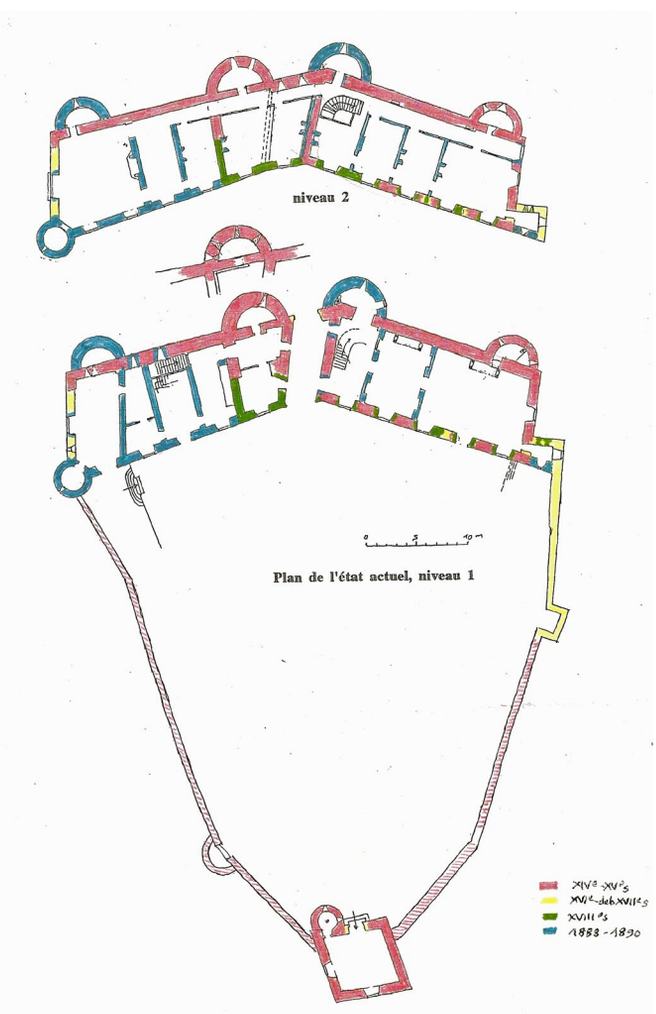
Chateau du Sailhant, c. 1997-Present

"Understanding a thing clearly is half doing it"
— Lord Chesterfield

My first activity was to assemble all available material which concerned Sailhant. Alfred Douet's 1925 book, Le Château du Sailhant et ses seigneurs was an excellent start. It located primary sources and identified the proprietors and their genealogy in the context of historical events, but it contained frustratingly little architectural information and the construction campaigns. Most books on French châteaux-forts and châteaux of the Auvergne have photographs and basic information about Château du Sailhant and there are numerous early-twentieth century postcards. An original copy of a pre-Raynaud nineteenth-century photograph exists at the château (pg. 142).

I commissioned France Brunon, a local genealogist and researcher, to search the archives of Aurillac, the principal city of the department of Cantal, Saint-Flour and Paris. At the same time, I commissioned Christian Corvisier, an architectural historian and Doctor of Medieval Archeology, to investigate the château, review Madame Brunon's findings and prepare a monograph.

The conservation directive to myself was to understand the construction chronology, conserve and leave intact the existing Raynaud exterior composition, to install new heating, plumbing and electrical systems and to conserve the interior with the exception of investigating the possibility of re-configuring the second floor of the seigniorial residence to the ancient second floor grande salle.



Château du Sailhant -- Conctruction Campaigns

Before any conservation work could start, a very serious structural problem had to be addressed: the stabilization of the four north towers. By 1996, two of the towers were critically unstable and the other two were relying on an identical failed system. In consultation with structural engineers, I considered various support systems, but eventually decided to replace the large wood ceiling beams that were immediately below the towers with steel beams covered in wood.

Château du Sailhant -- Roofs

Château du Sailhant, c. 2000-2012

"...the tragic and mortal thing that is the building itself, the physical object that has journeyed across time, and whose roster of scars and alterations represents the most fragile aspect of a historic artifact: the sense of congealed time."

— Michael J. Lewis, Chairman of the Art Department at Williams Collegein an article in the New York Times, June 23, 2002 entitled "Preservation. "

Restoration of the tower roofs

With the difficult structural problems complete, I could begin the conservation work. The second floor grande salle had been subdivided into three rooms in the eighteenth century, reopened after the Revolution for grain storage and then redivided, with the addition of a hallway and lowered ceilings at the turn of the twentieth century. In the sixteenth century, the mantle in the present first floor dining room had been located on the west wall of the second floor grande salle and its location was confirmed by the soot under the removed plaster. But in the Spring of 2000, a shooting slit from the time of Phillipe-Auguste in the thirteenth century was most unexpectedly discovered in a location that would have been blocked by the sixteenth century chimney. The discovery confirmed that this wall (between a21 & a11 - pg. 140) was the original termination of the seigniorial residence and that at some time prior to the sixteenth century the chimney of the second floor grande salle had been located elsewhere.

It appears that the ancient grande salles of Château du Sailhant originally followed the tradition of having the chimney placed on the long, windowless north wall. The location of a large Gothic fireplace mantle in local basalt stone of a size suitable for the north wall finalized the chimney location. The reopening of the second floor grande salle eliminated three turn of the twentieth-century bedrooms in a house with eight servant's bedrooms, none of which I needed.

As was traditional in France in the Middle Ages, there had originally been two grande salles, one above the other. The entrance hall on the first floor of the seignorial residence had originally been part of the lower level reception grande salle. This large room had also been divided into three spaces, probably by the tenant farmers. They had been fitted out as a vestibule, dining room and salon with wood floors in the eighteenth century and paneling in the nineteenth century. I gave no consideration to changing this historical configuration.

In the vestibule (a 11 - pg. 140) was an awkwardly placed nineteenth-century stair leading to the subdivided second floor grande salle. From the sixteen to the eighteenth century, a stair had been in the middle of the seigniorial residence. An inner court door (af - pg. 140) had led to the lower level reception grande salle (a11 - pg. 140) and a stair (a1e - pg. 140) rose to the upper grande salle (upper a 11 - pg. 140) and the seignorial room (upper a13 - pg. 140). Reconfiguration would have resulted in compromising the dining room and the salon. In order to remove the interruption to the upper salle haute and create an open one-bay vestibule on the lower level, I decided to place the

stair in the nineteenth-century east entrance tower. This tower had been used simply as a storage room on each floor. Placing the stairway in the tower also allowed for the reinstallation of the Renaissance mantle on the west wall of the reception room.

I adhere to the preservation principle that the facsimile is always worse than the ruin. In a conservation project of the complexity of Sailhant, I had to return again and again to this maxim. The kitchen, informal dining room, library, main dining room, salon, chapel, bedrooms and bathrooms were all retained in their nineteenth-century locations. Their decoration, which had evolved over the centuries, was likewise maintained.

Finishing details were a pleasure. Quarries were still producing, as they had for thousands of years, the thick, large basalt paving stones for ground floors. France has a seemingly endless supply of nineteenth-century bath fixtures and it still produces beautiful faucets and fittings. There are serious stoves manufactured by two-hundred-year-old firms and fine electrical switches and outlets in brass and nickel are available. A dedicated and capable local carpenter, plumber and electrician made further high-level finishing possible.

On Memorial Day weekend in 2000 I met with Jean-Pierre Esbrat, a young man who had grown up in Le Sailhant, the small village at the base of the château. He had approached me through the researcher, Madame Brunon, claiming to know the location of the château's water source and to have an unknown nineteenth-century photograph of the château. He led us through the woods of the hill to the north of the château to an extraordinary, probably prehistoric, man-made reservoir fed by a cascade with a shaft hewn into the solid rock. Partially natural and partially man-made, the source is a mysterious wonder. The magnitude of the work makes it difficult to comprehend when and how it was built and who constructed it. The photograph was equally exciting. For three years I had studied the known nineteenth-century view from the northeast, wishing that the photographer had taken views from other directions. Esbrat, with great flourish (he knew the importance of his treasure), revealed a large copy of a pre-Raynaud view from the southwest. It confirmed the hypotheses in Christian Corvisier's monograph.

With the conservation and restoration work complete, the seigniorial residence of the château now has its second floor grande salle (upper a11 - pg. 140) and seigniorial room (upper a13 pg. 140) in their thirteenth-century locations on the second floor.

The ground floor of the seignioral residence has a vestibule with its chimney still in its sixteenth century location. The salon and dining room created in the nineteenth century remain as they were when they were built. The ground floor service wing is still accessible through the 14th century door from the entry passage (a21 - pg. 140). The ground floor of the service wing contains, as it did in the nineteenth century, the chapel (a31 - pg. 140), caretaker's rooms, informal dining room, kitchen and the château office (a22 - pg. 140). The second floor of the service wing contains the nineteenth- century library (upper a31 - pg. 140) and two bedrooms and a sitting room in the 16th century portion (upper a32, a22 & a21 - pg. 140).

The top floor contains the servants rooms used as guest bedrooms. The fourteenth century tower to the west of the entrance (a23 - pg. 140) and the fourteenth century tower at the east corner (a14 - pg. 140) contain bathrooms/ toilet rooms as they did in the fourteenth to twentieth centuries. The ancient latrine in the ground floor of the east corner tower has been left undisturbed. The main stair is in the nineteenth century tower to the east of the entrance and the nineteenth-century service stair remains.

On the entrance side, the fourteenth-century windowless wall with four towers remains undisturbed. The inner court facade continues to have its seven bays of eighteenth-century openings and four bays of nineteenth-century openings. The re-configured sixteenth-century linking bay tower (ac - pg. 140) and the re-configured early tower on the west end of the inner court facade (ad - pg. 140) also remain undisturbed.

The ancient lower level and fifteenth century upper level donjon (B - pg. 140) has been conserved without changes. The twenty-five-foot square tower presently has four levels. The first floor room has an ancient chimney flue with a later, seventeenth-century, mantel. This room, probably the auditorium for seigniorial justice, had either a groin or a rib-vaulted ceiling. The vault had been substantially removed, but segments are still visible underneath the existing flooring.

At the second floor, the exterior entrance door is approximately at the level of the inner court. It can be supposed that before the classical door frame was installed, this door was the termination of a drawbridge. The top floor is the cut down portion of the next upper floor. On the exterior of the east wall, the bases of a cantilevered latrine confirm the original use of this floor as a bedroom.

Further chapters will discuss the wallpaper selection from nineteenth-century patterns by the French company,

Zuber, and the significant discovery of striped painted arch over Salon window imitating fabric in 2002.

In 1888 Raynaud created a chapel and a room for a resident chaplain at Sailhant. The chapel was built into the ancient rampart walls which contain IVth century shooting slits. He installed a leaded glass window with painted images of Jeanne d'Arc, national heroine of France, and of Charles VII, whose coronation she made possible. After the Raynaud sale of Sailhant in 1904, the chapel fell into disuse. In 2006, the chapel was re-established as it had been at the time of Raynaud.

The floors are volcanic stone, the walls are covered in lime plaster and the ceiling has exposed painted beams. Placed on the altar is a XIth century Romanesque Madonna and Child. The Madonna is clothed, following Byzantine tradition, as if she were a priestess, with cloaks and veils that swathe her head and shoulders. Her shoes are distinctly dateable and there are remnants of early paint. Known as a Virgin in Majesty Statue, it is of the Auvergne. Severe in pose, solemn in spirit, archaic in style, the Madonna is enhanced and softened by rhythmical folds and rounded modeling. The likeness between Mother and Child is unmistakable.

The early XIVth century Apostle Candelabra is most likely from South Germany. It is tin plated iron with small remnants of early paint.

The chairs are XIXth century individually crafted Auvergnat Prie-Dieus, which reverse for kneeling.

Slowly, but with the greatest of excitement, the 500,000 piece, one thousand year old jigsaw puzzle was coming together.

Château du Sailhant -- Grande Salle 2017

Château du Sailhant Chapel -- 2017

Sailhant Virgin in Majesty - Auvergne
XIth century

Chemin de Croix
Christ on one side and the Virgin in Majesty
on the other Basalt
Saint-Flour, Cantal, XVth century

Stations of the Cross - Paris
XIXth century

Holy Water Font
Auvergne

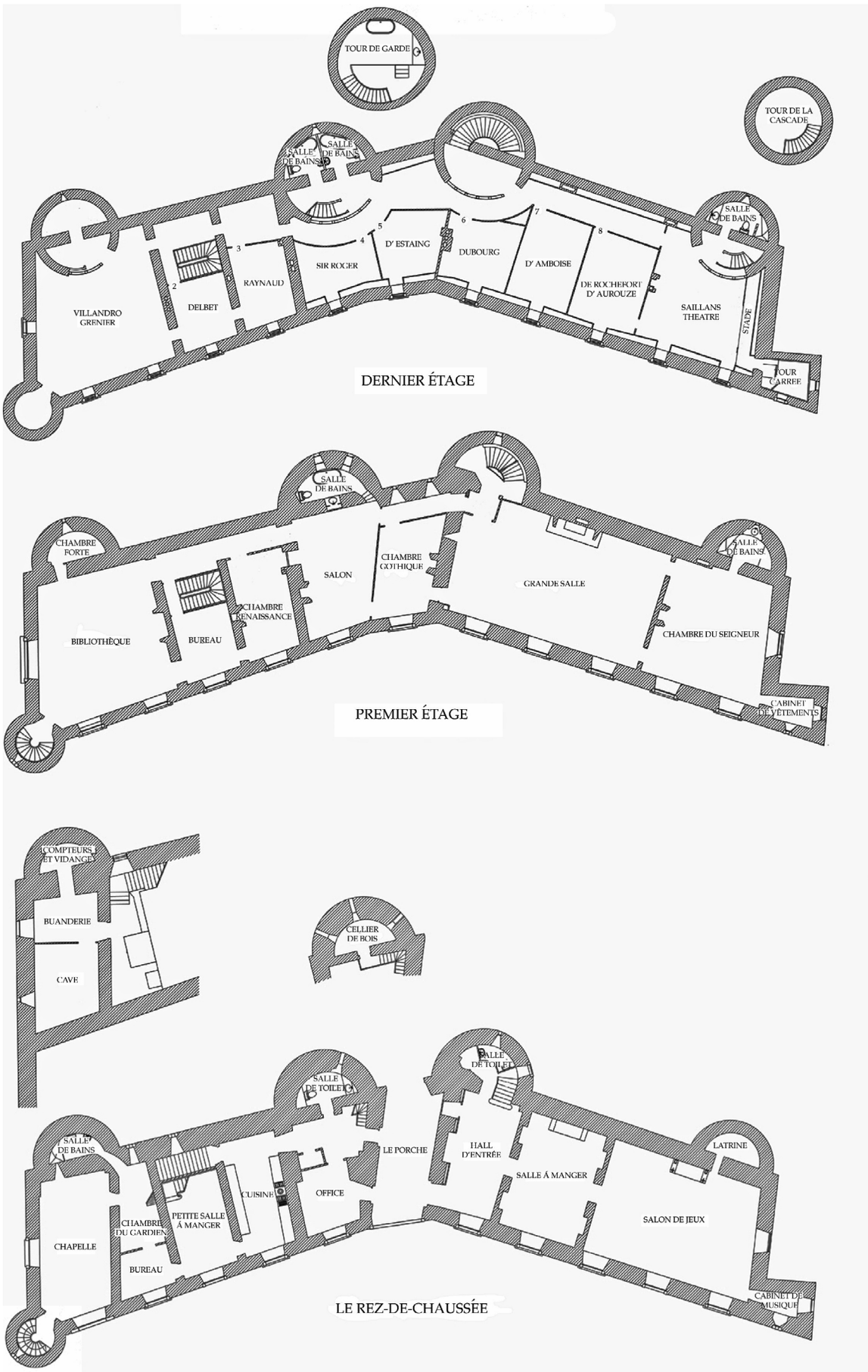
19th c. Stained glass windows -- chapel.

Master Bedroom, 2017

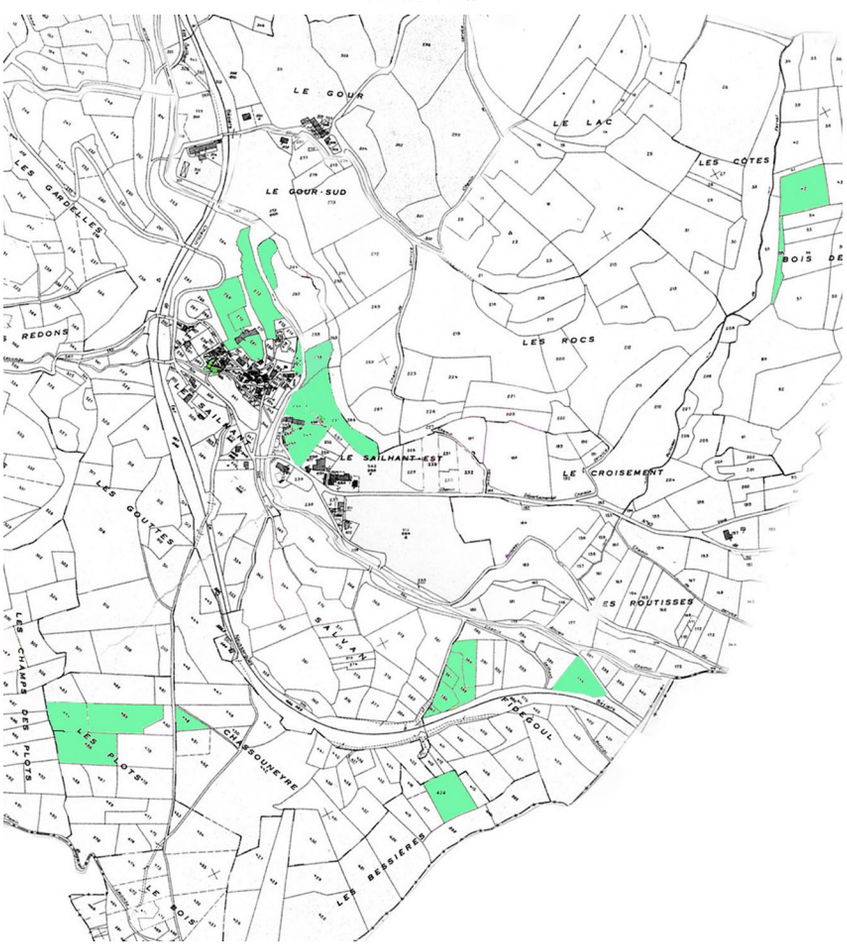
Château du Sailhant -- Sitting Room Bath

Dressoir in Grand Salle

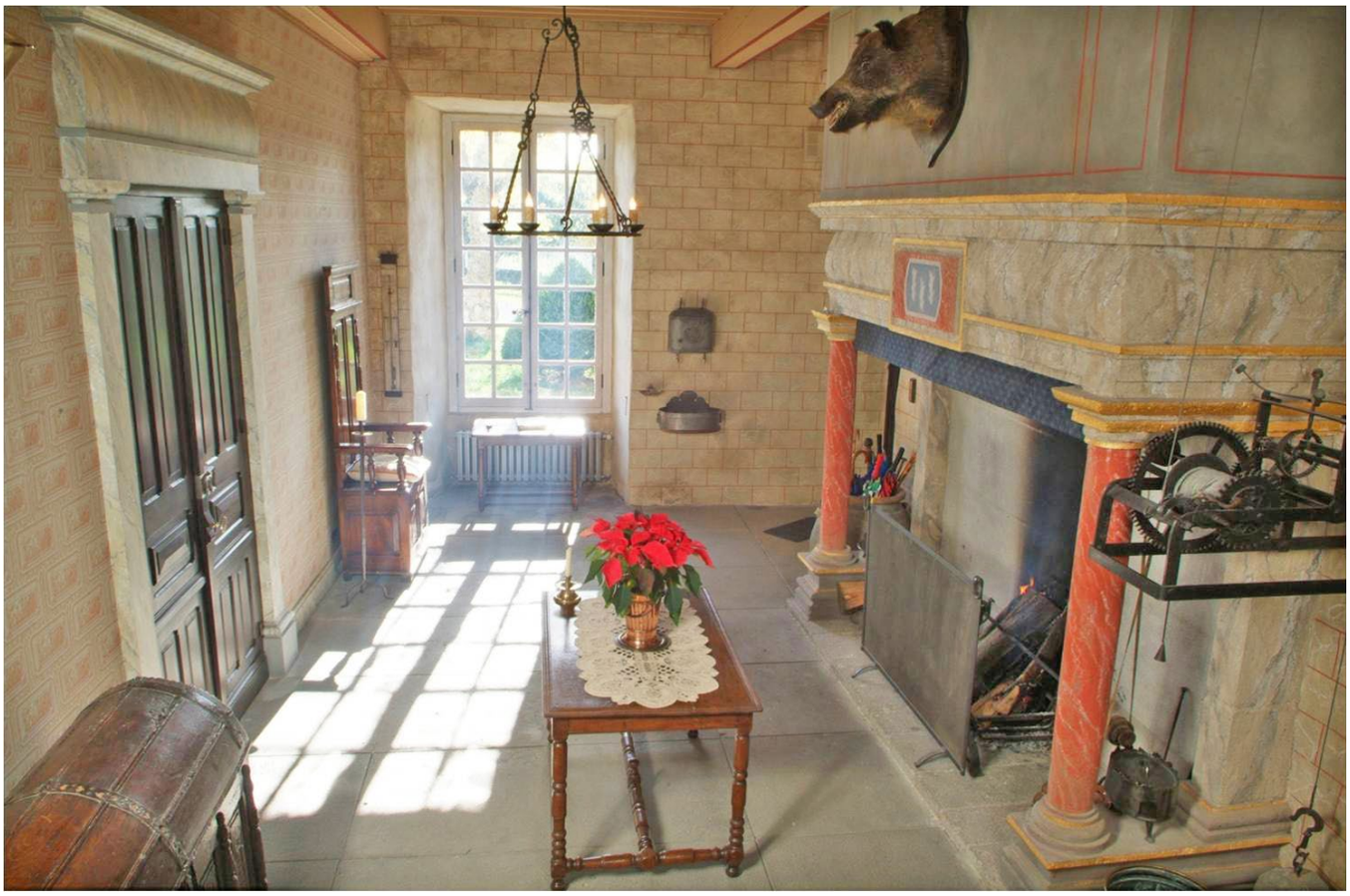
Entrance to the Donjon


TOUR DE GARDE
TOUR DE LA CASCADE
SALLE DE BAINS
SALLE DE BAINS
SALLE DE BAINS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
VILLANDRO GRENIER
DELBET
RAYNAUD
SIR ROGER
D' ESTAING
DUBOURG
D' AMBOISE
DE ROCHEFORT D' AUROUZE
SAILLANS THEATRE
STADE
TOUR CARREE
DERNIER ÉTAGE
SALLE DE BAINS
CHAMBRE FORTE
SALON
CHAMBRE GOTHIQUE
GRANDE SALLE
SALLE DE BAINS
BIBLIOTHÈQUE
BUREAU
CHAMBRE RENAISSANCE
CHAMBRE DU SEIGNEUR
CABINET DE VÊTEMENTS
PREMIER ÉTAGE
COMPTEURS ET VIDANGES
BUANDERIE
CAVE
CELLIER DE BOIS
SALLE DE TOILET
SALLE DE TOILET
SALLE DE BAINS
LE PORCHE
HALL D'ENTRÉE
LATRINE
SALLE Á MANGER
CUISINE
OFFICE
CHAMBRE DU GARDIEN
PETITE SALLE Á MANGER
SALON DE JEUX
CHAPELLE
BUREAU
CABINET DE MUSIQUE
LE REZ-DE-CHAUSSÉE

Aerial View



Sailhant Domain



Entry Hall -- 2006

Salon, 2006

Sitting Room 2006

Château du Sailhant -- Library

Château du Sailhant -- Library 2017

Dining Room, 2006

Dining Room, 2006

Kitchen West - 2017

Kitchen East - 2006

Cave - 2006

Kitchen North - 2006

Rose Garden

Aerial View of the East Wing

Aerial View

Rose Garden

Aerial View

Alfheim Lodge
Valhalla Highlands

Cold Spring, New York

Alfheim — "Home of the Elves" in old Norse mythology
Valhalla — "Paradise for heroes" in old Norse mythology

Alfheim Lodge - Lakeside view

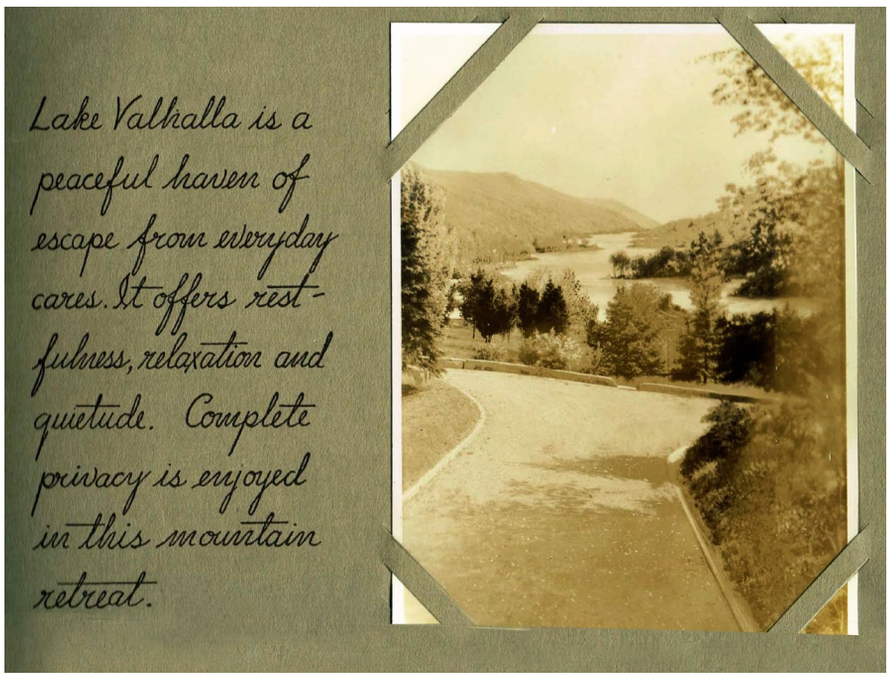
From 1940, the year I was born, to 1997, my family maintained a summer lodge at Valhalla Highlands, a rustic lake community in the North Highlands area above the Village of Cold Spring, New York, 55 miles north of New York City. My time spent at Valhalla with my parents, my sisters and summertime friends roaming the trails, camping in the forest, swimming, sailing and fishing in Lake Valhalla and playing tennis, shuffleboard and softball was the antithesis of the noisy, dangerous, confined-to-the-inside New York City winters. The lodge was my first love affair with a house; it foreshadowed my life as a restoration architect.

Valhalla Highlands Aerial View

For many years I pursued a return to Valhalla, my interest being one of the early twentieth century lodges with a view of the Lake, surrounded by woods but still part of the community. It became apparent that my pursuit could be best achieved through one of the very few lodges not originally built as part of the community which could be reinterpreted to correspond to the lodges I remembered from the 1940s. In 2013, I purchased this lodge at Valhalla which I reconstructed

in the Rustic Storybook Style of the community. Now, when I look back to the time spent in the Valhalla community my pleasant memories are enhanced by continuity.

Valhalla Highlands contains 59 lodges located on 1,100 acres. Lake Valhalla occurs at an elevation of 607 feet with Scofield Ridge to the west rising sharply to an elevation of 1,540 feet.



Lake Valhalla - 1941

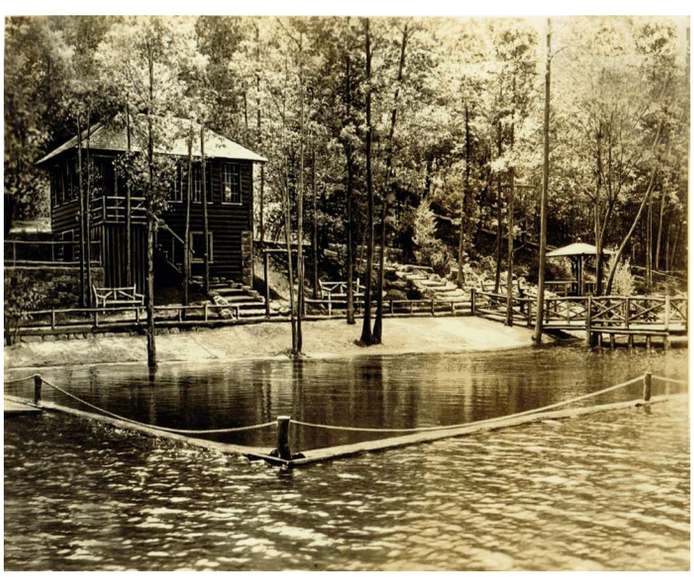
In addition to the lodges, there are common facilities consisting of a boat lodge with a ping-pong room and a terrace overlooking the Lake, a swimming dock, a boat dock, a tea pavilion, a dance/activities pavilion, a covered lookout pavilion, shuffleboard courts, a tennis court, a playing field, a picnic area and the remnants of a hunting cabin. All of the common facility structures were also executed in the Rustic Storybook Style.

Throughout the forest and Mt. Novo, there are trails with peeled log and fieldstone rustic improvements consisting of benches, steps, railings and terraces. On the mountain, at an elevation of 665 feet, there is a lookout area, known as Josephine Heights, with a stone fireplace, stone paving, a peeled log picnic table and a lookout with plank flooring, peeled log railings, a flagpole and a peeled log wishbone arch leading to a lower lookout. There are camping areas in the forest and a stream with a waterfall.

Each lodge is situated on its own parcel of land as laid out during the 1930s. The lodges are typically one or two stories high and have fieldstone foundations. Most of the lodges and the enclosed community facility buildings have irregular massing and are frame clad with half-log wood siding and fieldstone foundations, chimneys and terraces. The lodges also feature swooping asphalt shingle roofs, cantilevered entry porches, small paned wood and steel windows, and incorporated garages. They are all free-standing structures with gable roofs.

The organized community of Valhalla Highlands, its lodges, roads, common facilities and landscape, is a distinct type of American architecture - the Rustic Storybook Style popular in the years between World War I and World War II.

With their buttressed fieldstone and half-log walls, multi-color asphalt shingles, swooping peaked roofs, asymmetrical roof pitches, prominent fieldstone chimneys, knotty pine interiors, fieldstone paths, boulder bordered roads, free-standing arched peeled log entrances, canvas awnings, half-log flower boxes, and small-paned steel and wood windows, the buildings of Valhalla Highlands are characteristic of the unique Rustic Storybook Style. The Style was the product of architects and builders with a distinct flair for theater, a love of fine craftsmanship and, not least, a good sense of humour. It was also a nostalgic interpretation of the pre-machine age early American settlements. The playful, fairy-tale aesthetic incorporated into the design of Valhalla Highlands' lodges and common facilities was well suited to the summer community's theme of a Nordic paradise. To the delight of the children of the community, a number of owners added their own playful touch by maintaining gardens fronting their lodges inhabited by cast-iron elves.

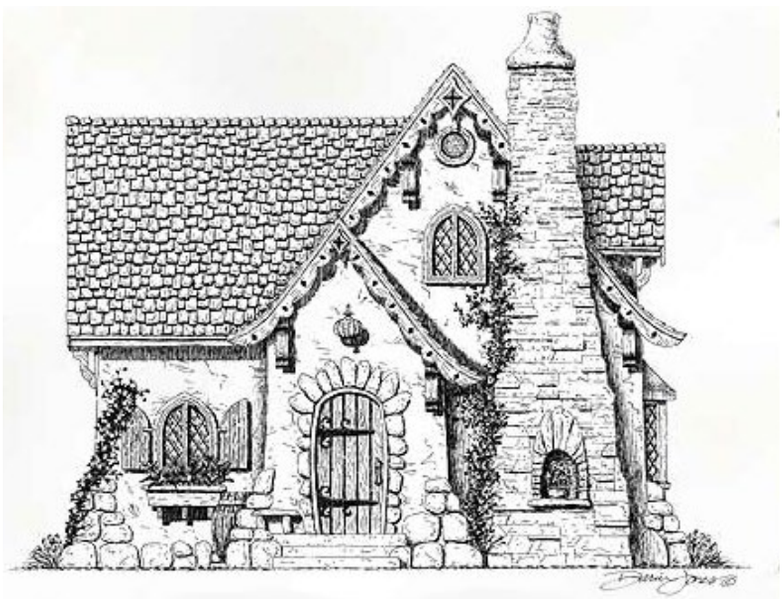


Boat House on Lake Valhalla

Valhalla Highlands has the three classic Rustic Storybook Style attributes namely:

- A picturesque, quaint and charming interpretation of medieval elements as in the steel windows with their resemblance of leaded windows and entrance doors with strap iron hinges;
- an artificial suggestion of age through rusticated peeled logs and weathered fieldstone; and
- whimsicalness and creative playfulness in the buildings, the setting, the community name and the road names.

Now almost 100 years old, this private intact lake side community, with lodges and common facilities constructed in a lyrical, stone and half-log vocabulary, blurs the line of fantasy and reality with an inherent sense of humor and playfulness. No two lodges are the same and the community is harmoniously placed in a magnificent natural setting. The size, type and use of the buildings, essentially unchanged from the time of their origin, contribute to the feeling of historic context, readily identifiable sense of place and substantial unity. All the lodges are placed on the building lots laid out in the 1930s and there is a carefully organized system of roads and landscaping which continues to maintain to retain a high degree of integrity.



Rustic Storybook Style

Ludwig Novoting, the builder of Valhalla Highlands, was born in Austria in 1891, immigrated to the United State in 1913 and died in 1985. In 1925, Novoting and Norway-born Peter Sivertsen, the inventor of the motorized rotary slicer, established the Globe Slicing Machine Company. For over 50 years, the Globe Slicing Machine Company dominated the slicing machine business.

In 1928, Novoting and Sivertsen purchased former pre-Revolutionary farms totaling 735 acres in the North Highlands area of the Village of Cold Spring. Novoting eventually bought Sivertsen's interest and constructed a stylistically cohesive summer community of individual lodges with shared amenities including common facilities, rustic improvements and the entirety of Valhalla Highlands. His work included the creation of the 3,200' long, 32 acre Lake Valhalla.

Upon completion of his work, Novoting sold the individual lodges and the land they sat upon, emphasizing the rusticity, simplicity and nostalgia associated with a remote, rural, completely private retreat in harmony with the natural landscape of Valhalla Highlands. The lodges were equipped with fireplaces, high ceilinged, knotty pine panelled living rooms, porches and a garage. Initially the lodges were for seasonal use, without water from early fall to late spring and no central heat. An annual fee was charged for maintenance and supplying water via above ground pipes. The deeds to the lodges gave the owners the right to use the common facilities and structures, the rustic improvements and the roads and restricted, in perpetuity, the use of the 735 acres to residential purposes only.

Valhalla Highlands Lodge

Typical Valhalla Highlands Lodge

Some of the purchasers were employees of the Globe Slicing Machine and many of them were, like Novoting and his wife, German/Austrian-Americans and, like Sivertsen, Norwegian-Americans all of whom had immigrated to America in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Novoting built for himself and his wife, Josephine, a house which he called Valkyrie. Novoting chose the name Valhalla for the community and Vallkyrie for his home, because of his love for the music of Wagner. Valhalla Highlands was not primarily a speculative venture for Novoting. Since it was his home and the seasonal home for a number of his friends and employees, the level of craftsmanship, the extent of the improvements and the access to the facilities went far beyond economic considerations. Novoting created a legacy for himself and for the community.

Valhalla Highlands is one of the very few uniform, planned communities with individually owned lodges and community facilities purposely built by one person, in one style, in a single construction campaign. Each structure uses the same vocabulary with no two structures being the same. In fact, it is difficult to find another, intact, contained, fully planned, designed and built in one rustic style, private community with ownership of the lodges, shared common facilities and expansion constricted by terrain and residential use of the land restricted by deed.

In the summer of 2013, I commenced reconstruction of Alfheim Lodge at Valhalla Highlands on one of the original 1930s plots. With its buttressed fieldstone and half-log walls, multi-color asphalt shingles, swooping peaked roofs, knotty

Typical Valhalla Highlands Lodge

pine interiors and small-paned steel and wood windows, the reconstructed Alfheim Lodge is characteristic of the Rustic Storybook Style prevalent in the Lake Valhalla community.

I named the house Alfheim Lodge. Alfheim (pronounced *"ALF-hame"*) means elf home and it is one of the worlds in Norse and Germanic mythology, along with Valhalla, ehich are occupied by Valkyries - the divine and beautiful maidens sent out to select brave warriors for Valhalla, the paradise for heroes.

Bringing National recognition to Valhalla Highlands, on November 12, 2014 the United States Department of the Interior listed the Valhalla Highlands Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2014, I had returned to Valhalla Highlands, my first love of a house and the origin of my passion for houses.

Lake Valhalla Entrance Gate - 1950s

Josephine Heights on Mt. Novo overlooking Lake Valhalla in the 1940s

National Register Plaque at Point Look Out

Alfheim Lodge overlooking Lake Valhalla - Photo by Arclight Images for Buffalo Lumber Co.

Alfheim Lodge from the south - Photo by Arclight Images for Buffalo Lumber Co.

Alfheim Lodge Terrace

Alfheim Lodge Patio overlooking Lake Valhalla - Photo by Arclight Images for Buffalo Lumber Co.

Alfheim Lodge Entry

Alfheim Lodge Great Room - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

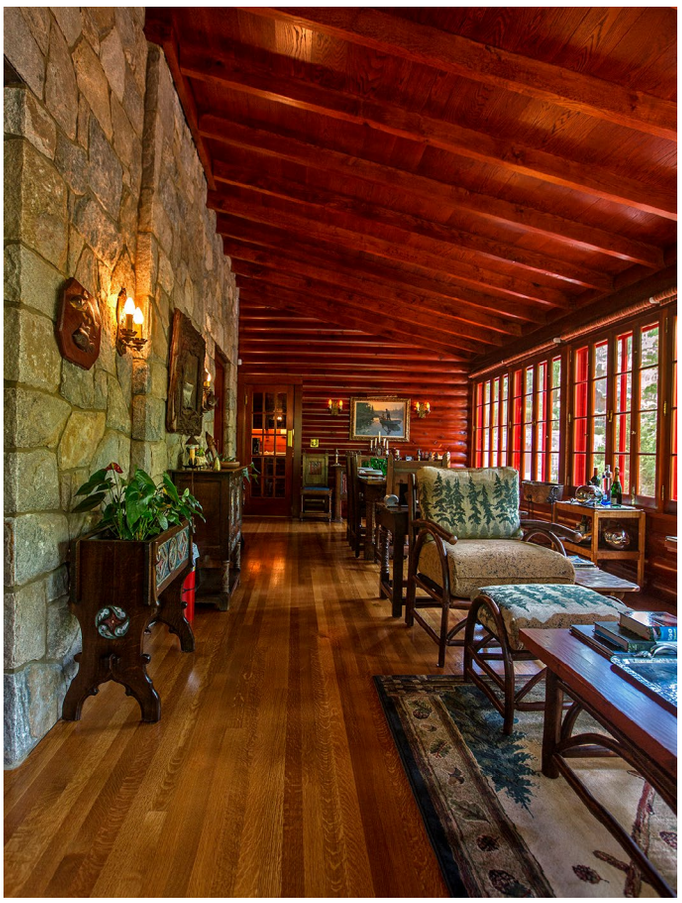
Alfheim Lodge Great Room

Alfheim Lodge from the South - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Porch - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Library

Alfheim Lodge Great Room/Library - Photo by Nisha Sondhe



Alfheim Lodge Dining Room - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Family Room - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Kitchen - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Stair - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Kitchen - Photo by Arclight Images for Buffalo Lumber Co.

Alfheim Tramp Art Radio - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Master Bath with Batchelder Tile

Alfheim Master Bedroom - Photo by Nisha Sondhe

Alfheim Lodge Garage - Photo by Arclight Images for Buffalo Lumber Co.

Alfheim Lodge - Winter

Final Word

One thing hastens into being, another hastens out of it. Even while a thing is in the act of coming into existence, some part of it has already ceased to be. Flux and change are forever renewing the fabric of the universe just as the ceaseless sweep of time is forever renewing the face of eternity. In such a running river, when there is no firm foothold, what is there for a man to value among all the many things that are racing past him?

— Marcus Aurelius, Mediations (VI, 15)

If I were granted one wish, my choice would be simple. I would like to go back in time to empty the Trade Center before the collapse, even better to stop the planes before they depart.

Then, I would like to go back further, to see my houses. It would be wonderful for me to see the Octagon House with Stiner in possession in 1873 or to see Harry Sinclair on the 29th floor of Liberty Tower in the early 20th century. In my mind I imagine a bird's eye view of Château du Sailhant as it evolved, was reduced and grew again. Likewise, the Renaissance decoration of Erdödy-Choron Castle can only barely be imagined and the simplicity and remoteness of 19th century Peru, Vermont would be best understood without paved automobile roads.

Were my efforts accurate?

Notes

Chapter IV Lofts

I Andrew Scott Dolkart, *The Texture of TriBeCa,* New York: Enterprise Press, 1989 p. 19

Chapter IX Château du Sailhant

Page 125 A Celtic bronze helmet circa 400 B.C. The oval skull engraved with fine cross-shaped geometric stripes. Short rectangular neck and eye guard. Semicircular riveted ear openings reinforced with engraved and punched mountings; above these are two small riveted adornment discs each. In the center surrounding double parallel hammered and punched decorative band. In the apex a threefold riveted, long two-piece adornment socket holed at the tip and the sides. Green somewhat speckled patina with areas of bronze shining through. Height 28 cm

Page 129 A Burgundian kidney dagger circa 1450 Heavy blade of triangular section with grooved tip of diamond section and one-sided ricasso. Carved fruitwood grip with riveted iron plate and inlaid silver nail decor length 32.5 cm

Page 132 Helmet "Bec de Passereau" (beak of a sparrow). Crest forged in two pieces lowering to the neck. The movable visor "Bec de Passereau" with ventilation holes and narrow viewing slits. The original helmet is XVth century with the visor being added approximately 50 years later. This helmet form, with the added visor, was the best protection and the one most used during the Hundreds' Year Wars. Its relative lightness and its strength provided the most effective defense of the head prior to the development of the "armet" later in the xvth century (the "armet" was the first helmet to completely enclose the head).

Glossary

Arquebuse: Shoulder arm musket.

Archeres-Cannonieres: Shooting slits with a circular hole at their base for firing small cannons.

Basalt: Gray-black colored hardened volcanic lava.

Battlements: Parapet with higher and lower alternate parts.
Donjon: Inner tower capable of being defended even if the outer walls of a chateau are breached.

Embrasure a la francaise: ("French slit") A shooting slit with an exterior rectangular splaying that is wider than it is high.

Fresco: Mural paintings executed on wet plaster.

Gable: Triangular part of an end wall.

Grande salle: One of two main rooms of great halls of a French medieval residence, usually one above the other. The lower being for reception and the upper for family activities.

Lauzes: Flat stone slabs used as a roofing material.

Machicolation: space between corbels carrying a parapet to enable missile sto be dropped on an attacker below.

Piano Nobile: Principal story of a building containing the important rooms, usually placed over a lower level. The ceiling height of a Piano Nobile is typically greater than the other stories.

Quoins: Courses of stone differentiated form the adjoinng walls by material, texture, color, size or projection at the corner of a building usually laid in alternate long and short pieces.

Rendering: Stucco finish applied to a surface not intended to be exposed.

Scoria: Rust brown colored hardened volcanic lava.

Chronological List of Owners

Owners of Château du Sailhant

?	Jacques de Saillans
Circa 900	Guy de Saillans
Circa 1000	Etienne de Saillans
1285	Béranger de Saillans (last of the name)
	Demoiselle de Saillans, wife of Bertrand I de Rochefort
Circa 1302	Bertrand I de Rochfort d'Aurouze
Circa 1332	Bertrand II de Rochefort d'Aurouze, eldest of Bertrand I
Circa 1350	Bernard de Rochefort, brother of Bertrand II
Circa 1374	Béraud II, son of Bernard, d. 1382
1382-1383	Pons de Rochefort, uncle of Béraud II, d. 1383
1383	Françoise d'Aurouze, niece of Pons, d. after
1398	Béraud Dauphin I, son of Françoise, d. 1415
After 1415-1436	Béraud Dauphin III, grandson of Béraud Dauphin I, d. 1436
1436	Blanche Dauphine, sister of Béraud Dauphin III, wife in 1425 of Jean de Lespinasse Béraud Dauphin IV de Lespinasse, son of Blanche Dauphine, d. 1482
After 1482	Françoise de Polignac, daughter of Béraud Dauphin IV de Lespinasse, wife of Guy d'Amboise
	Antoinette d'Amboise, daughter of Françoise de Polignac, wife of Antoine de La Rochefoucauld sells Sailhant
Circa 1540	Anne Hénard, widow of Antoine Dubourg, purchases Sailhant, d. 1538
	Charles-Antoine Dubourg, son of Antoine, d. 1569, husband of Nicole d'Andredieu
	Louis Dubourg, son of Charles-Antoine, husband of Jeanne de Lastic
	Catherine Dubourg, wife of Jacques d'Estaing
Circa 1650	Jean d'Estaing, son of Jacques d'Estaing
	Gaspard d'Estaing, son of Jean d'Estaing
1654	Joachim Joseph d'Estaing, d. 1742
After 1703-1746	Charles-François, son of Gaspard d'Estaing, d. 1746
1746-before 1763	Charles-Hector d'Estaing, sells château
1763	Sir Francois Jean Roger
Circa 1765-1777	Etienne Serre de Saint Romans, d. 1781
1777	Jacques-Philippe de Saint Romans, son of Etienne Serre de Saint Romans
Since 1780	Pierre Rongier is farmer at Sailhant
1789	Jean-Baptiste Rongier, son of Pierre Rongier, farmer
Circa 1816-1817	Children and heirs of Jean-Baptiste Rongier
1817-before 1858	Pierre Lorier, d. 1857, husband of Gabrielle Delort
Before 1858-1875	Michel Lorier, d. 1894
1875-1881	Jacques Genestoux, husband of Marguerite Anastasie Laurier, daughter of Michel Lorier
Circa 1881-1892	Mary Raynaud, d. 1924-5
1892-1904	Marie Hyacinthe Nathalie Martine, wife of Mary Raynaud

1904-1930	Dr. Paul Delbet, d. 1924
1930-1961	Antionette Silhol Delbet (after 1931 Comtessa de Fleurieu)
1961-1984	Jeannine Marguerite Delbet Lafont, Jean-Paul Delbet & Pauline Antoinette Delbet Gohin, children of Paul and Antionette Delbet
1984-1996	Jean-Paul Delbet
1996-1997	Gabrielle Borel Delbet, Marie Delbet & Marguerite Delbet
1997-	Joseph Pell Lombardi

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Acknowledgments

Given the complexity of the subjects of this book and the long duration of my involvement with them, there are a substantial number of people who have aided me.

The history of Château du Sailhant relies substantially on the 1999 monograph, Château du Sailhant, Monographie Historique et Architecturale, Étude Approfondie de Documentation et d'Analyse Historique et Archéologique by Christian Corvisier, Architectural Historian and Doctor of Medieval Archeology. The principal source for family histories was Le Château de Saillans et ses seigneurs the 1925 book by Alfred Douët. France Brunon, Genealogist, located, researched and produced copies of primary sources in France. Caroline Schweyer, Architect/Preservationist, coordinated the on-site investigations and research. Kathryn Gravdal, Ph.D., French Medievalist, produced a condensed chronological version of the sections relating to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Anne-Sophie Roure, Preservationist, assisted with translations and interpretations of the French texts relating to Château du Sailhant.

The section concerning Jánosháza is based upon the work of Sélysette Somorjay, Art Historian, which is assembled in the 1999 presentation JÁNOSHÁZA, Erdödy-Choron Kastély, Müemléki Helyreállításának, Elvi Engedélyezési Terve.

My sons, Christopher and Michael, reluctantly spent a significant portion of their childhood in unfinished houses and being dragged to house museums and late night country auctions. They swore that when they had freedom of choice, they would live in a glass box. I am very happy they have contradicted themselves. A very special thanks goes to Nan Hall Lombardi who played a major role in the earlier houses.

Joseph Pell Lombardi
Autumn, 2001

Illustration Credits

All illustrations were furnished by the author except those listed below.

BEGINNINGS

Downtown Cavern -- George Herbet Macrum c. 1913
Cartoon from Architectural Record

THE ARMOUR-STINER (OCTAGON) HOUSE

The (Armour-Stiner) Octagon, c. 1990
98. Palisades. No. 19 of the Hudson River Portfolio. W.G.Wall New York:1826 - Collection of the Author
98. Tappan Zee John Williamson 1875 - Collection of the Author
99. Map of the Village of Abbortsford - Irvington Public Library
100. Site Plan
100. Photo of characteristic 2 story octagon house in Montvale, NJ Ca. 1850 - Collection of the Author
Prof. O.S. Fowler
Phrenological Chart
Phrenological Almanac
102. Phrenological Head - Collection of the Author
103. Octagonal Home of Orson Fowler, Fishkill (A Home for All, 1854 ed.) - Collection of the Author
Suburban Octagonal Cottage
Joseph Stiner -- Dobbs Ferry Register, July 9, 1987
George Earl -- White English Terrier, "Prince" (c. 1856). Oil on canvas. AKC
Collection
"Prince", cast-iron railing
Lion statue, c. 1990
Octagon house, 1860 & 1872
Desert de Retz, 1988
Domes
Temple of Venus & Vesta
Oriental Villa -- Samuel Sloan
Map of the Village of Irvington
Residence of George W. Dibble, Dobbs Ferry, New York, c. 1885 -- The New York
Historical Society
Carl and Betty Carmer, c. 1953
Octagon House, c. 1972. Life Magazine
Octagon House, c. 1976
Aerial View of Octagon House, c. 1980

THE OLD PARSONAGE - PERU, VERMONT

The Town of Peru, c. 1908
Map of the Town of Peru, c. 1869
Church Dinner in front of the Old Parsonage, c. 1905
The Congregational Church and the Old Parsonage, c. 1955
The Barn behind the Old Parsonage, c. 1978
The Parlor, c. 1989
The Old Parsonage, c. 1976

The Old Parsonage, Fred Swan
The Parlor, c. 1989
The Kitchen, c. 1089
The Dining Room, c. 1989
The Shed, c. 1989
Dining Room Wood Stove, c. 1989
The Master Bedroom, c. 1989
The Study, c. 1989
The Master Bedroom, c. 1989
Three Views in the Parlor, c. 1989

Liberty Tower - Lower Manhattan

The MacIntyre Building, 874 Broadway, NYC -- Both Sides of Broadway, c. 1905
565 Broadway, NYC -- Ball, Black & Co. c. 1865
644 Broadway, NYC -- The Manhattan Savings Bank Building, c. 1973
889 Broadway, NYC -- The Gorham Silver Building, c. 1972
W.J. Sloane Building, 649-659 Broadway, NYC c. 1892
W.J. Sloane Building, 649-659 Broadway, NYC c. 1979
W.J. Sloane Building, 649-659 Broadway, NYC c. 1979
The United States Sugar Building, 79 Laight Street, TriBeCa, Exterior Rendering
Hudson square Building & 5 Hubert St. TriBeCa, rendering
361 Broadway, NYC, rendering
101-111 Greene Street, SOHO, rendering
27 North Moore, TriBeCa, rendering
The Juillard Buildings, 18 Leonard Street, TriBeCa, rendering
The Chrysler Building Lobby
The Loft, 50 Crosby Street, SOHO, rendering
Liberty Tower, c. 1977
The Potter Palmer Residence, c. 1901
The Fisheries Building -- Columbia Exposition, 1893
Liberty Tower, c. 1909
Liberty Tower, Entrance Facade, rendering
Liberty Tower -- 29th Floor Plan
Liberty Tower -- 29th Floor Library
Liberty Tower -- 29th Floor Rotunda

Château du Sailhant

Château du Sailhant, postcard, c. 1910
Château du Sailhant (J. F. Ferraton)
Mountains of Auvergne
19th century map of the Auvergne
The Cascade of Sailhant, c. 1912
The Cascade of Sailhant, c. 1965
Celtic Bronze Helmet, c. 400 BC
Early Fortification Illustration, c. 6th century
Auvergne Donjon
Donjon at Château du Sailhant, c. 1997
Château du Sailhant 13th century shooting slit
Château du Sailhant, north side, c. 1895
Château du Sailhant tower to the west of the entrance, c. 1999
Château du Sailhant embrasure a la francaise

Château du Sailhant northeast tower
Château du Sailhant northeast tower
Château du Sailhant archeres-cannonieres and light/vent openings
Château du Sailhant donjon from the west
Château du Sailhant Seignorial Justice Auditorium
Château du Sailhant donjon with moat partially excavated
Château du Sailhant main entrance door
Château du Sailhant inner court facade remains of large opening
Napoleonian Cadastral Survey
Château du Sailhant linking bay from the north
Château du Sailhant from the north
Shooting slit linking bay north wall
Château du Sailhant east facade of linking bay
Château du Sailhant Dining Room fireplace mantle
North wall of linking bay from inside
Donjon, c. 1950
Donjon entrance door, c. 1998
Inner court facade verstiges of arched
Curb stone
Inner Court facade, c. 1997
Entrance door blazon
Inner court passageway
East gable wall seignorial residence
Marie Athalina Laurier, daughter of Michel Laurier
Château du Sailhant, late 19th century from the northeast
Château du Sailhant, late 19th century, from the southwest
Cascade of Sailhant c. 1870
Cascade of Sailhant c. 1957
Mary Hippolyte Raynaud
1888 elevation drawings of Château du Sailhant
Château du Sailhant from the northeast
Cascade path
Château du Sailhant from the west, c. 2000
Château from the west, c. 1890
Chambre de la Chatelaine
Interior Views Gilles Chabrier. 6 Place Marchande, 15300 Murat, France
Chapel
Doctor Jean-Paul Delbet and his first wife
Antoinette Emilie Silhol (Delbet) 19 years old
Château du Sailhant, watercolor by Frank Boggs (1855-1926)
Château du Sailhant c. 1997
Roofs, c. 1997
Château du Sailhant from the west, c. 1996
Kitchen, c. 2002
Aerial View, c. 1963
Pg. 145 Château de la Clauze Herv'e MonestierForteresses et Châteaux d'Auvergne
Pg, 158 View fron the Northeast Black & white - Delbet

ERDÖDY-CHORON CASTLE -- JÁNOSHÁZA, HUNGARY

Vernacular House, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Stone carving, Ankor Wat Temple, Cambodia

"Everyone has their thing. Mine is the mystery of bringing it all back together"
— The New York Times, July 5, 1990

Joseph Pell Lombardi is a Restoration Architect and Preservationist with over 50 years experience in those fields. Holding degrees in both Architecture (B.Arch.) and Historic Preservation (M.Sci.), Lombardi established his architectural firm in 1969 to specialize in restoration, preservation, adaptive reuse and contextual new buildings - an unconventional specialty in a period when modernist architecture and new construction were the norm. Widely known as an expert in historic preservation and adaptive re-use, Lombardi has been sought out as a speaker on the subject by varied institutions, including Yale University and Brazil's Viva Centre.

His firm — The Office of Joseph Pell Lombardi, Architect - has been involved in over 500 restoration and preservation projects with historic buildings throughout the world including over 200 commercial building converted to residential use. His pioneer efforts in conversions changed entire New York neighborhoods and furthered the word "Loft" becoming a household word.

Lombardi is the owner of many of his historically significant projects including the conversion to residential use of Liberty Tower, an early 20th-century 33-story New York City Financial District Gothic skyscraper and the conservation of the National Historic Landmark, the Armour-Stiner (Octagon) House and Château du Sailhant, a 12th-century castle in Andelat, France.

His personal homes are an extraordinary collection of residential architecture spanning a time period from the 10th to the 20th century. Over the years, Lombardi has researched, conserved, restored, historically landscaped and contemporaneously furnished his houses. Their 1,000 year story is explored here through their historical background, construction evolution, program rational and restoration techniques. This book memorializes their standpoint at the beginning of the 21st century and shares with the reader Lombardi's extraordinary adventure with them.

"When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center, most people nearby fled downstairs and uptown, but Joe Lombardi did the opposite: despite injuring his leg in the tumult, he headed to Liberty Tower, one block from ground zero, and took an elevator to his penthouse apartment on the 29th floor".
— The New York Times, October 18, 2001

Joseph Pell Lombardi, Photo by Mark Seliger