



West Mt. Airy Historic House Tour

October 20, 2024

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WELCOME

Welcome to West Mt. Airy Historic House Tour 2024, a self-guided tour through our fascinating neighborhood of architecturally diverse homes built in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Whether walking through the expansive Pelham District or experiencing the grandeur of one of the rare gems of the French Village, this tour provides a unique opportunity to see inside an array of iconic private homes. Exterior architectural styles range from Jacobean, Colonial, and Colonial Revival, to Norman Revival, and Victorian Era. Stunning interior finishes abound: grand entryways, original fireplace mantels and surrounds, period wall sconces, ornately carved woodwork, leaded glass windows, hardwood/parquet flooring, and unexpected surprises in the detailed metal work on doorknobs, door knockers, hinges, radiator covers, and heating vents. The care and craftsmanship that has gone into every detail of these homes is not to be missed!

This tour will provide you with a rare opportunity to experience the quality and diversity of homes in our West Mt. Airy neighborhood community as we raise the public awareness about the importance and impact of historic preservation.



30 Pelham Road, Fairelawn Manor

Fairelawn is a 10,000 square foot stone, half-timbered Tudor Revival style residence and associated carriage house, with 10 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms. Designed by architects G.W. and W.D. Hewitt, it was constructed between 1902 and 1903. It is situated in the Pelham neighborhood in northwest Philadelphia, a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century development composed primarily of single-family houses and twins. Fairelawn is situated on a generous corner lot, one of the most prominent locations in a neighborhood comprised of many large homes of various Victorian revival styles.

The L-shaped building is three stories tall with a steeply pitched roof interrupted by cross-gables, dormer windows, and tall stone chimneys. The front elevation is dominated by a large porch that extends out over the driveway to become a porte-cochere. According to a Philadelphia Inquirer article of the time, the home was designed for industrialist Henry B. Curran, and then deeded to his daughter Constance Davison, and built as a wedding gift. The 1910 Census lists Constance and her family as living at 30 Pelham Road with their two children and four servants. In 2017, Fairelawn was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, and in 2022 it was nominated for the National Register. The name "Fairelawn" references the large front yard.

Parking details on page 13



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235 Pelham Road

Built in 1893, this Queen Anne style, three story home was designed by Yarnell and Goforth. Built in the 19th century as part of the Pelham Estates, this residence was one of the original “suburban” homes of Pelham. The Queen Anne exterior features Flemish bond brick work with a Wissahickon schist stone foundation. A large wraparound porch, ornate two story windows, and round turret are the most notable exterior features. There are a multitude of asymmetrical windows, including a two story cathedral window fronting the grand staircase. Asymmetry and openness characterize the interior of this magnificent home.

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329 Pelham Road

Built in 1895, this stone Victorian Gothic home was designed by Philadelphia architect Edward Hazelhurst and features revival architecture referencing Flemish, Norman, and Gothic styles. Representing one of the many distinguished dwellings built on the 1893 Pelham Estates in the 19th century, architectural features abound, including Gothic arched windows, Gothic gables, tracery muntins, wrought iron grills, sconce lighting, window benches, indoor wood shutters, oak hardwood and parquet floors, pocket doors, three dramatic fireplaces, and a grand leaded glass window. The central staircase anchors this home with beautiful light filtering through the leaded glass. The exterior of the home features one of the primary exterior materials used in constructing local homes, Wissahickon schist.

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325 West Allens Lane

The houses designed for the French Village reflect the 1920s trend of eclectic regional and period revivals in an unusual style inspired by the medieval farmsteads and manors of Normandy, France. Robert Rodes McGoodwin and other influential Philadelphia architects designed houses which embraced traditional massing and forms seen in the Norman countryside. The French Village houses express a romanticized version of the native Norman vernacular architecture with exaggerated and fanciful details.

The French Village neighborhood reflects the development of first-ring suburbs in the early twentieth century that grew out of the “degraded conditions of the city, coupled with a growing demand for housing in an environment that melded nature with community.” This trend occurred not only in Philadelphia during a period of rapid industrialization, but throughout the country. In Philadelphia, designers and builders embraced the materials and topography of the natural Wissahickon Valley landscape, sometimes termed the “Wissahickon Style.”

The first resident of this home was Preston Blair Lee. He attended Princeton and served in the U.S. Army in WWI and was a vice president of the First National Bank of Philadelphia at the time of his arrival into the French Village in 1929. He later became a partner in the banking firm of Brown Brothers, Harriman & Company, and then became president of the Western Savings Fund Society of Philadelphia. P. Blair Lee was married to Elizabeth Wayne in 1926.

Parking details on page 13



508 West Allens Lane

This gracious stone colonial style house was constructed in 1925. It has a sweeping staircase that captures the eye upon entering. The rest of the house is equally impressive with renovations to accommodate a flair for the modern 21st century. A spacious living room with the original fireplace makes for a comfortable family living space. Original wall sconces grace the main entrance. This home is positioned on high ground and oriented towards Allens Lane near the intersection of McCallum Street.

Parking details on page 13



700 Westview Street, The Sadie Alexander House

This home is on the Philadelphia Historic Register of Historic Places due to its association with Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander (1898-1989) and her husband Raymond Pace Alexander (1897-1974). The Alexanders were political activists in education, law, and civil rights, locally and nationally. As an African American woman, Sadie Alexander achieved numerous firsts. In 1921, she was the first African American to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania with a Ph.D. in economics. In 1924, she was the first African American to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School; and in 1927 Sadie Alexander was the first African American woman to gain admission to the Pennsylvania Bar. Sadie and Raymond Alexander rank among the leading Civil Rights advocates in the history of Philadelphia.

700 Westview Street was constructed in 1915 for Edwin R. Winner on a parcel subdivided from the estate of Alice W. Strawbridge, the daughter of John Welsh (1805-1886), a prominent landowner and minister to England, and wife of George Strawbridge, a member of another large landowning family in Germantown. Winner commissioned a home from the well-known contractor George F. Payne. No architect is specified, but the resulting home was constructed in the Tudor Revival style, the characteristics of which are expressed to this day with little contemporary intervention, retaining much of the building's integrity.

Parking details on page 13



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About West Mt. Airy Neighbors:

WMAN is a member-supported, nonprofit civic organization whose mission is to support and advocate for the needs and concerns of the West Mount Airy community, nurture our social fabric in all its diversity, and help protect and steward the inevitable transformation of our beloved physical and natural environments.

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WMAN Historic Preservation Initiative

The goal of the West Mount Airy Neighbors Historic Preservation Initiative is to identify and protect the character defining features of the community by taking a proactive stance in order to recognize and protect the historic built-environment for the future. Likewise, we aim to bolster the quality of life in our neighborhood through highlighting its history, architecture, diversity of community, and its long standing engaging spirit.

Committee Members

Adrienne Carpenter, Sherman Aronson, Cynthia Dutwin, David Barnes,
David Schaaf, Morrie Zimmerman, Patrick Hauck, Libbie Hawes,
Paul Gill, and Monica Gonzalez

Please visit www.wman.net to learn more about West Mt. Airy Neighbors. Follow us on social media: @westmtairyneighbors



About Mt. Airy Learning Tree:

Founded in 1980, MALT is a nonprofit that offers over 750 classes to approximately 4,500 students each year. Held at locations throughout our community—in local churches, schools, businesses, and homes or outdoors in the Wissahickon and at local points of interest—our classes bring students of all ages together through engaging educational and recreational activities. MALT's community-focused programs creates a welcoming place for neighbors and helps define what we love about living in Northwest Philadelphia.

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Please visit our website to view our classes, register, and learn more about Mt. Airy Learning Tree. Follow us on social media: @mtairylearningtree

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*Thank you to all of our house tour docents
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Brian Rudnick, Peggy Bradley, Paul Gill, Lynn Berkowitz, Nathan Long,
Linda Bell, Jennifer Keene, Theo Wood, Steve Kendall, Sherman Aronson,
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Allison Cooper, Patricia Robinson, John Stanchak, Annette Gibbs,
Rachel Falkov, Robert Maas, Janet Gala, Marisia Robinson
and Sammy Lifson-Neubardt

*We are especially grateful for the homeowners who are welcoming us
into their homes to share their hidden gems with our attendees.*

Peter and Katie Commons; Howard and Margaret Shapiro;
Michael and Amy Cohen; Michael Miska and Erik Brown;
Amy and Josh Klaris; Connie and Sam Katz

*And to you, our attendees, thank you for joining us and for supporting
the mission of Mt. Airy Learning Tree and West Mt. Airy Neighbors.*

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