



LANDMARKS **LETTER**



THE PHILIP AND LOUISA GREEN HOME: an Interesting Italianate Survival in the Vandeventer Neighborhood



IN THE FALL OF 2014, our office was approached by an individual who was considering purchasing and rehabilitating a home on West Belle Place. Once a prominent neighborhood of stately homes, many of the streets situated between Midtown and the Central West End have suffered from demolition and disinvestment in recent decades, so we were pleased to hear from someone who saw opportunity in the area. The potential homeowner was interested in using the State Historic Tax Credit as a component of her rehabilitation plan and wanted to know how it could be accessed. We advised her that the building first had to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and that nominations of individual houses could be difficult. Landmarks' staff agreed to come take a look at the property and were truly surprised when we discovered that the home appeared to be an early, Italianate country house embedded in a neighborhood that was mostly built around the turn of the century. While other such survivals exist in St. Louis, they are rare. Most mid 19th

century country estates were subdivided and developed as the city boomed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; many grand residences were lost. We were thrilled: St. Louis had revealed the existence of another mysterious architectural treasure and challenged us to figure out its story. Challenge accepted.

The land where the home at 4171 West Belle Place stands today was originally granted to Jean Baptiste Bequette (aka Becquet) in the late 18th century. Bequette was born in Kaskaskia, Illinois in 1721 and came to St. Louis in 1764 where he worked as a blacksmith. He married Marie Francoise Dodier and the couple had three children; Margaret, Marie and Gabriel. Sometime prior to his death in 1797, Bequette acquired land in the vicinity of the Grand Prairie Common Field, which had been designated for the use of the citizens of St. Louis for agricultural purposes in 1766. Located far from the city limits at the time, Bequette's tract remained in the ownership of his estate until the growth of the city prompted an initial subdivision of the property in 1859.

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Can you guess which building this architectural detail is from? Test your knowledge with our column, *Elements* on page 2.

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LANDMARKS LETTER

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Elements

THE ST. LOUIS ARTISTS' GUILD was founded in 1886 by members of the St. Louis Sketch Club who wanted to create a new organization that would allow women to join. The organization's mission was concerned with developing a high capacity for art appreciation in St. Louis and also to assist its members and local artists to advance in their respective media, showcase the work of artists and craftsmen, and to encourage the performing arts. By 1907 the organization had grown sufficiently that it had need of its own building and through the patronage of its members and philanthropists, a facility was constructed at 812 North Union.

Designed by architect Louis Spiering, the Arts and Crafts style building housed meeting rooms and a large gallery space. In 1916, the size of the building was doubled with the construction of a theater designed by Lawrence Ewald. In 1989, the Guild moved to a former mansion in Oak Knoll Park in Clayton. Following the departure of the Guild, the building on Union was used for various community service purposes for more than

Green House continued...

Many lots remained in the possession of Bequette's descendants following subdivision including lot 31 where 4171 West Belle now stands. This lot is shown as belonging to Bequette's son-in-law Louis Barada on the 1859 subdivision map of St. Louis.

By 1875, Bell Avenue (a portion of which would become West Belle Place) had been laid out between Vandeventer Avenue on the east and Taylor Avenue on the west, but the land (including lot 31) remained almost completely undeveloped. The 1875 Pictorial St. Louis Map depicts only two large homes along the entire length of Bell, neither of which survives



The block of 4244-52 West Bell circa 1890s.



two decades. During this time it suffered from deferred maintenance and by 2014 had fallen into a severe state of disrepair. Following a painstaking renovation by Patrick and Carol Schuchard that was completed in October, 2014, the former Artists' Guild building has been brought back to life.

Come join us for the Most Enhanced Awards celebrating excellence in historic rehabilitation in the Guild's historic theater, gallery, and catacombs and see for yourself how St. Louis' architectural treasures are being brought back to life.

See page 7 for details...

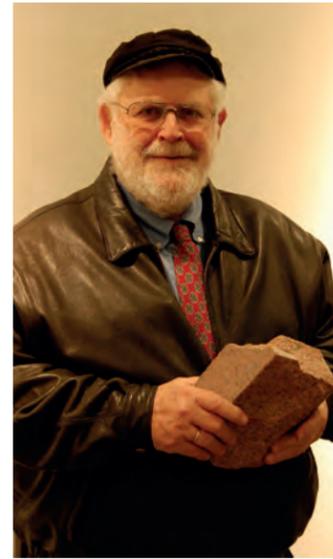
today. The fact that 4171 West Belle does not show up on this map provides evidence that while the home looks like it may have been associated with an early country estate, it actually has a different story to tell.

In fact, the home turned out to be associated with early suburban subdivision development. Banking on the future prospects of the central corridor west of Grand Boulevard, Philip P. Green began purchasing land in the area by 1880 and in 1881 began constructing a home for his family at what would become 4171 West Belle Place.

The Atlas of The City of St. Louis published in 1883 by C.M. Hopkins clearly shows the home standing in an area that remained largely rural. There was a smattering of modest brick and frame homes located several thousand feet to the west, no homes for blocks to the south, and virtually nothing but Charles Elleard's plant nursery to the north, but the area was poised to grow.

A real estate man by trade, Green must have understood the advantages of the location. Situated just west of the prestigious Vandeventer Place and less than a block to the north of the West End Narrow Gauge Commuter Railroad the land was ripe for development. In what was either a stroke of good luck for Green or indicative of his shrewd business sense, in 1884 the railway's terminal was relocated to the corner of Vandeventer and Enright (three blocks from his home and many other lots he controlled) so that it could link up with the western terminus of the cable car line that ran to the city's central business district.

Green House continued on back page...



Bob Cradock by Andrew Weil

BOB CRADOCK'S FAMILY has been working with stone in St. Louis since the 1870s when his Irish ancestors arrived to work on the Eads Bridge. His Uncle George O'Toole and other family members also did work for Henry Shaw on the walls, culverts and foundations on the grounds of the Missouri Botanical Gardens and Tower Grove Park. In 1892, George O'Toole and a cousin incorporated the St. Louis Contracting Company, which was commonly known as Casey & O'Toole. The company operated a quarry at 18th and Chouteau on what is now Ameren's campus, and also set up a plant for cutting and finishing stone at Newstead and Clayton. The company grew rapidly and earned many prominent contracts including the job of constructing the immense foundation for the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica on Lindell which broke ground in 1907. Construction of the Cathedral's foundations employed 420 men and yet St. Louis Contracting was large enough to service five other contracts simultaneously.

Bob's father joined the company in 1928 and began work on the new campus of Concordia Seminary; at night he attended classes in the school of architecture at Washington University. At that time Bob's family moved to Richmond Heights to be closer to Concordia as well as many other church and hospital projects. Bob said that many of the masons would work a full day on major institutional or commercial projects like Concordia and then moonlight building houses.

Bob was born in 1938 at St. Mary's Hospital at Clayton and Bellevue and grew up in the stone business. As a child during World War II, he remembers that construction work slowed down and his father and uncle George O'Toole made their workforce and industrial capabilities available to McDonnell Aircraft. Apparently they had a lot

of older craftsmen working for them who were too old to participate in military service, but who were put to work building gliders for McDonnell on the parking lot of the old St. Louis Arena on Oakland Avenue. During this period, many of the men gained experience with new epoxy technologies that were being deployed for the war effort. This experience later led the company to develop new masonry products such as Stone Weld, which are now used for repairing and bonding masonry.

After the War, new building materials and techniques began to change the masonry industry. Perhaps the biggest change was the complete shift away from stone foundations in favor of concrete.

As a result, the number of stone masons and stone masonry companies in St. Louis began to shrink. With fewer foundations to build, focus shifted somewhat toward cutting stone cladding for buildings, repairing existing stone edifices, and supplying

specialty materials for monument companies.

At the age of 17 Bob entered Kenrick Seminary, but after three years he realized that he wanted to shift his focus to the building trades. He then became an architecture student at Washington University and went to work with his father in the stone business. His studies at Wash U. were not directed toward becoming an architect, but rather toward learning how buildings worked so as to better understand the masonry business.

Eventually Bob took over the family business, which at various times has operated quarries from Newfoundland to Virginia, and from Carthage, Missouri to New Mexico; they even work with quarries in Italy and Germany. From the Eads Bridge to the Cathedral Basilica to the granite-skinned AT&T Building, three generations of Bob's family have left their mark, written in stone, on the architecture of St. Louis.

Perhaps the biggest change was the complete shift away from stone foundations in favor of concrete.



A CLOSER LOOK: a Selection of Buildings in the Path of the Riverfront Stadium

Situated firmly in the cross hairs of the new proposed parking lots and football stadium on the north riverfront are a number of interesting and useful buildings. While the most recent renderings of the parking/stadium plan appear to leave a number of buildings that face Broadway intact, their reprieve is far from certain and thus we have included them in the final tally of 24 National Register listed historic buildings that would be destroyed by the plan. These buildings could contribute to a vibrant stadium neighborhood, and their redevelopment paid for in part by incentives such as the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which would bring money in from Washington DC and invest it in St. Louis' infrastructure. The buildings also represent an important and vanishing chapter in the history of our city's industrial development. Associated with power generation, railroads, cold storage, warehousing, and the city's pioneering sheet metal industry, the buildings of the north riverfront have fascinating stories to tell. The following are three case studies of buildings that would be destroyed for a new NFL stadium on the north riverfront.



Belcher Bath House, 21 O'Fallon Street

Constructed in two phases in 1894 and 1919, the Belcher Bath House is named for the Belcher Sugar Refinery that once occupied many of the surrounding lots. In an effort to secure a water supply that was cleaner than the polluted Mississippi, the Belcher refinery began drilling a well in 1849. When they finally hit an adequate aquifer five years later, the well had been sunk 2,200 feet below ground. Unfortunately, the water they discovered was heavily laden with minerals and was described as both salty and sulfurous. Needless to say, the water was not suitable for use in the sugar refinery. On the bright side, bathing in and consuming mineral water were popular medicinal practices in the 19th and early 20th century and the water proved to be commercially viable. In 1894 the small bath house was erected over the well, and by 1905 the Belcher Water Bath Company erected a large spa hotel at the corner of 4th and Lucas downtown in order to capitalize on the popularity of the water. Connected directly to the well by a pipe, the hotel contained steam rooms, saunas, "shower baths," Turkish baths, cold rooms, massage parlors, a barbershop, and every other amenity that a patron of a world class mineral water spa would require. After the spa opened, the little bath house at the well site was no longer needed and the building was used for cold storage. The Belcher Hotel building was torn down for a parking lot in 1976, but the bath house at 21 O'Fallon Street survived.

In 2004, 110 years after it was built, the William A. Kerr Foundation purchased the Belcher Bath House and began St. Louis' first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certified renovation. Incorporating advanced technologies and techniques to improve energy efficiency, indoor environmental quality, water conservation and reduce landfill; the former bath house is a model green building. After a multi-million dollar investment in the north riverfront area, the William A. Kerr Foundation uses the building for offices, but also makes it available at no charge to other non-profit organizations and community groups as a component of its efforts to improve education, enrich the environment, and promote health and accessibility in St. Louis.

Al's Restaurant, 1200 N. 1st Street

Al's Restaurant was started by Italian immigrants Louise and Albert Barroni in 1925. The building the restaurant occupies was originally known as Julius Vogel's Sugar House Exchange, but after ninety years of continuous operation by descendants of the Barroni's, it is safe to say the building's identity as Al's is set in stone. Initially serving the working men of the industrial riverfront, Al's has evolved over the years into a St. Louis culinary landmark. Owners Pam and Gary Neal treasure their family's history with the building and are rightly proud of the fact that the restaurant has continued to thrive despite the decline of commercial activity in the area and the isolation caused when Interstate 70 severed the area from the rest of the city. Despite the fact that the restaurant has stuck it out for nearly a century at this location and its owners don't want to leave, the site is slated to become a parking lot for the new stadium.



St. Louis Stamping Company/ Hammond Sheet Metal complex, 101 Cass Avenue

This complex consists of six buildings that were constructed between 1871 and 1913 and were designed during successive building episodes by August Beinke and Frederick Bonsack respectively. The buildings are attractive examples of late 19th century industrial architecture and are generally well-suited for adaptive reuse. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2009, the buildings were recognized for their association with a company that developed a product that revolutionized the stamped metal industry and had a lasting impact on the geography of the St. Louis region.

According to the National Register Nomination, the St. Louis Stamping Company was founded in 1866 through a reorganization of a previous concern established by brothers Frederick and William Niedringhaus in the late 1850s. Trained in Germany in the skills associated with finishing stamped metal products that were commonly used for housewares, containers, and various implements in the 19th century, the Niedringhaus brothers served as importers, dealers, and manufacturers. The company prospered and by 1870 it had begun assembling land for a new facility at today's north riverfront location.

In 1873, the company began attempting to replicate and improve upon a new European technique for creating metal ware with an enamel coating. One of three American firms to adopt and

advance the technology, by 1874 St. Louis Stamping had created graniteware. Their major innovation was a new enamel that incorporated powdered granite and made stamped metal products stronger, more durable, and impervious to oxidation or reaction with other chemical agents. Patented in 1876 by Frederick Niedringhaus, Graniteware drove the exponential growth of the company which quickly began exporting across the country and around the world. The factory on the north riverfront grew along with the company with major additions between the 1870s and 1890s.

By 1892 St. Louis Stamping had run out of land at the north riverfront site and the company purchased 5,300 acres of farmland across the river in Illinois for a new factory. The plant was to be so large that a new community was incorporated to support it and in 1896 the company town of Granite City was born. The former factory in St. Louis was sold to the Hammond Sheet Metal Company, which remained there until moving to St. Louis County in 2005. The earliest component of the St. Louis Stamping complex on the riverfront, a combined factory, warehouse, office and showroom constructed between 1871 and 1873, was renovated into the Hammond Apartments, which won a **Most Enhanced Award from Landmarks Association in 2014**. The entire complex including the newly renovated building would be destroyed by the proposed stadium plan.

The entire complex including the newly renovated building would be destroyed by the proposed stadium plan.



SATURDAY, MAY 9: 10am–4pm

Old North St. Louis House and Garden Tour

TOUR BEGINS: 10:00am at southwest corner of N 14th and St. Louis Avenue (right across from Crown Candy).

TOUR COST: \$10 for members in advance; tickets available at the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group office, 2700 N.14th Street, or online at: www.onsl.org.

SATURDAY, MAY 9: 2pm

Architectural Walking Tour of Flora Place

FROM ITS ORIGINS AS THE ROAD leading from Grand Avenue to the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Shaw Neighborhood's Flora Place was destined to be a significant street. Late 19th century subdivision led to Flora Place's blossoming as a private street lined with large houses designed by a who's-who of area architects. Architectural historian Michael R. Allen, director of the Preservation Research Office, will lead a tour that illuminates the fine architecture while calling out some of the street's colorful residents (including two former mayors and an inimitable television broadcaster).

TOUR BEGINS: Meet at the Grand Avenue entrance gate.

TOUR COST: \$10 to benefit the Shaw Neighborhood Improvement Association. Please bring a check or cash. *No advance registration required.*

For more information call 314-771-3101 or email snia@shawstlouis.org

SUNDAY, MAY 17: 11am–2pm

Tour of Kuhs' Farm and picnic on the Missouri River bluffs

COME TOUR THE FORMER COUNTRY ESTATE of prominent North St. Louis businessman Edward L. Kuhs in Spanish Lake. Situated high above the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, this remarkable property boasts stunning views, two Native American mounds, a working farm and animal rescue operation, a pioneer cemetery and an enormous terraced garden designed by Mr. Kuhs in the 1920s and 1930s. Learn about the history of the property with current owner and Kuhs' descendant Elizabeth Parker, and enjoy a leisurely picnic beneath the trees. This tour reprises last spring's trip to the farm due to popular demand. Don't miss this chance to explore and enjoy this beautiful private property.

TOUR BEGINS: Join us at Kuhs' Farm, 13080 Spanish Pond Road, St. Louis, MO 63138

TOUR COST: \$50.00 for members, \$75.00 for non-members and includes a catered box lunch and beverages

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED through Landmarks Association. Call 314-421-6474 or email stschetter@landmarks-stl.org to register.

Tours of the fabulous Campbell House Museum are free for Landmarks' members during the month of May this year!

Simply identify yourself as a member and enjoy a tour of this stunning Victorian home at 1508 Locust Street, St. Louis, 63103. For more information call 314-421-0325.



Campbell House Museum



Kuhs Farm gardens

FOR RESERVATIONS FOR LANDMARKS TOURS,

Please call Susan Tschetter 314-421-6474 or email stschetter@landmarks-stl.org

SATURDAY, MAY 23: 10:30am–12:30pm

Tour of Bernard Maybeck's Principia College campus followed by a picnic on the grounds of Eliestoun

ELIESTOUN IS THE FORMER country residence of Henry Turner and his wife Ada Ames whose estate was purchased for the Principia campus in 1930.

TOUR BEGINS: Principia College, 1 Maybeck Place, Elsah Illinois, 62028. For online directions, www.principiacollege.edu. Meet at the flag pole in front of Cox Auditorium.

TOUR COST: Cost is \$50.00 for members, \$75.00 for non-members and includes a catered box lunch and beverages.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED through Landmarks Association. Call 314-421-6474 or email stschetter@landmarks-stl.org to register.



Eliestoun, Principia Campus

SUNDAY, MAY 24: 12pm–4pm

Exhibit of Will Levy drawings (12pm–1pm), Walking tour of Levy-designed buildings at New Mt. Sinai (1pm–2pm) and Symphony performance (3pm–4pm)

Funereal architecture of Will Levy drawings exhibit/presentation and tour New Mt. Sinai Cemetery with Esley Hamilton, followed by St. Louis Symphony ensemble concert.

TOUR BEGINS: New Mt. Sinai, 8430 Gravois Road, St. Louis, MO 63123

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED FOR WALKING TOUR ONLY; the exhibit and symphony concert do not require reservations. These events are free. To make reservations for the walking tour, contact Daniel Brodsky 314-353-2540 or danielbrodsky@NMScemetery.org



Entrance to Mt. Sinai Cemetery

THURSDAY, MAY 28: Reception 6pm–7pm, Ceremony 7pm–8pm

MOST ENHANCED AWARDS, former Artists' Guild building, Boo Cat Club, 812 N. Union

Come explore the beautifully restored former Artists' Guild building, enjoy delicious appetizers and wine/beer/soft drinks, and celebrate the outstanding work that St. Louis rehabbers have completed over the course of the last year with Landmarks Association and our Master of Ceremonies Debbie Monterrey of KMOX Radio.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED. Call 314-421-6474 or email stschetter@landmarks-stl.org to register. Reservations can also be purchased through Event Brite by visiting www.eventbrite.com and searching for Landmarks Most Enhanced Awards. \$20.00 for members, \$30.00 for non-members.



Catacombs under the former Artists' Guild building

SATURDAY, MAY 30: 1pm–3pm

Tour of Pilgrim Congregational Church, Union Avenue Christian Church and the newly renovated Blossom House

TOUR BEGINS: Pilgrim Congregational Church at 826 N. Union

All three buildings are located very close together so we will walk from one to another. **RESERVATIONS REQUIRED** through Landmarks Association. Call 314-421-6474 or email stschetter@landmarks-stl.org to register.

TOUR COST: \$20.00 for members, \$30.00 for non-members



Union Avenue Christian Church



LANDMARKS

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Green House continued from page 2...

By 1890, all the pieces had fallen into place and the Greens were ready to start surrounding their country home with a neighborhood. August 14 of that year, Phillip's wife Louisa took out a building permit for a two story brick house on the north side of what was then Bell Avenue between Sarah and Whittier. While no architect is listed on the permit for this first speculative home, it was likely designed by William Mathews and Albert Clarke. Working in partnership, these two architects (along with the contracting firm of John Tierney) designed eleven other homes for Philip Green on West Belle in the ensuing two years.

Interestingly, Mathews & Clarke had previously worked in the office of prominent architect Jerome B. Legg before striking out on their own in 1892 along with another of Legg's former employees Joseph T. James. While the partnership with James would last just one year, Mathews & Clarke remained in business with each other for at least two decades. While the architect of 4171 West Belle is unknown, it is possible that it was designed by them under Legg's direction. Considering that Green used Mathews & Clarke for so many commissions at the very outset of their careers outside of Legg's office, it seems likely that he knew something of their experience before they left Legg's employ. In addition, we know that Legg's office was still designing Italianate style homes in the area well into the 1880s because of the Italianate design he executed for William Cuthbert Jones in 1886 at 3724 Olive (extant).

The initial work done by Mathews & Clarke for Philip Green on West Belle Place was apparently met with approval by both Green and other speculative developers who owned land in the area. In 1892, Green commissioned a second house from the firm and the architects were also chosen to design a large home for C.E. Udell and seven homes for A. K. Florida in the new neighborhood. In 1893, Green commissioned *nine* more houses on West Belle, John W. Fears commissioned three more and an M. T. Merritt and E. D. Frantz each commissioned one. In all, the firm designed at least twenty five homes on West Belle Place between 1890 and 1893.

Mathews & Clarke went on to design prominent homes, churches and commercial buildings around St. Louis until 1913 when the firm disappeared from the City Directory. Today, many of their works have been destroyed, but perhaps their most well-known commission, the Delaney Building at the southwest corner of 10th and Locust Street in downtown St. Louis, survives (NR 3/1/02).

The home at 4171 West Belle is interesting because of its relatively rare Italianate design and because of the story that it tells about how developers envisioned, planned and executed St. Louis neighborhoods at the turn of the century. While other "real" country houses were either absorbed or demolished by the creation of city subdivisions, the Green home was apparently constructed as a picturesque centerpiece for its owner's long range master development plan.

**Join us for
Landmarks
Most
Enhanced
Awards
May 28**

at the
former Artists
Guild building
*see details
on pg. 7*



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