

**ADDRESS: 5848 CITY AVE**

Name of Resource: The Chestnuts

Proposed Action: Amend Designation

Property Owner: Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham jon.farnham@phila.gov

**OVERVIEW:** This application proposes to amend the designation of the property at 5848 City Avenue. The property was developed as a country estate in the nineteenth century and converted for use as a convent in the twentieth century. The 11.6-acre property includes a mansion or main house and several other buildings and a large amount of open space.

The Historical Commission designated the property on 13 November 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The owner of the property, a cloistered group of nuns who have little contact with the outside world, did not participate in the reviews of the nomination by the Committee on Historic Designation and Historical Commission, except to note a general objection to the designation by email. The Historical Commission found that the property satisfied Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J. While the property was nominated for its significance as a nineteenth-century country estate, the Historical Commission extended the period of significance to 1965 to include the property's history as a convent within its significance. With the expansion of the significance beyond that claimed in the nomination, the Historical Commission added the chapel, dormitory, and an ancillary building to the list of historically significant buildings that already included the mansion house, gardener's cottage, carriage house, and other outbuildings. The nomination adopted by the Historical Commission also called out numerous landscape features as historically significant. Although the Historical Commission designated the property, which consists of a single tax parcel, individually, the nomination treated the large property with numerous buildings, appurtenances, and landscape features as though it was a historic district, classifying various buildings and landscape resources as significant, contributing, and non-contributing.

The current application requests that the Historical Commission amend the designation to include the main house, gardener's cottage, carriage house and stable, and the land around the buildings and between the house and City Avenue. The application points out numerous mistakes and flaws in the nomination and offers numerous reasons for limiting the area of designation. A letter with the application includes a marked-up aerial photograph that proposes a new boundary for the designation. The Heritage report also calls for amending the Period of Significance to 1865 to 1940, the period originally proposed in the nomination but later extended on the recommendation of the Committee on Historic Designation to include the property's history as a convent.

Following the Committee on Historic Designation review in January 2023, the staff visited the site, evaluated the buildings and landscape, conducted additional research on the site, and authored a report. The report identifies numerous inaccuracies and mistakes in the nomination.

The Historical Commission began reviewing the amendment application at its February 2023 meeting but tabled the matter without reaching a conclusion to allow additional time for the Commissioners to consider new information including the staff report. Since the February meeting of the Historical Commission, the applicant submitted an additional letter clarifying the boundary proposal and providing a site plan with the proposed boundary drawn on it.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommended that the Historical Commission amend the designation, redrawing the boundary as proposed to include the main house, gardener's cottage, carriage house and stable, and a portion of the best-preserved landscape between City Avenue and the main house, and redefine the Period of Significance to 1865-1940, as originally proposed in the nomination.

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March 2, 2023

*Via E-mail*

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission  
1515 Arch Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Application to Amend Designation (the “Designation”) of 5848 City Avenue (the “Property”)

Dear Dr. Farnham:

As you know, we represent the Sisters of the Visitation (the legal owner of the Property) and Saint Joseph’s University (the equitable owner of the Property) with respect to the above-referenced application (the “Applicants”).

As the Staff’s February 7, 2023 Report on Site Visit confirms, the nomination that led to the Designation contained numerous material, false statements. As you stated at the February 10, 2023 Historical Commission Meeting, “the staff would not have deemed the nomination correct and complete as it did in 2020 if it knew what it knows now.” 2/10/23 Historical Commission Recording at 3:39:05. For that reason, the Commission lacked jurisdiction to designate the Property pursuant to a flawed third party nomination in the first place, and it lacks jurisdiction to continue regulating the Property today. *See* Commission Rules & Regulations § 5.8.a-b (providing that a “substantive correctness and completeness” staff finding is a prerequisite to Commission’s ability to proceed on the basis of a third party prepared nomination).

Still, because they wish to be good stewards of the Property, the Applicants remain willing to accept the compromise submitted on January 17, 2023. That compromise revises the boundaries of the designated areas of the Property to include the areas the staff suggested are worthy of inclusion in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Although there was general consensus from the Commissioners at the February 10 meeting to accept the compromise, a few Commissioners expressed concerns that the boundaries of the revised area were not clear enough. For that reason, we enclose a recent survey of the Property, which delineates the compromise boundary in detail in greater detail.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
March 2, 2023  
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We look forward to further discussing this matter at the March 10 meeting of the Commission. Thank you for your attention to this matter.  
Sincerely,



Nathanael Farris

NF

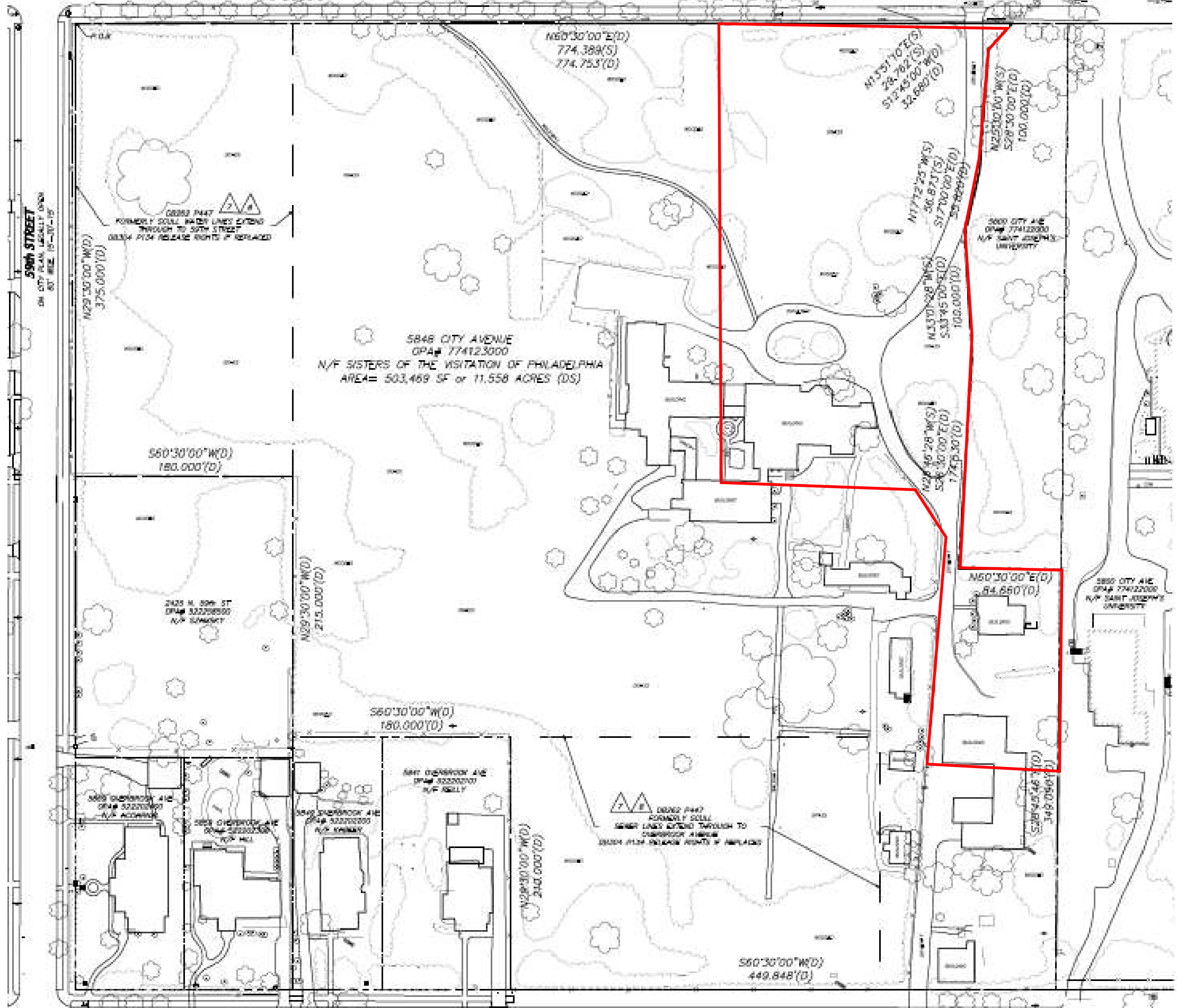
cc: Laura DiPasquale Zupan  
Matthew N. McClure

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

CITY AVENUE

ON CITY PLAN, LEGALLY OPEN  
80' WIDE, 10'-30'-15'

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY



The boundary was slightly corrected from the original version submitted on March 2, 2023 to follow the east property line more precisely.

OVERBROOK AVENUE

ON CITY PLAN, LEGALLY OPEN  
80' WIDE, 10'-30'-15'

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January 17, 2023

*Via E-mail*

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Re: Application to Amend Designation (the "Designation") of 5848 City Avenue (the "Property")

Dear Dr. Farnham:

As you know, we represent the Sisters of the Visitation (the legal owner of the Property) and Saint Joseph's University (the equitable owner of the Property). After discussion with the staff and review of its recommendation concerning our application, we wish to revise our application to amend the Designation. We request that the boundaries of the designated area of the Property be amended as depicted in the attached aerial graphic of the Property.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathanael Farris

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cc: Laura DiPasquale Zupan

Matthew N. McClure



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December 19, 2022

*Via E-mail*

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Philadelphia Historical Commission

Re: Application to Amend Designation (the "Designation") of 5848 City Avenue (the "Property")

Dear Dr. Farnham:


As you know, we represent the Sisters of the Visitation (the legal owner of the Property) and Saint Joseph's University (the equitable owner of the Property). Under Section 14-1004(5) the Philadelphia Preservation Ordinance, we request that the Designation of the Property be amended. In support of this application, we enclose the following:

1. Statement in Support of Application to Amend;
2. Report prepared by Heritage Consulting Group setting forth new information, which requires amendment to the Designation; and
3. Survey of the Property

We request that the application be placed on the January 18, 2023 agenda for the Committee on Historic Designation and the February 10, 2021 agenda for the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Nathanael Farris

NF

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.  
December 19, 2022  
Page 2

cc: Laura DiPasquale Zupan  
Matthew N. McClure



# Applicant Statement

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**PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

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	:	Property Address:
	:	5848 City Avenue,
<b>Application for Amendment of the Designation:</b>	:	Philadelphia, PA 19131
<b>of 5848 City Avenue</b>	:	
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**Statement In Support Of Application for Amendment**

The Sisters of the Visitation (the “Sisters”) and Saint Joseph’s University (the “University”)<sup>1</sup> respectfully submits the following statement in support of this application to amend the designation (the “designation”) by the Philadelphia Historical Commission (the “Commission”) of the property at 5848 City Avenue (the “property”) for listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (the “Register”).

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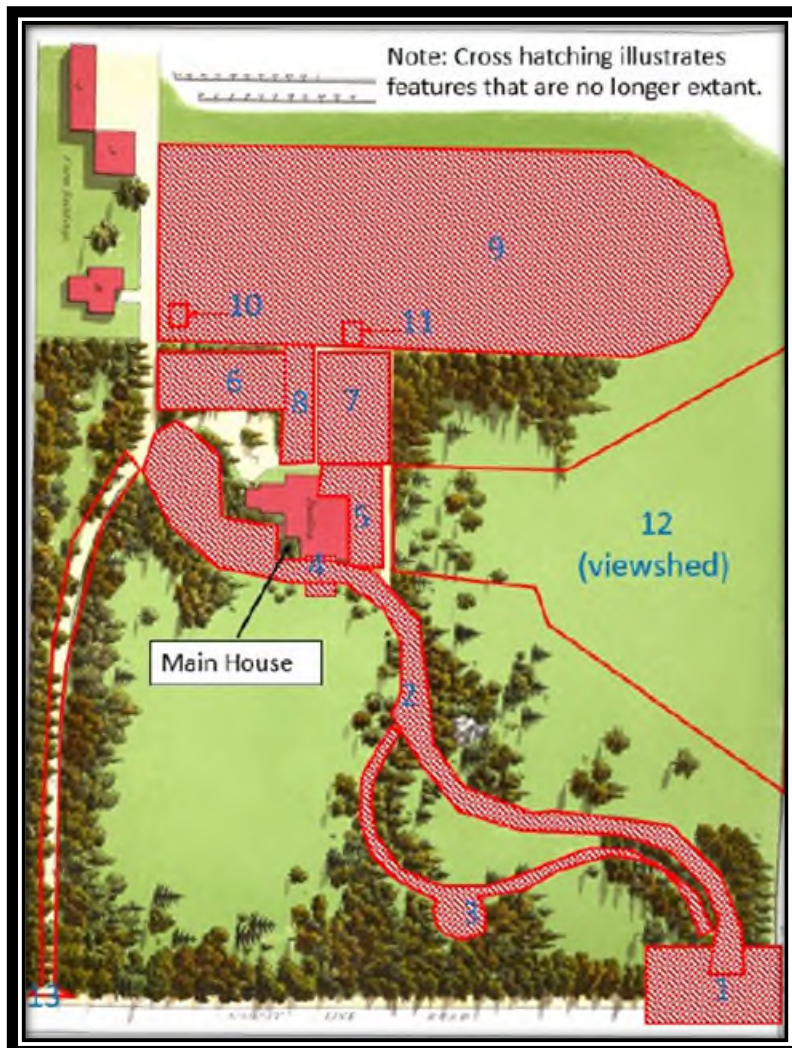
<sup>1</sup> The University is the equitable owner of the property.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Sisters and the University request that the designation be amended so that only the Main House (defined below) is listed in the Register. *See* Phila. Code § 14-1004(5) (allowing the Commission to amend or rescind designations). The Commission did not have the benefit of a site visit or complete information when it designated the entire property. This application provides new information, including a report compiled by Heritage Consulting Group (the “Report”) showing the significant changes to the property that were not noted in the nomination. It explains that nearly all of the features of the landscape plan drafted by Eugene A. Baumann (the “Baumann Plan”)—which was a central part of the nomination—are no longer intact:



Report at 3.

Additionally, many of the buildings on the property are not visible from the public right of way and are inaccessible to the public. So those buildings should not be in the Register because they are incapable of conveying any historical significance they may have to the public.

What's more the nomination contains several legal mistakes that should be amended. The property was designated as a site. But the property does not (and cannot) meet the definition of a site. Its significance depends on buildings and structures, which is the opposite of a site. So the Commission lacked the power to designate the entire property as a site.

Further, the nomination treats the property as if it were a district by categorizing various property features as significant, contributing, or non-contributing. But the property was not nominated or designated as a district. So only those structures or buildings that the Commission deemed significant should be listed in the Register.

For all of these reasons, the designation would be on firmer footing if it were amended to include only the Main House.

## BACKGROUND

The Report includes a full description and history of the property. For that reason, we present only a brief summary of the property, nomination, and designation here.

### **I. The Property And The Sisters.**

In the Nineteenth Century, the property was developed as a country estate, featuring a mansion house (the “Main House”) and extensive pleasure grounds—*i.e.*, a large lawn. Over the years, many additions have been made to the Main House. Report at 11-17. Many of these additions were made by the Sisters to accommodate their religious practices, including a dormitory and a chapel. Report at 16-17. The additions to the Main House have transformed it into a sort of compound with a courtyard to serve the Sisters needs and religious practices.

Several auxiliary buildings have also been constructed over the years. However, all but one of them are not visible from the public right of way. Report at 41-42.

Notably, the pleasure grounds and landscape have been almost entirely altered from what the Baumann Plan shows. The following is a list of the features in that plan that no longer exist or have been heavily altered:

1. Primary entrance;
2. Primary entrance drive;
3. Entrance walkway and fountain;
4. Porte cochere;
5. Porch;
6. Drying yard;
7. Flower garden;
8. Garden buildings A & B;
9. Vegetable gardens and associated walkways;
10. Well;
11. An unidentified site feature;
12. Viewshed from main house/porch; and
13. Service drive.

Report at 3-4.

Today, the property is a convent for the Sisters, who are cloistered nuns.<sup>2</sup> In 1898, the Sisters moved from Mobile, Alabama to Mexico. <https://www.visitationnuns.org/VisitationNuns-OurHistory.php>. In 1926, the Sisters, which now included many Mexicans, were forced to flee to the United States. *Id.* Eventually, Cardinal Dougherty secured the current location for the Sisters, which was next to his residence. *Id.* The Sisters have used the property to carry out their religious activities ever since. They have expanded and adapted the property to fit their needs, which is why the chapel bears obvious Mexican influences. According to their website, the Sisters pray “together in choir five times a day, spend an hour and a half daily in mental prayer, do spiritual reading for at least a half hour a day, observe silence except during Recreation which is after dinner and supper; and engage in a variety of work: maintenance of the monastery, gardening, correspondence, art work, computer projects, kitchen and sacristy work, needlework, and crafts.” *Id.*

## **II. The Nomination.**

On April 15, 2020, the Commission received a nomination to list the property in the Register. The nomination checks the box indicating that the property has both historic buildings and is a historic site. But there is no discussion in the nomination of how the property satisfies the Preservation Ordinance’s definition of a site.

The nomination contends the property should be designated under Criteria A, C, D, and J. It lists the period of significance as 1865-1940. The nomination devotes considerable attention

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<sup>2</sup> Generally, cloistered nuns “do not interact with the outside world except by necessity.” *Personal Sacrifices for Faith: Cloistered Nuns Sacrifice Worldly Pleasures for Austerity and Self-Denial*, ABCNews (May 11, 2007) available at <https://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=3160621&page=1>. “Cloistered nuns believe that their vocation is to witness the primacy of prayer in the Church, to serve as a reminder of the contemplative dimension in all lives, and to intervene for others before God.” *The Cloistered Life*, New York Times Magazine (July 10, 1983) available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/10/magazine/the-cloistered-life.html>.

to the landscaping of the property, which the nomination contends is significant in its own right. It also catalogues the various features of the property—both its buildings and other structures (like stone walls and footpaths)—as significant, contributing, or non-contributing. Nomination at 6 & 25.

### **III. The Designation.**

Importantly, consideration of the nomination occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited the Sisters ability to comment on the nomination and limited the Commission staff's ability to visit the property to evaluate it.

On October 21, 2020, the Committee on Historic Designation decided that the nomination did not go far enough. The members felt that by stopping the period of significance at 1940, the nomination failed to account for the recent history of the Sisters' ownership of the property. The Committee wanted to ensure that the Chapel, which reflects the Sisters' Mexican influences, was preserved too. So it recommended the period of significance be extended to 1965.

On November 13, 2020, the Commission considered the nomination. There was no public comment other than from the authors of the nomination. And the Commissioners did not discuss the merits of the nomination in any detail. Commissioner Cooperman explained the Committee's recommendation, and the Commission adopted it.

## DISCUSSION

### **I. Only The Main Building Should Be Listed In the Register.**

The Sisters and the University acknowledge that the Main House meets the Criteria for listing in the Register for all of the reasons outlined in the nomination. The nomination is impressive in its research and analysis of the Main House.

But, based on incomplete information gathered without authorization, the nomination invited the Commission to designate that the entirety of the landscape and many of the outbuildings. The Commission accepted this invitation based on faulty this information. It is simply not true that the “historic landscape is almost entirely intact.” Nomination at 8. As detailed in the Report, the landscape has been substantially altered so that it no longer retains its integrity. What’s more, most of the outbuildings are not visible from the public right of way. Many of the photographs in the nomination are taken from a vantage point that could not have been accessed by the public--*i.e.*, the photographer must have been trespassing. So the Commission appears to have mistakenly believed those buildings were within its jurisdiction.

#### **A. Only The Main House, Some Of The Lawn, And The Cottage Are Visible From The Public Right Of Way.**

By practice, the Commission has long limited its jurisdiction to what is visible from the public right of way. Though not codified, this practice is well-supported by the Preservation Ordinance, the case law, and the Commission’s Rules and Regulations.<sup>3</sup> Here, the nomination

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<sup>3</sup> The first purpose of the Preservation Ordinance is to “[p]reserve buildings, structures, sites, and objects that are important to the education, culture, traditions, and economic values of the City.” Phila. Code § 14-1001(1). The Commission’s practice of limiting its jurisdiction to what the public can see serves this purpose. The public cannot be educated or edified by things it cannot see or experience. So the Commission’s power to regulate areas of a building not open to the public is appropriately limited.

Along the same lines, the Supreme Court has ruled that the Commission’s power to designate was limited to the exterior of buildings. *United Artists’ Theater Circuit v. City of*



included photographs that made it appear the public could see all of the buildings on the property. But that is not the case.

Only the Main House, parts of the lawn, and the 1921 Cottage along Overbrook Avenue are visible from the public rights of way on Overbrook Avenue, 59<sup>th</sup> Street, and City Avenue.

Indeed, there are only two entrances to the property: (1) the main driveway off of City Avenue, and (2) a small driveway off Overbrook Avenue. And the driveway off Overbrook Avenue is explicitly labeled as private, as seen here:<sup>4</sup>

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*Philadelphia*, 635 A.2d 612, 622 (Pa. 1993) (“The plain meaning of this ordinance is that the interior must be maintained physically (and not aesthetically) for the express purpose of supporting the exterior of the building. However, the Commission exceeded that authority by designating the interior of the Boyd Theater. There is no ‘clear and unmistakable’ authority to designate the interior of a building.”). True, the Preservation Ordinance has since been amended to allow designation of *public* interior portions of buildings. But even that amendment underscores that the Commission’s jurisdiction is limited by what the public can see and access.

The Commission’s Rules and Regulations also recognize that its jurisdiction is limited by what the public can see. Commission Regulations § 6.10.6-7 (permitting simple staff review of alterations to exterior and interior portions of a designated building if “the alterations are not visible to the public”).

<sup>4</sup> Nomination at 13 (red circles added).



Despite the property being clearly labeled as private, the nomination includes photographs that could only have been taken from somewhere on the property. The following are a few examples:<sup>5</sup>



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<sup>5</sup> The following photographs are from pages 35-37 of the nomination. There are other photographs that also appear to have been taken on the property without the Sisters' consent, meaning the photographer was trespassing. See nomination at 26-28, 30-32, & 34.



All of these photographs are attributed to Oscar Beisert in 2019. To our knowledge, Mr. Beisert was never given express permission to visit the property—let alone to take photographs for the purpose of preparing a nomination. In other words, Mr. Beisert was trespassing when he took these photographs. And their use has not been authorized by the Sisters.

The inclusion of these photographs apparently led the Commission to believe that these buildings are visible from the public right of way. But they are not. The public has no ability to access or learn from these buildings. With this new information, the Sisters and the University ask that the Commission follow its practice of refusing to designate buildings, structures, sites, or objects that are not visible to the public.

## **B. The Landscape Is Not Intact.**

While some of the landscape of the property is visible from the public right of way, almost nothing from the Baumann Plan remains. The Report goes into great detail about the alterations to the landscape, including information that was not available to the Commission at the time of designation. Report at 28-39. The upshot is that the landscape does not retain its integrity, and it should not have been designated.

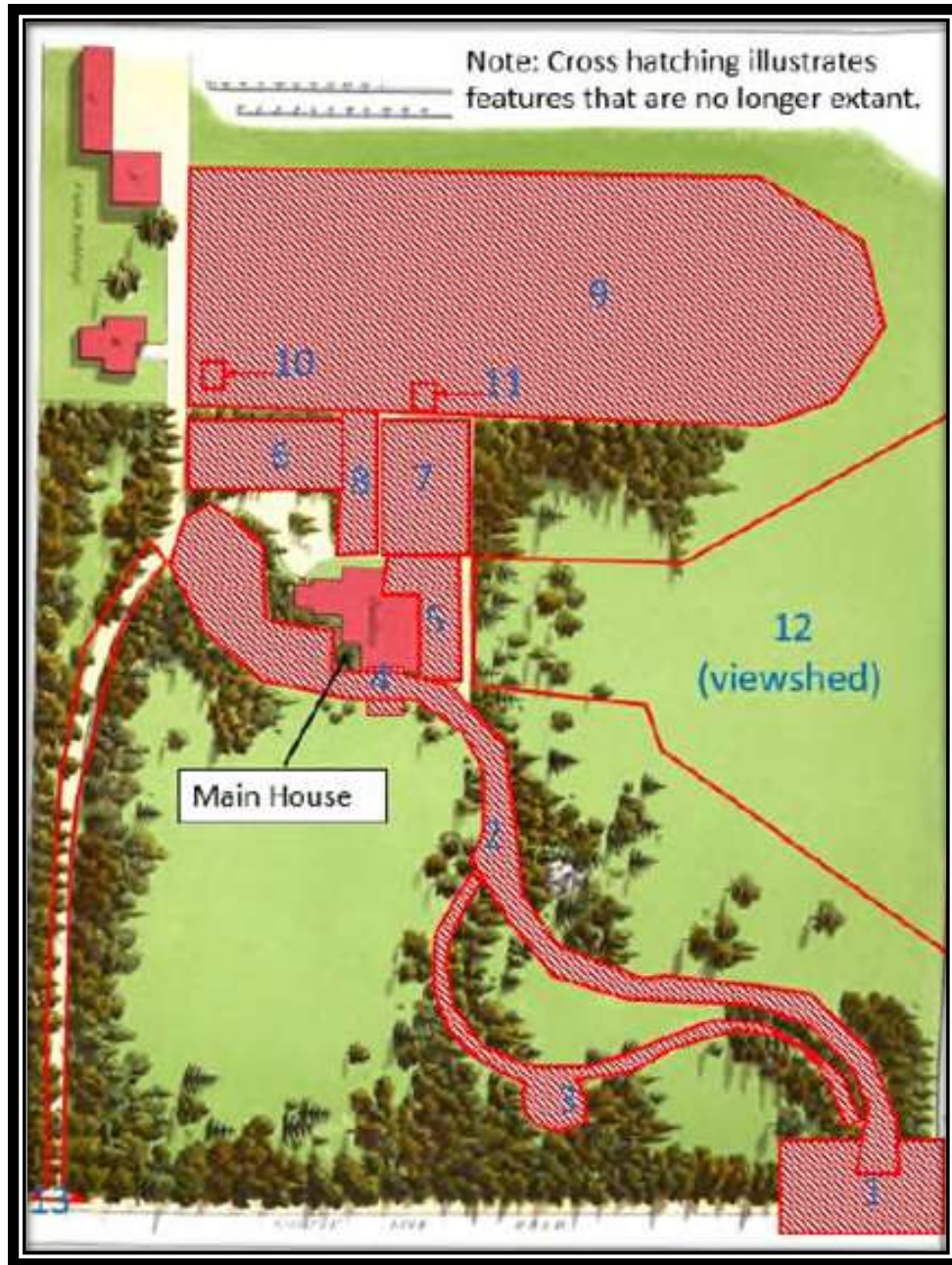
The nomination relies almost exclusively on the Baumann Plan as evidence of what the landscaping of the property looked like when the Main House was constructed. See Nomination at 7 (“[The Baumann Plan] is a critical element to . . . identifying and preserving historic features and materials[.]”) (citing *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes – Vegetation*, National Parks Service (April 2020)).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Commissioner Cooperman stated that finding the Baumann Plan was “an extremely rare event,” calling it as “rare as hen’s teeth.” 10/21/2020 Committee on Historic Designation Meeting Video at 56:32; 11/13/2020 Commission Meeting Video at 1:25:11.

The Baumann Plan is an extraordinary document that was found thanks to exemplary research. But, in and of itself, it is not a basis to designate the landscape. In order to be designated, the structures comprising the landscape must retain their integrity. They do not. According to the nomination, a comparison between the Baumann Plan and current aerial imagery shows that the “historic landscape is almost entirely intact.” Nomination at 8. But that

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<sup>6</sup> The National Park’s *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes – Vegetation* have no relevance to the Commission’s consideration of nomination. True, the Commission’s Regulations instruct the Commission to “be guided in their evaluations [of permit applications] by the most recent edition of *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.” Commission Regulation § 6.9.a.6. But that section governs permit application review and does not mention the guidelines for landscapes.

is simply incorrect. As the Report explains in great detail, the landscape has changed significantly from what the Baumann Plan shows. Report at 28-39. Based on this new information about the changes to the property (summarized in the below graphic), the Sisters and the University request that the designation be amended so that only those features of the Bauman plan that remain intact are designated.



### **C. The Other Buildings Are Not Significant.**

The only other building that is visible from the public right of way is the cottage along Overbrook Avenue. Both the nomination and the designation classify the cottage as a contributing resource. As discussed in Section III below, that classification is inappropriate because the property is not in a district. Even so, it reflects the Commission's determination that the cottage is not significant. So it is not eligible for individual listing in the Register. *See* Commission Regulations § 2.19 (defining a significant building as one "that warrants individual listing on the [Register.]"); *see also* Commission Regulations § 5.7.c.6 ("A contributing building, structure, site, or object, *while perhaps not eligible for individual listing*, reflects the character of the district[.]") (emphasis added).

Even if the Commission had jurisdiction over the other buildings that are not visible from the public right of way, none of them merits individual designation. As detailed fully in the Report, the nomination makes numerous mistakes concerning those buildings. For instance, it claims the Garden Building B dates to circa 1865-1898. But that building is constructed with CMU block, a material that did not exist at that time. Report at 42-43. Given the inaccuracies of the nomination, the Sisters and the University request that the designation be amended to include only the Main House.

### **II. The Landscape Is Not A Site.**

By designating all of the landscaping, the Commission brought the entire property under its full jurisdiction. The designation amounts to an open space preservation easement, preventing the property owner from any future development without Commission review and approval. But the Commission is not empowered to impose such a restriction. It may designate only buildings, structures, sites, or objects. A lawn or landscape design is none of those.

To avoid this issue, the nomination contends that the property is a site. Apparently, the Commission seized on this notion as a hook for its jurisdiction. Indeed, at the Committee on Historic Designation meeting, Commissioner Cooperman stated that “this landscape is a site.” 10/21/2020 Committee on Historic Designation Video at 1:00:02.

But the landscape does not meet the definition of a site. A site is the “location of a significant event, a prehistoric occupation or activity, or building or structure, whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself maintains historical, cultural, or archeological value, *regardless of the value of any existing structure.* Phila. Code § 14-203(298) (emphasis added). In other words, a site is a location where some significant historical event occurred that should be preserved, regardless of whether the structures on the site tell the story of that event. Examples include battle fields or locations important to the history of the country or Commonwealth that have since been demolished or altered, like Penn Treaty Park.

The property is not like those sites; its significance depends on the existence of buildings (like the Main House) and structures (like the primary entrance and fountain), all of which have been removed. The Commission was explicit that what makes the landscape significant is that the design shown in the Baumann Plan is “still very much intact.” 11/13/2020 Commission Meeting video at 1:25:29 (comments of Commissioner Cooperman). Absent the structures shown in the Baumann Plan, which are now gone, the landscape does not (and cannot) “maintain[] historical, cultural, or archeological value.” Phila. Code § 14-203(298). Without these features, the landscape is merely a large lawn. It cannot be designated.

The Commission has no authority under the Preservation Ordinance to designate open space. And the property does not meet the definition of a site. So the designation should be amended to reflect that it is a designation of a building—the Main House.

### **III. The Property Was Not Designated As A District, But The Nomination Treats It As One.**

By designating some property features as contributing, the Commission brought those features under its jurisdiction, even though it implicitly determined that they did not meet the Criteria for Designation. The designation could be improved significantly by making clear that only those features the Commission determined are significant are listed in the Register.

Listing some features as contributing simply makes no sense in the context of an individual designation. A contributing resource is a “building, structure, site, or object *within a historic district that reflects the historical or architectural character of the district [.]*”. *Id.* § 14-203(78) (emphasis added). On the face of the Preservation Ordinance, it is not possible to have a contributing resource outside a district.

What’s more, the Commission may only designate those buildings, structures, sites, or objects that satisfy the criteria for designation. Phila. Code § 14-1004(1). And, by definition, a contributing resource does not necessarily satisfy the criteria. *See* Commission Regulations § 5.7.c.6 (“A contributing building, structure, site, or object, *while perhaps not eligible for individual listing, reflects the character of the district[.]*”) (emphasis added).

In sum, the Commission lacked authority to designate any feature based solely on a finding that it contributes to a non-existent district.



**CONCLUSION**

Given the new information contained in the Report, the Sisters and the University respectfully request that the designation be amended to list only the main house in the Register.

**BALLARD SPAHR LLP**

By: /s/Matthew N. McClure  
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Nathanael Farris (ID: 323059)  
*Attorneys for Sisters of the Visitation and  
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# Applicant Expert Report

**The Sisters of the Visitation – A Cloistered Community**

**5848 City Ave., Philadelphia, PA**



**Prepared by:**

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**December 19, 2022**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Assignment and Conclusions*

Heritage Consulting Group was retained to analyze whether there is a basis to rescind or amend the designation of the Property, located at 5848 City Avenue (Property).

Heritage reviewed the nomination of the Property prepared by the Overbrook Farms Club and the Keeping Society of Philadelphia in April of 2020 (nomination), and evaluated the merits of the designated boundary. In addition to our analysis of the nomination, Heritage conducted a site visit to assess the existing conditions of the Property and completed additional research to identify retention of historic building and Property features. In the course of conducting this work, we discovered new information pertaining to the existing conditions of the Property and the minimal retention of historic features and designs of the Property.

This new information revealed significant changes to the grounds and buildings that was not covered in the nomination and therefore not known to the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) when it designated the Property. These substantial changes impact the overall significance of the Property and warrant amendment of the designation. With this new information, Heritage recommends that the designation be amended to more appropriately convey the significant features of the Property and to redraw the boundary of the designated Property.

Heritage believes that some portion of the Property deserves listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (PRHP). Understanding the changes to the Property, however, it is our professional opinion that the designation should be amended to more appropriately convey the retained significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century country house. The amended nomination should return the period of significance to what was proposed in the original nomination (1865-1940), omitting the building's ownership and the alterations made as a result of the Property's shift from private single-family to religious use. Additionally, the nominated boundary should be revised to only include the features of the main house that are visible from the public right of way (see proposed, updated boundary below in Figure 43).

### *Overview of the Nomination and Designation*

On November 13, 2020, the PHC designated the Property. The designation included the main house, centrally located within the Property, as well as the surrounding grounds and secondary buildings included within the full tax parcel identified as OPA #774123000. The Property is owned by the Sisters of Visitation of Philadelphia, a Roman Catholic order of cloistered nuns. At the time of designation, the Sisters voiced their opposition to the proposed listing.

The Property was nominated as an intact example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate. As defined in the nomination, the Property was also considered significant as an intact example of a designed landscape by well-known landscape gardener Eugene Achilles Baumann. The nomination originally identified a period of significance dating from 1865 to 1940, ending with the Property's purchase by the Sisters of Visitation. During the designation hearing, the PHC expanded the period of significance to end in 1965, which included buildings and building additions completed by the Sisters.

Based on our review, the nomination provides an accurate overview of the history of The Property and its original owners. As an example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate, the nomination

appropriately identifies the key contributing factors of that building type. The nomination, however, does not justify an extended period of significance or any significance tied to the Sisters of Visitation; this is the result of the nomination not being updated following the PHC hearing.

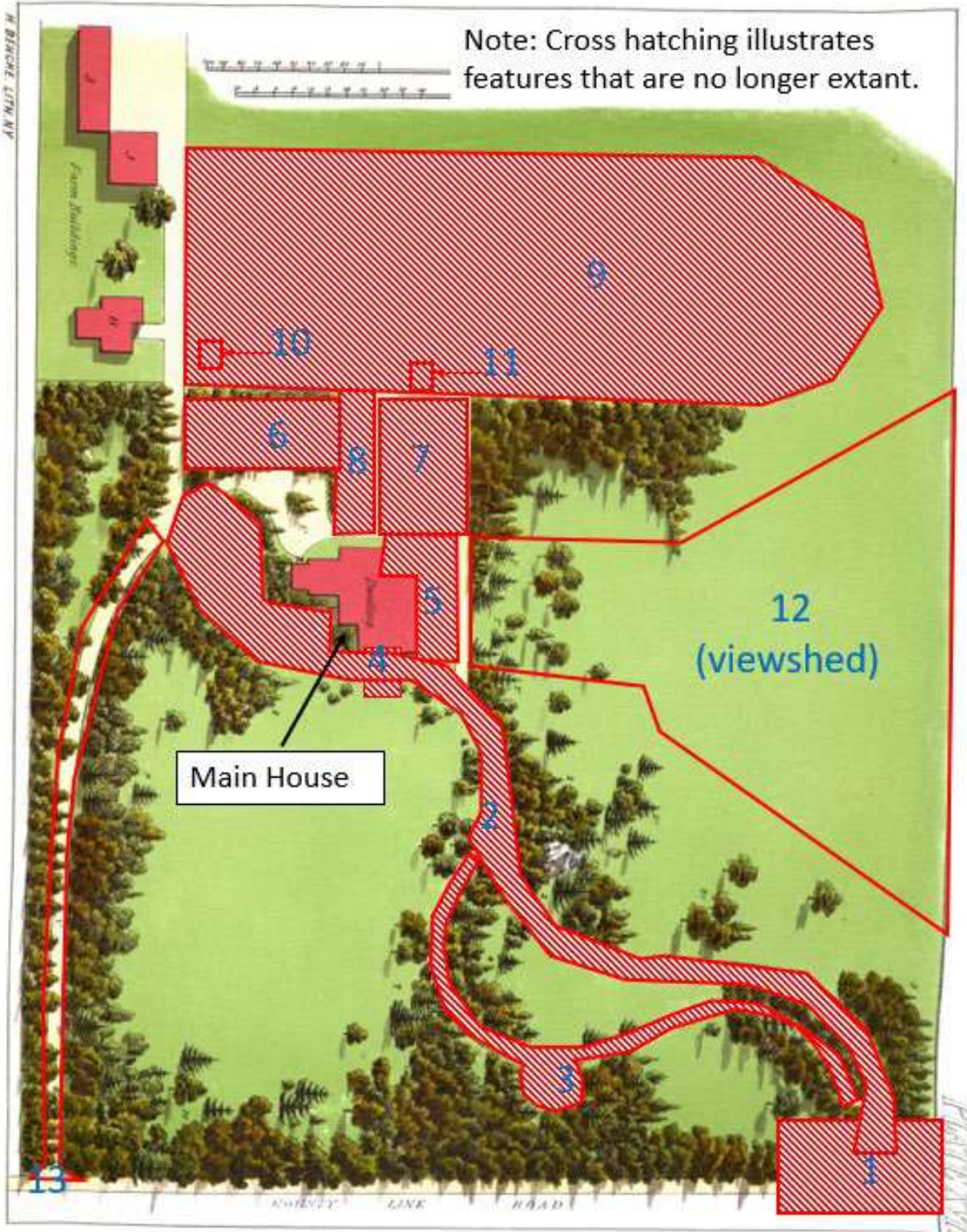
Additionally, the nomination provides a significant overview of Baumann's landscaping plan (Bauman plan) asserting that the original design remains "largely intact." Based on the new information discovered by Heritage, that is not true.

*Summary of Substantial Changes Not Known at Time of Designation.*

As the Property is private, it is understood that the nominator did not have access to the grounds and his understanding of the Property was gained primarily through aerial photographs. Since the primary portion of the property, which includes the historic primary elevation of the main house and the majority of secondary buildings within the site, is fenced in with locked gates, the preparer was unable to view the historic primary elevation. Heritage's site visit, therefore, has resulted in new information that identified the minimal retention of historic landscaped features that presently remain.

The Sisters explained that they have planted new trees and redesigned circulation throughout the Property over the past 82 years they have owned it. Changes in landscaping are evident when comparing current vs historic aerial imagery. Further, the sisters explained that they were not aware of the Baumann Plan and, therefore, have not consulted the plan for any site work undertaken since 1940. As illustrated below, the existing conditions of the Property do not, nor have they since at least 1896, conveyed the Baumann Plan as shown in an 1870 book. Heritage's survey identified numerous areas throughout the Property that are no longer extant and no longer convey their appearance under the Baumann Plan. These changes have significantly and severely diminished the Property's association with a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate. In fact, due to alterations and additions completed by the Sisters of Visitation, the historic "country seat" of some of Philadelphia's elite families retains only minimal integrity and itself features diminished feeling and association with its defined significance.

Changes over time to the Property include removal of key landscaping features, which are identified in the nomination as significant to defining the Property as an example of a "picturesque" landscape. The below graphics illustrate these alterations to the property. The first figure highlights the lost or altered features, considered character-defining to the Baumann Plan. The second figure illustrates the alterations to buildings since Baumann's design. Of particular note are the additions completed at the main building, which have significantly impacted the building's ability to convey its historic significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate.

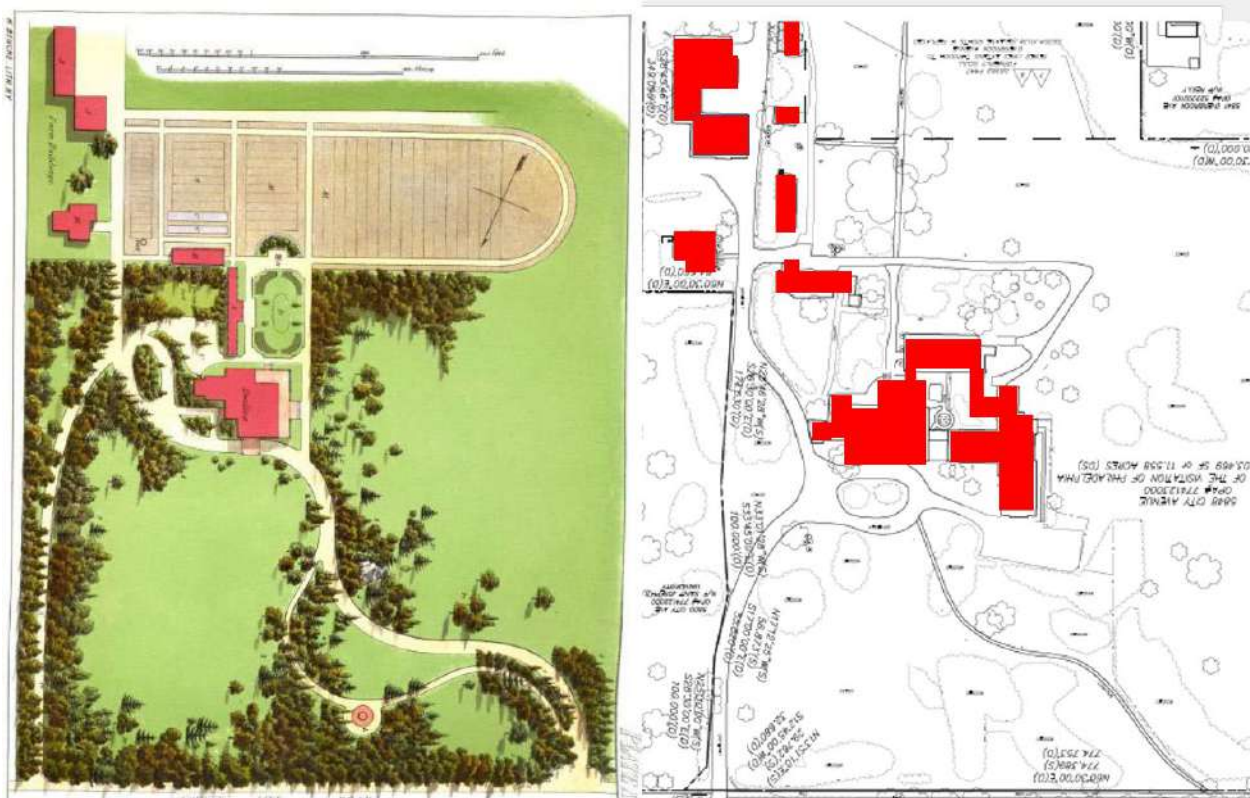


Features of the Baumann Plan that have been altered or are no longer extant:

1. Primary Entrance
2. Primary Entrance Drive
3. Entrance Walkway and Fountain
4. Porte Cochere
5. Porch
6. Drying Yard

7. Flower Garden
8. Garden Buildings A & B
9. Vegetable Gardens and associated walkways
10. Well
11. Unidentified Site Feature
12. Historic viewshed from main house/porch
13. Service Drive

Each of these features, with the exception of the fountain, are incorrectly identified in the nomination as extant or intact.



Like the landscape features, the buildings have also been altered, and in some cases demolished and replaced. Most prominently, the Sisters of Visitation have significantly expanded the main building block, which completely destroyed the primary historic view of the pleasure fields to the east.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

5848 City Avenue is located at the intersection of City Avenue and 59<sup>th</sup> street, extending south to Overbrook Avenue. The Property features an irregular shape that is primarily undeveloped open lawn, with the main house and associated buildings located at the east and southeast ends (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Subject property, showing full extent of tax parcel. Source: Philadelphia Atlas.

### *Public View from outside the Subject Property*

The subject property is privately owned and serves as the home of cloistered Roman Catholic nuns. As such, access to the Property is not permitted to the public and public views of the Property are limited to views from the public rights-of-way on City Avenue, N 59<sup>th</sup> Street, and Overbrook Avenue. Trees are situated along the perimeter at each of the three streets, limiting the public view within the Property. Despite the trees, the Property's main lawn segments at the north and northwest portions of the Property are visible. These areas simply consist of lawn space interspersed with trees. Views of the main house are visible from City Avenue. The primary Property feature from public viewsheds is the stone curbing and wall along City Avenue and the northern portion of N 59<sup>th</sup> Street. The primary entrance drive consists of an asphalt paved driveway, at the north end of the Property, though it is not historic or original. Directly east of the driveway is a modern chain link fence separating the subject property from the adjacent parcel.





**Figure 2:** September 2022 photograph showing the present-day, but not historic, primary vehicular entrance. View looking south from City Avenue. Also visible is the stone wall that separates the subject property from City Avenue and N 59<sup>th</sup> Street.

At center of the north portion of the Property is a concrete paved pathway. The pathway is blocked from public access via a modern chain link fence.



**Figure 3:** September 2022 photograph showing concrete path. View looking southeast from City Avenue. *Beautifying Country Homes: A Handbook of Landscape Gardening* and the PRHP nomination identify this pathway as the location of the historic primary carriage entrance to the Property. No additional break in the lawn was identified beyond this simple concrete path. The extant path is modern and has no relationship to the historic entrance drive.

### *Private View from within the Subject Property*

From within the Property, the views historically associated with the Property's use as a country estate are largely non-existent. At the north, west, and southwest ends of the Property open lawns remain extant. Views of the "pleasure grounds," however, have been significantly and negatively impacted by later construction completed by the current owners in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As shown in Figure 4 below, views of the open, expansive lawn to the west of the main house are no longer possible from the location of the historic porch. Rather, modern plantings and modern construction, directly block the primary historic view from the main house.



**Figure 4:** September 2022 photograph showing current view from the main house looking west at historic “pleasure grounds.” As evidenced in this photograph, the historic view of the pleasure grounds from the main porch no longer remains. This would have been the central character-defining of the 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate. The historic view from the front porch of the pleasure grounds no longer remains.

To the south of the main house, additional areas of lawn exist where the Baumann Plan identifies flower gardens, vegetable gardens, a drying yard, and other amenities. None of these features remain extant, and the current condition of the south end of the Property consists purely of lawn space interspersed with trees and concrete paved pathways. Figures 5 and 6 below show the current condition of what the Baumann Plan identifies as the flower garden and vegetable gardens, respectively.



**Figure 5:** September 2022 photograph showing current view of what was historically the flower garden. As illustrated in the Baumann Plan, the flower garden incorporated shrubbery resulting in an oval shape. Today, the space consists solely of open, non-landscaped lawn. There is no remaining evidence of the historic flower garden.



**Figure 6:** September 2022 photograph showing current view of what was historically the vegetable gardens. Today, the space consists solely of open, un-landscaped lawn. There is no remaining evidence of the historic vegetable gardens.

Over time the main house was significantly added to by the Sisters of Visitation. These additions have further diminished the Property’s character-defining features. For example, at the east end of the main house, the Property currently features an asphalt paved driveway, separating the house’s “arcade addition” from lawn areas. As shown in Figure 7 below, the current configuration of the Property no longer conveys the circular drives at that end of the building.



**Figure 7:** September 2022 photograph showing the current driveway configuration at the east end of the main house. No circular drives remain at this section of the Property.

### *Buildings within the Subject Property*

The nomination identifies eight buildings within the subject property, including:

1. The Mansion House, inclusive of the main block, arcade addition, porch addition, east addition, south addition, chapel addition, and dormitory.
2. The Gardener’s Cottage
3. The Carriage House & Stable
4. The Cherry Cottage
5. Garden Building A and B
6. Ancillary Building
7. Garage/Storage Building
8. Cottage



Figure 42. Top: Looking southeast at the subject property in context. Figure 43. Bottom: Looking southeast at the more specific context. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

Figure 8: Aerial image showing building inventory. Note, numbers 9 and 10 indicate Property features not buildings. Source: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia, *The Chestnuts aka Leighton Place*, Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Winter 2020.

Mansion House

The mansion house is the primary resource on the subject property and was constructed over seven building campaigns, two of which were constructed after the Sisters of Visitation purchased the Property. The main block consists of a 2½ story stone building that features an asphalt shingle roof supported by bracketed eaves.



Figure 9: September 2022 photograph showing the main block of the mansion house, which is the oldest portion of the building. View looking southeast.

The arcade addition is located to the east of the main block and is named for its arcaded first floor level. The individual arched openings have been infilled. A shed roof corrugated metal storage shed is located at the south end of the addition.



**Figure 10:** September 2022 photograph showing the arcade addition of the mansion house, located to the south of the main block. View looking south.

The porch addition is located to the west of the main block. The PRHP nomination ascribes a date of construction to c. 1900-1910. Although the porch addition was likely originally constructed at that time, later alterations included the installation of windows and the raised flat roof segment. Infilled openings feature vinyl siding and aluminum-framed windows. As a result of the alterations to the addition, it no longer conveys its purported period of construction and instead reads as a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century addition.



**Figure 11:** September 2022 photograph showing the porch addition of the mansion house. The nomination dates this building segment to c. 1900-1910. Later alterations to the porch, however, have significantly diminished its ability to convey its date/period of construction and today reads as a mid-century addition. The historic porch, which was a character-defining feature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate, no longer exists. View looking west.



The east addition is situated at center of the mansion house, surrounded by all other building sections. The two-story rectangular-shaped addition is clad in a stucco exterior.



**Figure 12:** September 2022 photograph showing the east addition, which is situated at center of the mansion house. View looking east.

The south addition is located to the south of the arcade addition. The two-story rectangular-shaped addition features a flat roof with a stone clad first floor level and a stick-style second floor level with painted stucco.



**Figure 13:** September 2022 photograph showing the south addition, which is located to the south of the arcade addition. View looking northwest.

The chapel addition is a visual intrusion when compared with the remainder of the mansion house, reading more as an independent building. The one-story painted stucco building features a gabled roof and arched stained glass windows accurately representing a Roman Catholic chapel.



**Figure 14:** September 2022 photograph showing the chapel addition to the mansion house. The chapel addition is a visual intrusion when compared with the remainder of the main house. The addition eliminated the historic bucolic viewshed from the main house. View looking southeast.

The dormitory addition was the final building section of the mansion house. The two-story addition consists of a brick exterior designed in the Modern Movement of architecture. As such, and like the chapel addition, the dormitory is a visual intrusion when compared with the remainder of the mansion house. The addition features rectangular-shaped aluminum-framed awning windows.



**Figure 15:** September 2022 photograph showing the dormitory addition to the mansion house. The dormitory addition is a visual intrusion when compared with the remainder of the main house. The addition eliminated the historic bucolic viewshed from the main house. View looking south.

### Gardener's Cottage

The gardener's cottage is a two-story, L-shaped vernacular house with a stone exterior. The building features a gabled roof with asphalt shingles. A later enclosed porch addition was constructed at the open space of the "L". The roof of the addition engulfed a former gabled end that now reads as a dormer. The addition and dormer's gabled end feature vinyl siding. Windows throughout are modern vinyl replacement windows, save for the wood frame windows at the porch addition.



**Figure 16:** September 2022 image showing the gardener's cottage. View looking east.

### Carriage House & Stable

The carriage house and stable is located at the southeast portion of the Property. The carriage house is located at the north, with the connected stable at south. The carriage house is a two-story stone building with gabled asphalt shingles. At the west end of the building the second story features a gabled segment with wood shingle siding. A modern overhead garage door is located at the south elevation of the building



Figure 17: September 2022 photograph showing current conditions of the carriage house. View looking northeast.

The stable consists of an L-shaped one-story stucco building with an asphalt shingle roof. At the south end of the building a wood-framed lean-to extends off the building.



Figure 18: September 2022 photograph showing the existing conditions of the stable. View looking east.

### Cherry Cottage

The cherry cottage is a two-story house featuring a project second story level with gabled roof segments. The first story level is clad in stone, while the second story features painted stucco. The building features asphalt shingles at the roof. At the south end of the building is a later one-bay square-shaped addition that breaks the features a flat roof.



**Figure 19:** September 2022 photograph showing the existing conditions of the cherry cottage. View looking east.



Garden Buildings A and B

Garden building A consists of a single story small brick shed with a hipped roof.



**Figure 20:** September 2022 photograph showing garden building A at left, with the modern garden building B at right.

Garden building B is incorrectly identified in the PRHP nomination as dating to c. 1865-1898. As shown in Figure 21 below, the building dates to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, constructed of CMU block, and features all modern finishes, including windows and doors. The building is a one-story and rectangular-shaped featuring a low-pitched roof. Garden building B is situated in the former location of an earlier greenhouse building, as shown in the Baumann plan.



**Figure 21:** September 2022 photograph showing the modern garden building B. Garden building B was incorrectly identified as dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but was, in fact, constructed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is situated in the location of an earlier, since demolished, greenhouse.

### Ancillary Building

The ancillary building is not described in the PRHP nomination, but was determined to be contributing by the PHC when they expanded the period of significance to 1965. The ancillary building is a one-story garage clad in asphalt shingles with a flat roof.



**Figure 22:** September 2022 photograph showing the ancillary building. View looking east.

### Garage/Storage Building

The garage/storage building is a one-story buff brick building with a gabled asphalt shingle roof. At the main elevation, an enclosed painted stucco entrance portico projects off the building.



Figure 23: September 2022 photograph showing the garage/storage building. View looking east.

### Cottage

The cottage is a simple 1½ story Craftsman Style house located at the southernmost portion of the Property. The cottage features a painted stucco exterior with an asphalt shingle roof. At the main elevation, three dormer windows are centrally located at the roof. The dormers are clad in asphalt shingle.



**Figure 24:** August 2021 image, showing the cottage at the south end of the subject property. View looking north from Overbrook Ave.

## ANALYSIS OF PRHP NOMINATION

As explained below, the Property has been heavily altered since the Property was laid out in the 1860s. Historic maps and aerial images, as well as the current conditions, effectively illustrate that the Baumann plan is largely non-existent, counter to what was described in the 2020 PRHP nomination. As the Property has been so heavily altered, particularly during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century period, there is minimal association with its defined significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate. Rather, the Property reads today as un-landscaped and undeveloped lawn space more typical of a modern suburban neighborhood.

As a threshold matter, the nomination and the Commission classified the various features of the Property as significant, contributing, or non-contributing. The Commission's Rules and Regulations only permit such classifications in connection with a district nomination. PHC Rules & Regulations § 5.7.c.6. This conclusion is reinforced by the definition of a contributing building under the Preservation Ordinance. *See* Phila. Code § 14-201(78) ("As used in Chapter 14-1000 (Historic Preservation): A building, structure, site, or object *within a district* that reflects the historical or architectural character of the *district*[.]"). The correct inquiry, based on the current designation of the Property, is whether the given building or object independently satisfies the Criteria for Designation. Phila. Code § 14-1003(2)(a). Accordingly, our below analysis and accompanying recommendations evaluate whether the building, structure, or object at issue merits designation on its own, which is what is required under the Preservation Ordinance and the Commission's Rules and Regulations.

The Property was nominated for listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in April of 2020. The nomination asserted that the Property is significant under Criteria A, D, E, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination states that the Property is significant "as a representative of the development of country place in Philadelphia," as well as "the home of David Scull, Jr... a prominent Quaker merchant and philanthropist; and Charles P. Vaughan... an important industrial and philanthropist." Under Criterion D, the nomination explains that "the subject property represents the picturesque style of landscape architecture and gardening, a theory and practice popularized in the American context by Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), the distinguished American landscape gardener and tastemaker, and his disciples." Under Criterion E, the nomination ascribes significance for the Property's landscape design, stating "With a high degree of physical integrity, the subject property is a documented design of Eugene Achilles Baumann... a significant Alsatian-American botanist, landscape gardener, and nurseryman." In addition to the landscaping, the nomination attributes significance under Criterion E as the buildings within the Property were designed by Addison Hutton and William Lightfoot Price, both of whom were well-known architects in Philadelphia.

The original nomination argued a period of significance that extended from 1865, the date in which design and construction of the Property began, to 1940, when the Property shifted in use from a single-family country estate to a Roman Catholic convent. At the time of listing, the Philadelphia Historical Commission expanded the period of the significance's end date to 1965, reclassifying various buildings connected to the Property's convent use as contributing resources. The nomination was not updated to provide additional information or justification pertaining to the building's continued significance as a convent is provided in the nomination.

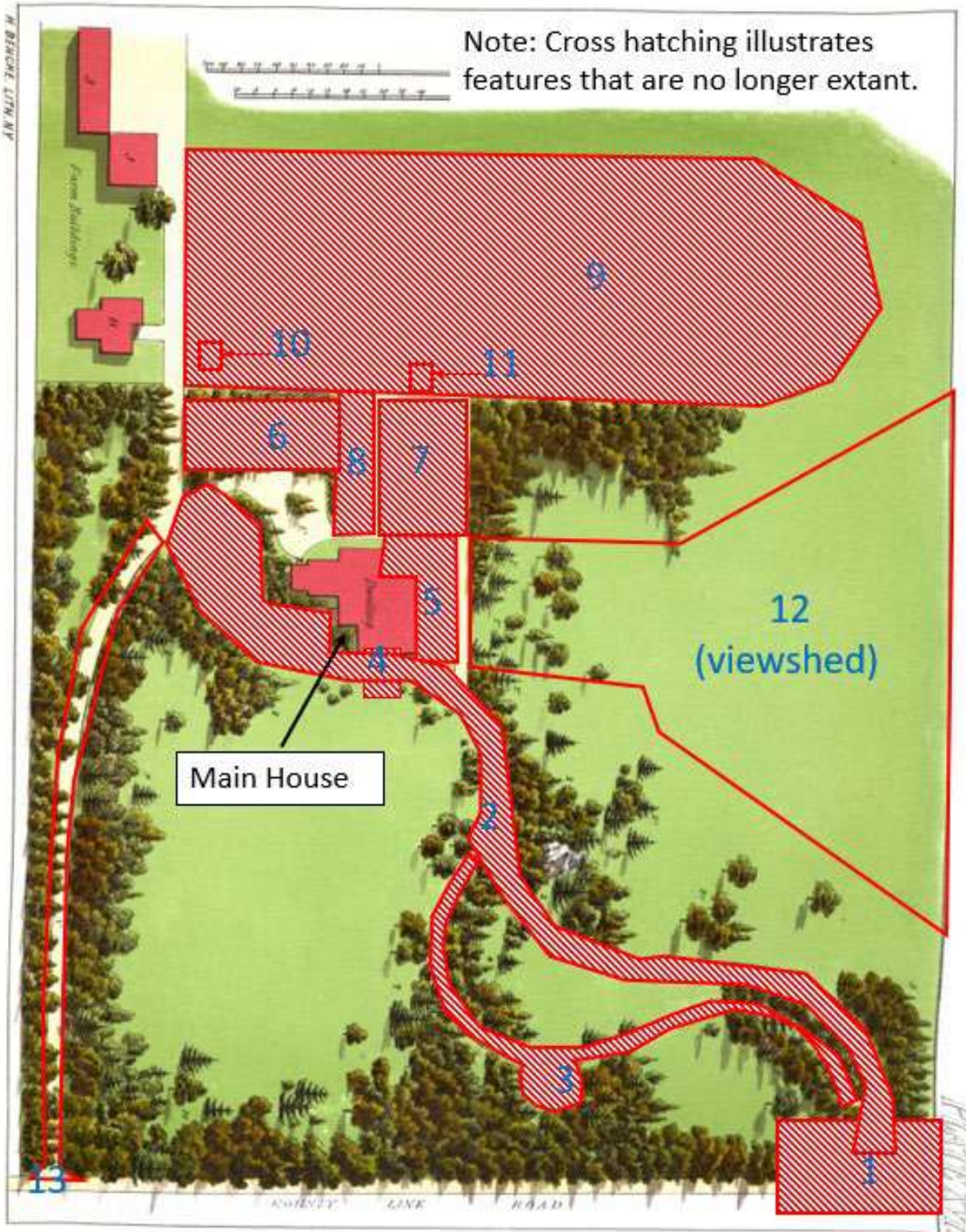
Following our assessment of the nomination, we concur that the main house is deserving of its designation to the PRHP. Though it should be recognized that there are significant alterations that detract from its retention of integrity. The nomination provides an extensive analysis of the

development of the Property and its association with some of Philadelphia's elite families. Its research is thorough and adequately justifies the building's historic significance as a country estate.

The nomination places significant weight on an 1870 rendering of Baumann's landscape and site plan for the estate. Further research and Heritage's recent site visit has yielded new information that illustrates that the existing conditions of the Property do not convey Baumann's plan. Neither the nominator nor the Commission, however, had access to complete information about the current status of the grounds and Property because the Property is the home of cloistered nuns. It is not open to the public. As such, the Commission and nominator had no way of knowing the current condition or of evaluating the extent to which the Bauman plan remains extant. The nomination, therefore, relies heavily on aerial imagery to identify retention of perceived historic features. As such, the nomination incorrectly identifies specific Property features as extant or intact, when, in fact, they are not related to Baumann's design of the Property or simply do not exist.

As illustrated in Figure 25 and further explained below, significant landscape features that have either been significantly altered or are no longer extant include:

1. Primary Entrance
2. Primary Entrance Drive
3. Entrance Walkway and Fountain
4. Porte Cochere
5. Porch
6. Drying Yard
7. Flower Garden
8. Garden Buildings A & B
9. Vegetable Gardens and associated walkways
10. Well
11. Unidentified Site Feature
12. Historic viewshed from main house/porch
13. Service Drive



**Figure 25:** Annotated Baumann Plan, illustrating lost or significantly altered site and landscape features. As a result of these significant changes, the former estate no longer conveys its significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate.

The below analysis compares the existing Property with the Baumann plan, using additional surveys and aerial imagery that were submitted with the original PRHP nomination, as well as photographs taken by Heritage in September 2022.

The nomination identifies seven resources/Property features, including:



1. Pleasure grounds/principal lawn
2. Perimeter trees
3. Driveway & service road
4. Rear gardens
5. Stone curbing and walls
6. Sloping lawn
7. Buildings

*Pleasure Grounds, Perimeter Trees, and Sloping Lawn*

The pleasure grounds are identified in the nomination as the land immediately adjacent the main house to the west and the lawn space to the north of the house.



Figure 7. Looking north at *The Chestnuts* with the historic Pleasure Grounds delineated. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

**Figure 26:** Aerial image showing what is referred to as the pleasure grounds in the PRHP nomination. Source: Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia, *The Chestnuts aka Leighton Place*, Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Winter 2020.

The nomination explains that the pleasure grounds include “landscape features, plantings, vegetation, etc. (i.e., component resources).” The nomination further asserts that “the designed portion of the landscape is largely contiguous with what one might call Pleasure Grounds.”<sup>1</sup>

The Baumann plan, shown below in Figure 27, illustrates that the original design of the pleasure grounds incorporated multiple walkways and carriage driveways set around expansive lawn space.

<sup>1</sup> Oscar Beisert, Keeping Society of Philadelphia, *The Chestnuts aka Leighton Place*, Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Winter 2020, p. 9.



**Figure 27:** Excerpt of the Baumann Plan, showing the portion of Property identified as the pleasure grounds in the PRHP nomination. Source: Jacob Weidenmann, *Beautifying Country Homes: A Handbook of Landscape Gardening* (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.

The present day configuration of the pleasure grounds no longer conveys the original design. Although lawns and pathways remain extant, the lawn space has been diminished by later building additions, an asphalt paved parking lot, and asphalt paved driveways. Property features, as shown in Figure 27 above, including what appears to be a fountain do not exist. Further, the existing walking path in that section of the Property does not conform to the design illustrated in the above figure, see Figures 28 and 29 below.



**Figure 28:** Aerial image showing location and general form of the existing pathway to the north of the main house. Source: Google Maps.



**Figure 29:** September 2022 photographs showing the existing condition and configuration of the walking path at the north end of the Property. As shown, the existing pathway consists of concrete paving leading directly to City Avenue as opposed to winding south and connecting with a larger driveway entrance, as illustrated in the Baumann plan. Landscaped features of the Baumann plan are no longer extant.

The configuration of trees shown in the Baumann plan is not extant. Beyond the walkway, the north lawn segment does not convey a formal layout of trees. Figure 30 below shows the Baumann plan (top) in relation to a 1931 aerial image (center) and a present-day aerial (bottom). As shown, tree groupings do not align with one another. The Baumann plan highlights a significant amount of trees along the perimeter of the Property, while the 1931 aerial shows a very small amount of trees along City Avenue. Since 1931, and under the ownership of the Sisters of Visitation, additional trees were planted at the front lawn. During our recent site visit, the nuns explained that they were entirely unaware of any historic landscape plan and that any planting done under their ownership did not follow any defined plan.



**Figure 30:** Changes to tree groupings at the north lawn segment are shown in the Baumann plan (top), a 1931 aerial image (center), and a present-day aerial image (bottom). Perimeter trees along City Avenue were shown to be densely populated under the Baumann plan. By 1931, perimeter trees were minimal and under the ownership of the Sisters of Visitation, additional trees have been planted that do not conform to the Baumann plan.

The nomination’s identification of the pleasure grounds also includes space to the west of the main house. The nomination explains the importance of this space, stating:

“The house was designed with a certain ‘Gothic, suburban simplicity,’ being ‘profoundly asymmetrical with a gable fronted entrance bay on the right, separated from a polygonal bay on the left by a narrow central connection that contains a stair – indicated by a narrow lancet window.’ While this elevation faced City Avenue and included the primary entrance at the Driveway, a commodious wooden porch at the side summoned a vista of the largest designed and natural expanse of the undulating eighteen-acre property.”<sup>2</sup>

As a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate, the described vistas are among the character-defining features of the building type. Views from the house, specifically from the porch – in and of itself a character-defining element of Victorian era architecture – were therefore integral to the design and use of the Property. Today, this “vista” no longer exists. The subject property was subdivided in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with single-family houses constructed along N 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Overbrook Avenue at the west and southwest portions of the former 18-acre property. Views of that lawn are entirely nonexistent. Figures 31 and 32 below effectively illustrate the current

<sup>2</sup> Beisert, *The Chestnuts aka Leighton Place*, p. 54.

conditions and viewshed of the historic porch and view from it. As shown, the main house no longer features an open porch, as is typical of Victorian era architecture. Figure 28 shows what the nomination refers to as the “porch addition,” which is entirely enclosed with modern building materials and provides view only of a private garden that dates to the Sisters of Visitation’s ownership. Figure 32, also shown in Figure 4 above, shows the present-day view from the historic porch location. As shown, views from the historic location of the porch do not go beyond modern construction, namely the 1958 chapel addition. With the loss of the vista from the main house, the building has suffered significant loss of feeling and association with its historic use as a country estate.



**Figure 31:** September 2022 photograph showing the existing condition of what was historically the main house’s porch.



**Figure 32:** September 2022 photograph showing the current view from the historic location of the main house’s former porch. The current view provides no visual of the lawn at west.

### *Driveway/Service Road*

The PRHP nomination explains that the “path of a serpentine Driveway shown in the Baumann Plan of 1865-1869 is largely intact.”<sup>3</sup> As shown in Figure 33 below, the Baumann plan included two entrance drives along City Avenue. The overview of the plan explains that the primary entrance is at west, stating “The main entrance to the place is at the base of the slope, for the purpose of avoiding the very steep ascent of the public road, just above the main gate.”<sup>4</sup> Due to the location at the base of the more hilly area of the Property, as well as the prominence of the opening, the author is referring to the entrance at the top left of Figure 30. The nomination’s “serpentine” description is perhaps more fitting for this driveway that no longer exists.

As shown in the Baumann plan, the winding, primary driveway passed beneath a port cochere at the main house’s north elevation and connected with the secondary driveway at a circular segment on the east side of the house. None of these elements are extant today. Only the secondary driveway exists.

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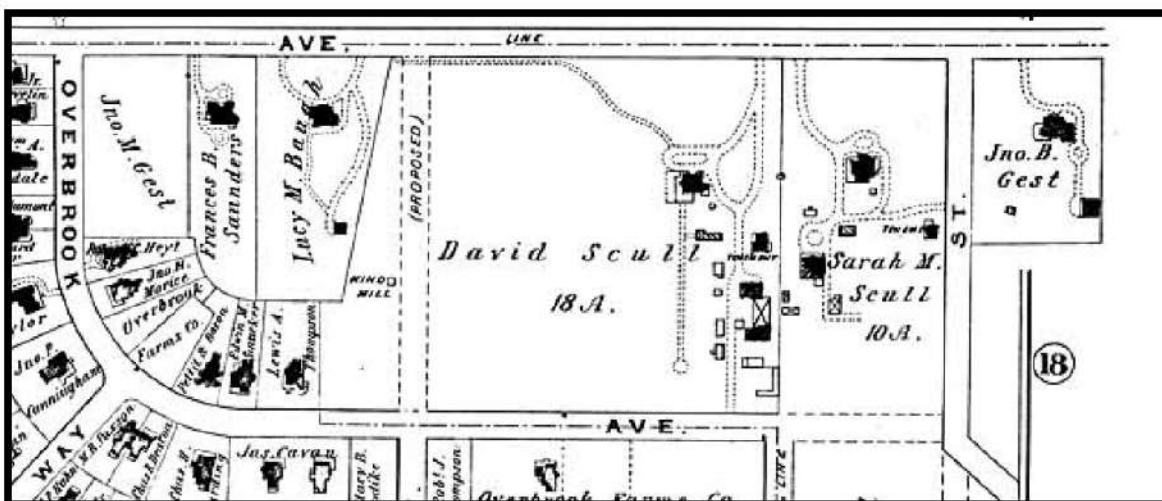
<sup>3</sup> Beisert, *The Chestnuts aka Leighton Place*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob Weidenmann, *Beautifying Country Homes: A Handbook of Landscape Gardening* (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.



**Figure 33:** Excerpt of the Baumann Plan, showing the two entrance driveways connecting the primary house to City Avenue. Only the secondary driveway remains extant today. The driveway's pattern has since been altered adjacent the house.

By 1896, as illustrated in the below Plan of Overbrook Farms (Figure 34), the driveway configuration had been significantly altered and no longer conveyed Baumann's original layout. At that point the primary driveway had been removed, a pedestrian path was located approximate the primary driveway, and the secondary driveway at the east end of the Property terminated in a circle directly in front of the main house's north elevation and included a secondary path that extended to the secondary buildings at the south end of the Property.



**Figure 34:** 1896 Plan of Overbrook Farms showing alterations to the Property's circulation patterns. Source: Famham, Jonathan. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Overbrook Farms, West Philadelphia, Philadelphia. (Philadelphia Historical Commission, August 2019), 18.

**Figure 34:** 1896 Plan of Overbrook Farms showing alterations to the Property's circulation patterns.

Today, the circulation pattern largely mirrors the 1896 configuration, with little to no association with the Baumann plan. As shown in Figure 35 below, the current configuration features additional alterations dating to the mid-century as additional buildings were constructed by the Sisters of Visitation. The aerial image shows Baumann's secondary driveway connecting with the c. 1896 circle in front of the main house. Additional areas of driveway were laid to the west

of the circle, providing parking in front of the chapel addition. To the east of the house, the circular driveway and driveway connecting to the rear of the Property have been removed.



**Figure 35:** Current aerial image showing the existing Property circulation.

### *Rear Gardens*

According to the Baumann plan flower gardens and vegetable gardens were located at the south end of the Property. As shown in Figure 36 below, the large area marked with M at the top of the figure was historically the vegetable gardens, while D at center served as a flower garden set within a designed oval-shaped space. Additional features in this area included a drying yard and a well. None of these features remain extant today.



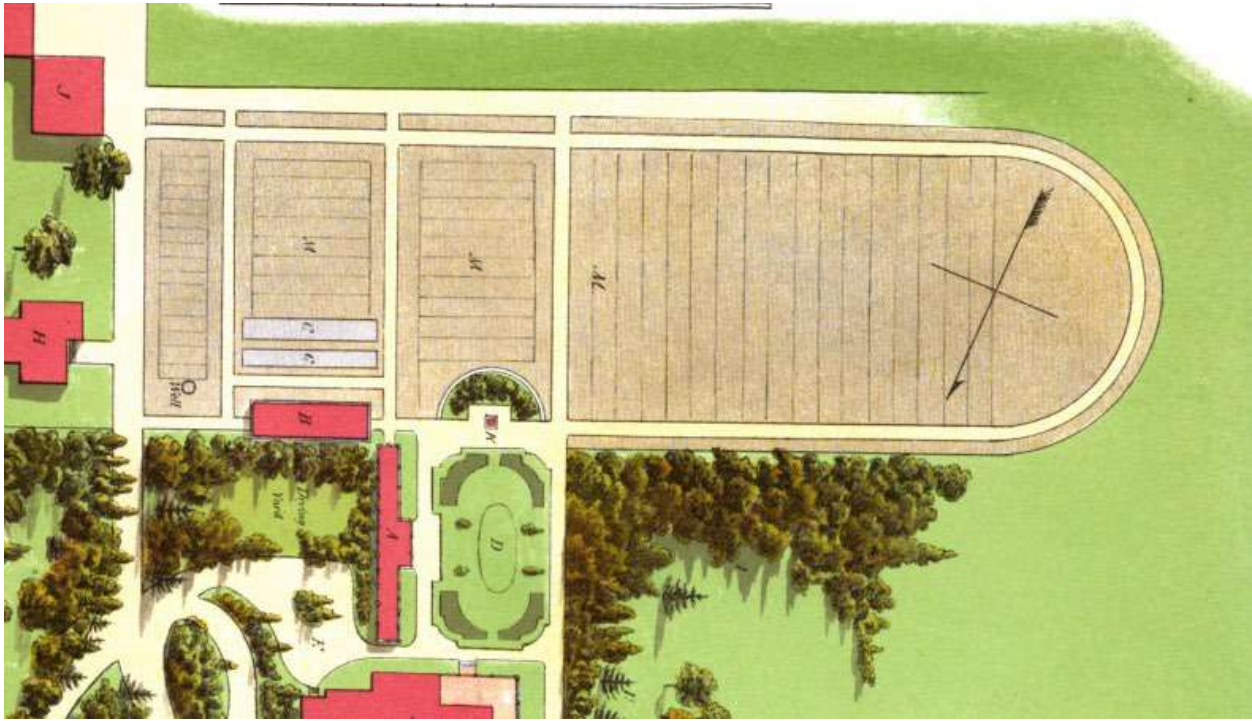


Figure 36: Excerpt of the Baumann Plan showing the rear gardens. None of these features remain extant today.

The nomination includes an historic aerial image from 1931 that illustrates the historic location of some of these features, while also conveying the loss of many others. This image (Figure 37) does not show the designed flower gardens, the drying yard, or well. Additionally, the pathways illustrated in the Baumann plan connecting each of these features appear largely non-existent.



Figure 37: 1931 aerial image showing the former vegetable gardens to the south of the main house. The image also shows that numerous features of the Baumann plan were removed prior to that time, including the flower garden, the drying yard, and connecting paths.

Today, there is no evidence that the rear of the Property was designed in any way. The vegetable gardens now display un-manicured lawns and no evidence of the other features were located (see Figures 5 and 6 above).

The nomination calls out the former well as extant and contributing but provides no evidence of its location. Based on the Baumann plan, the location of the well currently consists of lawn or paved walkways. The well, therefore, is no longer extant.



**Figure 38:** September 2022 photograph showing the former location of the rear garden's well. The PRHP nomination incorrectly identifies the well as extant and contributing. No well was located during our recent survey.

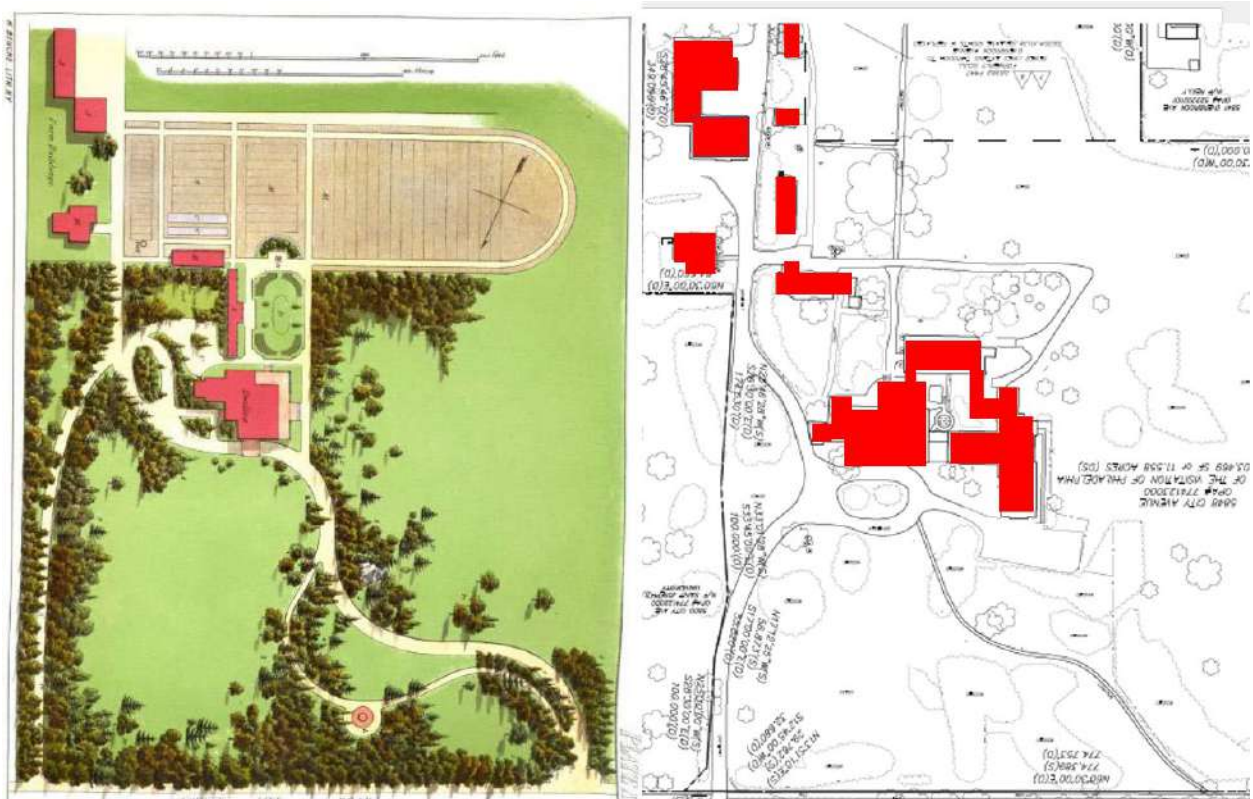
### *Stone Curbing and Walls*

Stone curbing and walls are located at the perimeter of the Property along City Avenue and the northern portion of N 59<sup>th</sup> Street. The stone walls are not identified in the Baumann plan, but are considered historic elements of the Property. The stone walls are among the few Property features visible to the public.

### *Buildings*

The nomination provides a thorough analysis of the developmental history of the buildings within the Property, particularly of the main house and its various additions. Only the Mansion house is appropriately defined as a significant resource and retains sufficient integrity to convey its period of construction. As the period of significance was expanded by the PHC, the nomination does not convey the significance of later building campaigns completed by the Sisters of Visitation, and in any event nearly all of those buildings are not visible from the public right of way. These buildings do not conform to the architectural styles of the remainder of the buildings on the Property, nor do they convey the Property's significance as a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate. In fact, construction of buildings associated with the convent negatively impact

the main house's ability to convey its history as a country estate. As shown in Figure 39 below, the present-day building configuration illustrates a marked shift away from the original layout and design of the Property and buildings by Baumann, Hutton, and Price.



**Figure 39:** Comparison of the Baumann Plan (left) and a current site plan (right), illustrating the changes in both buildings and Property that have occurred since the completion of the Baumann plan in the 1860s. As shown in the annotated map on the right, the building's today do not conform to the original buildings designed by Addison Hutton. Of particular note are the expansions to the main house, especially the chapel and dormitory buildings, which have eliminated the historically important viewshed from the porch that would have been the primary character-defining feature of the estate.

Most of the site is not visible from the public right-of-way. Aside from the main house, the vast majority of secondary buildings are not visible from the public rights-of-way on City Avenue, Overbrook Avenue, and N. 59<sup>th</sup> Street. These buildings are primarily located at the rear, south, of the property and concealed by modern fencing that provides privacy for the cloistered religious community. As shown in Figure 40 below, the view of the property from Overbrook Avenue is limited to a private paved street and the cottage.



**Figure 40:** 2021 image showing view of property from Overbrook Avenue. Views of the property are limited to the private driveway and the cottage (at right). Additional buildings associated with the property are not visible from the public right-of-way.

The following table and annotated aerial image in Figure 41 below provide further context into which buildings within the site are visible from public rights-of-way. Specific to the individual buildings:

- A. Main House and Additions – Visible from City Avenue and N. 59<sup>th</sup> Street
- B. Chapel Addition - Visible from City Avenue and N. 59<sup>th</sup> Street
- C. Dormitory – Not visible
- D. Gardener’s Cottage – Not visible
- E. Carriage House/Stable – Not visible
- F. Cherry Cottage – Not visible
- G. Garden Buildings A & B – Not visible
- H. Ancillary Building – Not visible
- I. Garage/Storage Building – Not visible
- J. Cottage – Visible from Overbrook Avenue



**Figure 41:** Aerial image illustrating individual buildings within the Property. Only buildings A, B, and J are visible from public rights-of-way.

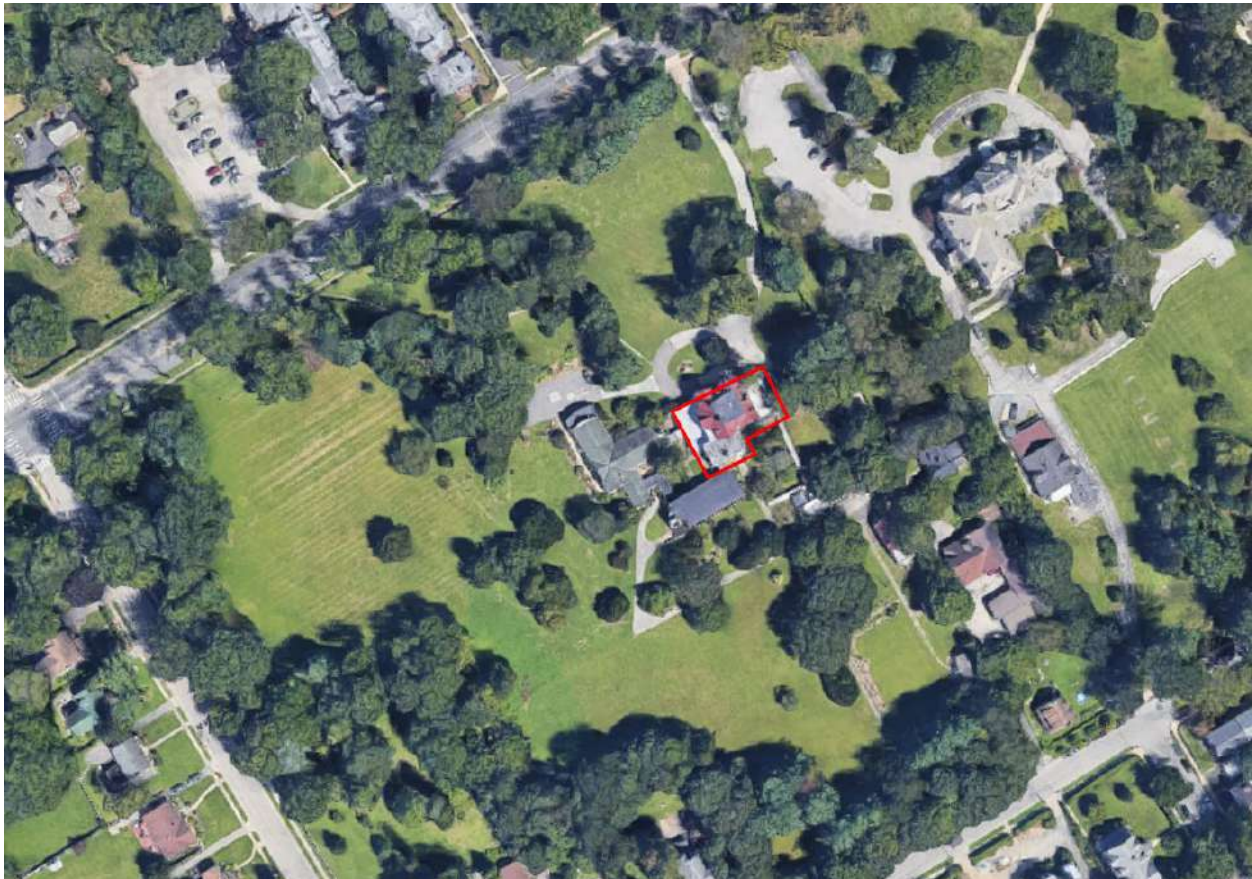
The nomination also incorrectly identifies Garden Building B, which is called out in the nomination as constructed between c. 1865 and 1898. As the nominator was not granted access to the Property, the nomination relies on aerial images to guess the date of construction and retention of historic features. Garden Building B, however, is a CMU block building that dates to the mid-century period.



**Figure 42:** September 2022 photograph showing the modern CMU Block Garden Building B.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the Property no longer conveys Baumann’s original design, it is our opinion that the entire Property should no longer be considered significant and that the designated boundary be limited to the sections of the Property that features the aspects of the Mansion House that are visible from the public right of way (see Figure 43). The Property’s designation as a site should be rescinded. Further, as the alterations made to the Property under the ownership of the Sisters of Visitation have only diminished feeling and association as a 19<sup>th</sup> century country estate, Heritage also recommends that the period of significance be limited to 1865-1940, as was proposed in the original draft nomination.



**Figure 43:** Aerial image showing recommended boundary, which is inclusive of all buildings on the Property.

*Heritage recommends the following revisions to the landscape designations (highlighted text indicates Heritage’s recommended revisions):*

<b>Feature/Building/Element</b>	<b>Current Contributing Status</b>	<b>Heritage Recommendation</b>
Pleasure Grounds	Significant	<b>Not Eligible</b>

The pleasure grounds around the main house have been significantly impacted by the changes to the driveway and walkways and the addition of the dormitories and the chapel, and therefore no longer conform to the Baumann Plan.





The chapel and the dormitory were originally considered non-contributing in the draft PRHP nomination. Heritage concurs with this non-contributing designation since the chapel and dormitory additions were constructed by the Sisters of Visitation for religious purposes in an unsympathetic style and are independent of the historic Baumann, Hutton, and Price designs for the Property.

Gardener’s Cottage (1870-71)	Significant	Not Eligible
Carriage House and Stable (1870-71)	Significant	Not Eligible
Cherry Cottage (1898)	Significant	Not Eligible
Garden Building A (c. 1898) and Garden Building B (c. 1865-1898)	Contributing	Not Eligible

As the nominator did not have access to the site, Garden Building B was incorrectly identified as dating to c. 1865-1898. The building, however, is constructed of CMU block and dates to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As such, it is recommended that Garden Building B be reclassified as Not Significant.

Garden/Storage (c. 1900-10)	Contributing	Not Eligible
Cottage (1921)	Contributing	Not Eligible
Ancillary Building (c. 1940-60)	Contributing	Not Eligible

As the nominator did not have access to the site, the Ancillary Building was not surveyed or identified in the nomination and was classified as contributing following the PHC’s expansion of the period of significance. The ancillary building is a one-story garage clad in asphalt shingles that does not contribute to the defined significance of the Property. As such, it is recommended that Garden Building B be reclassified as Not Significant.

## HERITAGE CONSULTING GROUP

Heritage is a national firm that assists the owners and developers of older and historic buildings in understanding the relative significance of their resources, navigating the regulatory redevelopment processes, and securing financial opportunities from federal, state and local incentives. The firm is staffed by seasoned historic preservation professionals who meet the Professional Qualifications Standards under the category of *Historic Architecture* and *Architectural History* in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines, *Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61*.



# Minute Documenting Designation

## THE MINUTES OF THE 699TH STATED MEETING OF THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

FRIDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2020  
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM  
ROBERT THOMAS, CHAIR

### CALL TO ORDER

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:00:00

Mr. Thomas, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and announced the presence of a quorum. The following Commissioners joined him:

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Comment
Robert Thomas, AIA, Chair	X		
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., Committee on Historic Designation Chair	X		
Mark Dodds (Division of Housing & Community Development)	X		
Kelly Edwards, MUP	X		
Steven Hartner (Department of Public Property)	X		
Labaron Lenard-Palmer (Dept. of Planning & Development)	X		
Josh Lippert (Department of Licenses & Inspections)	X		
John Mattioni, Esq.	X		
Dan McCoubrey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Architectural Committee Chair	X		
Jessica Sánchez, Esq. (City Council President)	X		
Sara Lepori (Commerce Department)	X		
Betty Turner, MA, Vice Chair	X		
Kimberly Washington, Esq.	X		

Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Commissioners, staff, applicants, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

- Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director
- Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III
- Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I
- Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II
- Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department
- Megan Cross Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

Joseph Tarsia  
Lillian Osei-Boateng  
Venise Whitaker  
Jennifer Sharp  
Michael Phillips  
Janet E. Bernstein  
Morris Cooperman  
Devon Beverly  
Thaddeus Squire  
Kristen Pomroy  
Oscar Beisert  
The Templetons  
Rachel Kaminski  
Tom Beck  
Harrison Haas  
Jason Greenspon, Esq, Law Department  
Christine Dejesus  
Charlie Dombrowski  
James P. Gallagher  
Ronn Ash  
Andrew Wade  
Phil & Louise Hurtt  
Erika Henson  
Gene Fiducia  
Kevin McMahan  
Taylor Allen  
Nathan Farris, Esq.  
John Scott  
Diane Richardson  
Bill Ritzler, DVARP  
Paul Steinke  
Ellie Devyatkin  
Steven Peitzman  
Caliph Gamble  
George Earl Thomas  
Janet Bernstein  
Kelly Brennan  
Arthur Stoppe  
Susan Wetherill  
Jordan Martin  
Ke Feng  
Noah Gustkey  
Suzanna Barucco  
Eliot Duhan  
Aly Mifa Solot  
JM Duffin  
Timothy Kerner  
Jeff Wyant  
Andrew Miller

Neil Sklaroff, Esq.  
Theo Aronson  
Steve Beskrone  
John Walker  
Michael Tarsia  
Adam Montalbano  
Randal Baron, public  
Tayyib Smith  
Rep. Jason Dawkins  
AJ Sorensen  
Hal Schirmer  
Rich McKie  
Roger S. Tenant Sr.  
Jay Farrell  
Jack Klotz  
Aaron Cohen  
Caust Draven  
Marc Byers, Motown Records  
Chase Galis  
Gussie O'Neill  
Alex Balloon  
Alexandra Fiorentino-Swinton  
Michele Gaffney  
Mary McGettigan  
Allan Slutsky  
Susan McAnally  
Eva Lew  
Nino V. Tinari, Esq.  
Max Ochester  
Josh Kwedar  
Jenny Corbin  
David Traub  
Robert Gurmankin  
Kathy Dowdell  
Scott Scuderi  
Kristin Aronson  
Marie Butler  
Peter Bloomfield  
Marcia Ruberg  
Eugene Desyatnik  
Mary Dankanis  
David Burkholder, Esq.  
Nancy Pontone  
Carla Robinson  
Barbara Aronson  
Gabriel Gottlieb  
Jennifer Folks  
Tim Herb  
Nicholas Baker, Streets Department  
Sloane Folks

Blane Stoddart  
Heather Brown  
Paul Newlin  
Alexander Esposito  
Sami Jarrah  
Dirk Devlin  
Donna Sticher  
Christopher Strom, Esq.  
Anthony Palimore  
Theresa Stuhlman  
Adam Silverman  
Roger S. Tenant Sr.  
John Vettese  
Evan Solot  
Johnnie Parker  
Bill Nicoletti  
Patrick Grossi  
Keith Cramer  
Anne Devlin

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES, 698TH STATED MEETING, 9 OCTOBER 2020**

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:04:50**

**DISCUSSION:**

- Mr. Thomas asked the Commissioners, staff, and members of the public if they had any additions or corrections to the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Historical Commission, the 698<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting, held 9 October 2020. No corrections were offered.

**ACTION:** Mr. Thomas moved to adopt the minutes of the 698<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Philadelphia Historical Commission, held 9 October 2020. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

**ADDRESS: 5848 CITY AVE**

Name of Resource: The Chestnuts

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia

Nominator: Overbrook Farms Club and Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5848 City Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building and its landscape satisfy Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the property is representative of the development of country estates in Philadelphia. It further elaborates under Criterion A on the significance of several former residents, including David Scull, Jr., a Quaker merchant and philanthropist, and Charles P. Vaughan, an industrialist and philanthropist. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the property's landscape represents the Picturesque style of landscape architecture and gardening. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that Eugène Achilles Baumann, the individual responsible for the property's significant landscape design, stood as an important Alsatian-American botanist, landscape gardener, and nurseryman. The nomination further argues under Criterion E that the property's original buildings are significant as works of prominent architect Addison Hutton and that Cherry Cottage and later alterations to the original buildings are significant as works of prominent architect William Lightfoot Price.

The historic preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to protect sites through the review of building permit applications. If the site is designated, the Historical Commission would enjoy regulatory authority over large-scale alterations to the grounds, but it would not regulate the planting, trimming, or removal of individual bushes and trees or other small-scale lawn and arboreal maintenance work.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J, and that the period of significance extend from 1865 to 1965, and that the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building be considered contributing.

**START TIME OF DISCUSSION IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 01:17:14

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Historical Commission.
- Oscar Beisert and Thaddeus Squire represented the nominator.
- No one represented the property owner at the meeting. However, the owner, Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, submitted a written statement prior to the meeting opposing the designation of the property.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None.



### **HISTORICAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The Historical Commission found that:

- The site was historically owned by prominent Quaker families, and it became home to the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia in the twentieth century, when they came to the area from Mexico.
- The nomination's period of significance extends from 1865 to 1940 and does not include the period of ownership under the Sisters of the Visitation.
- The nomination features a rare original landscape plan to show the intent of the design, which was created by landscape gardener Eugène Achilles Baumann. The general design of the landscape remains intact.

The Historical Commission concluded that:

- While the Quaker context and history of the property is significant and well argued in the nomination, the site's later history that includes the occupancy by the Sisters of the Visitation is equally significant and should be represented in the designation. The history of the site's ownership and its relationship to the surrounding context satisfies Criteria A and J.
- The site represents a designed Picturesque landscape that is rare in Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion D.
- Though schematic, the original landscape plan shows the general location of pathways, open space, and groupings of plantings. While it does not provide a plant inventory, it is significant in showing design intent and was created by significant landscape gardener Eugène Achilles Baumann. The nomination satisfies Criterion E.
- The property's original buildings were designed by prominent architect Addison Hutton, and later buildings, such as Cherry Cottage, and alterations were designed by William Lightfoot Price. The nomination further satisfies Criterion E.
- The period of significance should be extended to 1965 to include the structures erected by the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, including the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building, which should be listed as contributing buildings.

**ACTION:** Ms. Cooperman moved to find the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J, and to define the period of significance from 1865 to 1965, and to classify the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building as contributing. Ms. Turner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

# Minute Documenting Designation

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

21 OCTOBER 2020, 9:30 A.M.  
REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM  
EMILY COOPERMAN, CHAIR

### CALL TO ORDER

START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING: 00:00:00

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. The following Committee members joined her:

Committee Member	Present	Absent	Comment
Emily Cooperman, Ph.D., chair	X		
Suzanna Barucco	X		
Jeff Cohen, Ph.D.	X		
Bruce Laverty	X		
Elizabeth Milroy, Ph.D.	X		
Douglas Mooney	X		

\* Owing to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, all Committee members, staff, and public attendees participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software.

The following staff members were present:

Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director  
Kim Chantry, Historic Preservation Planner III  
Laura DiPasquale, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Shannon Garrison, Historic Preservation Planner I  
Meredith Keller, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Allyson Mehley, Historic Preservation Planner II  
Leonard Reuter, Esq., Law Department  
Megan Schmitt, Historic Preservation Planner II

The following persons attended the online meeting:

John Bang  
Gussie O'Neill, Klehr Harrison  
Nathan Farris, Esq., Ballard Spahr  
Randy Baron  
Ben Leech  
Michael Tarsia  
Aaron Cohen  
Chris Strom, Eckert Seamans  
Michelle Shuman  
Ronn Ash  
Nancy Pontone  
David Traub

Harrison Haas, Esq., Cozen O'Connor  
Patrick Grossi, Preservation Alliance  
Keith Cramer  
David Ivory  
Ilana Dean  
Jason Ford  
Kristi Ford  
Venise Whitaker  
Oscar Beisert  
Jacob Cooper  
John Vettese  
J. M. Duffin  
Scott Scuderi  
Max Ochester  
Nicholas Baker, Streets Department  
Theo Aronson  
Dana Fedeli  
Susan Wetherill  
Jon Makar  
Neil Sklaroff, Esq., Dilworth Paxon  
Greg Bond, Newmark  
Aaron Levinson  
Yue Wu, Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation  
Jake Paine  
Dirk Devlin  
Perry Garvin  
Josh Silver  
Jack McCarthy  
Steven Peitzman  
Stephen Klay  
Arthur Stoppe  
Paul Steinke, Preservation Alliance  
Vickie Feldman  
Thaddeus Squire  
Jeffrey Ogren, Bochetto & Lentz  
Justin Detwiler  
Elizabeth Stegner, University City Historical Society

## **CONTINUANCE REQUESTS**

### **ADDRESS: 1826 CHESTNUT ST**

Name of Resource: Aldine Theatre

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Sam's Place Realty Associates LP

Nominator: Kevin Block, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, [laura.dipasquale@phila.gov](mailto:laura.dipasquale@phila.gov)

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 1826 Chestnut Street as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Aldine Theatre, constructed in 1921, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, E,

<b>ITEM: 210-12 N 12<sup>th</sup> St</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate, A and J</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Mooney</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Milroy</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Lavery	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				

**ADDRESS: 5848 CITY AVE**

Name of Resource: The Chestnuts  
 Proposed Action: Designation  
 Property Owner: Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia  
 Nominator: Overbrook Farms Club and Keeping Society of Philadelphia  
 Staff Contact: Meredith Keller, meredith.keller@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 5848 City Avenue and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the building and its landscape satisfy Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J. Under Criteria A and J, the nomination argues that the property is representative of the development of country estates in Philadelphia. It further elaborates under Criterion A on the significance of several former residents, including David Scull, Jr., a Quaker merchant and philanthropist, and Charles P. Vaughan, an industrialist and philanthropist. Under Criterion D, the nomination contends that the property’s landscape represents the Picturesque style of landscape architecture and gardening. Under Criterion E, the nomination argues that Eugène Achilles Baumann, the individual responsible for the property’s significant landscape design, stood as an important Alsatian-American botanist, landscape gardener, and nurseryman. The nomination further argues under Criterion E that the property’s original buildings are significant as works of prominent architect Addison Hutton and that Cherry Cottage and later alterations to the original buildings are significant as works of prominent architect William Lightfoot Price.

The historic preservation ordinance authorizes the Historical Commission to protect sites through the review of building permit applications. If the site is designated, the Historical Commission would enjoy regulatory authority over large-scale alterations to the grounds, but it would not regulate the planting, trimming, or removal of individual bushes and trees or other small-scale lawn and arboreal maintenance work.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J.

**START TIME IN ZOOM RECORDING:** 00:45:00

**PRESENTERS:**

- Ms. Keller presented the nomination to the Committee on Historic Designation.

- The Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia represented the property owner and submitted their opposition to designation in writing prior to the meeting.
- Oscar Beisert represented the nomination.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- Ms. Milroy commended Mr. Beisert on the extent of his research and the completeness of the nomination, adding that it is rare to find a landscape plan such as the one Mr. Beisert located of Eugène Baumann's design for the property. Ms. Milroy questioned why Mr. Beisert ended the period of significance in 1940, noting that the nomination includes substantial discussion on the Quakers who settled in Overbrook Farms. She argued that there is also an arrival of important Catholic institutions in the area at the same time, specifically St. Charles Borromeo and St. Joseph's University. She elaborated that the Sisters of the Visitation were able to acquire the property at 5848 City Avenue thanks to Cardinal Dougherty, whose residence was next door. She added that the property is an important site related to the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions in suburban Philadelphia. She argued that the period of significance should be extended to include the later Catholic history, which would then include the outbuildings and chapel, as they reflect the order's Mexican heritage.
- Mr. Cohen agreed with Ms. Milroy, adding that the nomination is a remarkable piece of research. He questioned whether he has read a nomination focused so heavily on the landscape, commenting that it raises questions related to the preservation of a landscape more than one hundred years old. He remarked that the footprint of the house in Baumann's plan is quite different than the house as it was built. He then asked that the nomination be proofread to eliminate numerous errors.
- Ms. Milroy stated that the nomination makes no mention of Baumann's involvement with the estate beyond the plan, which she called quite schematic and stylized. She then noted that the staff's comments on the implication of the designation regarding the plantings are important, because the nomination should not contend that the property's plantings are intact. Most significantly, she continued, there are no chestnut trees. She stated that the nomination should make very clear that the bones of the plan may remain in terms of pathways and perimeters, adding that the property is a candidate for an archaeological survey; however, she remarked that one cannot assume that any of the current plantings date from the time of the plan, because there was no tree inventory provided, and none of the trees or plantings are dated. She commented that there is a level of specificity that is lacking, but she contended that it does not detract from the nomination's argument, considering so much of the pathways and perimeter survive from the plan.
- Ms. Cooperman agreed with Ms. Milroy that the character of the design from the Baumann plan survives. She noted the rarity of finding a landscape plan such as Baumann's in this country and called it a remarkable document. She clarified that the plan functions as a design scheme and should not be interpreted as a planting plan for a landscape. The plan, she continued, shows the patterns of open space, the patterns of plantings, and the layout of pathways, all of which remain legible in comparison to the plan as it was published.
- Mr. Laverty stated that he was concerned the nomination would focus solely on the landscape and was relieved to see that the significant structures on the property were placed into the larger context. He added that while the Historical Commission does not regulate flora, that aspect of the property is an essential part of the story of a rural suburban development where the owners were consciously seeking out

professionals from Alsace to offer them the best of the Picturesque. He commented that it is significant for such a site to survive into the twenty-first century. He then agreed with Ms. Milroy's statements regarding the importance of the Catholic period and commended the Sisters of the Visitation for preserving the site and landscape in such a densely populated area for eighty years.

- Ms. Cooperman clarified that while the Historical Commission cannot designate individual trees, it can designate sites. She contended that this property qualifies as a site.
- Ms. Milroy added that her comments were related to the precision of the language in the nomination. She explained that some statements implied that some trees are heritage trees, though there is no documentation to support those claims. She further explained that the Baumann plan shows design but does not prescribe the plantings and should not be interpreted as doing so.
- Ms. Barucco agreed and also clarified that the nomination contends that the landscape remains intact, though she distinguished that the site remains intact.
- Ms. Milroy noted an error in the nomination in which it states that designed Picturesque pleasure grounds rarely survive outside Fairmount Park. She clarified that the majority of Fairmount Park is not designed according to a plan, with the exception of the area around Lemon Hill. She elaborated that Fairmount Park is not a designed park and should not be regarded as such.
- Mr. Cohen argued that such sophisticated landscape designs do not follow Quaker behavior. He suggested that the nomination describe the designed landscape as working with nature rather than purposefully showing off to neighbors.
- Ms. Cooperman asked the Committee to reach a consensus on the period of significance.
  - Ms. Barucco questioned whether the nomination supports a period of significance that extends well into the twentieth century.
  - Ms. Milroy responded that it does not but that she contends that the period of significance should be extended to include the important presence of Catholic institutions in the immediate area, though the nomination focuses its discussion on the Quaker influence. She noted that Cardinal Dougherty purposely moved into the house next door in the 1920s, while St. Charles Borromeo was constructed nearby much earlier, in the 1860s. She stated that the nomination discusses the Quakers at great length; otherwise, the Committee could more easily recommend an extended period of significance, had the nomination provided a more general history.
  - Ms. Cooperman asked the Committee to focus on determining which buildings constructed by the Sisters contribute to the site.
  - Ms. Milroy answered that the chapel is significant. She commented that there is a Mexican chapel in nearby Overbrook that was designed to communicate that many of the nuns came from Mexico.
  - Mr. Cohen agreed that including the chapel would enrich the site's history, adding that the Committee would need to determine whether there is an even later structure that should be included in the period of significance. He then suggested that the period of significance tentatively end at 1960 to allow for the inclusion of the chapel.
  - Other Committee members agreed, given the information they have been provided.
- Mr. Beisert thanked the Committee for their kind comments and constructive criticism, noting that he has not written many nominations focused primarily on

landscape. He agreed with Ms. Cooperman's earlier comments that the bones of the design scheme remain. He stated he reviewed the Cultural Landscape Foundation and National Park Service requirements regarding the survival of plantings and heritage trees and noted that there is acknowledgement that over time plantings die or are replaced and schemes change, but that it would not preclude a later restoration of the garden. He suggested that the landscape plan be used to mitigate any potential future development at the site. He further acknowledged that regulation would not be a plant-by-plant review but that the staff would review any large-scale changes proposed to the site.

- Ms. Cooperman asked whether the Committee should recommend including the dormitory, which has a later construction date than the chapel. She suggested that the period of significance end with the chapel's construction date.
  - Ms. Milroy argued that, as a cloistered order, the dormitory building is very important and speaks to the function of the building. She added that in reading the history of the order, it began as a teaching order but that Cardinal Dougherty announced that they would be a contemplative order upon arrival in Philadelphia. She agreed that the nomination could be updated and revised at a later date. She questioned if that revision could involve changing the period of significance.
  - Mr. Farnham affirmed Ms. Milroy's statement that a nomination could be amended and period of significance revised in the future.
  - Ms. Barucco asked whether certain buildings constructed by the Sisters would be listed as contributing, such as the chapel and dormitory, since the nomination currently lists them as non-contributing.
  - Ms. Cooperman agreed that the buildings would need to be identified as contributing. She named them as the chapel (#1e), dormitory (#1f), and ancillary building (#6).
  - Ms. Milroy explained that the ancillary building has a construction date of c. 1940-60, so by extending the period of significance to 1965 to include the dormitory, the ancillary building would fall within that date range.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Jim Duffin commented that with nominations of this type, there are many avenues that could be followed, and the scope needs to be narrowed to accommodate the nominator's time and resources available to devote to the nomination. He agreed with the Committee's comments on the site's later Catholic history. He stated that he and Mr. Beisert chose to focus on the earlier Quaker history because of time and resources, though he contended that at some point in the future, someone could amend the nomination to include more information on the Catholic institutional history.

#### **COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS:**

The Committee on Historic Designation found that:

- The site was historically owned by prominent Quaker families, and in the twentieth century it became home to the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, who came to the area from Mexico.
- The nomination's period of significance extends from 1865 to 1940 and does not include the period of ownership under the Sisters of the Visitation.
- The nomination features a rare original landscape plan to show the intent of the design, which was created by landscape gardener Eugène Achilles Baumann. The general design of the landscape remains intact.

The Committee on Historic Designation concluded that:

- While the Quaker context and history of the property is significant and well argued in the nomination, the site’s later history that includes the occupancy by the Sisters of the Visitation is equally significant and should be represented in the designation. The history of the site’s ownership and its relationship to the surrounding context satisfies Criteria A and J.
- The site represents a designed Picturesque landscape that is rare in Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion D.
- Though schematic, the original landscape plan shows the general location of pathways, open space, and groupings of plantings. While it does not provide a plant inventory, it is significant in showing design intent and was created by significant landscape gardener Eugène Achilles Baumann. The nomination satisfies Criterion E.
- The property’s original buildings were designed by prominent architect Addison Hutton, and later buildings, such as Cherry Cottage, and alterations were designed by William Lightfoot Price. The nomination further satisfies Criterion E.
- The period of significance should be extended to 1965 to include the structures erected by the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, including the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building, which should be listed as contributing buildings.

**COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION:** The Committee on Historic Designation voted to recommend that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 5848 City Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and J, and that the period of significance extend from 1865 to 1965, and that the chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building be considered contributing.

<b>ITEM: 5848 City Ave</b>					
<b>MOTION: Designate; Criteria A, D, E, J, with amended period of significance</b>					
<b>MOVED BY: Milroy</b>					
<b>SECONDED BY: Laverty</b>					
VOTE					
Committee Member	Yes	No	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Emily Cooperman, chair	X				
Suzanna Barucco	X				
Jeff Cohen	X				
Bruce Laverty	X				
Elizabeth Milroy	X				
Douglas Mooney	X				
Total	6				



Correspondence from property owner received by  
the Philadelphia Historical Commission  
regarding the nomination for 5848 City Avenue

## Fw: historical designation

preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

Wed 10/7/2020 3:44 PM

To: Meredith Keller <Meredith.Keller@Phila.gov>

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**From:** viznunphil@aol.com <viznunphil@aol.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 1, 2020 10:32 AM

**To:** preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>

**Subject:** historical designation

**External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

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Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia  
5848 City Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19131

To the attention of Jonathan E. Farnham:

On the behalf of the Sisters of the Visitation of Philadelphia, we wish to declare that under no circumstances do we wish our property to be considered as a historic landmark nor be included on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

We appreciate your understanding our wishes.

Please be assured of our prayers for your Commission.

Sincerely yours,

Mother Antoinette Walker  
Superior

Please confirm that you received this e-mail. Thank you.

# Staff Report on Site Visit

**TO: PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**FROM: JON FARNHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2023**  
**RE: 5848 CITY AVENUE**

On Wednesday, February 1, 2023, I toured the property at 5848 City Avenue and inspected the buildings and landscape features called out in the nomination of the property, which the Historical Commission adopted on November 13, 2020. The Historical Commission is currently reviewing an application from the property owner to amend the nomination. I visited the property at the invitation of the property owner, the Sisters of the Visitation, and was accompanied on the tour by attorney Matt McClure, preservation consultant Cindy Hamilton, and property representative Frank Dalicandro. I did not enter any buildings but did walk the entirety of the grounds and visually inspect the exteriors of all buildings as well as all site appurtenances, vegetation, and land. The nomination provides extensive descriptions of the buildings, land, and landscape features of the site and the site visit was structured to correspond to the organization of the nomination. This report provides a summary of the observations made during the site visit as well as an analysis of the nomination based on new information obtained during the site visit and subsequent research.

## **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

The site visit confirmed the staff's earlier conclusions about the property: the main house, gardener's cottage, carriage house and stable, and the lawn between the house and City Avenue warrant designation. The other buildings on the site, some of which are misrepresented in the nomination and some of which were upgraded historically significant during the review, do not warrant designation. New information also shows that several aspects of the landscape do not merit designation. The Rear Garden area does not retain any of its historic features. The Sloping Lawn and Perimeter Trees along 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Overbrook Avenue are not part of the original landscape plan and have not been shown to have significance, even if they are attractive pieces of land. The staff continues to support the property owner's proposed compromise designation boundary as seen marked up on the aerial photograph below.



Compromise designation boundary proposed in the current amendment application.

## BAUMANN PLAN

The nomination for 5848 City Avenue is unusual, in that it contends that much of the significance of the site is conveyed through its land and landscape. The nomination explains that the landscape design was undertaken by Eugene A. Baumann in the late 1860s. The landscape plan, dubbed the Baumann Plan, was reproduced in *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*, a book by Jacob Weidenmann published in 1870. The site visit indicated that the Baumann Plan is not entirely accurate, even though it is scaled, and that it does not depict the entirety of the property that is now known as 5848 City Avenue. The Baumann Plan is seen below. A current aerial photograph of the site (also below) shows the approximate area of the Baumann Plan outlined in red and the remainder of the property at 5848 City Avenue in yellow. Two large sections of the current property are not depicted in the Baumann Plan, the areas along 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Overbrook Avenue, outlined in yellow. Also, of note is the fact that the Baumann Plan does not depict the features along the eastern property line accurately. Of course, the Baumann Plan may not have been implemented in precise accordance with the published plan and undoubtedly the site has been altered many times in the intervening 150 years since the implementation of the Baumann Plan.



Baumann Plan, 1870, north, City Avenue, at bottom



Aerial photograph of 5848 City Avenue with north, City Avenue, at bottom. The area depicted in the Baumann Plan is outlined in red. Other parts of the property at 5848 City Avenue that are not depicted in the Baumann Plan are outlined in yellow.

**PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The nomination defines the “Pleasure Grounds” as the open land north and west the main house between the house and City Avenue. The curvilinear drive and walkway with fountain running from the northwest corner to the house in the Baumann Plan have been removed. The chapel and adjacent parking lot have been constructed on the “Pleasure Grounds.” The land was regraded around the parking lot. The eastern property line has been shifted.



Site visit photograph, looking from the lawn in front of the main house northwest toward City Avenue.



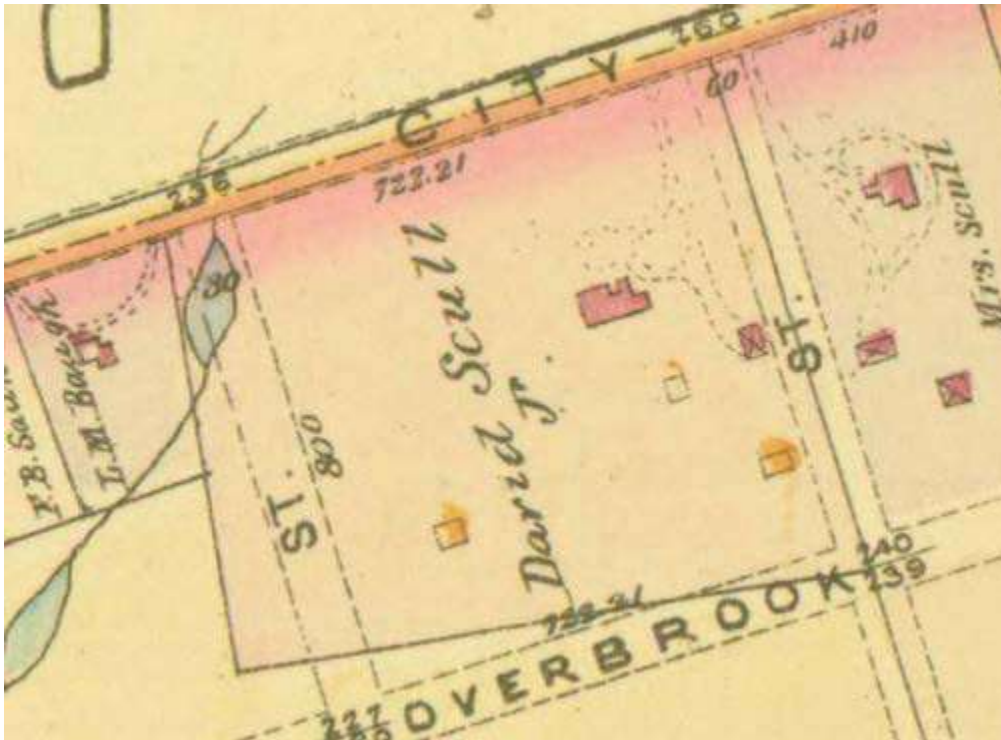
Site visit photograph, looking south from the front lawn toward the main house.



Site visit photograph, looking from the chapel parking lot northeast toward City Avenue.

## PERIMETER TREES

The nomination claims that the Baumann Plan prescribes four sets of “Perimeter Trees” around the property. Inexplicably, the nomination numbers the perimeter trees as Landscape Resource II, but then calls out the four sets as three subsets of Landscape Resource III: IIIA, IIIB, and IIIC. Ignoring the confusing numbers, the Perimeter Trees enumerated in the nomination are located along City Avenue, 59<sup>th</sup> Street, the east Property Line, and the Rear along Overbrook Avenue. In fact, the Baumann Plan indicates perimeter trees in two locations only, along City Avenue and the eastern property line. The property did not originally correspond to the lines of 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Overbrook Avenue because neither of those streets was extant at the time of the Baumann Plan. The streets were not opened for more than two decades after the Baumann Plan, not until in the 1890s. The 1893 map below shows that the property was not bound by the streets, which were not open. The so-called “Perimeter Trees” along City Avenue and the eastern property line are depicted in the Baumann Plan. Any trees along the current perimeter of the property along 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Overbrook Avenue are not depicted on the Baumann Plan, post-date the Baumann Plan by many decades, and should not be considered features of the Baumann Plan.



Baist Atlas of Properties in the Northwest Suburbs of Philadelphia, 1893

## DRIVEWAY (1865-69)

The current driveway at 5848 City Avenue follows a similar line as the historic driveway depicted in the Baumann Plan from front or City Avenue toward the rear, where Overbrook Avenue now runs, along eastern edge of property. However, the current driveway deviates in several ways from the historic driveway. The circular section of the driveway is currently to the north of the main house, not to the east as shown on the plan. A paved area labelled “E” on the Baumann Plan to the south of the house is not extant. The curvilinear drive from the northwest corner of the site to porte cochere no longer exists but its line is approximated by a concrete sidewalk. A parking lot has been added in front of the chapel. The land around the parking lot was regraded

for its installation. The driveway originally did not run to Overbrook Avenue because Overbrook Avenue did not exist until the 1890s. No historic driveway or sidewalk paving survives on the site. All paving is asphalt or gravel.



Site visit photograph, looking toward the main house along the driveway, which is paved in asphalt. The paved area labelled “E” on the Baumann Plan would have been behind the metal fence but is not extant.

#### **REAR GARDENS**

The Baumann Plan shows vegetable and flower gardens to the south and southwest of the main house. The nomination claims that “the tracery of this section of the landscape survives.” This is untrue. While the land on which the so-called “Rear Gardens” was located remains open, no features of the gardens themselves survive at or above grade, and the property was not designated under Criterion I, the archaeology criterion. There does appear to be a sewer line running east-west below grade along the edge of the former gardens, which is marked periodically by vents at grade, that might be visible as a line on the land in aerial photographs but nothing that might be called “tracery” of the former garden was discernable during the inspection tour. The garden and garden features depicted in the Baumann Plan do not exist.





Site visit photograph of the "Rear Garden" looking to the southeast. No garden features were observed during the site visit.



Site visit photograph of the "Rear Garden" looking to the southwest. No garden features were observed during the site visit.

### **STONE CURBING AND WALLS**

The description of the stone curbing and walls in the nomination is inaccurate. The photograph in Figure 18 on page 15 of the nomination of a stone wall with fence is a photograph of the adjacent property at 5800 City Avenue. It is not a photograph of the property in question. There is no stone wall with metal fencing at 5848 City Avenue. There is a section of stone wall along City Avenue at 5848 City Avenue, which is approximately 300 feet in length, but it includes no metal fence. The statement on page 15 of the nomination, “segments of the wall feature stone capping and iron or metal fencing” is incorrect. Most of the perimeter of the 12-acre property is surrounded by standard non-historic cyclone and corrugated metal fencing.



Figure 18. Looking southwest at the stone curbing and wall along City Avenue at the northwest property line of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

Figure 18 in the nomination depicts the wall and fence in front of the adjacent property at 5800 City Avenue. This feature is not at the subject property.

### **SLOPING LAWN**

It is unclear from the nomination where the resource called out as the Sloping Lawn is located. The Sloping Lawn is noted on page 6 of the nomination and classified as significant. It is apparently identified in the aerial photograph in figure 3 by a solid thin black line, but two areas are circumscribed by such a line, one at the northeast and one at the northwest. The area at the northeast is part of the so-called Pleasure Grounds. The area at the northwest, at the corner of 59<sup>th</sup> Street and City Avenue, is not included within the Baumann Plan. It is an open grass area without appurtenances like paths or walls. It is surrounded by a non-historic cyclone fence.



Site visit photograph, open lawn at the corner of 59<sup>th</sup> Street and City Avenue, as seen from the parking lot in front of the chapel.

#### **LANDSCAPE AND PLANTING AREAS (1865-1919)**

The nomination lists a series of so-called landscape and planting areas from the Baumann Plan on page 18 and then speculates as to whether they survive. This section of the nomination includes incorrect and contradictory figure numbers and labels to identify the features. It describes the landscape and planting areas as follows:

##### **Resource/Section**

**The following correspond with the said labeling of the Baumann Plan:**

- A-Ornamental Grape Arbor (no longer extant above-ground)
- B-Small Green House (extant)
- C-Hot-Beds (no longer extant above-ground)
- D-Small Flower Garden (no longer extant above-ground)
- E-Service Driveway (no longer extant above-ground)
- H-Cottage (extant)
- J-Coach House & Stable (extant)
- K-Garden Feature (unknown)
- L-Walk (no longer extant above-ground)
- M-Vegetable Garden (extant/previously discussed)
- N-North Driveway (extant/previously discussed)
- O-Well (extant)

The nomination is incorrect in several regards. An inspection of the grounds indicates that, other than two buildings and the driveway (H, J, and N), none of the features survive. No evidence of

grape arbors, green houses, beds, vegetable and flower gardens, a service driveway, a well, or a garden feature could be found.

A: not extant

B: not extant, no greenhouses at property

C: not extant

D: not extant

E: not extant

H: extant

J: extant

K: not extant

L: not extant

M: not extant

N: not labeled on Baumann Plan, but driveway survives with non-historic paving

O: not extant

On pages 19 to 24, the nomination includes several comparisons of details from the Baumann Plan with current aerial photographs and attempts to identify groups of trees and bushes that survive today from the Baumann Plan, which was published in 1870. The nomination (page 19) concedes that “most of the original plants in this section have died, been destroyed, and/or were replaced,” but then claims that “those [plants] extant are very similar to those present historically.” For example, the nomination identifies a group of trees shown to the west of the main house on the Baumann Plan that it labels “Section 1” and then correlates those trees to a group of trees on the current grounds seen in an aerial photograph (figure 23). While the groups of trees share some similarities, the argument in the nomination fails to note that the chapel and dormitory were constructed to the west of the main house in the twentieth century, right where the Baumann Plan locates the original group of trees called “Section 1.” The Baumann Plan is scaled, allowing the distance from the west façade of the main house to the edge of the group of trees to be accurately estimated at 65 feet. The distance from the west façade of the main house to the west façade of the chapel is 120 feet. The group of trees called “Section 1” in the nomination would have stood exactly where the chapel is currently located. Any similarities between the historic and contemporary group of trees called “Section 1” are coincidental. They are not in the same location. Moreover, attempts to correlate trees and bushes seen in the Baumann Plan to trees and bushes at the site today during the site visit proved to be impossible, except at the grossest level. The evaluations of vegetation on pages 19 to 24 of the nomination do not provide a viable framework for the Historical Commission’s regulation of plantings at the site going forward, assuming that the Historical Commission has the authority to regulate individual trees and bushes.

#### **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION – PART II: BUILDINGS**

Descriptions of the various buildings at 5848 City Avenue are provided on pages 25 to 41 of the nomination. The numbering of the buildings in this section of the nomination is not consistent. The tables and photographs label the main house #1 but the text descriptions do not number the main house and begin with the gardener’s cottage as #1, creating significant confusion. The following evaluation uses the building names, not numbers.

# **Building/Structure Name (Date(s) of Construction)-Contributing Status/Additions**

1. Mansion House. Main Block (1870-71)-Significant (S), 1a. Arcade Addition (1898)-Contributing (C), 1b. Porch Addition (c1900-10)-C, 1c. East Addition (1900-20)-C, 1d. South Addition (1900-20)-C, 1e. Chapel Addition (1958)-~~Non~~-contributing (NC), 1f. Dormitory (1965)-NC
2. Gardener's Cottage (1870-71)-S
3. Carriage House & Stable (1870-71); Alterations (c1898)-S
4. Cherry Cottage (1898)-S
5. Garden Building A (c1898)-C & B (c1898)-C
6. Ancillary Building (c1940-60)-~~NC~~
7. Garage/Storage (c1900-10)-C
8. Cottage (1921)-C
9. Driveway (1865-69)-S

Note: Chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building are classified as contributing, per the 13 November 2020 designation.

List of buildings at the site with dates and classifications, from page 25 of the nomination.

### **MANSION OR MAIN HOUSE**

The main house, sometimes called the mansion house, has been added to and altered many times, but the primary volumes and features of the house survive. The main entranceway has been relocated and the open porch that looked out onto the landscape has been replaced with an addition, but the 1870s house remains discernable.

The nomination indicates that prominent architect Addison Hutton designed the main house, gardener's cottage, and carriage house at 5848 City Avenue. The nomination cites Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall's biography of Hutton, which mentions the main house, but not the gardener's cottage and carriage house. The nomination reproduces an image of Hutton's ledger (figure 129) that ostensibly documents his work "on the subject property," but the page of the ledger relates to 5708 Germantown Avenue, not this property at 5848 City Avenue.



Site visit photograph, rear of main house with dormitory to the left and covered walkway to the right.

The Sisters of the Visitation constructed a chapel in the 1950s and a dormitory in the 1960s to the west and southwest of the main house. Both are discrete buildings connected by enclosed walkways to the main house and to one another. The nomination describes these features but does not provide any documentary basis for assigning architectural or historical significance to them. On the advice of the Committee on Historic Designation, the Historical Commission extended the Period of Significance to include these mid twentieth-century buildings in the historical significance of the site. A visual inspection of the buildings did not reveal any architectural significance. The chapel has been added to at least twice, at the front and rear.



Site visit photograph, Chapel looking from the parking lot to the southeast



Site visit photograph, rears of the Chapel and Dormitory looking to the east



Site visit photograph, Dormitory looking to the northeast

**GARDENER'S COTTAGE (1870-71)**

The nomination indicates that the Gardener's Cottage was designed by Addison Hutton, the architect of the main house, but provides no documentation for the attribution. The Gardener's Cottage is not depicted in the earliest detailed map of the site, the Baist map of 1886 (below). The date of 1870-71 and the attribution to Hutton seem reasonable but are not substantiated by documents. The Gardener's Cottage appears to have been significantly altered. It is in good condition.

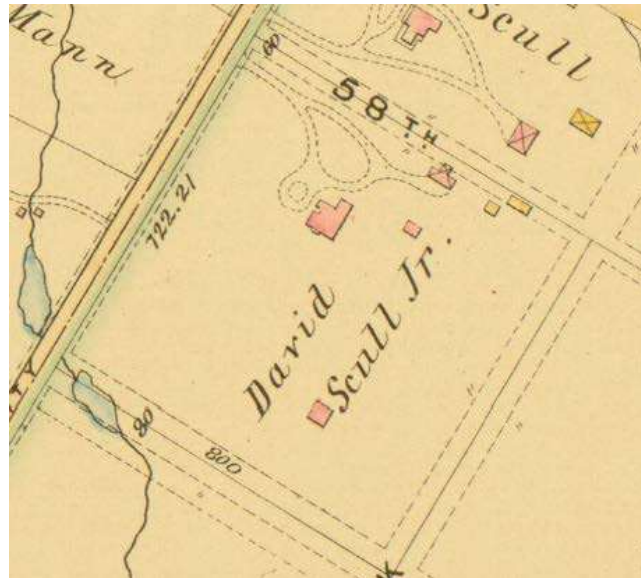


Site visit photograph of Gardener's Cottage.



### **CARRIAGE HOUSE & STABLE (1870-71)**

The nomination indicates that the Carriage House & Stable was designed by Addison Hutton, the architect of the main house, but provides no documentation for the attribution. The Carriage House & Stable is depicted in the earliest detailed map of the site, the Baist map of 1886 (below). The date of 1870-71 and the attribution to Hutton seem reasonable but are not substantiated by documents. The Carriage House & Stable have been significantly altered and added to and are in poor condition.



Baist map of 1886 showing carriage house but not the gardener's cottage.



Site visit photograph, front of carriage house.



Site visit photograph, rear of carriage house with the asphalt driveway in the foreground.

### **CHERRY COTTAGE (1898)**

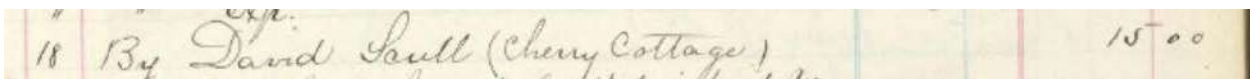
The nomination incorrectly attributes the building it names Cherry Cottage to prominent architect William L. Price. The nomination inconsistently labels the building #3 and #4. The nomination (pages 54 and 55) claims that “In 1898, Scull commissioned (sic) the eminent architect Will Price to design Cherry Cottage.” The attribution of the building to Price is based solely on an appendix entry in the monograph *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design* by architectural historian George Thomas. The entry in the book’s appendix, a transcription from Price’s account books, reads:

**1898**

1) David Scull, **Cherry Cottage**, Overbrook,  
Philadelphia

Account Book (18 January 1897), 87

The actual account book entry reads as follows:

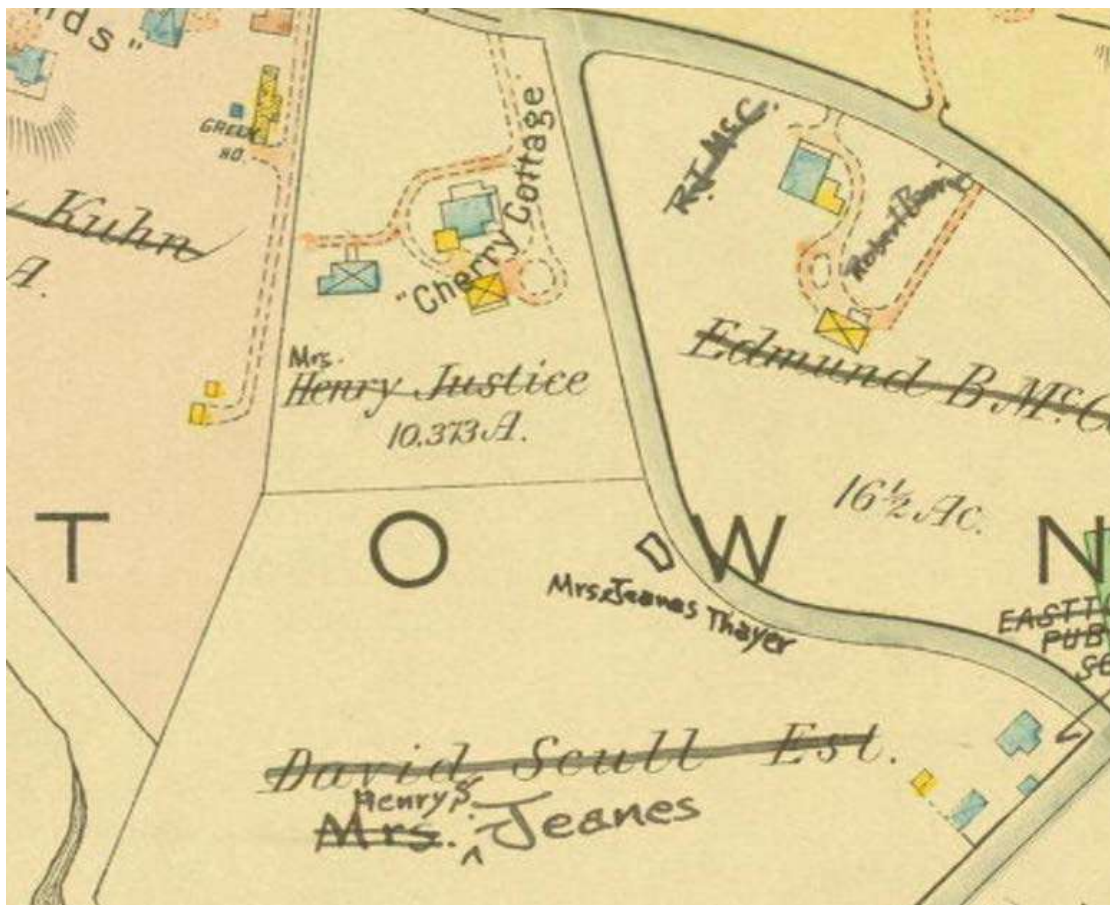


Nothing in the account entry or the monograph indicates that the building referred to as Cherry Cottage is located at 5848 City Avenue. Moreover, the account book indicates that Scull was billed \$15.00 for Price’s work, much less than the hundreds of dollars that Price typically charged for the design of a residential building. Further research on David Scull, the original owner of the

estate at 5848 City Avenue, indicates that he also owned a property on the Main Line in Devon, Pennsylvania that was described after his death as follows.

delphian. The place consists of a farm house, tenant house, orchard, creek, pond and more than twenty-six acres of ground, right in the heart of Devon, and adjoins

A 1908 map (below), published one year after Scull's death, indicates that the country estate in Devon was known as "Cherry Cottage." It appears that the entry in Price's account book cited in the nomination referred to work that Price did for Scull at his Devon property, not for work at 5848 City Avenue, as wrongly assumed in the nomination. The connection of the building at 5848 City Avenue to William Price appears to be incorrect. As an aside, a building visible from the street at the Devon property looks very much like a William Price building, but additional research would be needed to link it to Price. Finally, the building at 5848 City Avenue wrongly called Cherry Cottage in the nomination is much altered and in poor condition. It has no obvious architectural or historical significance.



This 1908 map depicts the Cherry Cottage property in Devon, Pennsylvania, which had been owned by David Scull prior to his death in 1907.



This building at Cherry Cottage in Devon is very much in the style of William Price.



Site visit photograph, the building incorrectly referred to as the Cherry Cottage in the nomination.

### **GARDEN BUILDING 5A**

The building that the nomination labels 5A, calls “Garden Building A,” and dates to 1898, is a small garden shed constructed of brick with a hipped roof. It is very small, about 10 feet square. The brick is in very poor condition, owing to a lack of pointing, and several bricks are missing.



Site visit photograph, Garden Building 5A, the red brick building.

### **GARDEN BUILDING 5B**

The building that the nomination labels 5B, calls “Garden Building B,” and dates to 1865 to 1898 was, in fact, constructed in the twentieth century, probably in 1921, as explained below in the discussion of “Cottage (1921).” The building has no apparent historic or architectural value.



Site visit photograph, Garden Building 5B

**ANCILLARY BUILDING**

The Ancillary Building was classified as non-contributing in the original nomination, but upgraded to contributing on the recommendation of the Committee on Historic Designation. It is a mid twentieth-century building clad in asphalt/fiberglass shingles. It has no apparent historic or architectural value.



Site visit photograph, Ancillary Building

**GARAGE/STORAGE BUILDING (c1900-10)**

The building called the “Garage/Storage Building (c1900-10)” and labeled inconsistently as #6 and #7 is a small garage that was converted by the Sisters of the Visitation for religious use. The garage door opening was infilled with a wood panel and leaded-glass window system that appears to have been salvaged from elsewhere. The building has been vacant for many years and is in very poor condition. The roof and cornice are very deteriorated. The building called “Garage/Storage Building (c1900-10)” has no apparent historic or architectural value.



Site visit photograph, Garage/Storage Building (c1900-10)

### **COTTAGE (1921)**

The nomination incorrectly dates and attributes the building it calls “Cottage (1921).” The nomination (page 56) states that Charles P. Vaughan, who purchased 5848 City Avenue from David Scull’s heirs, “commissioned a one-story brick cottage – Cottage 1921, measuring 46 feet by 26 feet, which was to be erected by Alfred James, a contractor, of Bala, Pennsylvania” in 1921. The nomination cites a note in the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, August 24, 1921, page 545. The entry in the trade magazine reads as follows:

Residence, Southwest Corner Fifty-eighth and City avenue, Philadelphia, \$4,500. Architect, private plans. Owner, Charles P. Vaughan, on premises. Brick, 1 story, 46 feet 5 inches x 26 feet, slag roof, hot water heat, electric light. Contract awarded to Alfred James, Bala, Pa.

The building in question, which the nomination calls “Cottage (1921),” is not 46 feet by 26 feet; it is nearly square, about 31 feet by 33 feet. It is two stories, not one. And it has a pitched roof, not a slag roof, which is a flat roof. The building referenced in the trade journal is not the building pictured in the nomination. The nomination is clearly incorrect with regard to this building. In fact, the dimensions of the building reported in the trade journal more closely correspond to the those of the building that the nomination sometimes labels 5B and calls “Garden Building B” and dates to 1865 to 1898. The nomination incorrectly dates and attributes the building called “Cottage (1921)” to property owner Charles P. Vaughan. The building called “Cottage (1921),” which is not on land depicted in the Baumann Plan, has no apparent historic or architectural value.



Site visit photograph, the building incorrectly identified as Cottage (1921)



## CONCLUSIONS

The site visit confirmed the staff's earlier conclusions about the property that the main house, gardener's cottage, and carriage house and stable are the historically and architecturally significant buildings at the site, and that the lawn between the house and City Avenue with the low stone wall along the street retains its mid nineteenth-century appearance, if not all of its original features. The three buildings and lawn warrant designation. The other buildings on the site, some of which were misconstrued and misrepresented by the nomination and some of which were initially considered non-historic but then upgraded with change to the Period of Significance without documentation, do not warrant designation. Regarding the landscape, the so-called Rear Garden area does not retain any of its historic features. The so-called Sloping Lawn and Perimeter Trees along 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Overbrook Avenue were not part of the Baumann Plan and have not been demonstrated to have any historical significance, even if they are attractive pieces of open and wooded land. The staff continues to support the property owner's proposed compromise designation boundary, which would include the main house, gardener's cottage, carriage house and stable, the lawn between the house and City Avenue, and the stone wall along City Avenue, as seen marked up on the aerial photograph below.



Compromise designation boundary proposed by the property owner, which would include the main house, gardener's cottage, carriage house and stable, the lawn between the house and City Avenue, and the stone wall along City Avenue.

# Nomination as Adopted by Historical Commission

## NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)  
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

### 1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: **5848 City Avenue**

Postal code: **19131-1210**

### 2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: ***The Chestnuts (later known as Leighton Place)***

Current/Common: **Sisters of the Visitation**

### 3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building

Structure

Site

Object

### 4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition:  excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

Occupancy:  occupied  vacant  under construction  unknown

Current use: **Convent**

### 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.*

### 6. DESCRIPTION

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

### 7. SIGNIFICANCE

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): **from 1865 to 1940.** 1965

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: **Landscape (1865-69); Main Block (1870-71); etc.**

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: **Eugene A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener**

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: **Addison Hutton, Architect; Will Price, Architect**

Original owner: **David Scull, Jr.**

Other significant persons: **David Scull, Jr.; Charles P. Vaughan**

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR: OVERBROOK FARMS CLUB/KEEPING SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA      DATE: 15 APRIL 2020**

Author: **Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian**      Email: **keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org**

Org. Contact: **Thaddeus Squire, President**      Email: **ofcexecutivecommittee@gmail.com**

Street Address: **6376 City Avenue**      Telephone: **484.800.1686**

City, State, and Postal Code: **Philadelphia, PA 19151**      **Note: Please direct all "complete & correct" concerns or questions to Oscar Beisert.**

Nominator  is       is not      the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 15 April 2020

Correct-Complete     Incorrect-Incomplete      Date: 17 September 2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 18 September 2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Sisters of Visitation of Philadelphia

Address: 5848 City Avenue

City: Philadelphia      State: PA      Postal Code: 19131

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 21 October 2020

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 13 November 2020

Date of Final Action: 13 November 2020

Designated       Rejected      Criteria A, D, E, J; chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building classified as contributing.

# **NOMINATION**

**FOR THE**

## **PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**



Figure 1. Looking southeast at the primary (northwest) elevation of the Main Block of the Mansion House. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

## ***THE CHESTNUTS***

**ALSO KNOWN AS**

### ***LEIGHTON PLACE***

**ERECTED 1865-69, 1870-71. ENLARGED 1898.**

▪

**THE COUNTRY SEAT OF DAVID SCULL, JR.**

**ADDISON HUTTON, ARCHITECT**

**EUGÈNE A. BAUMANN, LANDSCAPE GARDENER**

▪

**5848 CITY AVENUE, OVERBROOK**

**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19131-1210**

▪

**AUTHOR: OSCAR BEISERT, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

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*The Chestnuts* aka *Leighton Place*, The Country Seat of David Scull, Jr.  
5848 City Ave, Overbrook, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19131-1210

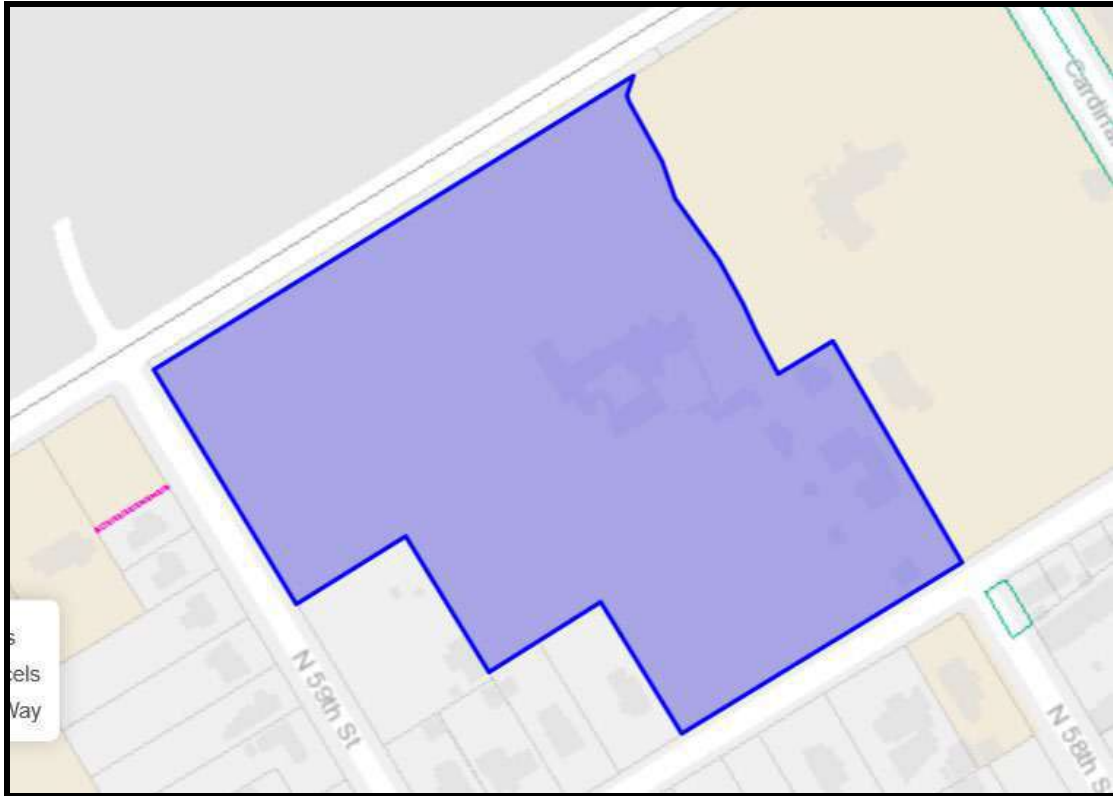


Figure 2. The boundary of subject property is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the designation of the subject property is as follows:

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and Improvements thereon erected

BEGINNING at a point, the intersection of the Northeasterly side of Fifty-ninth Street (Sixty feet wide) and the Southeasterly side of City Avenue (Eighty feet wide), thence extending along the said Southeasterly side of City Avenue North sixty degrees thirty minutes East a distance of Seven hundred seventy-four and seven hundred fifty-three one-thousandths feet to a point, a corner of land about to be conveyed by the above Grantors to His Eminence, Dennis J. Dougherty, Cardinal Archbishop of Philadelphia; thence along the five following courses and distances, to wit; South twelve degrees forty-five minutes West, a distance of thirty-two and sixty-eight one hundredths feet to a point; South twenty-eight degrees thirty minutes East, a distance of one hundred feet to a point; South seventeen degrees East, a distance of fifty-five and eighty-two one-hundredths feet to a point; South thirty-three degrees forty-five Minutes East, a distance of one hundred feet to a point; South seventy-six degrees thirty minutes East a distance of one hundred seventy-four and fifty-three one-hundredths feet to a point in a line of hemlock hedge; thence extending through the said line of hemlock hedge North sixty degrees thirty minutes East a distance of eighty-four and sixty-six one hundredths feet to a point in the line of land now of His Eminence, Dennis J. Dougherty, Cardinal Archbishop of Philadelphia; thence

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along the same South twenty-eight degrees forty-five minutes forty-six seconds East, a distance of three hundred forty-nine and nine one-hundredths feet to the Northwesterly side of Overbrook Avenue (Sixty feet wide); thence extending Southwestwardly along the said side of Overbrook Avenue a distance of four hundred forty-nine and eight hundred forty-eight one- thousandths feet to a point; thence extending Northwestwardly and at right angles to the said Overbrook Avenue a distance of two hundred ten feet to a point; thence extending Southwestwardly along a line parallel to said Overbrook Avenue a distance of one hundred eighty feet to a point; thence extending Northwestwardly along a line parallel to the said Fifty-ninth Street, a distance of two hundred fifteen feet to a point; thence extending Southwestwardly along a line at right angles to the said Fifty-ninth Street, a distance of one hundred eighty feet to a point on the Northeasterly side of Fifty-ninth Street; thence extending Northwestwardly along said side of Fifty-ninth Street, a distance of three hundred seventy-five feet to the point and place of beginning.

BEING NO. 5848 City Avenue.



Figure 3. Looking south at an aerial photograph of the the subject property with the various sections of the landscape delineated. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

**6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION – PART I: LANDSCAPE**

Known historically as *The Chestnuts*, the subject property at 5848 City Avenue in the Overbrook neighborhood of Philadelphia is a former country seat that comprises a significant and largely intact historic landscape. The property has the following designed features and sections:

<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
I. Pleasure Grounds	— . . —	Significant
IA. Principal Lawn	—————	Significant
Note: While the Pleasure Grounds include the Perimeter trees on City Avenue, as well as the Driveway, which will be described below as separate resources.		
II. Perimeter Trees		
IIIA. City Avenue	.....	Significant
59 <sup>th</sup> Street	.....	Significant
IIIB. Property Line	.....	Significant
IIIC. Rear	.....	Contributing
III. Driveway & Service Road	—————	Significant
IV. Rear Gardens	—————	Contributing
V. Stone Curbing & Walls	— — — —	Contributing
VI. Sloping Lawn	—————	Significant
VII. Buildings	.....	See Part II of the Physical Description

Note: The siting of the the service buildings towards the east corner of the subject property is a significant aspect of the design and layout of the landscape. The individual buildings are discussed later in the Physical Description.

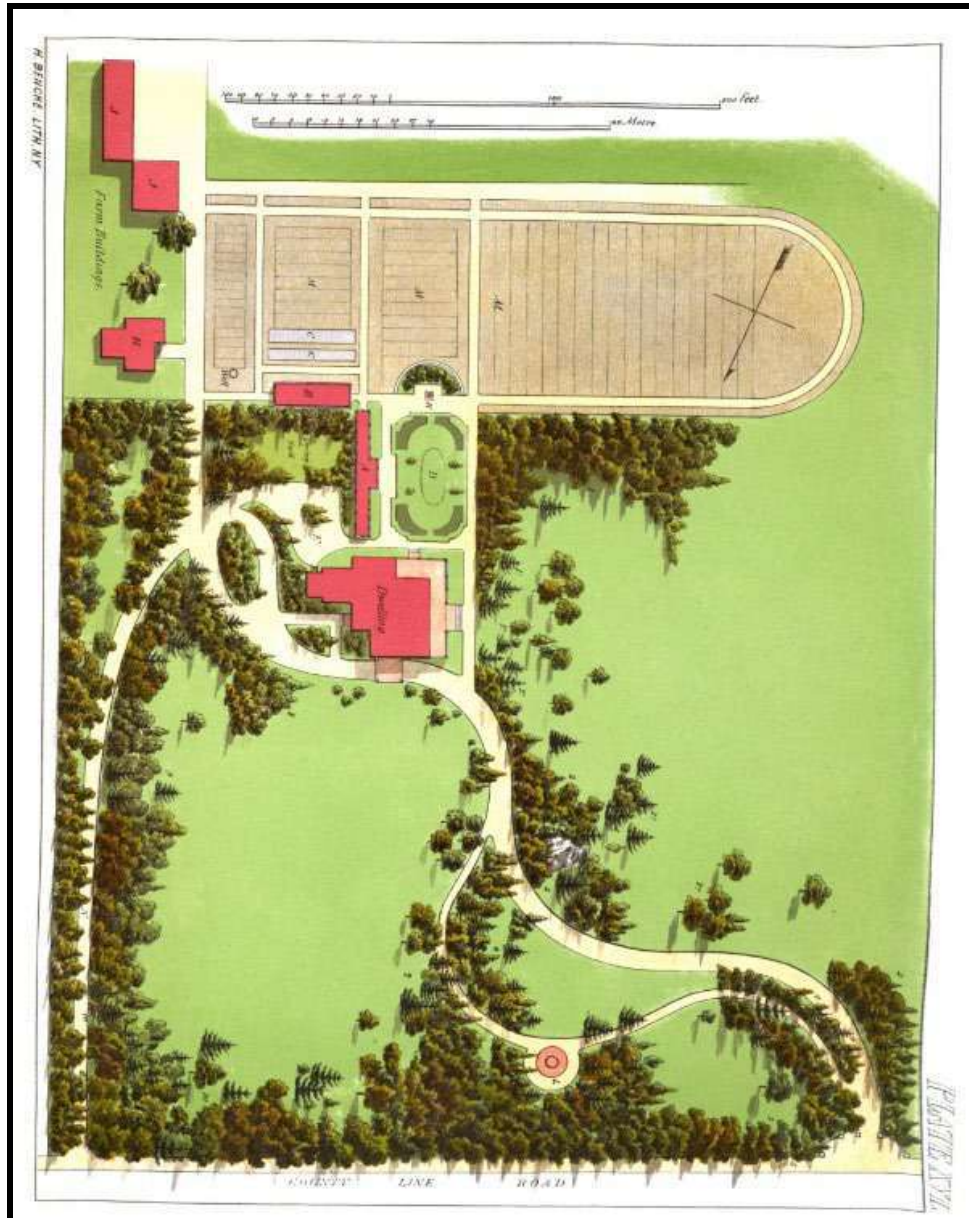


Figure 4. A plan of the subject published in 1870, referencing the designer as Eugène A. Baumann. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust.

Shown above in Figure 4 is the plan of the subject property created by Eugène A. Baumann, a significant landscape gardener who will be described in more detail later, between 1865 and 1869 (Baumann Plan), which is a rare document to survive for an extant and intact country place created in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. According to the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes of the National Park Service, possession of a plan is a critical element to not only identifying and preserving historic features and materials, but, even more importantly for a landscape, replacing deteriorated historic materials and features; replacing missing historic features; altering and amplifying vegetation for new use of a property.

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Knowledge of the original design and specific plantings according to an original plan is not only critical for recreating a historic landscape, but also for any “new use” that might come to the property. In the case of new use, the restoration of vegetation in some cases can screen new construction and development.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 5. Top: Looking northwest-north, this aerial photograph shows the subject property in 1931, looking very much like it does not in terms of the buildings and landscape. Source: Dallin Aerial Surveys, Hagley Library. Figure 6. Bottom: Looking northwest-northt, this aerial photograph shows the subject property in 2019, with the addition of several buildings related to the Sisters of the Visitation. The historic landscape is almost entirely intact. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes—Vegetation, Nation Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/rehab/vegetation.htm> Accessed on 9 April 2020.



Figure 7. Looking north at *The Chestnuts* with the historic Pleasures Grounds delineated. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

## **I. PLEASURE GROUNDS**

As delineated in the figure above, *The Chestnuts* features extensive surviving pleasure grounds, which comprises the area of the subject property that is in close proximity to the Main Block of the Mansion House (Main Block), built in 1870-71. Rare to survive outside of Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, the Pleasure Grounds include landscape features, plantings, vegetation, etc. (i.e., component resources) as is discernable in Figures 3 and 21, excluding the buildings and/or any other resources listed as non-contributing or outside the immediate vicinity of the Main Block. The component resources within the Pleasure Grounds include the IA. Principal Lawn; II. Perimeter Trees, including IIA. City Avenue, IIB.; III. The North Driveway; and roughly ten specific landscape and planting areas, which will be further discussed on the forthcoming pages. As was the case in nineteenth century garden design, the designed portion of the landscape is largely contiguous with what one might call Pleasures Grounds.



Figure 8. Top: Looking southeast at the Principal Lawn with the Main Block in the background. Figure 9. Bottom: Looking east at the Front Lawn and the Main Block with various plantings in view. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2020.

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Figure 10. Looking southeast through the Perimeter Trees on City Avenue across the Principal Law to the Main Block. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

## II. PERIMETER TREES

As delineated in Figures 10 and 11, the Perimeter Trees include four principal areas along the margin of the property, providing a buffer between City Avenue and the others streets. The veil created by the said areas are comprised of groupings of ordinary and specimen trees that create a vegetative fence line. This border was prescribed by the Baumann Plan of 1865-69 (Figure 4). Baumann prescribed specific specimen of both shrubs and trees in these principal areas, which may lend to restoring the original design or, upon further survey, a deviation from that plan based on historic evidence of alternate plantings. Furthermore, the Baumann Plan may also lend to mitigation and/ or treatment measures in the future to shield intact portions of the site from any future development or a change in use.



Figure 11. A grouping of Perimeter Trees along City Avenue. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 12. Top: Looking northeast at the Perimeter Trees along the northeast property line. Figure 13. Bottom: Looking northwest at the Perimeter Trees along Overbrook Avenue along the southeast property line. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 14. Looking southeast at the Driveway to the Main Block (1870-71). Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### III. DRIVEWAY (1865-69)

The path of a serpentine Driveway shown in the Baumann Plan of 1865-69 (Figure 4) is largely intact, extending from the north corner of the subject property to the Main Block, where at the primary (northwest) elevation it makes a circle. A stone wall that extends along City Avenue curves at each side to make an elegant driveway entrance. The driveway also extends to the rear of the property between all of the aforementioned outbuildings.



Figure 15. Left: Looking northwest from the rear of the subject property at the Rear Driveway with the Carriage House & Stable and Gardener's Cottage on right. Figure 16. Right: Looking northwest from the rear of the subject property at the Driveway, showing the brick posts on each side and the Gardener's Cottage on right. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 17. Looking north through the Perimeter Trees on Overbrook Avenue to the Rear Gardens of *The Chestnuts*. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

#### **IV. REAR GARDENS**

The Rear Gardens were a part of the designed landscape of the Baumann Plan (Figure 4) of the subject property, featuring plantings and walks that are both historic and modern. However, the precise details of what of the Rear Gardens exists from a historic perspective is unclear. However, based on the patterns shown in aerial views, it is clear that the tracery of this section of the landscape survives. Further survey and research could allow for the restoration of the Rear Gardens or may inform mitigation and treatment measures if a new use is proposed for the subject property.



Figure 18. Looking southwest at the stone curbing and wall along City Avenue at the northwest property line of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

#### **V. STONE CURBING AND WALLS**

The northwest property line features a low stone wall (Figures 19 and 20) with free-standing and retaining components. Segments of the wall feature stone capping and iron or metal fencing.





Figure 19. Top: Looking south at the stone curbing and wall at the North Driveway and along City Avenue at the northwest property line of the subject property. Figure 20. Bottom: Looking northeast at the stone wall and curbing along City Avenue at the northwest property line of the subject property. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

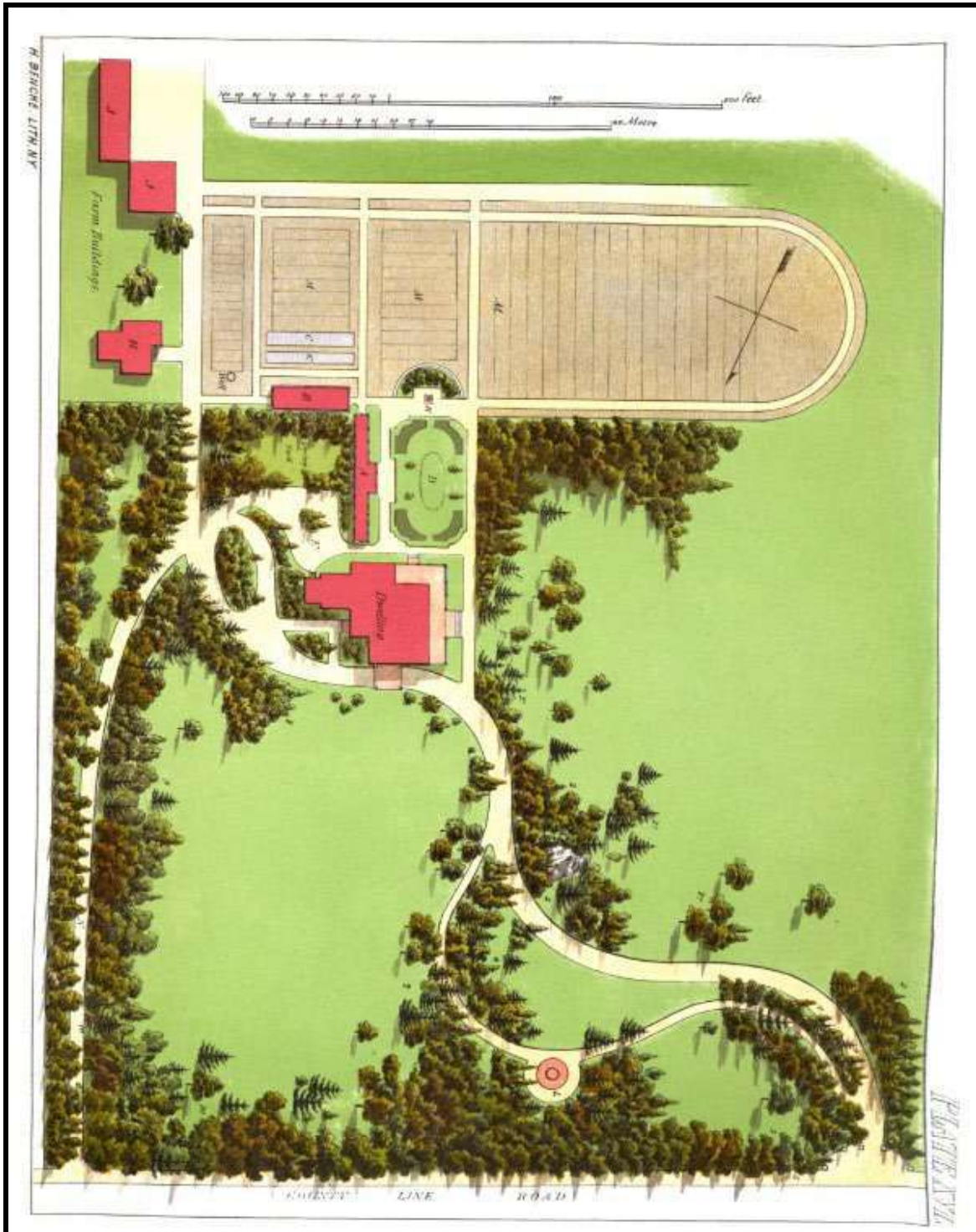


Figure 21. (repeated) A plan of the subject published in 1870, referencing the designer as Eugène A. Baumann. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust.



Figure 22. Looking southeast at *The Chestnuts*. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

### **LANDSCAPE & PLANTING AREAS (1865-1919)**

The aerial photograph shown above in Figure 23 is labeled according to the Baumann Plan of 1865-69 (Figure 22). Not to be confused with the previous and forthcoming labeling of component resources of the subject property, this view is labeled with letters that correspond with the Baumann Plan to further illustrate which rooms or sections within the landscape survive to-date. The numbered sections listed on the Baumann Plan relate to significant component parts describe by Jacob Weidenmann in 1871. While much of the vegetation has been replaced over time, vegetation clusters have been maintained for the most part, adhering to the aforementioned guidance on historic landscapes of the National Park Service.

#### **Resource/Section**

#### **The following correspond with the said labeling of the Baumann Plan:**

- A-Ornamental Grape Arbor (no longer extant above-ground)
- B-Small Green House (extant)
- C-Hot-Beds (no longer extant above-ground)
- D-Small Flower Garden (no longer extant above-ground)
- E-Service Driveway (no longer extant above-ground)
- H-Cottage (extant)
- J-Coach House & Stable (extant)
- K-Garden Feature (unknown)
- L-Walk (no longer extant above-ground)
- M-Vegetable Garden (extant/previously discussed)
- N-North Driveway (extant/previously discussed)
- O-Well (extant)



**Section 1** was designed to feature masses or groupings of trees and shrubs, the prescription of which included: *Pyrus Japonica*, Purple Beech, *Magnolia tripetala*, Kilmarnock Willow, *Prunus sinensis*, the Purple Barberry, etc.<sup>2</sup> In addition, this section of the property also included masses or groupings of evergreens and other specimen trees—including Crab Apple, some of which appear to be extant. While most of the original plants in this section have died, been destroyed, and/or were replaced, those extant are very similar to those present historically and in the 1931 aerial photograph (Figure 5).



Figure 23. Above (top): Looking north at Section 1. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 24. Left: Section 1 as depicted in 1870. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust. Figure 25. Right: Looking southeast, this aerial view of the subject property shows Section 1 circled in black to orient the reader with its location within the larger property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.



**Section 2** was designed to feature masses or groupings of trees and shrubs “around the large rock,” which included the following varieties: Austrian Pines, Scotch Pine, and some *Pinus Mugho*, mixed with the American Trailing Juniper. Section 2 also included a *Spirea Reevesiana*.<sup>3</sup> While many of the original plants in this section have died, been removed, and/or replaced, those extant are very similar to those present historically and in the 1931 aerial photograph. This section of the property has a high degree of integrity and retains historic setting and feeling with its extant specimen trees, plantings, etc.



Figure 26. Above (top): Looking south at Section 2. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 27. Left: Section 2 as depicted in 1870. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust. Figure 28. Right: Looking southeast, this aerial view of the subject property includes Section 2 circled in black to orient the read to its location within the larger property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Below: Looking southeast at Section 2. Source: Sisters of the Visitation, 2018.



<sup>3</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.



Looking north, **Sections 3, 4, and 5**. Section 3 is near the extant footway—at the site of the former northwest vehicle entrance from City Avenue—which was removed prior to 1931, originally featuring Sycamore and Norway Maples. Section 4 is to the southwest of the current footway, originally featuring California Privet, Syringa, and Deutzia Scabern. Sections 3 and 4 are preserved in the sense that trees still line the footway that extends along the line of the original northwest driveway. Section 5 extends in masses and/or groups along City Avenue in the area shown, which originally featured Evergreens, a few of which remain.<sup>4</sup> In both Sections 4 and 5 there are shrubs that once formed a single mass along City Avenue, a few examples of which are labeled according to the appropriate section.



Figure 29. Top: Looking north at Sections 3, 4, and 5. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 30. Left: Section 3, 4, and 5 in 1870. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust. Figure 31. Right: Looking southeast, this aerial view of the subject property orients Sections 3, 4, and 5, circled in black, within the larger property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. While most of the original plants in this section have been replaced, those extant are very similar to those present historically and in the 1931 aerial photograph.

<sup>4</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.

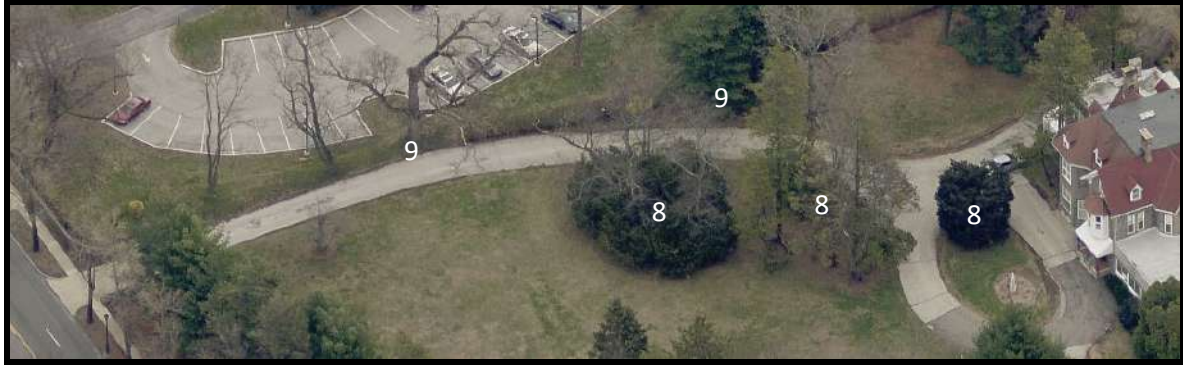


Figure 32. Left: Looking north, Section 7 is a cluster of trees and shrubs near the center of the property that were sited to obscure the viewshed of the house from City Avenue. Both sections originally contained Norway Spruces (7a), European Silver Firs (7b), Siberian Arbor Vitae, and Junipers (unknown). Figure 33. Right: Looking southwest, at the same cluster of trees, including an original Norway Spruce (7a). Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. While most of the original plants in this section have been replaced, those extant are very similar to those present historically and in the 1931 aerial photograph.



Figure 34. Left: Section 7 in 1870. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust. Figure 35. Right: Looking southeast, this aerial view of the subject property orients Section 1, circled in black, within the larger property. Below: Looking southeast, this detail of Section 7 shows the circular feature (7d) that once occupied a turn in the footway, as well as stonework supporting a slight terrace (7e). Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.





**Sections 8 and 9** both feature vegetation intended to hide the rear approach and the cluster of support buildings from the North Driveway, and the Pleasure Grounds, including the vast open lawn in front of the Main Block. Section 8 was designed to feature masses or groupings of Norway Spruces and Scotch Pines with Arbor Vitae to form a dense mass, component parts of which exist today in design intent. Section 9 was designed to feature White Pines, Norway Spruces, Junipers, and Yews, which survive in theory.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of which original trees and plantings are extant, Sections 8 and 9 retain a strong sense of historic character and place, including design, feeling and setting.



Figure 36. Above (top): Looking southeast at Sections 8 and 9. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 37. Left: Sections 8 and 9 in 1870. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust. Figure 38. Right: An aerial view of the subject property with Sections 8 and 9 circled in black to show its location within the larger property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

<sup>5</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.





**Section 10** forms a significant and intact cluster of evergreens, emulating, in placement and siting, the original White Pines, Norway Spruces, Junipers, and Yews that were part of the original intent of the Baumann Plan (Figure 22).<sup>6</sup> While most of the original plants in this section have been cut back or replaced, those extant are very similar to those present historically and in the 1931 aerial photograph (Figure 5), preserving the original design, feeling and setting.



Figure 39. Looking northwest at Section 10. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia. Figure 40. Left: Section 10 in 1870. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust. Figure 41. Right: Looking southeast, this aerial view of the subject property is to orient Section 10, outlined in black, within the larger property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

<sup>6</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.



Figure 42. Top: Looking southeast at the subject property in context. Figure 43. Bottom: Looking southeast at the more specific context. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

**6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION – PART II: BUILDINGS**

The subject property at 5848 City Avenue in the Overbrook neighborhood of Philadelphia is a former country seat that is set within the well-preserved pastoral, suburban landscape. Sited between 1865 and 1869 and first built between 1870 and 1871, being enlarged over the years, the subject property includes the following buildings and structures:

- # **Building/Structure Name (Date(s) of Construction)-Contributing Status/Additions**
1. Mansion House. Main Block (1870-71)-Significant (S), 1a. Arcade Addition (1898)-Contributing (C), 1b. Porch Addition (c1900-10)-C, 1c. East Addition (1900-20)-C, 1d. South Addition (1900-20)-C, 1e. Chapel Addition (1958)-~~Non~~-contributing (NC), 1f. Dormitory (1965)-~~NC~~
  2. Gardener’s Cottage (1870-71)-S
  3. Carriage House & Stable (1870-71); Alterations (c1898)-S
  4. Cherry Cottage (1898)-S
  5. Garden Building A (c1898)-C & B (c1898)-C
  6. Ancillary Building (c1940-60)-~~NC~~
  7. Garage/Storage (c1900-10)-C
  8. Cottage (1921)-C
  9. Driveway (1865-69)-S

Note: Chapel, dormitory, and ancillary building are classified as contributing, per the 13 November 2020 designation.



Figure 44. Top: The primary (northwest) elevation of the Main Block. Figure 45. Bottom: The northwest and northeast elevations of the Main Block from the driveway. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### **1. MANSION HOUSE (1870-71)**

Constructed between 1870 and 1871, the Main Block of the Mansion House (Main Block) is of load-bearing stone masonry construction laid out on a large square plan with a hipped roof featuring a central flat top. Built of rusticated granite, the building stands two-and-one-half-stories tall and essentially measures five bays in width on each elevation. Dual and single roof structures project from the hipped roof at each elevation, creating complex and irregular fenestrations, along with structural projections. The primary (northwest) elevation is divided into three sections, two of which are dominated by projecting roof structures and associated granite walls that comprise two distinct forms. On the northeast side of the primary elevation is a massive, three-part granite oriel component that features a hipped roof that intersects with the main roofline. At the face of the hipped roof is a single gable front dormer within which is a one-

over-one wooden sash window with a rounded top. The roof projects beyond the granite façade at each elevation and is supported by pairs of decorative wooden brackets that flank each side of the three-part oriel structure. At the center of the stone projection is a large, double-width window on both the first and second floors. These windows are defined by granite hoods with keystones. The side elevations of the oriel projection feature single openings per floor, with second-floor apertures that feature blind openings. At the opposite side of the primary elevation is a gable-fronted granite wing that projects from the primary mass. Heavy wooden moldings define the single-pitch gable with similar paired brackets at the top center, also flanking at each end. This gable is centered on two round top windows that are paired openings though separate with original wooden architraves. The wooden sash windows appear to be original in most openings. On the second floor is a three-part bay window that corresponds with the northeastern oriel projection. The bay window features single one-over-one wooden sash windows in each section of the three parts. This projecting structure features a hipped roof clad in the original or early red tile roof. Below the bay window is the primary entrance featuring a round-arch opening with double oak doors and sidelights further delineated by columns. Flanking the doorway are single stone corbels that are carved in a stylized motif. The doorway is accessed by a stone porch and steps that appear to have served as a carriage block. A mid-twentieth-century awning conceals part of the entrance, projecting from beneath the bay window. At the center of the northeast and southwest components is the façade of the primary mass at the center of which is a two-story mullion window that no-doubt follows the staircase from the first to the second floors. The opening contains original leaded glass windows defined by pointed arches. On the northeast elevation of the southwest stone projection is a small ornamental bay window. A dormer projects from the main roofline, emulating the aforementioned dormer.



Figure 46. The primary (northwest) and side (southwest) elevations of the Main Block and the Porch Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The southwest elevation of the Main Block is similarly complex, which is further complicated by the Porch Addition, a large one-story enclosed porch. This elevation is dominated by a single gable-front that projects from the main roofline, which is flanked by dormers similar to those previously described. The fenestration is similar to the aforementioned façade only less ornate. Two granite chimney stacks rise from this portion of the elevation. Brackets are used to decorate

the projecting roofline in the same manner as previously described. A bay window was added within the southeastern portion of this façade. The fenestration is otherwise unchanged.



Figure 47. Top: The primary (northwest) elevation of the Main Block. Figure 48. Middle left and Figure 49. right: Details of the primary (northwest) elevation of the Main Block. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019. Figure 50. Bottom left: The primary (northwest) elevation of the Porch Addition to the Main Block, showing the columns and cushion capitals with Norman architectural details of the porch addition. Figure 51. Bottom right: The primary entrance within the primary (northwest) elevation of the Main Block, showing similar columns and cushion capitals with Norman architectural details to the porch. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 52. Top: Looking east at the Main Block and Additions 1B, 1C, 1E, and 1F of the subject property. Figure 53. Bottom: Looking north at the Main Block and the Additions of the subject property. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

1b. Porch Addition is a single-story enclosed porch with a mansard roof that was likely added in the mid-twentieth century. The primary (northwest) elevation of the porch is six bays in width, featuring four columns that create three sections of two-part mullion windows. The columns feature cushion capitals with Norman architectural details. The southwest elevation of the porch is partly concealed by a one-story addition that connects the 1b. Porch Addition with the 1e. Chapel Addition, spanning roughly ten bays defined by five two-part mullion windows, featuring pairs of one-over-one-sash windows. The fenestration defined by similar columns. The southeast elevation of the 1b. Porch Addition is partly concealed by the two-story, masonry 1c. East Addition with a flat roof that rises to just below projecting eaves of the roof.

Constructed in 1958, 1e. Chapel Addition is a one-story, T-shaped building of masonry construction with a cross-gabled roof, appending 1b. Porch Addition and is a non-contributing feature to the property. To the southeast of the Main Block and 1e. Chapel Addition 1f. Dormitory, built in the 1960s, is the two-story building of masonry construction with a buff brick

façade. Connected to the aforementioned buildings by a covered walkway, the building is a non-contributing resource to the historic property.



Figure 54. Top: Looking northwest at the Main Block and 1a. Arcade Addition, 1b. Porch Addition, 1c. East Addition, 1d. South Addition, 1e. Chapel Addition, and 1f. Dormitory. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019. Figure 55. Bottom: The rear (southeast) and side (northeast) elevations of the Main Block with 1c. East Addition, 1d. South Addition, and 1a. Arcade Addition also in view. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The southeast elevation of the Main Block is similar to the primary (northwest) elevation with two separate projecting roof sections, but the two gables are within the primary massing of the building. At the center of the southeast elevation within the roof structure is a projecting dormer like those previously described. The southwest gable rises above a two-story masonry addition that appends the south corner of the Main Block. The two-story addition is of masonry construction with a flat roof, featuring stylized paneling and what appears to be a stucco finish.

The architectural details of the Main Block at this elevation are consistent with those previously described.



Figure 56. Top: The primary (northwest) elevation of 1a. Arcade Addition. Figure 57. Bottom: The side (northeast) elevation 1a. Arcade Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The northeast elevation of the Main Block is largely obscured by the 1a. Arcade Addition (Addition 1A). This addition is a rectangular wing of loading-bearing stone masonry construction. The upper floor of the Main Block features a central gable-front flanked by single dormers like those previously described. The primary (northwest) elevation of 1a. Arcade Addition is three bays in width and defined by an arcade of three arches at the ground floor. All of the arches are formed by finished rubble stone with lightly-colored stone abutments. The second-floor features two openings—a three-part mullion window and a small single window. The mullion window features original wooden sash windows, the upper sash being multi-light with a diamond pattern. The mullion window is further defined by a granite hood with a keystone. The northeast elevation of 1a. Arcade Addition features an arcade of two arches at the ground floor and two two-part mullion windows at the second floor. The two mullion windows are further defined by granite hoods with keystones. The second-floor windows feature the same



wooden sash configuration. The entire addition is characterized by a simple crenellation along the roofline.



Figure 58. Left: The primary (northwest) elevation of 1e. Chapel Addition. Figure 59. Right: The “1958” cornerstone within primary (northwest) elevation of the 1e. Chapel Addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019. Figure 60. Middle: The primary (northwest) and side (southwest) elevations of the 1e. Figure 61. Bottom: A side component of the primary (northwest) elevation of the 1e. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 62. Top: The northwest and southwest elevations of the 1f. Dormitory. Figure 63. Bottom: The southwest and southeast elevations of the 1f. Dormitory. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 64. The primary (southwest) elevation of the Gardener's Cottage. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### **1. GARDENER'S COTTAGE (1870-71)**

Constructed between 1870 and 1871, the Gardener's Cottage is a one-and-one-half-story L-shaped stone building with an enclosed porch and rear addition. The primary (southwest) elevation features the said enclosed porch with half-panelling and half windows, along with the primary entrance. The primary elevation of the building is concealed by the porch enclosure, but the original façade of the gable front is fully visible to the southeast. The rusticated granite façade features a single window opening at each level, featuring a segmental arch top at the ground floor and a round arch at the second. The roof projects greatly beyond the façade to form a widely projecting eave. To the northwest is a large gable-front dormer and at the center is a granite chimney stack.



Figure 65. Left: The side (northwest) and primary (southwest) elevations of the Gardener's Cottage. Figure 66. Right: The primary (southwest) and side (southeast) elevations of the Gardener's Cottage. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 67. Top: Looking south at the Carriage House & Stable. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia.  
Figure 68. Bottom: The primary (northwest) elevation of the Carriage House component of the larger Carriage House & Stable. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

## **2. CARRIAGE HOUSE & STABLE (1870-71)**

Constructed between 1870 and 1871, the Carriage House & Stable is a rectangular building with at least two additions and other alterations. The building stands one-and-one-half-stories tall and is of load-bearing construction with finished rubble stone façade, and a complex, cross-gable roof. The southwest half of the building is dominated by hipped roof with a massive gable-front dormer structure. The dormer is largely clad in wood shingles and siding, the southwest elevation

of which features a loading bay with double wooden doors. Above the loading bay is another opening with a three-part louvered window, beneath which projects a wood arm that suspended tackle to hoist items into the double doors below. The first floor of the southwest elevation is defined by a largely blind stone façade, at the center of which is a single window. The primary (northwest) elevation consists three sections, the southwestern-most of which includes the said hipped roof that projects above the stone façade with an infilled vehicle bay at center. This opening is defined by a stone lintel course. The central section includes an architectural embellishment dating to 1898 in the form of a projecting surround that defines the central vehicle bay and rises beyond the roofline to form a stepped parapet. The vehicle bay is delineated by a rusticated stone round arch, the opening of which is infilled with vinyl siding and a single metal pedestrian door. At the center of the stepped parapet is a small stone niche defined by a diminutive rusticated stone round arch. Beyond the parapet, projecting from the roof is a smaller gable-front dormer that features a two-part mullion window and a widely projecting eaves. This dormer is also clad in wood shingles. The northeastern-most section of the northwest elevation is largely defined by a one-and-one-half-story stone façade that takes the form of a gable front, which is defined by a large central opening that features a six-part mullion window at the base of a much larger loading bay with original or early-twentieth century double wooden doors with a transom above defined by a central arch of rusticated stone. These openings span both floors, the upper portion of which is at the center of single windows, one of which features a six-over-six wooden sash unit. At the center of the upper portion of the gable is another wooden arm used for loading through the doors below.



Figure 69. Left: A alteration to the central vehicle entrance of the primary (northwest) elevation of the Carriage House & Stable. Figure 70. Center: A projecting loading dormer on the second floor of the side (southwest) elevation, featuring much of its original details. Figure 71. Right: The northeastern most component of the primary (northwest) elevation of the Carriage House & Stable. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The southeast elevation is much like the northwest without the 1898 embellishment. Another three-part façade, the southwestern-most portion features a six-part mullion window within a largely blind rusticated stone façade. The central section of this elevation is dominated by a vehicle opening with a modern door. The third and northeastern-most section of the façade is a one-and-one-half-story component dominated by a gable-front. A single window occupies the first floor and second. Towards the east corner of the building is a large one-story addition that is of a rectangular form.



Figure 72. Top: The southwest and southeast elevations of the Carriage House & Stable. Figure 73. Bottom: The southwest elevation of the Stable component of the Carriage House & Stable. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

The Stable is a one-story building that projects from the Carriage House & Stable in a rectangular form with a side-gable roof, featuring a fenestration of approximately seven openings within the southwest elevation. At the center of the façade is a vehicle opening with the other windows on each side. The windows of the southeastern portion of the façade are concealed by a modern, open shed addition, where tractors and other equipment appears to be stored. All of the openings are defined by four-centered arch tops. Another rectangular addition appends the first addition.



Figure 74. The primary (northeast) elevation of Cherry Cottage. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### 3. CHERRY COTTAGE (1898)

Built in 1898, Cherry Cottage is a two-story, rectangular-shaped building of stone and wood construction. The first floor of the building is exposed rusticated stone laid in a random ashlar at each elevation, while the second story emulates a timber house, projecting from the stone base at the primary (northeast), northwest, and southwest elevations. The primary (northeast) elevation features a central entrance with a pedestrian door. A single window occupies the southeast portion of the façade, while a two-part mullion window is at the northwest. The second floor is defined by a timber façade that jetties from the stone base featuring two gable fronts that project ever so slightly from the cross-gable roof. At the center of each gable-front are two-part mullion windows. The jetty is supported by simple wooden brackets. The northwest elevation features a three-part mullion window with a stylized surround. The second floor is defined by the gable end that similarly treated with a projecting three-part bay window with a hipped roof. The jetty is also similarly treated. The southwest elevation is similar to the northeast. A one-story stone component projects from the main block to the southeast. There is a second story addition that is rather unsympathetic to the otherwise intact design. The building's primary roof components feature red tile or shakes. A stone stack rises from the roofline.



Figure 75. Left: The primary (northeast) and side (northwest) elevations of Cherry Cottage. Figure 76. Right: The primary (northeast) and side (northwest) elevations of Cherry Cottage. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



The southwest elevation of the Garden Building A. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

### **5A. GARDEN BUILDINGS A (c1898)**

Built c1898, Garden Building A is a small, single-story structure of decorative, red-brick masonry construction with a hipped roof that is attached to what appears to be a greenhouse or hothouse to the southeast and covered walkways to the northwest and the southwest. The building appears to have some original windows and likely decorative brickwork.

### **5B. GARDEN BUILDING B (c1865 - 1898)**

Built between 1865 and 1898, Garden Building B is a single-story rectangular masonry structure that appears to be painted white with a flat roof that once contained skylights. The building is attached to the southeast elevation of Garden Building A and extends to the northeast in a rectangular format.



Figure 77. Top: The northwest elevation of the Garden Buildings A & B. Figure 78. Bottom: The rear elevation of the Garden Buildings A & B. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.





Figure 79. Left: The southwest elevation of the Garage/Storage Building. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019. Figure 80. Right: The northwest elevation of the Garage/Storage Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

### **7. GARAGE/STORAGE BUILDING (c1900-10)**

Built c1900-10, the Garage/Storage Building is a one-story masonry building with a buff brick façade that is built on a rectangular plan with a gable-front roof. Located southeast of the Main Block and the other outbuildings, the Garage/Storage Building stands near the southeast property line on the Overbrook Farms side of the property. The northwest elevation features a wooden door with what appears to be a half panel, half ledged glass configuration. The gable front at this elevation features wooden shingles. The other building facades feature recessed brick panels at the northeast, southeast, and southwest elevations.



Figure 81. Left: The northeast elevation of the Garage/Storage Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019. Figure 82. Right: The southeast elevation of the Garage/Storage Building. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.



Figure 83. The primary (southwest) and side (southeast) elevations of the Cottage 1921. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

**8. COTTAGE (1921)** Located at the southeast extremity of the subject property, the Cottage, built in 1921, (Cottage 1921) is a one-and-one-half-story dwelling that features a side-gable, shed-like roof. The building features a façade of stucco on each elevation. The primary elevation features a mullion window and the face of an integral porch enclosure that includes a pedestrian door with flanking windows. The house features three low-slung shed dormers on each side of the roof.



Figure 84. The northwest and primary (southwest) elevations of the Cottage 1921. Source: Pictometry, Atlas, City of Philadelphia, 2019.

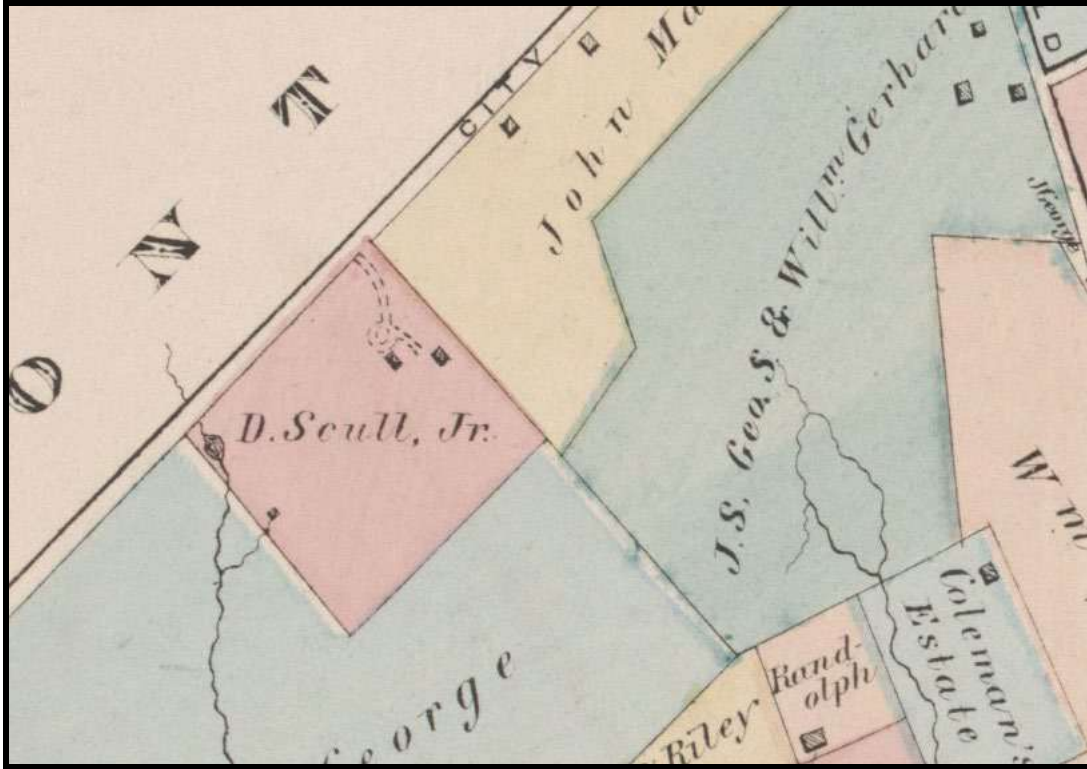


Figure 85. Hopkins, G.M., City Atlas of Philadelphia, 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Wards, 1872, Plate L, Volume 7. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The subject property, known originally as *The Chestnuts*, at 5848 City Avenue is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation;
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Situated on a magnificent site along City Avenue in Philadelphia, *The Chestnuts* and its contributing component resources comprise a significant historic landscape—a rare surviving specimen of a suburban country place of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Retaining much of its original “rural, suburban” character, the subject property satisfies Criteria A and J as a representative of the development of country places in Philadelphia. Also satisfying Criteria A and J, the subject property was the home David Scull, Jr. (1836-1907)—shown in Figures 137, 138, 139, and 141, a prominent Quaker merchant and philanthropist; and Charles P. Vaughan (1867-1936)—shown in Figures 143 and 144, an important industrialist and philanthropist, in both cases speaking to the economic and social heritage of the community.<sup>7</sup> With a high degree of physical integrity, the subject property is a documented design of Eugène Achilles Baumann (1817-1869)—shown in Figure 99, a significant Alsatian-American botanist, landscape gardener, and nurseryman, satisfying Criterion E. Aesthetically, the subject property represents the picturesque style of landscape architecture and gardening, a theory and practice popularized in the American context by Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), the distinguished American landscape gardener and tastemaker, and his disciples, satisfying Criterion D. The architectural characteristics and qualities of the subject property are exhibited through purpose-built and designed estate buildings and structures that possess “*architectural beauty*” evocative of the Victorian-era that were “considered conjointly with the *beauty of landscape* or situation,” evident to-date through the surviving layout of the property, extant driveways and walks, its verdurous and undulating pleasure grounds, monumental heritage trees, etc.<sup>8</sup> The same is true of the buildings, the original of which were designed by the prominent Quaker architect Addison Hutton (1834-1916)—shown in Figure 129—with later buildings by William “Will” Lightfoot Price (1861-1916)—shown in Figures 131 and 132, both of whom were architects who significantly impacted the built environment of the City of Philadelphia and the larger region. Preserved at a commercial, institutional, and suburban crossroads, *The Chestnuts*, with its elegant, magisterial, and sylvan qualities, forms a unique location, and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

The period of significance dates to the time of design and construction: 1865 to 1940.

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<sup>7</sup> Simpson, John Warfield. *Visions of Paradise: Glimpses of Our Landscape’s Legacy*. (University of California Press, 1999), 276.

<sup>8</sup> Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A treatise on the theory and practice of landscape gardening, adapted to North America; with a view to the improvement of country residences*. (New York & London: Wiley and Putnam; Boston: C.C. Little & Co., 1841), 298.



Figure 86. Looking east at the Main Block of *The Chestnuts* in 1897. Source: Samuel Fitch Hotchkin. *Rural Pennsylvania in the Vicinity of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs & Company, 1897), 22.

### **CRITERIA A & J**

Once among the most substantial private estates within the city limits of Philadelphia, *The Chestnuts* is a rare surviving historic landscape of the Victorian era. This highly intact country place with its associated historic buildings and grounds represents the cultural and social history of upper class Philadelphians, and the development of the suburban country house ideal in the nineteenth century. Planned by prominent Quakers David Scull, Jr. and his wife Hannah Ellicott Coale (1837-1871) in the mid-1860s, the landscape was designed and the buildings were sited by Eugène A. Baumann, the aforementioned Alsatian-American landscape gardener, and the original buildings were designed between 1870 and 1871 by Addison Hutton with later additions by another important Quaker architect Will Price, also of Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup>

The planning and construction of *The Chestnuts* represents the trend in the development of country places and suburban dwellings that was a direct result of the establishment of commuter railroad lines and, specifically, the “Main Line” of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The term Main Line is a moniker for the affluent Philadelphia suburbs created and serviced by the primary line

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<sup>9</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust.; and Thomas, George. *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design*. (New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 350.

of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway, once known as the Paoli Local, began laying its tracks across what was then known as Blockley Township in the 1830s. The route was parallel to Lancaster Avenue, crossing the entirety of West Philadelphia into Montgomery County. Established in 1846, the Pennsylvania Railroad acquired the Philadelphia & Columbia Railway in 1850, enabling transportation service from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia with an estimated 146,320 passengers in 1852. Despite this early ridership, the local trains we know today were not immediately in service. The following stations opened in 1860: Mantua, near 40<sup>th</sup> Street; Hestonville, at 52<sup>nd</sup> Street; and Overbrook at County Line Road (later renamed City Avenue).<sup>11</sup> With the arrival of the railroad stop at Overbrook, lands once encompassing large agrarian estates and farms gained greater value as wealthy industrialists and merchants from Philadelphia proper were wont to develop country places in close commuting distance to the city. David Scull, Jr., a successful woolen merchant, was no different. He managed to convince the George family to sell an 18-acre plot near the Overbrook Station in 1865.<sup>12</sup> This represents the early period of residential development resulting from the newly established proximity to passenger service provided by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The development of the Main Line was a long process that spanned much of the second half of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. In fact, while Scull's decidedly rural environs were radically changing due to the Overbrook Farms development by the 1890s, country places and suburban residences were still being developed in more rural and idyllic settings along the Main Line. A rural setting like what was vanishing near *The Chestnuts* at the turn of the twentieth century was being both enhanced and more sensitively preserved near the Paoli Station by people like John Christian Bullitt (1824-1902), the eminent lawyer and author of the Philadelphia's new City charter. Approaching retirement, Bullitt commissioned Furness Evans, Architects, to design his country house, stable and gardener's cottage at Paoli, unconsciously emulating a pattern of development on the Main Line that began closer to town with people like Scull in the 1860s, and even earlier in relationship to other railroad lines.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 91.

<sup>11</sup> Tello J. d'Apéry, *Overbrook Farms: Its Historical Background, Growth and Community Life* (Philadelphia: Magee Press, 1936), 59-62.

<sup>12</sup> Deed: John M. George, et. al. to David Scull, Jr., 11 December 1865, Philadelphia Deed Book L.B.R., No. 145, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Cohen, Jeffrey A., Lewis, Michael J., and Thomas, George E. *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 330.

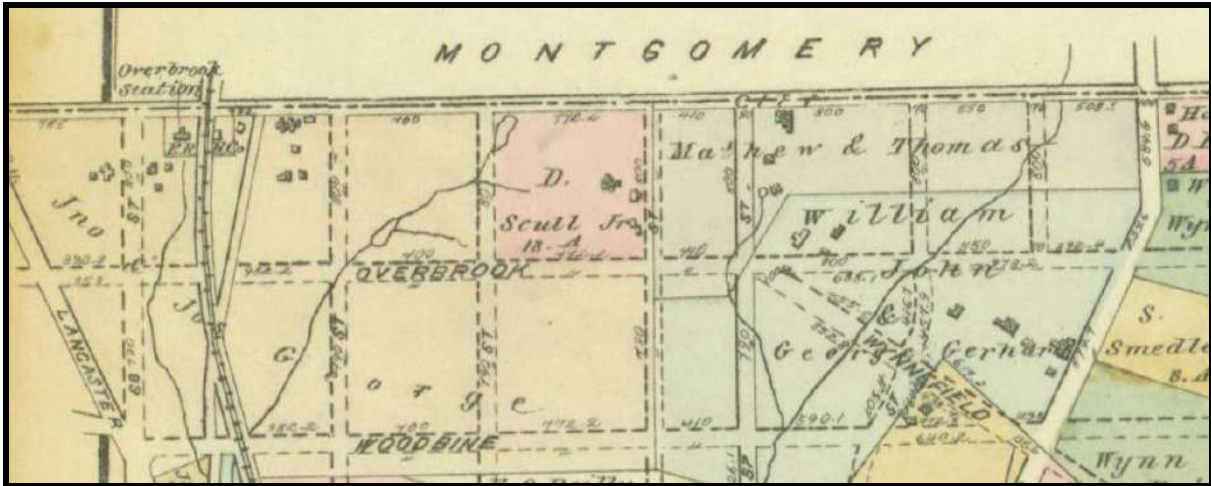


Figure 87. Showing the vicinity of the subject property northeast of Overbrook Station in 1878. Source: Atlas of the 24<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Wards, West Philadelphia, 1878, Plate L, by J.B. Scott. Via Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

Even in the 1870s, Scull was one among just a few families that had acquired property from the George family and other longtime landholders near Overbrook Station to develop their own personal estates in a suburban, rural environment. In 1878, as shown in J.B. Scott's *Atlas of the 24th & 27th Wards, West Philadelphia*, the George family's property still surrounded Overbrook Station undeveloped. Nearby were other nominally-sized, estate-like parcels comparable to Scull's, including P.S. Esrey, Frank Godey (1844-1928), Frederick P. Hayes (1847-1919), Wistar Morris (1816-1891), Francis O. Reilly (1872-1943), Joseph R. Rhoads (1841-1915), S. Smedley, and Joseph B. Townsend (1821-1896) at Greystone. Scull was definitely among the first to penetrate the local strongholds near Overbrook Station, though he was a prominent and wealthy Philadelphia Friend, which may have served as an appropriate calling card to accompany the cold, hard cash he used to purchase the property. In fact, he accompanied institutions like the Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo, which also established itself in 1871 at Overbrook in Lower Merion Township caddy corner from *The Chestnuts* across City Avenue.<sup>14</sup> Charles In his autobiography, Scull's son, William Ellis Scull (1862-1942)—shown in Figure 96, described the conditions near Overbrook Station in the 1870s as somewhat primitive compared to decades later, though the family certainly had greater access to luxuries than most Philadelphians:

Every morning representatives of about eight families would meet at Overbrook Station for the 8:21 train; the men going to business; the boys and girls, to school. We had a rather gay time on the way in. One or two of the brakemen we liked very much but the others were rough and trying to keep order. The only station house was a wooden room about 15 feet square with a green flag, which was used to stop the train.

One of the highlights of the era was an Indian named Plumley, with high cheek bones and slick, greased, jet-black hair, who would jump off the arriving train

<sup>14</sup> Baist, G. Wm. Atlas of the Properties Along the Pennsylvania R.R. from Overbrook to Malvern Station. (J.L. Smith, 1887), Plate 2.

with a big bundle of newspapers in a strap under his arm, sell as many as he could, and waltz onto the train after it was going at a fairly good pace.

There was no bridge over the railroad in those days and when we had to hurry for the train, all of our friends—and others—were interested in watching us from the windows of the cars. There were no shops that I can recall within a long distance of Overbrook; the farmers brought their produce to the house. My aunt, Mrs. Francis C. Yarnall, who lived a mile and a half south from the railroad, used to send her coachman about two miles away to the toll gate on the Haverford Road to get the good butter a farmer left there for her.

One time, at least, when the farmer had neglected to come, or our cows had gone dry, my father carried a butter kettle to the train with him. But hurrying to catch the train, he tripped and fell, the kettle flying across his path. The conductor held the train for us—and the passengers had a good laugh.<sup>15</sup>

These memories, recorded by William E. Scull, from his youth, speak to the conditions of Overbrook, and its early residential history.

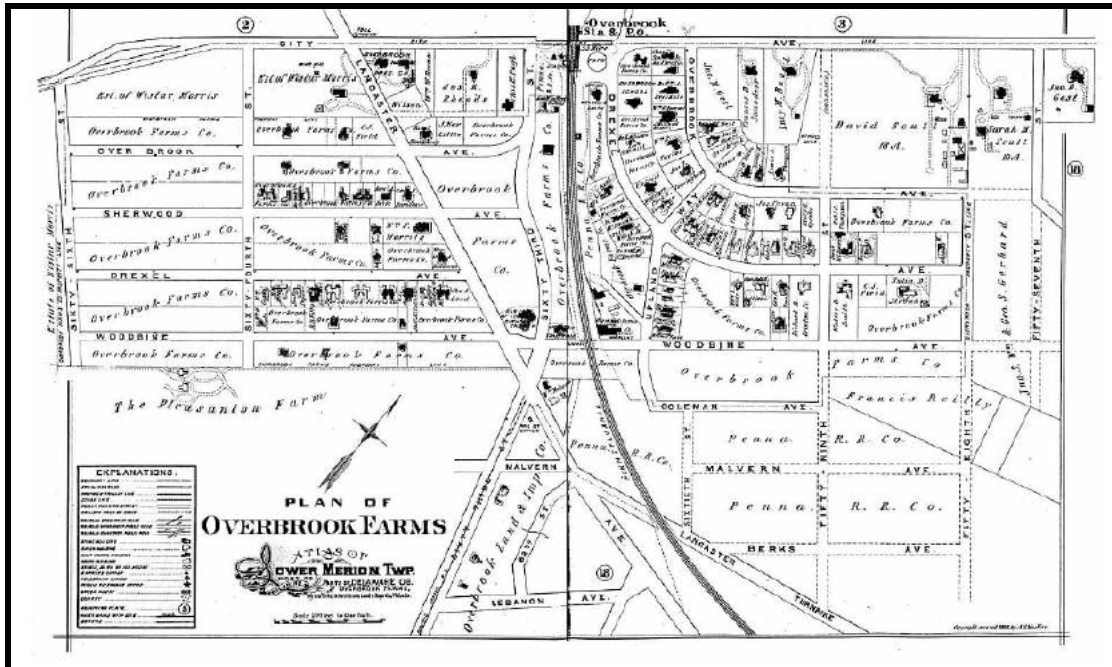


Figure 88. A plan of Overbrook Farms, 1896. Source: Farnham, Jonathan. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Overbrook Farms, West Philadelphia, Philadelphia. (Philadelphia Historical Commission, August 2019), 18.

The development of country places and suburban residential enclaves was not isolated to the Main Line. In fact, the establishment of the railroad line in Germantown had led to the creation

<sup>15</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2. Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Winter 2020 - p. 47 *The Chestnuts aka Leighton Place, The Country Seat of David Scull, Jr.* 5848 City Ave, Overbrook, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19131-1210



of such developments even earlier, as did the prior horse car line on Germantown Avenue. In the northwest part of the city, even before it was consolidated, Quakers like the Hackers of Germantown bought old houses in need of repair for country or suburban respite, while keeping houses in town. This allowed wealthy families to commute by horse car line or, in the truest and most familiar style of the wealthy, private coach. Nevertheless, the advent of improved modes of public transit justified and spurred suburban development in other parts of the city, though few would gain the same panache as that of the Pennsylvania Railroad line from Philadelphia to Paoli. While both the Mantua and Hestonville Stations would witness development more expeditiously, Overbrook remained slow to transition from rural to suburban due to the fact that the George Estate remained relatively intact. As a result, *The Chestnuts* would not gain any major neighbors until the 1880s, when individuals like Louisa “Lucy” (Ralston) Baugh (1833-1912)—her home being features in Figure 90, Frances (Baugh) Saunders (1858-1937), and various members of the Gest family—relatives of the Baughs and “Old Philadelphia” incarnate, developed suburban residences on smaller, but ample parcels to the northwest, northeast and southwest of the Sculls on City Avenue. And there were certainly others who managed to acquire property for private estates prior to the major efforts that would come in the 1890s.

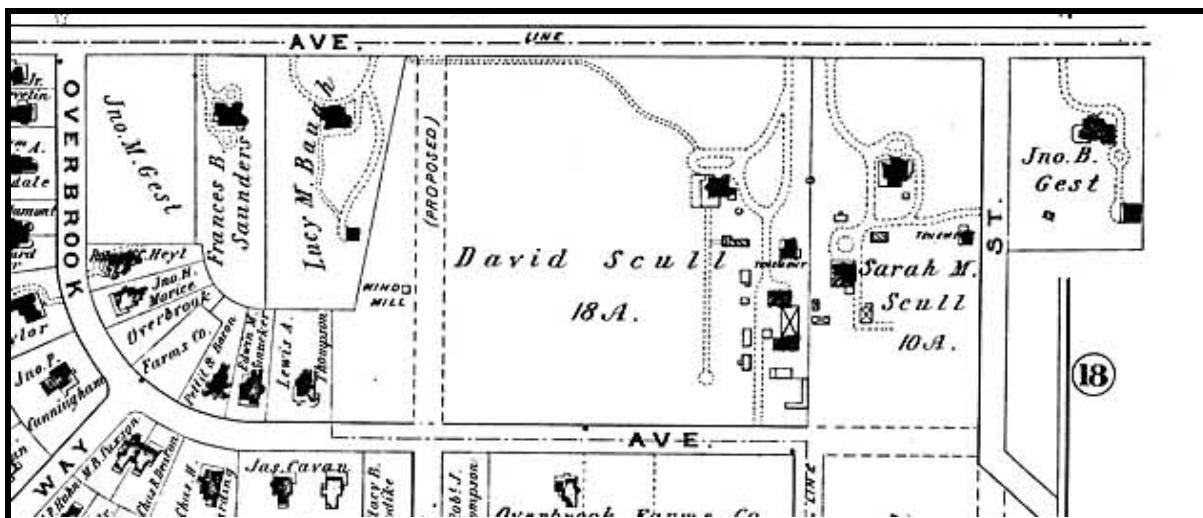


Figure 89. A detail of the Plan of Overbrook Farms, 1896, showing the Scull properties as they appeared in 1896. Source: Farnham, Jonathan. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Overbrook Farms, West Philadelphia, Philadelphia. (Philadelphia Historical Commission, August 2019), 18.

The primary residential development of the area took place after Drexel & Co., its senior partner being the almighty financier Anthony J. Drexel (1826-1893), purchased the George Estate in 1892, which still consisted of 171 acres of undeveloped land that surrounded the Overbrook Station (Figures 88 and 89).<sup>16</sup> William E. Scull described the development of the formerly picturesque landscape as being “improved” by “Mr. Drexel” in the pejorative that preservationists would use today when undisturbed landscapes and historic buildings are destroyed in the name of progress:

<sup>16</sup> Farnham, Jonathan. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Overbrook Farms, West Philadelphia, Philadelphia. (Philadelphia Historical Commission, August 2019).

The illustrations given here of Leighton Place, show the beautiful country appearance of Overbrook during the early part of the time we lived there—until the Overbrook Farms Company bought the George property and “improved” it. With the growth of skyscrapers and commercial buildings spreading out in all directions from central Philadelphia, most of the residents have been driven out of the old sections and Overbrook is now called the residence part of Philadelphia.<sup>17</sup>

What would become known as the Overbrook Farms development took place in stages between 1892 and 1929 (Figures 88 and 89).<sup>18</sup>



Figure 90. Mrs. Baugh’s Cottage, City Avenue, Overbrook, Philadelphia (demolished 2019), an example of the early development of the area prior to the completion of Overbrook Farms. Source: Hidden City Philadelphia.

At the earliest opportunity, the Scull family expanded their bucolic reserve at Overbrook in 1880, when Edward Lawrence Scull (1846-1884), David Scull, Jr.’s brother and business partner, purchased two tracts, comprising a 10-acre site, immediately adjacent to *The Chestnuts* at the northeast.<sup>19</sup> Edward L. Scull had just married Sarah Elizabeth Marshall (1845-1910), which, eventually, led him to commission Addison Hutton to design a large house for him, his wife, and their forthcoming child.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, this specimen of Hutton’s oeuvre seems almost entirely alien to David Scull, Jr.’s Main Block of 1870-71, presenting the complex stylistic transitions that occurred in the Victorian era. During their brief marriage, Edward L. Scull and Sarah E. Marshall had two children Edward Marshall Scull (1880-1952) and John Lawrence Scull (1883-1950), who were raised at the neighboring property. Edward L. Scull died on June 14, 1884 at the Oatlands Park Hotel, while stopping at Surrey in England.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly enough, David

<sup>17</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 19.

<sup>18</sup> Farnham, Jonathan. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Overbrook Farms, West Philadelphia, Philadelphia. (Philadelphia Historical Commission, August 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Deed: Furman M. Mayhew and wife to Edward L. and Sarah Scull. 20 January 1880. Philadelphia Deed Book: L.W., No. 75, p. 297.; and Charles J. Thomas and wife to Edward L. and Sarah Scull. 18 March 1880. Philadelphia Deed Book: L.W., No. 91, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> “Diary, 1882,” Addison Hutton Papers, Coll. no. 1122, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library.

<sup>21</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

Scull, Jr. had purchased his brother's property earlier that year, though his widow and children would remain in residence for more than ten years.<sup>22</sup> The Philadelphia Deed Registry confirms that David Scull, Jr. held the property until 1890 when his sister-in-law purchased her home, which remained in her possession until 1918 when it was sold to Cardinal Dougherty.

As the new houses were being built nearby in the 1890s, David Scull, Jr. was accommodating his son's small, but, apparently, expensive family: William Ellis Scull (1882-1942); his wife, Florence Moore Prall (1855-1937)—shown in Figures 96 and 97, and their daughter and David Scull, Jr.'s only grandchild, Margot Ellis Scull (1896-1972)—shown in Figure 97.<sup>23</sup> Likely accommodating his growing family, David Scull, Jr. upgraded his mansion with a new wing designed by Will Price, then a budding Quaker architect. While Price used the same stone, his work is distinctly different from Hutton's earlier style, bringing a certain modernity to the already old-fashioned, twenty-year-old mansion—at least one addition accommodated a nursery. Price was also commissioned to design other near features on the property including, Cherry Cottage in 1898, renovations to the Carriage House & Stable, and both the 1a. Arcade Addition and 1b. Porch Addition to the Main Block. This also appears to have included changes to the façade of the house and some interior alterations. Work at *The Chestnuts*, by then renamed *Leighton Place* for the Sculls' ancestral seat in Hedfordshire, England, was convenient to his nearby work for the Overbrook Farms Company.



Figure 91. *Holt Fleet*, the Residence of David Scull, Jr. at Dark Harbor, Maine. Source: House & Garden. Via Google Books.

Perhaps partly stimulated by the suburbanization of Overbrook, the Sculls did not occupy *The Chestnuts* yearround. They had always gone to Maine in the summertime, but it was not until the

<sup>22</sup> Deed: Edward L. Scull to David Scull, Jr. March 1884. Philadelphia Deed Book: J.O.D., No. 179, p. 150.

<sup>23</sup> *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.; and 1900 United States Federal Population Census, via Ancestry.com

1890s that the place became increasingly attractive due to the development of Dark Harbor in Islesboro, Maine, an enclave that required a ferry to access. David Scull, Jr. was among the first to build a cottage, known as *Holt Fleet* (Figure 91), at Dark Harbor.<sup>24</sup> His son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter would continue to be devotees of Dark Harbor over the years.<sup>25</sup> This explains why upper-class Philadelphia families would lease *The Chestnuts*, while the family was away at Dark Harbor. One such tenant was that of Josiah Bunting “of Spruce Street” in the summer of 1899.<sup>26</sup> While David Scull, Jr. appears to have spent more of his time in Philadelphia at *The Chestnuts*, his son’s family traveled for much of the years, usually returning to Philadelphia in November of each year for the society balls after months of rusticing.<sup>27</sup>

Even in 1896, when the development and construction of Overbrook Farms was in full force, David Scull, Jr. retained 18 acres for his place, while his sister-in-law resided on 10 acres next door. In fact, neither of the Sculls, nor the preceding owners of *The Chestnuts*—the Vaughan family, who purchased the property in 1919, and the Sisters of the Visitation, purchasing it from the Vaughans in 1940—would significantly reduce the physical acreage of the original property.<sup>28</sup> Some land, however was sold to the southwest and at the south corner of the property, which led to residential development. Nevertheless, the overall picturesque quality of the place has been entirely maintained, improving various aspects of the estate over time (Figure 92).<sup>29</sup>

Ultimately, *The Chestnuts* represents the type of early rural suburban development that took place in Philadelphia and the larger region along commuter railroad lines during much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, the growth and development of the estate speaks to the way in which properties of scale were both enlarged and improved over time, being passed down from one generation to the next. While the initial development of *The Chestnuts* took place prior to most of the other residential development projects that created the picturesque suburbs, architectural trends of the newly developed Overbrook Farms neighborhood clearly influenced the way in which the Sculls chose to continue enhancing their property, as their house was clearly from a bygone era in comparison to the new and modern suburban dwellings built nearby. While David Scull, Jr. may have been more conservative in making these alterations, his son and daughter-in-law were very fashion- and socially-conscious.<sup>30</sup> Outside Philadelphia, the “Main Line” suburbs were no different, leading to some of the most princely estates of the Greater Philadelphia Region.

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<sup>24</sup> Daniels, Caroline T. *Dark Harbor*. (Privately Printed, 1935), 12.; Lawrence, Elizabeth Prescott. “Isleboro: A Bit of the Maine Coast,” *House and Garden*, July 1907, 23.

<sup>25</sup> Daniels, Caroline T. *Dark Harbor*. (Privately Printed, 1935), 22.

<sup>26</sup> “Across the Schuylkill,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 June 1899, 26.

<sup>27</sup> “Mr. and Mrs. William Ellis Scull,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 October 1908, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Deed: William Ellis Scull of the City of Philadelphia and Florence Prall Scull, his wife, to Charles P. Vaughan and his wife Fannie W. Vaughan, Catherine Nelson Vaughan, and Barbara Thomas Vaughan. 1 October 1919. Philadelphia Deed Book J.M.H., No. 680, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939).

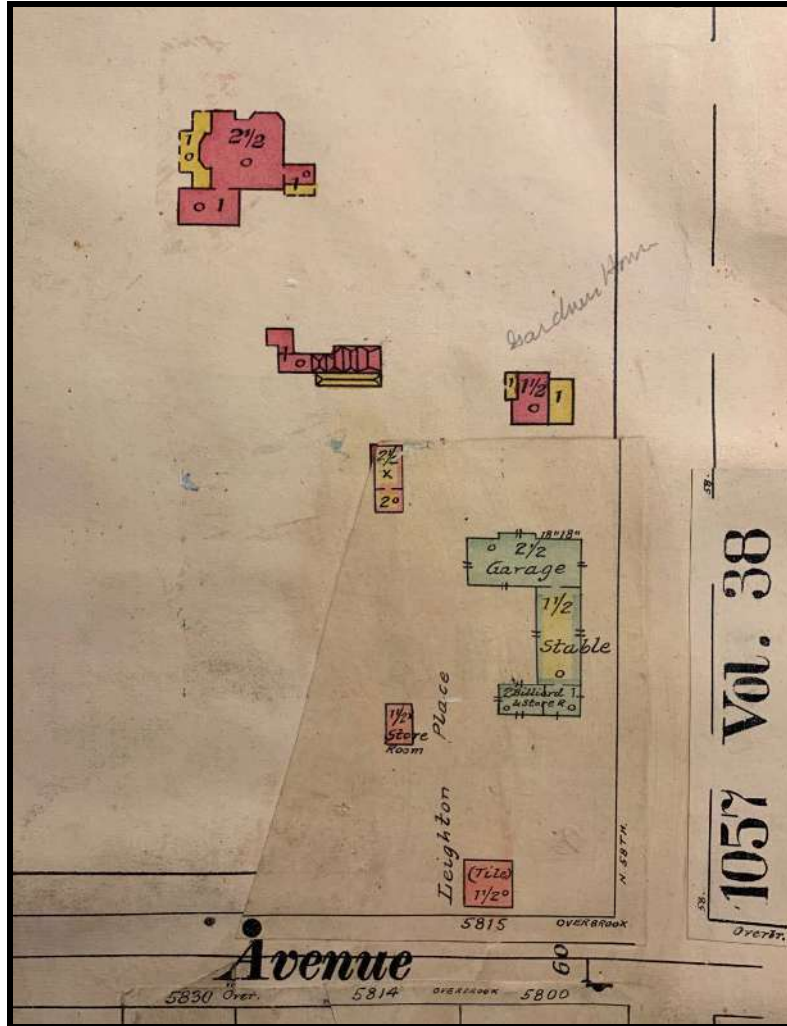


Figure 92. A detail, showing *The Chestnuts* (renamed *Leighton Place* by the time this map was created) of the Insurance Maps of the City of Philadelphia surveyed and drawn by Ernest Hexamer & Son, Civil Engineers and Surveyors, Volume XXXI. (Philadelphia: Ernest Hexamer & Son, 1907, Updated through 1924). Source: Insurance Surveys, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

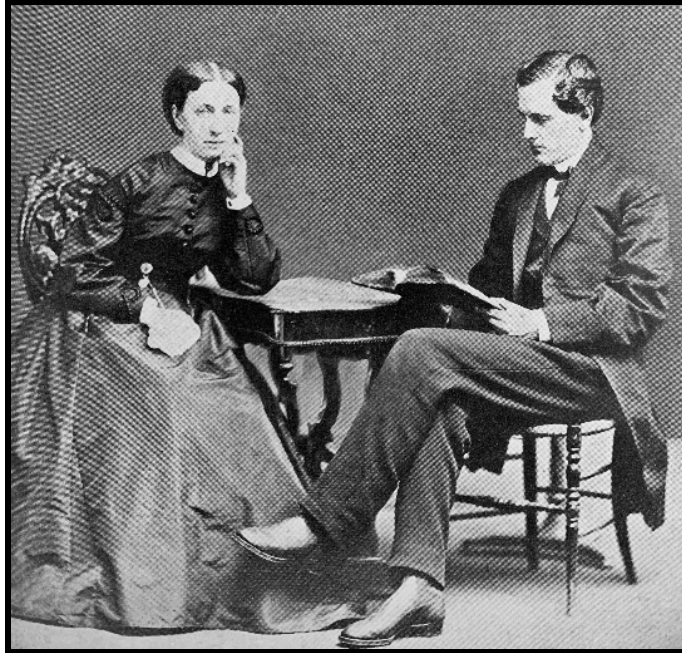


Figure 93. Hannah Ellicott Coale and David Scull, Jr. Source: *William Ellis Scull, Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 3.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: *THE CHESTNUTS, LATER KNOWN AS LEIGHTON PLACE***

Prominent Quakers David Scull, Jr., and his wife Hannah Ellicott Coale (Figure 93) began planning for a country place at Overbrook as early as 1865, when they purchased the subject property, comprising approximately eighteen acres, from the George family on December 11 for \$15,000.<sup>31</sup> According to his son, William E. Scull, the “ground had been coveted by many, but no one could buy it until my father [David Scull, Jr.], with his beautiful face and personality...”<sup>32</sup> However, the Sculls did not build a house on the property right away. In fact, at some point between 1865 and 1869, the Sculls commissioned Eugène A. Baumann to design and layout the property.<sup>33</sup> As Baumann died in 1869, but was credited for the design in *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening* (1870), it is clear that the Sculls were planning in advance for their new country place. Detailed information on Baumann, and the design and layout of the landscape is discussed under Criteria D and E.

By 1870, the Sculls had engaged Quaker architect Addison Hutton to design a large house for their 18-acre property at Overbrook. The commission included the aforementioned Main Block, the Carriage House & Stable, and Gardener’s Cottage.<sup>34</sup> Hutton’s first visit to the Scull property

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<sup>31</sup> Deed: John M. George, Joseph W. George, Jane George, and Sophia M. George, all of the Twenty-fourth Ward of the City of Philadelphia, the only surviving children of Joseph George, late of Blockley Township, Philadelphia County, deceased, to David Scull Junior of the City of Philadelphia, Wool Merchant. 11 December 1865. Philadelphia Deed Book: L.R.B., No. 145, p. 35.

<sup>32</sup> *William Ellis Scull, Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust.

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Biddle Yarnall. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect*. (Associated University Presse, 1974), 70.

appears to have occurred on August 23, 1870, he took the 8:15AM train to Overbrook Station. Another visit was recorded on October 25, 1870 at 8:00A.M. took much of the day. Again, Hutton visited again on December 15, 1870 at 2:30PM.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, his designs had been put in place by Baumann years earlier.

As previously stated, Hannah died on April 4, 1871, just a few months before *The Chestnuts* was completed. The house was ready for occupancy by June 1871, and the first night that David Scull, Jr., and his young son William E. Scull spent at the house was the 16<sup>th</sup> of that month.<sup>36</sup>

The house was designed with a certain “Gothic, suburban simplicity,” being “profoundly asymmetrical with a gable fronted entrance bay on the right, separated from a polygonal bay on the left by a narrow central connection that contains a stair—indicated by a narrow lancet window.”<sup>37</sup> While this elevation faced City Avenue and included the primary entrance at the Driveway, a commodious wooden porch at the side summoned a vista of the largest designed and natural expanse of the undulating eighteen-acre property.

At the time *The Chestnuts* was newly completed, Overbrook was a sparsely populated section of Philadelphia. It was comprised of farms, estates, and country places. There were no stores, schools or other resources, aside from the various roads and the railroad right-of-way. William E. Scull attended the William Penn Charter School, which was then located next to the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Meeting House in Philadelphia proper.

By 1897, Samuel Fitch Hotchkin, an important local historian, wrote about *The Chestnuts* in his book, *Rural Pennsylvania in the Vicinity of Philadelphia*:

The granite of the neighborhood provided the stone which formed the dwelling, which is located on an eminence commanding a delightful view.

On the side facing Overbrook Farms there are tastefully laid out gardens and extensive buildings, including houses for the coachman and gardener, a commodious coach-house and stable, and greenhouses; and various other buildings suited to a country place covering nineteen acres, which was the first purchase in the division of the old George estate. The house was erected in A.D. 1871, from plans by Addison Hutton.<sup>38</sup>

Soon after this description, and as the Overbrook Farms development was progressing, David Scull, Jr., enlarged the capacity of the estate with additional out buildings and improvements. In

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<sup>35</sup> “Diary, 1870,” Hutton papers, Coll. no. 1122, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library.

<sup>36</sup> *William Ellis Scull, Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas, George. “Pennsylvania Historic Resources Survey Form: David Scull home, 5848 City Avenue Line Avenue, Philadelphia.” 13 July 1982. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission Files.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Fitch Hotchkin. *Rural Pennsylvania in the Vicinity of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs & Company, 1897), 22.

1898, Scull commission the eminent architect Will Price to design Cherry Cottage.<sup>39</sup> Price was again employed to make “improvements” to Scull’s residence in 1900, constituting the 1a. Arcade Addition, 1b. Porch Addition and 1c. East Addition.<sup>40</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer* estimated the work at \$4,000, consisting of a second story rear addition, measuring 24 by 36 feet, as well as interior alterations.<sup>41</sup> Another addition, measuring 24 by 41 feet, was announced in February 1902 to be built by Joseph F. Dolan, contractor. The improvement was to be erected of stone and feature room for a nursery, pantry and bathroom at a cost of \$2,500.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 94. Left: Florence Prall Scull. Figure 95. Middle: Florence Prall and Margot Scull. Figure 96. Right: William E. Scull. Source: *William Ellis Scull, Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1, 50, & 210.

By 1904, David Scull, Jr., slightly reduced the size of his large estate by selling a lot at the northwest corner of Overbrook Avenue and 59<sup>th</sup> Street, measuring 150 by 180 feet.<sup>43</sup> Despite his death on November 22, 1907 at 9:40 AM, his heirs retained ownership of the property until 1919 when it was sold to the Vaughan family.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Thomas, George. *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design*. (New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 350.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas, George. *William L. Price: Arts and Crafts to Modern Design*. (New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 351.

<sup>41</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 March 1900, 9.

<sup>42</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 February 1902, 11.

<sup>43</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 January 1904, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Pennsylvania (State). Death certificates, 1906–1963. Series 11.90 (1,905 cartons). Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Record Group 11. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.; and Deed: William Ellis Scull of the City of Philadelphia and Florence Prall Scull, his wife, to Charles P. Vaughan and his wife Fannie W. Vaughan, Catherine Nelson Vaughan, and Barbara Thomas Vaughan. 1 October 1919. Philadelphia Deed Book J.M.H., No. 680, p. 23.



*The Philadelphia Inquirer* described the property as follows:

The property has a large frontage on City Line avenue, and also fronts on Overbrook avenue. The sale included the residence, large stables, garage, two gardeners' cottages and a greenhouse and a total acreage of 9.57 acres. The price paid for the property is not disclosed. It was reported held for sale at \$200,000. The purchaser will make extensive alterations and improvements.<sup>45</sup>

This article confirms that nearly all of the significant and contributing buildings on the site today were erected by 1918, though the Vaughans would certainly leave their mark on the place.

In June 1921, Charles P. Vaughan commissioned a "Sleeping Porch" addition built of stone, measuring 17-1/2 feet by 14-1/2 feet, at a cost of \$4,000.<sup>46</sup> This was likely a component of one of the aforementioned additions—1c. East Addition or 1d. South Addition. By August 1921, he commissioned a one-story brick cottage—the Cottage 1921, measuring 46 feet by 26 feet, which was to be erected by Alfred James, a contractor, of Bala, Pennsylvania.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 January 1918, 20.

<sup>46</sup> *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 8 June 1921, 366.

<sup>47</sup> *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 24 August 1921, 545.



Figure 97. A view of *The Chestnuts* from City Avenue and 59<sup>th</sup> Street, the roof of the Main Block being visible between the trees in the distance. Source: *William Ellis Scull, Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939).

#### **CRITERION D**

*The Chestnuts* is a designed landscape that embodies distinguishing characteristics of the “picturesque” style of landscape architecture, as adapted and applied to small- to medium-size country places of a rural, suburban character in the mid-nineteenth century. Derived from the eighteenth century English landscape, the Picturesque mode is part of a larger divergence from the “ancient style of gardening...those of regularity, symmetry, and the display of laboured art.”<sup>48</sup> Eminent practioners such as Lancelot “Capability” Brown (c1715-16-1783), the incredible English landscape gardener, among others, initially laid the ground work that led to the emergence of a new set of aesthetic ideals far removed from the Geometric designs of the past. In the nineteenth century, three distinct modes of landscape architectural style emerged and formalized in the nineteenth century: the Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Picturesque, only the latter two being greatly known and prominent in the United States.<sup>49</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing popularized the practical application of these styles, describing the Picturesque as follows:

The Picturesque School of Landscape Gardening, Fig. 13, aims at the production of outlines of a certain spirited irregularity; surfaces, comparatively abrupt and broken; and growth, of a somewhat wild and bold character. The shape of ground sought after, has its occasional smoothness varied by sudden variations, and, in parts, runs into dingles, rocky groups, and broken banks. The trees should in

<sup>48</sup> Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A Treatise On The Theory And Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America; With A View To The Improvement of Country Residences*. (New-York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 48.

<sup>49</sup> Tatum, George B. *Prophet with Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852)*. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989), 60-61.

many places be old and irregular, with rough stems and bark; and pines, larches and other trees of striking character to the woody outlines. As, in the Graceful school the trees are planted singly, in open groups, to allow full expansion, so in the Picturesque school, the groupings takes every variety of form; every object should group with another; trees and shrubs are often planted closely together; and intricacy, and variety—thickets—glades—and underwood—as in wild nature, are all dispensable. Walks and roads are more abrupt, turning off frequently at sudden angles, where the form of ground, or some inviting object directs. In water, all the wildness of romantic spots in nature, is to be imitated or preserved; and the lake or stream with bold shore, and rocky, wood-fringed margin, or the cascade in the secluded dell, are the characteristic forms. The keeping of such a landscape will, of course, be less careful than in the graceful school. Firm gravel walks near the house, and a general air of neatness in that quarter, are indispensable to the fitness of the scene in all modes, and, indeed properly evince the recognition of art in all Landscape Gardening. But the lawn may be less carefully trimmed, in the picturesque mode. While in portions more removed from the house, the walks may sometimes sink into a mere footpath without gravel, and the lawn change into forest, glade or meadow. The architecture of the Picturesque school, is the Gothic mansion and old English cottage, or the Swiss, or some other bracketted [sic.] form, with bold projections, deep shadows, and irregular outlines. Rustic baskets, and similar ornaments, may abound near the house, and in the more frequent parts of the place.<sup>50</sup>

In context, *The Chestnuts* possesses many of the characteristics of the Picturesque, including, achieving an overall rural and rustic effect in its otherwise ordinary suburban context. There are several factors that no doubt influenced and formed the design and style of the subject property, including the location and setting, the designer, and the moment and time.

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<sup>50</sup> Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A Treatise On The Theory And Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America; With A View To The Improvement of Country Residences*. (New-York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 48.



Figure 98. An illustration from Downing's *Landscape Gardening And Rural Architecture*, showing a Picturesque landscape with a Picturesque Gothic Revival house. Source: Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A Treatise On The Theory And Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America; With A View To The Improvement of Country Residences*. (New-York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 48.

The subject location and its natural setting of the 1860s was said to be the choicest section of the 300+-acre George Estate, offering “an eminence” or plateau, providing both a flat surface for buildings and certain sections of the pleasure grounds and gardens to the northeast, while also featuring undulating grounds to the southwest with thickets, meadows, and formerly a stream.<sup>51</sup> The property was once replete with old Chestnut trees, thus the moniker: *The Chestnuts*. These features certainly suited the designer’s probable or perhaps engrained bias for the Picturesque. As will be referenced in his biography, Eugene A. Baumann undertook extensive educational and experiential international tours during the 1830s, which led him to work with the esteemed John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), the Scottish author, botanist, and landscape gardener.<sup>52</sup> As a great influencer, Loudon came to prominence in the field of landscape architecture after the death of Humphry Repton (1752-1818), “the last great English landscape designer of the eighteenth century.”<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, Loudon’s career was formed by the influence of Sir Uvedale Price (1747-1829) and the Picturesque. While Loudon would evolve over time to coin his own style, he popularized the notion of distinctive modes of landscape architecture, including “the Gardenesque,” a term that did not enjoy longevity in the larger aesthetic criteria of the nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup> These prevailing influences, as well as his illustrious family of Alsatian botanists and gardeners, served as the proper precursors to enable

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Fitch Hotchkiss. *Rural Pennsylvania in the Vicinity of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs & Company, 1897), 22.

<sup>52</sup>Journal of Eugene A. Baumann, 1836. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>53</sup> Tatum, George B. *Prophet with Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852)*. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989), 59-60.

<sup>54</sup> Tatum, George B. *Prophet with Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852)*. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989), 64.

Eugene A. Baumann to hit the ground running when he arrived in America, shortly thereafter working on several important commissions.

The reason for David Scull, Jr.'s choice of designer is likely lost to history, but, like so many of his Quaker peers, he sought beauty in architecture and landscape outside the industrialized city. Eugene A. Baumann arrives in America shortly after the death of Andrew Jackson Downing, often called "the American Loudon." After his *Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture* was published in 1841, Downing produced other books, as well as years of material through *The Horticulturist: Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*, all of which informed the taste of many Americans with means to seek the professional services of budding new design professional—the landscape gardener. With these books and publications being accessible, Downing had profound influence on the field of architecture both in buildings and landscape that extended well beyond New York. One obscure, but poignant example is found in the privately published life story of Therese Langhorne Bullitt Coles (1851-1922), the daughter of John Christian Bullitt, the eminent Philadelphia lawyer and author of the "City Charter." Born just one year before Downing's death, her adolescence was passed with various works of Charles Dickens, as well as "the Late Mr. Downing's" *The Architecture of Country Houses*, which she read several times.<sup>55</sup> While Miss Bullitt was enjoying Downing's design theories and house plans in the mid-1860s, David Scull, Jr. was at the same time putting such ideals into practice through his purchase of the subject property, commissioning of Baumann's design—and, later, Addison Hutton. Bauman, who didn't necessarily need Downing's guidance was a beneficiary of the said ideological groundwork, while Downing's legacy was cemented by professionals like Baumann.

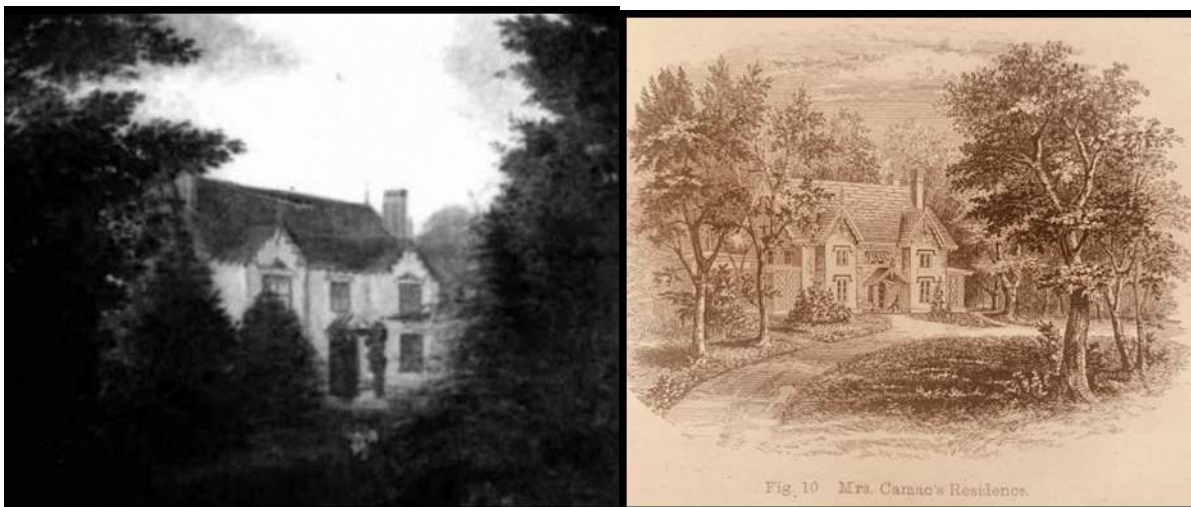


Figure 99. Left: A drawing of "Mrs. Camac's Residence," Philadelphia. Source: Figure 100. Right: A rendering of "Mrs. Camac's Residence," Philadelphia, which Downing also refers to as a Picturesque style landscape amplified by a Picturesque Gothic Revival style house. Source: Camac, William Masters. *Memoirs of the Camacs of Co. Down with some account of their predecessors.* (Philadelphia: W.M. Camac, 1913). Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A*

<sup>55</sup> Coles, Theresa Langhorne Bullitt. *My Life: Written at the request of my Daughter.* (Philadelphia: Privately Published, 1910). Source HSP.

*Treatise On The Theory And Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America; With A View To The Improvement of Country Residences.* (New-York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 48.

Shown in Figures 99 and 100, it is interesting to note that Downing featured *The Cottage Woodvale*, or as he called it the “Cottage Residence of Mrs. Camac,” which stood in a 60-acre park near Eleventh Street between Berks Street and Montgomery Avenue in North Philadelphia.<sup>56</sup> His 1841 book, describing what was a large estate as of being of the Picturesque style, amplified by Elizabeth Markoe Camac’s appropriately Picturesque Gothic Revival house.<sup>57</sup> Baumann’s task would essentially be to create a similarly Picturesque landscape on a much smaller premises. Whatever his personal stylistic leanings were in landscape design, Baumann certainly possessed the expertise to capitalize on the natural features of the extant landscape, which he certainly did, amplifying the subject property with the careful citing of buildings and the creation of many rooms and component parts of the larger landscaped environment. Achieving the Picturesque at Mrs. Camac’s or on the larger George Estate would be much easier, but doing so at *The Chestnuts*, with a mere eighteen acres, meant extreme attention to every conceivable detail, exhibiting the designer’s broad talents and ingenuity. This concept marks the particular importance of the subject property. Once a crowning center of a natural landscape, Baumann’s enhancements in the Picturesque style exist today as decidedly unique among the last vestiges of the hallowed landscape in this part of Philadelphia.



Figure 101. A watercolor of the Picturesque landscape known as Llewellyn Park in Orange, New Jersey, designed in part by Eugene A. Baumann. Specifically, Baumann is said to have completed the architectural drawings for the

<sup>56</sup> Camac, William Masters. *Memoirs of the Camacs of Co. Down with some account of their predecessors.* (Philadelphia: W.M. Camac, 1913).

<sup>57</sup> Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A Treatise On The Theory And Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America; With A View To The Improvement of Country Residences.* (New-York & London: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 44.

Ramble, which is pictured above. Source: Commisso, Michael. Cultural Landscape Report for Glenmont: Thomas Edison National Historic Park, West Orange, New Jersey. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service, 2010)

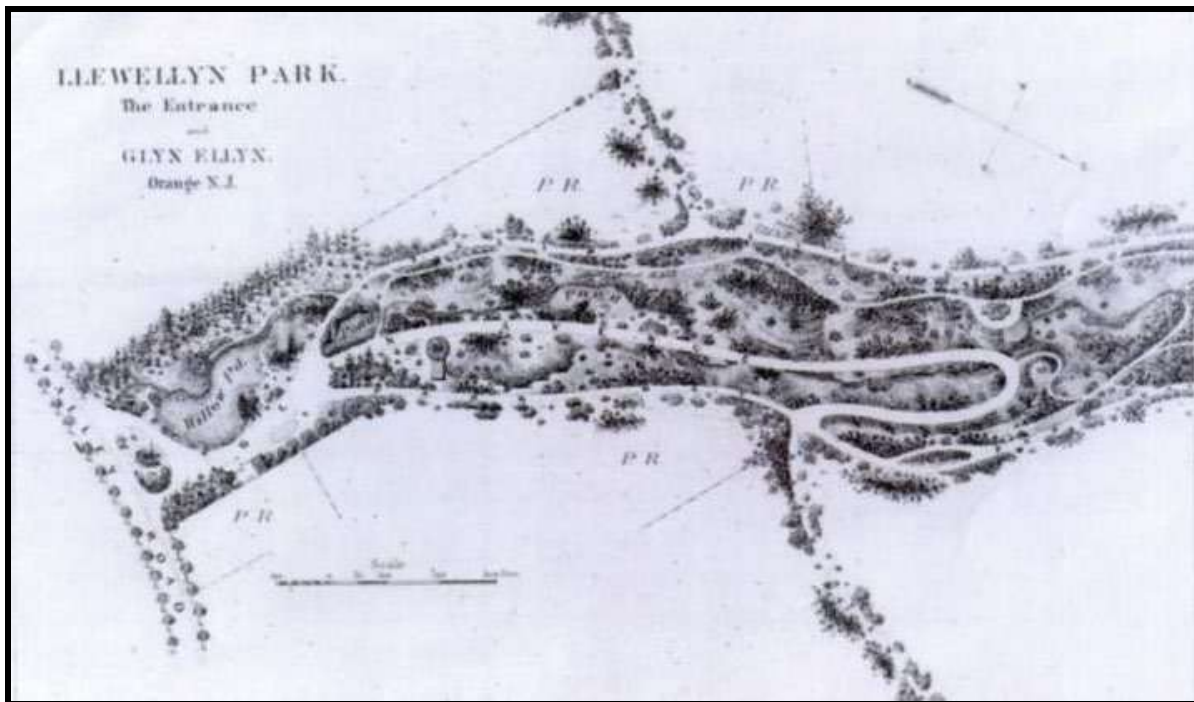


Figure 102. An 1859 drawing of “Llewellyn Park, The Entrance and Glyn Ellyn, Orange, New Jersey,” showing components of the landscape. This plan or drawing was created by Eugene A. Baumann. Source: Commisso, Michael. Cultural Landscape Report for Glenmont: Thomas Edison National Historic Park, West Orange, New Jersey. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service, 2010).

## CRITERION E

An influential and successful Alsatian American botanist, nurseryman, and landscape gardener, Eugène A. Baumann was a significant businessman, figure, and practitioner during an evolving and transformative period of landscape architecture and design in the United States. Hailing from a multi-generational legacy of botanists in France, he arrived in America at a moment when his knowledge and expertise was distinctive and valuable, allowing him to establish a successful landscape design practice, as well as a commercial nursery; contribute to the education and progress of his field on an international level; and create new and improved landscapes in various places throughout the nation. He achieved all of this from the time of his emigration to the United States in 1854 through his untimely death in 1869. Between 1865 and 1869, the Sculls commissioned Baumann to design a landscape for their country place—*The Chestnuts*—on County Line Road (now City Avenue) at Hestonville (now Overbrook) in the West Philadelphia section of the larger Quaker City. The early view of *The Chestnuts*, shown above in Figure 98, is not unlike certain vantages of the property today.

Baumann’s design and layout for *The Chestnuts* was apparently so well-respected that even after his death an analysis, description, and plan was published in Jacob Weidenmann’s beautifully executed book—*Beautifying Country Homes—A Handbook on Landscape Gardening*, in 1870.

An illustration of this plan was published in Weidenmann's book along with other designs and layouts for the landscapes of country places and suburban dwellings such as that of the Honorable George Beach of Hartford, Connecticut; R. Downs, Esq., Brooklyn, New York; Alexander Van Rensselaer, Newport, Rhode Island; William H. Paine, Esq., Newport, Rhode Island; etc. The book also includes several public spaces, including both the Public Green and Retreat Park at Hartford, Connecticut; Washington Park, Brooklyn, New York; the Flower Garden at Mount St. Vincent in Central Park, New York City; etc. While Baumann-designed landscapes only accounted for three of twenty-four designs in the book, his companion designers including Mich Butler, who worked in Newport for Van Rensselaer; Olmsted & Vaux, the pre-eminent landscape design firm in America; Ignatz Anton Pilat (1820-1870), an Austrian-born landscape gardener, who also worked on the design and planting of Central Park; Edward Otto Schwagerl (1842-1910), a Bavarian-born, American landscape architect and Superintendent of Parks for Cleveland, Ohio and Seattle, Washington; etc.

Incidentally, the long-forgotten illustration of the subject property exhibits a country place and its associated landscape that is very much intact today. Shuttered, though well-maintained, by the ownership of a contemplative Roman Catholic sisterhood since the 1940s, *The Chestnuts* retains a high degree of physical integrity that is critical to justify its designation as a significant work of an important landscape designer. Baumann's plan for the property included ten major areas comprising the lawn and the pleasure grounds (previously described in the physical description), the majority of which retains the buildings, drives, footways, and, most importantly, landscape features and plantings such as groups and masses of heritage trees and aged shrubs that were purposefully placed to create a picturesque and sylvan country place in a manner that was of growing fashion and practice in the United States at that time.

The said plantings are situated within a greater environment that is both designed and natural, including the 1866 topography—a plateau upon which the buildings are situated with a large verdurous lawn, leading to undulating grounds. The house; all the supporting buildings at the rear; and the service area were designed conjointly to achieve a greater architectural and environmental ideal. All that has been described retains remarkable historic character, comprising an old-world sense of place, despite some insensitive alterations that were made over the last 150 years.

Perhaps one of the most well-preserved of his landscape designs, Baumann's creation—*The Chestnuts*—is a remarkable and significant surviving specimen of his oeuvre, as well as the realization and preservation of a Victorian-era ideal, which was created for a patron who greatly valued beauty in architecture and landscape.







Figure 104. Top: Illustration of the Bollwiller Nurseries c1788. Figure 105. Bottom Left: An ancestor of Eugène A. Baumann. Figure 106. Bottom Middle: A plant specimen by the Baumanns. Figure 107. Bottom Right: Nap Baumann Nurseries in Bollwiller in 1911. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

In the mid-eighteenth century the nursery became one of the main sources of economic viability in Bollwiller, though the greatest expansion occurred in the early nineteenth century. The Baumanns were underwriters of several books on French Botany.<sup>62</sup> Eventually, the firm would become known as Baumann Brothers.<sup>63</sup>

Returning to Eugène A. Baumann, his formal education included attending the College de Remiremont in the Vosges in eastern France from 1828 to 1833, after which time his father arranged for him to apprentice under Court Gardener Held at the Grand Ducal Gardens at Karlsruhe. From the summer of 1833 to June 1836 his apprenticeship continued, during which time he took formal courses at the newly founded Polytechnic School Karlsruhe (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology): botany with Alexander Carl Heinrich Braun (1805-1877), a German botanist, professor and later director of the botanical garden in Berlin; minerology with Friedrich Walchner (1799-1865), a German geologist, chemist, and mineralogist; and architectural drawing with both Hubscher and Friedrich Eisenlohr (1805-1855), a German architect and professor. His studies also included continual private drawing lessons from Charles Frommel, who was the director of the Grand Duke's picture gallery. At the close of his apprenticeship Baumann returned to Bollwiller in the summer of 1836. Almost immediately his father sent him on a European exploration that would last nearly a year and a half. Baumann first went to Italy, traveling in a stagecoach via Berne, Lausanne, and Geneva. Stopping in Geneva, he was able to spend a few weeks seeing Chambéry and Turin. The trip continued by way of Alessandria to Genoa and from there he took a steamship to Livoraa and Pisa. He stayed in Pisa from July to

<sup>62</sup> Leroy, Andre. *Dictionnaire de Pomologie*. (Angers: Chez l'Auteur, 1867-1875).

<sup>63</sup> Baumann, E.A. "Rhododendron d'Adanson, *Rhododendrum Adansoni*," *Annales de Flore et de Pomone: ou Journal des jardins et des champs*. (Paris, France: Rousselon, 1838-[1845]), 305.

October 1836, taking courses in botany with professors Savi, directors of the local botanical gardens. In October 1836 he went to Florence for a few weeks, and then returned to Pisa. He would eventually visit Rome from November 1836 through the end of the year, but his travels were often delayed due to cholera pandemics, which required him to quarantine on several occasions. In January 1837, Baumann returned to Pisa by way of Florence, where he remained until the end of March. His father advised him to return to Lombardy, which he did, visiting Genoa, Milan, and Plaisance in the Duchy of Parma. His travels in Italy were extensive, ending with Parma, Gaustalla, Mantua, Verona, Padua, Venice, Trieste, etc. In June 1837 his father subsidized a trip to Greece, which included Ancome, Corfu, Patras, Hydra, and Athens. At the end of June, he went to Constantinople, making the acquaintance of two Milanese merchants, with whom he stayed in Pera, north of Galata for nearly two months. Returning to Athens on business for his father, he would go on to Vienna, where he stayed from mid-November 1837 through March 1838. He then went to Berlin by way of Bohemia and Saxony. He left Berlin in June for London, where he arrived just in time to witness the coronation of Queen Victoria. Staying in England through October, he was employed as a sketcher in the office of John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843), the eminent Scottish botanist, landscape gardener, and author, where he completed landscape plans.<sup>64</sup> Loudon references Baumann's travels in Greece in his *Encyclopedia of Gardening* in 1850, mentioning that there was only one nursery in all of Athens.<sup>65</sup> After London, Baumann traveled to Paris, where he stayed with Fritz Wagner, Jr., a horticulturist from Rega in Russia. He returned to Bollwiller on December 26, 1838.<sup>66</sup>

After this period of intellectual and practical emersion, Baumann returned the family business, the Bollwiller Nursery, where he was living and working again in January 1839.<sup>67</sup> During this time, he cultivated and popularized new plant specimen, including the Rhododendron d'Adanson, Rhododendrum Adansoni, among others.<sup>68</sup> Baumann also authored articles and books in France.<sup>69</sup> Despite these accomplishment, he returned to Bollwiller at a time when Baumann Brothers was under great familial duress. The forty-year partnership of his father and his uncle Augustine Baumann was greatly troubled to the point of dissolution, and the property the brothers had acquired was subject to lawsuits and, eventually, debtors. For a time, Baumann, himself, took over the business, but the circumstances went from bad to worse due to the financial conditions he had inherited from his father and uncle.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Baumann, Eugene A. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (New Jersey: Unpublished Manuscript, 1865), 8-10. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>65</sup> Loudon, J.C. *Encyclopedia of Gardening*. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1850), 235-236.

<sup>66</sup> Leroy, Andre. *Dictionnaire de Pomologie*. (Angers: Chez l'Auteur, 1867-1875).

<sup>67</sup> Baumann, Eugene A. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (New Jersey: Unpublished Manuscript, 1865), 8-10. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>68</sup> Baumann, E.A. "Rhododendron d'Adanson, Rhododendrum Adansoni.," *Annales de Flore et de Pomone: Ou Journal des Jardins et des Champs*. (Paris, France: Rousselon, 1832-[1848]), 303-305.

<sup>69</sup> Baumann, Eugène Achilles. "Notes Taken From A Narrative of a Horticultural Society in Green," *Gardeners' Chronicle of America*, March 1839, 97-98.

<sup>70</sup> Baumann, Eugene A. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (New Jersey: Unpublished Manuscript, 1865). Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

In 1843, he married Sophie Marguerite Loehr (1818-1884), the daughter of Philippe Loehr and Anna Schlumberger, both of whom were from Mulhouse, France. Their union produced the following children: Ernest Joseph Philip Baumann (1844-1912); Camille Eugène Baumann (1847-1929); Anna Mathilde Baumann (1848-1851); Marie Eugenie Baumann (1849-1850); Jean-Jacques François Baumann (1853-1854); and Rose Marie Emily Baumann (1861-1910).<sup>71</sup>

A series of unfortunate events unfolded that finalized the dissolution of the family business.<sup>72</sup> These events included the revolution in France in 1848 through 1850; a torrential hailstorm that destroyed much of the Bollwiller property in July 1853; etc.<sup>73</sup> Despite opposition from his family and accounts published about his departure, Baumann eventually made the decision to emigrate to the United States, apparently off-loading what little of the business remained to his half-brother-in-law, François Emmanuel Gay (1829-1876), the husband of his half-sister Adele Mathilde Baumann (1826-1887).<sup>74</sup> He departed Europe via Antwerp, Belgium on the Locharmar, and arrived in New York City on September 30, 1854.<sup>75</sup> And while this might seem a bit unusual, Baumann also left his wife and children in Mulhouse, a town about fifteen miles south of Bollwiller. They were not to join him in the United States until August 14, 1859, perhaps a combination of marital and parental pressures, as well as his success in garden design.<sup>76</sup>

Upon arriving in America, Baumann was able to leverage a few contacts to gain entrees to landscape commissions and/or temporary employment between 1854 and 1856.<sup>77</sup> In fact, his brother Napoleon Baumann gave him letters of introduction to Marshall Pickney Wilder (1798-1886), a merchant, horticulturist, and politician of Boston, and Professor Asa Gray (1810-1888), one of the most important American botanists of nineteenth century America, of the Botanical Garden in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He also had at least one acquaintance, Charles Pflieger, originally of Altkirch, Haut-Rhin, Alsace, France, who he was initially unable to locate in New York City. Baumann traveled to Boston to meet Marshall P. Wilder (1798-1886), who, while not encouraging him to remain in Boston, provided letters of introduction to General Franklin Pierce

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<sup>71</sup> General information on the Baumann family would found at the following website and verified on Ancestry.com: <http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~corbaumgen/genealogy/Baumann>. Accessed on 21 February 2020.

<sup>72</sup> *Neue allgemeine Deutsche Garten-und Blumenzeitung*. (Hamburg, Germany: Berlag von Robert Rittler, 1850).

<sup>73</sup> Leroy, Andre. *Dictionnaire de Pomologie*. (Angers: Chez l'Auteur, 1867-1875).

<sup>74</sup> Leroy, Andre. *Dictionnaire de Pomologie*. (Angers: Chez l'Auteur, 1867-1875).

<sup>75</sup> *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897*. Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls. NAI: 6256867. Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36. National Archives at Washington, D.C.

<sup>76</sup> *Dictionnaire de pomologie, contenant l'histoire, ...* v.6. Leroy, André, 1801-1875.

<sup>77</sup> Despite having relatively few contacts in America, Eugene A. Baumann did have some distant family in the United States. His cousin, Martin Baumann (1791-1865), originally of Department du Haut-Rhin, Alsace, France, apprenticed under Joseph Bernhard Baumann and Augustine Baumann at the nurseries in Bollwiller from 1808 to 1811. After five of his brothers were killed in the service of the French Army, Joseph Baumann, his father, arranged for Martin Baumann to emigrate to America to work as a gardener for Stephen Girard (1750-1831), a French and naturalized American philanthropist and banker. Martin Baumann would later be commissioned by Louis Clapier to design Fern Hill, which would become one of the largest estates in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia. Martin Baumann and his family would live at Fern Hill in the gardener's cottage. In 1837, Baumann opened a nursery on the south side of Manheim Street. Both of his sons would go on to establish nurseries. Source: Baumann, Clara. Unpublished Notes on Martin Baumann. (Philadelphia: 27 February 1954). On file at the Germantown Historical Society.

(1804-1869), then President of the United States, G.C. Breckenridge, and Hogg & Co., horticulturists in New York City—founded by Thomas Hogg, and carried on by his sons, Thomas and James Hogg.<sup>78</sup> Professor Asa Gray (1810-1888), an important American botanist, also made recommendations, encouraging Baumann to settle in New York City. Baumann returned to New York City and eventually found Pflieger working as a journeyman gardener for \$1.50 per day. He began working with Pflieger to start a business, which included renting a small plot of land to establish plants—a multi-year process. One day, while out and about in New York City, Baumann noticed the seed house of James M. Thorburn & Co., which then stood in John Street. He had known the name for some time, but it wasn't until then that they became personally acquainted. The Thorburns immediately took an interest in Baumann, introducing him to several potential clients.<sup>79</sup>

In some ways, the Thorburns would become to New York City what the Baumanns had been in Alsace. Born in Dalkeith, Scotland, Grant M. Thorburn, Sr. (1773-1863) was one of America's pioneer seedsmen, arriving in New York City in 1794, where he found that among his novelties, the flower pots sold best. As night follows day, he began dealing in seeds in 1805, a business that ebbed and flowed. Thorburn first sold seeds in Newark, and, later, in New York City, surviving several disasters, including both finance and fire. Thorburn's seed house was eventually known as G. Thorburn & Sons, producing their first seed catalogue in 1822. While Grant Thorburn eventually retired to Connecticut in 1854, the first was continued by his son James M. Thorburn & Co., which operated at 15 John Street and in Astoria, Long Island.<sup>80</sup> Another son, Grant Thorburn, Jr., operated a seed store at 576 Broadway, living on Long Island.<sup>81</sup> Baumann first worked for the Thorburns, and continued to work with the firm until the time of his death.



Figure. 107b. Members of the Thorburn Family of New York, comprising the leading seedsmen of nineteenth century America. Source: “Annual descriptive catalogue of seeds in the world, 1899.” Via Archive.org.

<sup>78</sup> Bailey, Liberty Hyde. *The Standard Cyclopaedia of Horticulture*. (Macmillan, 1915), 1518.

<sup>79</sup> Baumann, Eugène Achilles. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (Unpublished Manuscript, 1865), 15-16. Source: Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>80</sup> *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1889), 100.

<sup>81</sup> *New York City Directory*, 1845, 359.

Perhaps the most important contact Baumann made through the Thorburns was Llewellyn Solomon Haskell (1815-1872), the pharmaceutical magnate who founded a major drug company at Philadelphia with Thomas B. Merrick.<sup>82</sup> Haskell and Merrick started as drug-clerks in Hallowell, Maine, and later became hugely successful in the Quaker City. Eventually, relocating to New York City for business reasons, Haskell would go on to develop Llewellyn Park, which would become one of the earliest “planned suburbs” in the country. In 1852, he commissioned Andrew Jackson Davis (1803-1892), the eminent American architect associated with the Gothic Revival style, to design the initial development, which would go on to become a 750-acre park with 173 suburban residences. After connecting with Haskell through the Thorburns, Baumann was engaged to design components of the landscape for Llewellyn Park, including The Rambles, which was a Downing-esque “forest of evergreens, a lyceum, a kiosk, and a series of ponds along a stream running the length of the park.”<sup>83</sup> Bauman also produced architectural drawings of Llewellyn Park, which illustrated the planned landscape in great detail (Figures 101, 102, 108 and 109). These plans were published in the Henry Winthrop Sargent’s Sixth Edition of Downing’s *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*. Haskell also commissioned Baumann to design the landscape for Arcade Cottage.<sup>84</sup> During this project, it probable that Baumann became connected with Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), the important British-American architect and landscape designer, who first studied under Andrew Jackson Downing. Vaux is known to have designed several houses at Llewellyn Park.



Figure 108. Left: A view of Llewellyn Park near the entrance gate in 1860. Figure 109. Right: Arcade Cottage in 1865. Source: New York Public Library.

<sup>82</sup> Baumann, Eugène Achilles. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (Unpublished Manuscript, 1865), 15-16. Source: Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>83</sup> <https://telf.org/landscapes/llewellyn-park>

<sup>84</sup> Commisso, Michael. *Cultural Landscape Report for Glenmont: Thomas Edison National Historic Park, West Orange, New Jersey*. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service, 2010), 21-22.

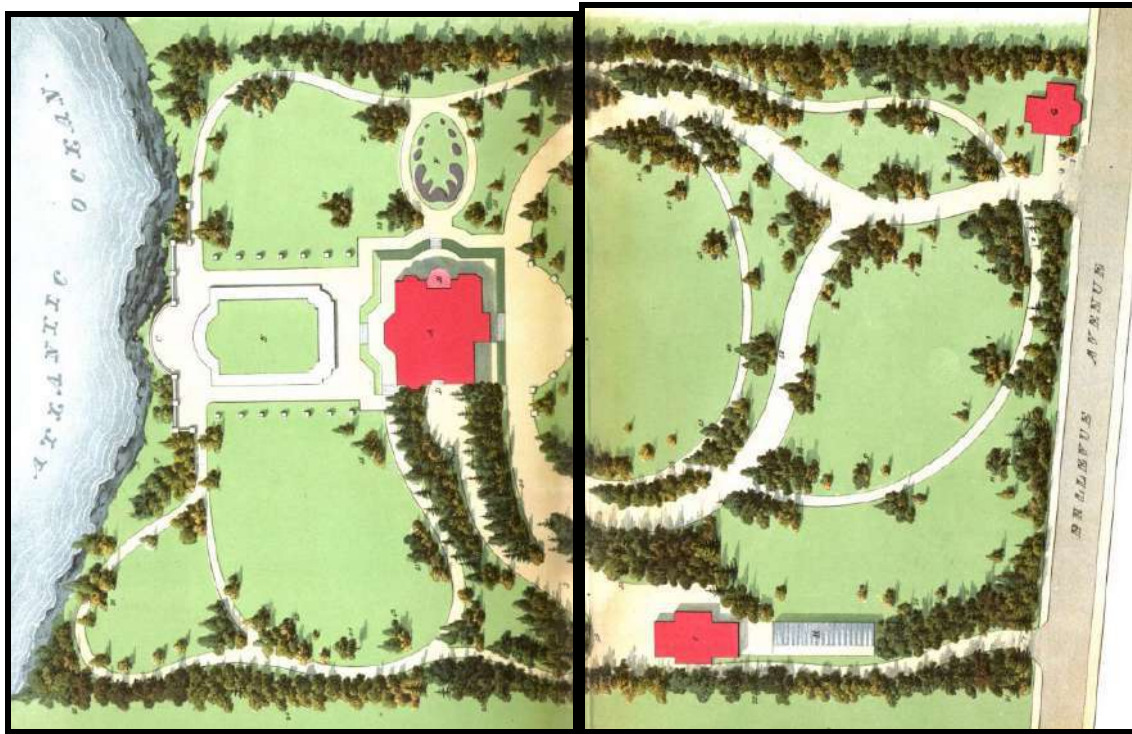


Figure 110. Plan for Beaulieu, Bellevue Avenue, Newport Rhode Island, the Country Residence of Federico L. Barreda, designed by Calvert Vaux, Architect, and Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, c1856. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI. Via Hathi Trust.

While skilled in both architectural and landscape design, Vaux no doubt hired landscape gardeners to assist with larger projects. In 1856, Vaux was commissioned to design a large Second Empire style house at Newport, Rhode Island for Federico L. Barreda, a wealthy Peruvian-born businessman, who was eventually the Peruvian ambassador to the United States during the Lincoln administration. Located outside of town where the major Gilded Age mansions would eventually rise at Newport, Beaulieu, the mansion, other buildings, and grounds of Barreda, stands between Bellevue Avenue and the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 110). The formal landscape upon which the mansion is centered was designed and partly executed by Baumann, as shown in Figure 104.<sup>85</sup> In the aforementioned book on *Beautifying Country Houses* (1870), the author, Jacob Weidenmann (1829-1893), also significant in the realm of early practitioners of landscape architecture, stated the following about the project:

The terraces around the mansion and the parterre between them and the sea are very happy combinations of the natural and the artificial style of landscape gardening, and reflect great credit upon the excellent taste of Mr. Eugène A. Baumann, the landscape artist who designed and partly superintended the laying

<sup>85</sup> Kowsky, Francis R. *Country, Park & City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux*. (Oxford University Press, 2003), 145.

out of the grounds, and Mr. Calvert Vaux, the eminent architect of this princely residence.<sup>86</sup>

While working in Newport between 1855 and 1856 it also appears that Baumann designed Touro Park, preserving the ruins of the Old Stone Mill, still present to-date.<sup>87</sup>

Both clients, Haskell and Barreda, had connections to Newport, where Vaux and Baumann no doubt met and/or knew Charles Howland Russell (1796-1884), a banker and businessman in New York City, who was also a native of Newport. Russell served on the first Central Park Commission in 1856, which was certainly more beneficial for Vaux than Baumann, as the former would go on to design the park with Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), the most prominent and prolific landscape architect of nineteenth-century America.

Baumann was not only engaged in landscape design projects in the mid-1850s, he was also still working to influence a larger audience within his field. In December 1856, he published an article, “The Use of American Evergreen Shrubs and on Rockwork,” in *The Horticulturist*, in which he compared the “beautiful gardens” he had visited in the United States to that of England, France and Belgium. He discussed all aspects of evergreens and their use in planning and planting a country place. The article was also provided in French for international publication.<sup>88</sup>



Figure 111. “Residence of Uriah Hill, Jr.” on Washington Street in Peekskill, New York. Source: Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XIV. Via Hathi Trust.

<sup>86</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XVI.

<sup>87</sup> <https://telf.org/landscapes/touro-park-and-old-stone-mill>

<sup>88</sup> Baumann, Eugène A. “The Use of American Evergreen Shrubs and on Rockwork,” *The Horticulturist*, December 1856, 542-545.



Between 1856 and 1859, it appears that Baumann may have worked or partnered with Jacob Weidenmann (1829-1893), landscape gardener.<sup>89</sup> Originally from Winterthur, Switzerland, it is possible that Baumann and Weidenmann were acquainted through the close circles of their small professional world in Europe.<sup>90</sup> Weidenmann first worked for Olmsted; however, the precise commissions conducted with Baumann remain unclear.

In 1857, Baumann submitted a design for the layout and plan of Central Park in New York City, which was supposedly “highly approved of, but not adopted.”<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, Baumann’s connection to Charles H. Russell proved favorable, as he recommended his services to Olmsted.<sup>92</sup> After Olmsted was named superintendent, he commissioned Baumann to design “planting plans” used to implement the overall concept of the park.<sup>93</sup> He would work for Olmsted in 1858 through August 1859, when his reputation allowed him to gain more advantageous employment.<sup>94</sup>

In the late 1850s, around the time his family arrived in 1859, Baumann established a nursery at Morrisania in Westchester County, New York. This was one many destinations for middle to upper class New York City residents, creating and populating suburban enclaves, though its value as such would be short-lived. Here he produced a catalogue of his plants and stock, a product he knew in the family business in France, and one that became even more common of nurseries in the nineteenth century. The 1860 U.S. Population Census confirms Baumann was living in Morrisania with his wife and three children, as he is listed as a “Gardener.”<sup>95</sup> Tax assessments and personal records confirm his residence and occupations in 1863 and 1864, being also recorded for tax purposes as a “retail dealer.”<sup>96</sup>

Despite his nursery business at Morrisania, Baumann continued to dedicated substantial time to developing his career as a landscape gardener. His work is documented more thoroughly in both 1860 and 1862, as his descendant, W. Scott Baumann, has preserved two journals completed during those years. While he was not a detailed diarist, Baumann kept simple notes that offer perspective on his daily professional life, as well as his clientele. In fact, at times Baumann

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<sup>89</sup> *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.

<sup>90</sup> Favretti, Rudy J. *Jacob Weidenmann: Pioneer Landscape Architect*. (Wesleyan University Press, 2007).

<sup>91</sup> Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park for the Year Ending April 30, 1858. (New York: William C. Bryant & Co., 1858), 14.

<sup>92</sup> Baumann, Eugène Achilles. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (Unpublished Manuscript, 1865), 16-17. Source: Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>93</sup> Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park for the Year Ending April 30, 1858. (New York: William C. Bryant & Co., 1858), 14-16.

<sup>94</sup> Baumann, Eugène Achilles. *Memoirs of the Baumann Family of Bollwiller, Haut Rhin, France*. (Unpublished Manuscript, 1865), 16-17. Source: Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>95</sup> 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.

<sup>96</sup> *Records of the Internal Revenue Service*. Record Group 58. The National Archives at Washington, DC.

seems to visit people almost daily—sometimes multiple clients and friends in one day, producing plans or work afterwards, though many entries are illegible and some pages are blank.<sup>97</sup>

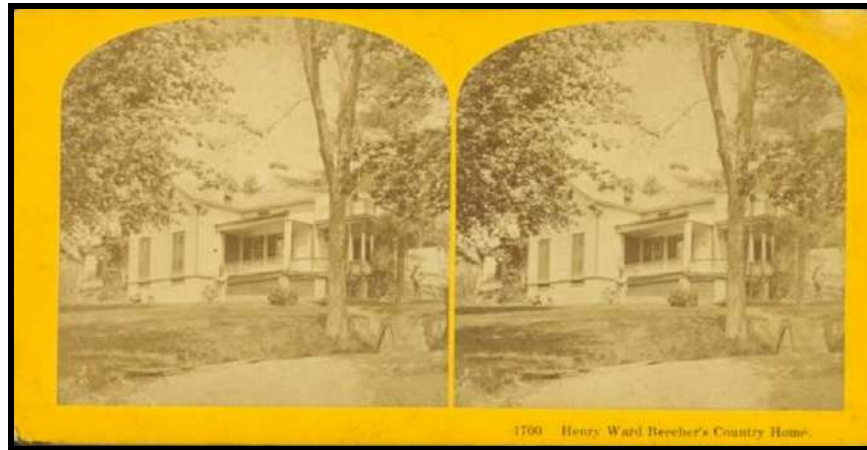


Figure 112. Henry Ward Beecher’s Country House at Peekskill-on-the-Hudson. Source: Library of Congress.

On Saturday, April 14, 1860 (Figure 115), Baumann visited the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), “The Most Famous Man in America,” an eminent minister of Brooklyn, New York, and the brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, at his 36-acre country place in Peekskill, New York, as shown in Figures 112 and 113.<sup>98</sup> Beecher had purchased “the hillside” at Peekskill-on-the-Hudson, naming it “Boscobel”, in the Fall of 1859, which he took possession the following spring. An early biography of Beecher describes the property:

With the exception of a few acres on the crest of the hill, the farm lay along the south slope, sheltered by its own crest from the north winds, its face to the southern sun. In this Mr. Beecher saw peculiar advantages for early fruit and vegetables, while the view in every direction delighted his eye. From the house, looking west, lay the river, visible only for a mile or so, and lying like a beautiful Swiss lake encircled by protecting mountains. To the south and southeast the landscape was varied and charming—low hills, woodland and green fields, making up a beautiful picture. Whilst from the hill-top, reputed to be the highest point in Westchester County, the country lay out like one great panorama on all sides, the view to the north and west being especially grand; another glimpse of the Hudson being visible just before it is swallowed up by the grim mountains of the Highlands. Over all in the distance rise, blue and faint, the Catskills, whilst to the east the country rolls in graceful, broken stretches for miles.

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<sup>97</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann; and Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann. (New York: Double Day, 2006).

<sup>98</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.; and Applegate, Debbie. *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*. (New York: Three Leaves Press, Double Day, 2006).

In the spring of 1860 Mr. Beecher took possession of his new farm of thirty-six acres, and began at once the work of reformation and improvement.<sup>99</sup>

While undocumented in known Beecher materials, Baumann created preliminary plans for Beecher's property, returning to Peekskill to spend additional time surveying the property and its terrain. He arrived at Peekskill on Wednesday, May 23, 1860 and stayed through Friday, May 25.<sup>100</sup> Baumann would spend the following four days working on a sketch for Henry Ward Beecher, which he delivered to the famous minister's city residence at 150 Hicks Street, Brooklyn Heights. Likely upon acceptance of the draft, Baumann was finalizing plans for the Beecher in June, which he worked on exclusively through June 25. It appears that Beecher's final plans were finished by June 27, when Baumann sent him the final plan with a bill for \$148.80.<sup>101</sup> Beecher's place at Peekskill was eventually famous for its landscape, including the incredible array of plant specimen, an accomplishment no doubt connected to Baumann's knowledge of plant materials. The early appearance of Beecher's property is illustrated in Figures 106 and 107.



Figure 113. The landscape that surrounded Henry Ward Beecher's Boscobel. Source: Library of Congress.

The larger Beecher family was at the very center of American society at this time, and Baumann's association with Henry Ward Beecher speaks to his significance during this period. Baumann's diary included the following clients for which he completed drawings; designs; and/or more extensive work in 1860, largely consisting of merchants and wealthy men in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island. Etc.: Geo. G. Barnwell/Barnwill; Alex. Bonnell of Bergen, New Jersey; William Brown of Nicholasville; Samuel Colgate (1822-1897) of Orange, New Jersey; William Colgate of Orange, New Jersey;

<sup>99</sup> Beecher, William C. and Scoville, Samuel. *A Biography of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher*. (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1888).

<sup>100</sup> *Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860*. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>101</sup> *Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860*. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

James Geddes Craighead (1823-1895) of New York; William A. Cummings of Hartford, Connecticut; William Goddard of East Greenwich; Joseph Howland; Frederick Koenig of College Point, Bronx, New York; Thomas McMahon of Melrose, New Jersey; William Parker of Brick Church Station, Orange, New Jersey; William A. Righter (1826-1896), a prominent lawyer, of Newark, New Jersey; Bernard Vetterlein (1819-1892) of Bergen, New Jersey; etc.<sup>102</sup>

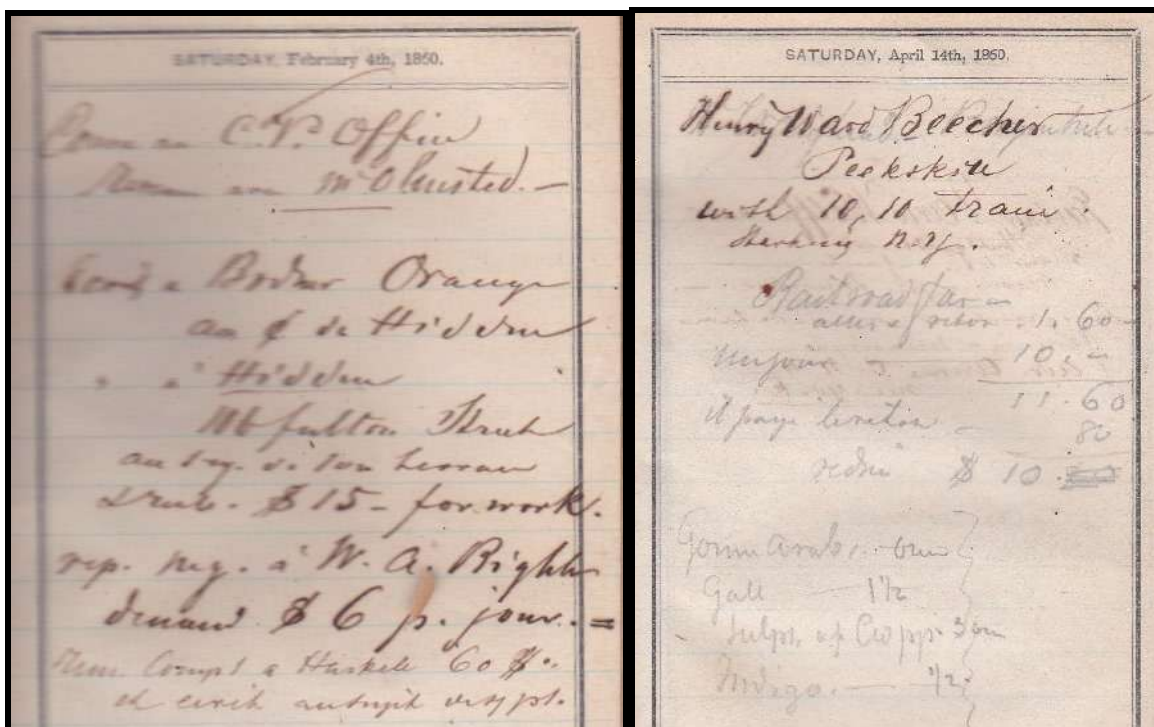


Figure 114. Left: Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1850, Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann. Figure 115. Right: Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1860, Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

One new client that Baumann served for a period in 1860 was Samuel Colgate, the son of William Colgate, and an American manufacturer and philanthropist. Colgate commissioned Baumann to work on a landscape plan for his country place in Orange, New Jersey. Moving from New York City to Orange in 1856, Colgate first rented a house, but eventually, he purchased a 26-acre farm from the Crane family, which stood on the west side of Centre Street, near Highland Avenue. He erected a brick house, and called the estate “Seven Oaks,” after the town in County Kent, England where his grandfather resided.<sup>103</sup> Baumann spent several days in March 1860 creating a plan for Seven Oaks, which led to additional work later that year in October.<sup>104</sup> James Geddes Craighead of Field & Craighead, publishers of the *New York Evangelist*, also

<sup>102</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>103</sup> Pierson, David Lawrence. *History of the Oranges to 1921*. (Orange, New Jersey: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1922), 7.

<sup>104</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

commissioned Baumann to work on his garden.<sup>105</sup> Baumann met with Craighead in New York City, and then visited his property on numerous occasions starting on April 6, 1860. Joseph Howland, “a country gentleman”, commissioned Baumann to work on his property in Fishkill, New York throughout 1860. Bernard Vetterlein of “Bergin Hill” or Bergen, New Jersey, invited Baumann to his home on Summit Avenue, consulting with him on plans for his extensive and noted garden.<sup>106</sup>

Another source of work, Calvert Vaux continued to supply Baumann with various jobs, including an ongoing project (Figure 114). For several weeks in early 1860, Baumann returned to the Barreda estate in Newport, no doubt implementing and/or improving his 1856 design for the property. He regularly visited the offices of both Vaux and Frederick Law Olmstead in Manhattan. It appears that Baumann did submit a planting plan for “Central Park” in 1860.<sup>107</sup> His intermittent work on Central Park would continue into 1861 and 1862, though the full nature of his physical contributions remain unclear.

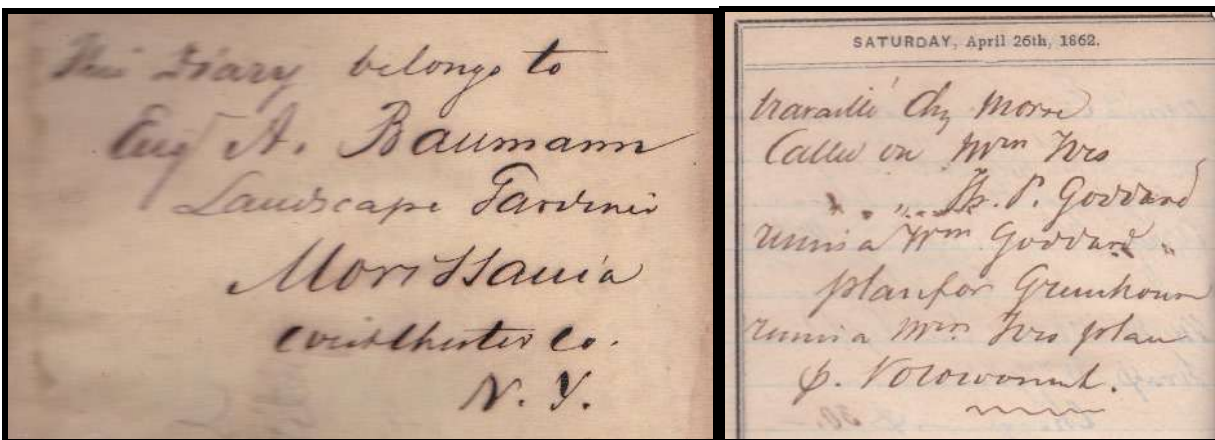


Figure 116. Left: The front page from the Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann. Figure 117. Right: Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1862, Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

While the record of 1861 is lost to the Baumann descendants, his diary for 1862 shows continued activity working for wealthy clients, producing a relatively impressive enlargement of his oeuvre despite there being an ongoing Civil War. Clients included the following of a similar demographic referenced in 1860: George G. Barnwell/Barnwill of New York; Ellwood Burdsall (1814-1890) of Port Chester, New York; Edward K. A. Burtis, President of the Jersey City & Albany Railroad, of Ridgefield, New Jersey; T.W. Ferris; Thomas Poynton Ives Goddard (1827-1893) of East Greenwich; William Giles Goddard (1821-1907) of East Greenwich, Rhode Island; Cyrus Harris, Collector of the Port, of Providence; Mssr. W. Hopper; Julius Koenig; Alpheus

<sup>105</sup> Maverick, Augustus. *Henry J. Raymond and the New York Press, for thirty years*. (Harford, Connecticut: A.S. Hale & Co., 1870), 334.

<sup>106</sup> Van Winkle, Daniel. *History of the Municipalities of Hudson County, New Jersey*. (Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1924), 133.

<sup>107</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1860. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

Carey Morse (1818-1893), a prominent architect, of Providence, Rhode Island; H.A. Rhodes of Providence, Rhode Island; C.H. Rodgers of Ravenswood; Thomas Shephard of New York; Mssr. Thornburn; etc.<sup>108</sup>

In 1862 Baumann spent a substantial portion of the year working for well-to-do clients in East Greenwich and Providence, Rhode Island (Figure 117). In April 1862, he traveled to Providence and then on to East Greenwich. In Providence he called on Rev. Dr. Thomas Shephard, who paid him \$82.44 for a garden pan. He also appears to have been working for H.A. Rhodes of Providence, sending him a bill for \$153 on May 15, 1862. In East Greenwich his clients included Thomas P. I. Goddard and William G. Goddard, both of Goddard Brothers, Agents, a management company; and William Ives.<sup>109</sup> The Goddards and the Ives were among the most prominent families in Rhode Island. He produced a plan for William Goddard's grapery and greenhouse by late April 1862, conducting more extensive planning for Thomas Goddard and William Ives. In fact, he made several visits to Rhode Island throughout the remaining spring and also in the fall of 1862. Another new client, Elwood Burdsall, a Quaker and partner in Russell, Burdsall & Ward, Bolts & Nuts, commissioned Baumann to design a grape arbor for his property in Port Chester, New York. Baumann had completed the design by January 1862 at a cost of \$94.<sup>110</sup> Since 1860, Baumann had been working on the property of Frederick Koenig, a German-born banker and one-half of Poppenhusen & Koenig, who built a house in that part of New York City in the mid-1850s.<sup>111</sup>

Towards the end of 1862, Calvert Vaux commissioned Baumann to assess "the condition of the work done" on Central Park. The following is the opening of his report to Vaux:

In compliance with your desire of having a correct-report-of my opinion on the condition of the work done on the Central Park as well as any personal opinion in a practical view of the matter and suggestions thereon, I have the honor to submit to you this Memorandum.

I made irregular visits to the Central Park ground on the fifth, 8th, 11th, 13th, 18th, 19th, and 27 days of December and on the 5th of January last. The first visits I made I was alone. Not being able this season of the year to judge correctly of many things I referred to Messrs. Plas and Ficher for information and with their assistance I was able to judge better than otherwise.

I have for several years felt the highest interest in the Central Park and although not frequently I followed season by season the great work going on.

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<sup>108</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>110</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>111</sup> Diary of Eugène A. Baumann, Landscape Gardener, 1862. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

I must say that on considering the whole there has been no improvement of much importance done any where else with so much care and such an intention to make it permanent economical and pleasing for future times as the work done by your honorable commission. The complete finish of the drives, the paths, and the Bridal Road, or ride as also their durability are completely confirmed by examinations made in the various seasons of the year and leave nothing to the desired.<sup>112</sup>

The precise purpose of this commission is unknown, but since Baumann billed Vaux for each day of his assessment, it is clear that his expertise was well-respected, and his opinion valued.

At some point prior to 1866, William G. Read, Esq. of Mamaroneck, Westchester County, New York commissioned him to remodel a country seat that stood on the Long Island Sound, roughly two miles from the New Haven Railroad. He was able to beautify the country seat with a new arrangement, taking advantage of the natural landscape features and employing certain plantings to create a pleasure ground.<sup>113</sup> As shown in Figure 111, he also designed a plan for the “Residence of Uriah Hill, Jr.” on Washington Street in Peekskill, New York. The plan united “the features of a country seat of moderate size with those of a suburban residence.”<sup>114</sup>

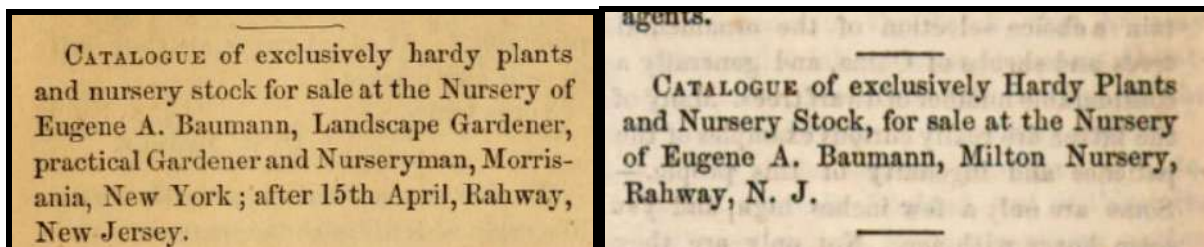


Figure 118. Left: *The Horticulturist*, March 1865, 96. Figure 119. Right: *The Horticulturist*, February 1866, 64. Source: Hathi Trust.

Baumann appears to have abandoned his nursery at Morrisania in 1865, moving his wife and family to Rahway, New Jersey. His nursery, call the Milton Nursery, opened on April 15, 1865, as shown in Figures 118 and 119.<sup>115</sup> The move was confirmed in February 1866 with the announcement of the new catalogue in *The Horticulturist*.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Copy of Letter from Eugène A. Baumann to Calvert Vaux, Morrisania, New York, 13 January 1863. Source: Baumann, W. Scott. Baumann Family History and Other Baumann Documents. <http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~corbaumgen/history/bauhist.htm>. Accessed 8 April 2020.

<sup>113</sup> Bauman, Eugène A. “Plan for Improvement of Grounds.,” *The Horticulturist*, 1866,

<sup>114</sup> Weidenmann, Jacob. *Beautifying Country Homes. A Handbook of Landscape Gardening*. (New York: Orange Judd and Company, 1870), Plate XIV. Via Hathi Trust.

<sup>115</sup> *The Horticulturist*, March 1865, 96.

<sup>116</sup> *The Horticulturist*, February 1866, 64.

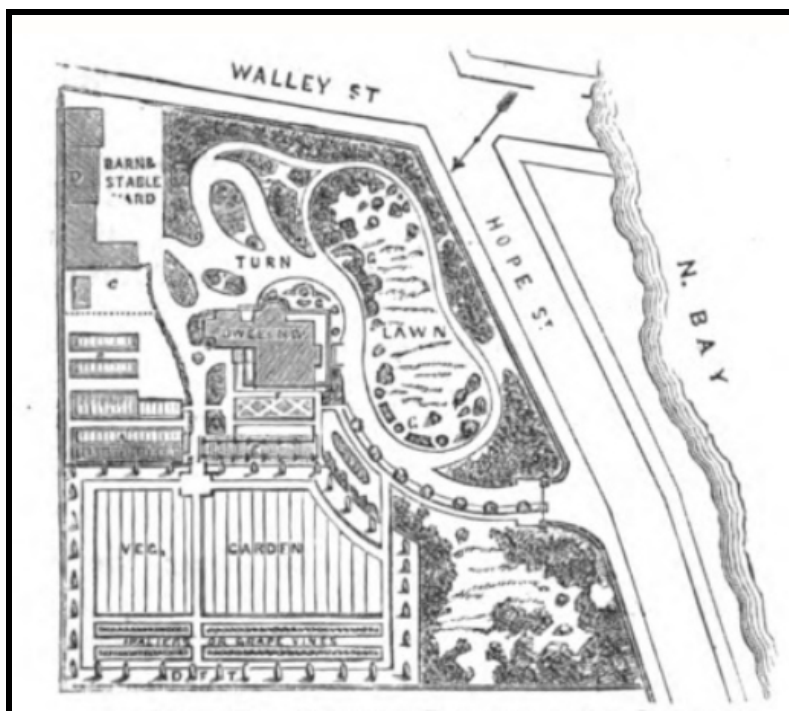


Figure 120. “Figure 59.—Plan for Improvement of Grounds.” Source: *The Horticulturist*, May 1866, 64.

At some point prior to this Baumann was again designing a landscape, this time for a “small place” for a gentleman in Bristol, Rhode Island. This patron’s country place occupied roughly four acres at the junction of two streets on the waterfront of the Narragansett Bay the edge of Bristol, as illustrated in Figure 120. With “poor looking” houses on each side and a limitation of four acres, the plantings and placement of the buildings were especially critical to improving the property to a beautiful end. Baumann prescribed shrubbery of ten to twelve feet in height at the west corner, and enclosures of plantings for the barn yard and other less desirable features of the property. Every detail was carefully considered to cultivate and make best use of the grounds much like the subject property, but on a smaller scale.<sup>117</sup> Baumann wrote an article on this design, “Plan for Improvement of Grounds,” for *The Horticulturist* in May 1866. In the same issue Baumann published “Design for a Grape Arbor,” including elevation drawings of an elegant garden structure.<sup>118</sup>

In June 1866, Baumann provided another article, although not a feature, titled, “Remedy for Mildew,” which explained the process he used for this problem.<sup>119</sup> In July 1867, Baumann wrote an article, “On Planting Trees, and Staking,” for *The American Journal of Horticulture and*

<sup>117</sup> *The Horticulturist*, May 1866, 134-137.

<sup>118</sup> *The Horticulturist*, May 1866, 137-136.

<sup>119</sup> *The Horticulturist*, June 1866, 185.



*Florist's Chronicle*, in which he describes specific procedures to address practical issues related to planting trees.<sup>120</sup>

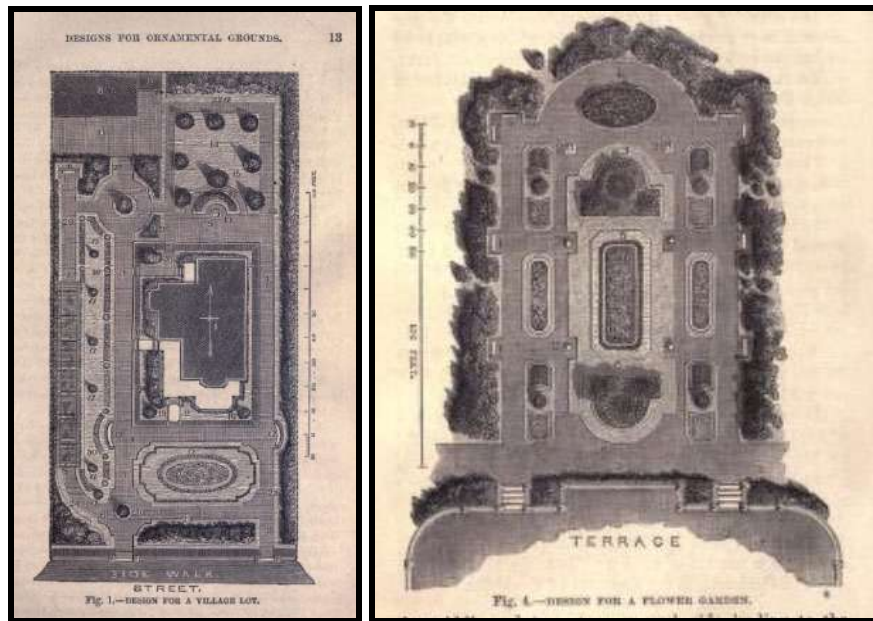


Figure 121. Design figures for “A Village Lot” and “A Flower Garden,” illustrated by Eugène Baumann. Source: *Floriculture: A Guide to the Successful Cultivation of Florists' Plants for the Amateur and Professional Florist*, via Archive.org.

Before the close of 1868, Baumann penned and copiously illustrated the third chapter of Peter Henderson’s *Practical Floriculture: A Guide to the Successful Cultivation of Florists' Plants for the Amateur and Professional Florist*, and two of his garden designs were featured posthumously in the *American Agriculturalist*, which offers both design and planting advice to people interested in horticultural pursuits. Both are illustrated above in Figure 121.

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<sup>120</sup> Baumann, Eugène A. “On Planting Trees, and Staking.,” *The American Journal of Horticulture and Florist's Companion*, July 1867.

## DESIGN No. 19.

## PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF GROUNDS.

BY E. A. BAUMANN, RAHWAY, N. J.

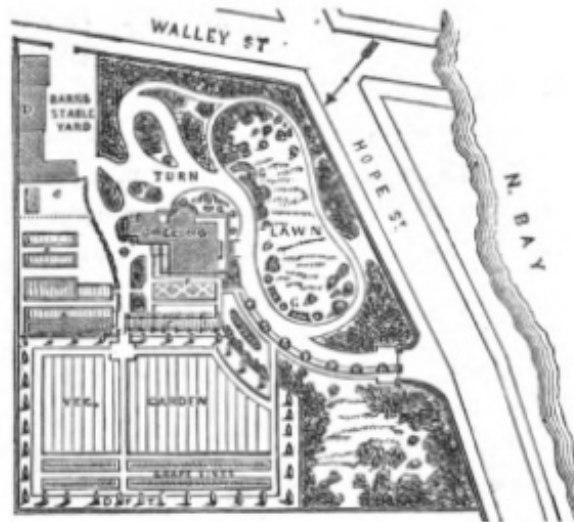


FIG. 57.—PLAN OF FOUR ACRES.

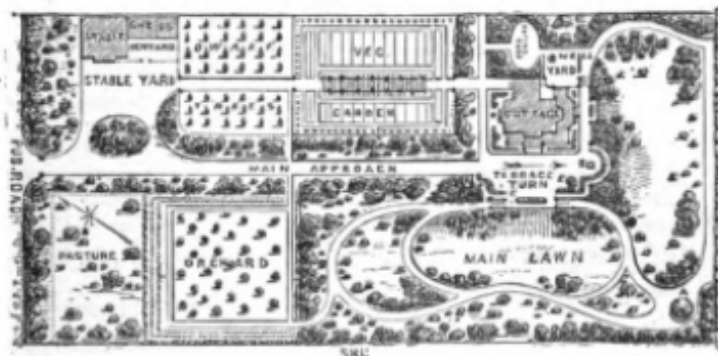


FIG. 58.—PLAN OF FIVE ACRES.

Figure 122. “Fig. 57.—Plan for Four Acres.” and “Fig. 58.—Plan on Five Acres.” Both illustrations are designs by Eugène A. Baumann done for various publications. Source: Hathi Trust.

Not only did he write about the subjects most important to his profession, Baumann also created illustrated features for *Woodward's Architecture*, including “Design No. 19: Plans for Improvements of Grounds,” showing plans for four- and five-acre properties.<sup>121</sup> Another work by Baumann was “Design No. 58.—A Grape Arbor,” also featured in *Woodward's Architecture*,

<sup>121</sup> Woodward, Geo. E. & F.W. *Woodward's Architecture, Landscape Gardening, and Rural Art*. (New York: Geo. E. & F.W. Woodward, Office of the “Horticulturist,” 1867), 51.

which was accompanied by an description.<sup>122</sup> His writings continued through the time of his death. In 1869, he provided specific information on growing plants in greenhouses to *Tilton's Journal of Horticulture and Florist's Companion*.<sup>123</sup> As part of a periodical, Baumann published an article, "Theory and Practice in Landscape—Gardening," for *The American Journal of Horticulture and Florist's Chronicle* in 1869, focusing on "Planting."<sup>124</sup> At least two feature articles appeared in 1869 issues of the *American Agriculturist*. The first, "Plan for Laying Out a Small Place," was published with a plan illustration in February 1869, providing professional advice on all the salient features.<sup>125</sup> The second, "Plan of a Suburban Place of Eight Acres," was published also with a plan illustration in July 1869, providing insight for landscape design for people with moderate size properties.<sup>126</sup> Though smaller than the subject property, these template or educational designs were no doubt influenced by works completed in combination with his ideals. Another article, published in 1870, was based on his writings and designs prior to his death, showing a "Garden at the Terminus of a Walk," which was published in the *American Agriculturist*.<sup>127</sup>

As previously stated, it was in 1865 that the Baumanns moved to Rahway, New Jersey, where he opened a larger nursery, which was operated by his descendants into the mid-1970s. According to family lore, the seedlings for the nursery were sent over from Europe. Baumann died after falling from a horse on October 2, 1869 at 8:30 AM.<sup>128</sup> The funeral was held the following Sunday at 3:00PM.<sup>129</sup> He was buried there in Hazel Wood Cemetery, near the border of Colonia and Rahway, New Jersey.

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<sup>122</sup> Woodward, Geo. E. & F.W. *Woodward's Architecture, Landscape Gardening, and Rural Art*. (New York: Geo. E. & F.W. Woodward, Office of the "Horticulturist," 1867), 120.

<sup>123</sup> *Tilton's Journal of Horticulture and Florist's Companion*. (Boston: E. Tilton & Company, 1869), 191.

<sup>124</sup> Baumann, Eugène A. "Theory and Practice in Landscape-Gardening," *The American Journal of Horticulture and Florist's Companion*, 1869, 79-80.

<sup>125</sup> Baumann, Eugène A. "Plan for Laying out a Small Place," *American Agriculturist*, February 1869, 60. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>126</sup> Baumann, Eugène A. "Plan of a Suburban Place of Eight Acres," *American Agriculturist*, July 1869, 260. Source: W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>127</sup> *American Agriculturist*, February 1870, 64-65.

<sup>128</sup> The cause of death was provided by W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann.

<sup>129</sup> *New York Herald*, 4 October 1869, 9.

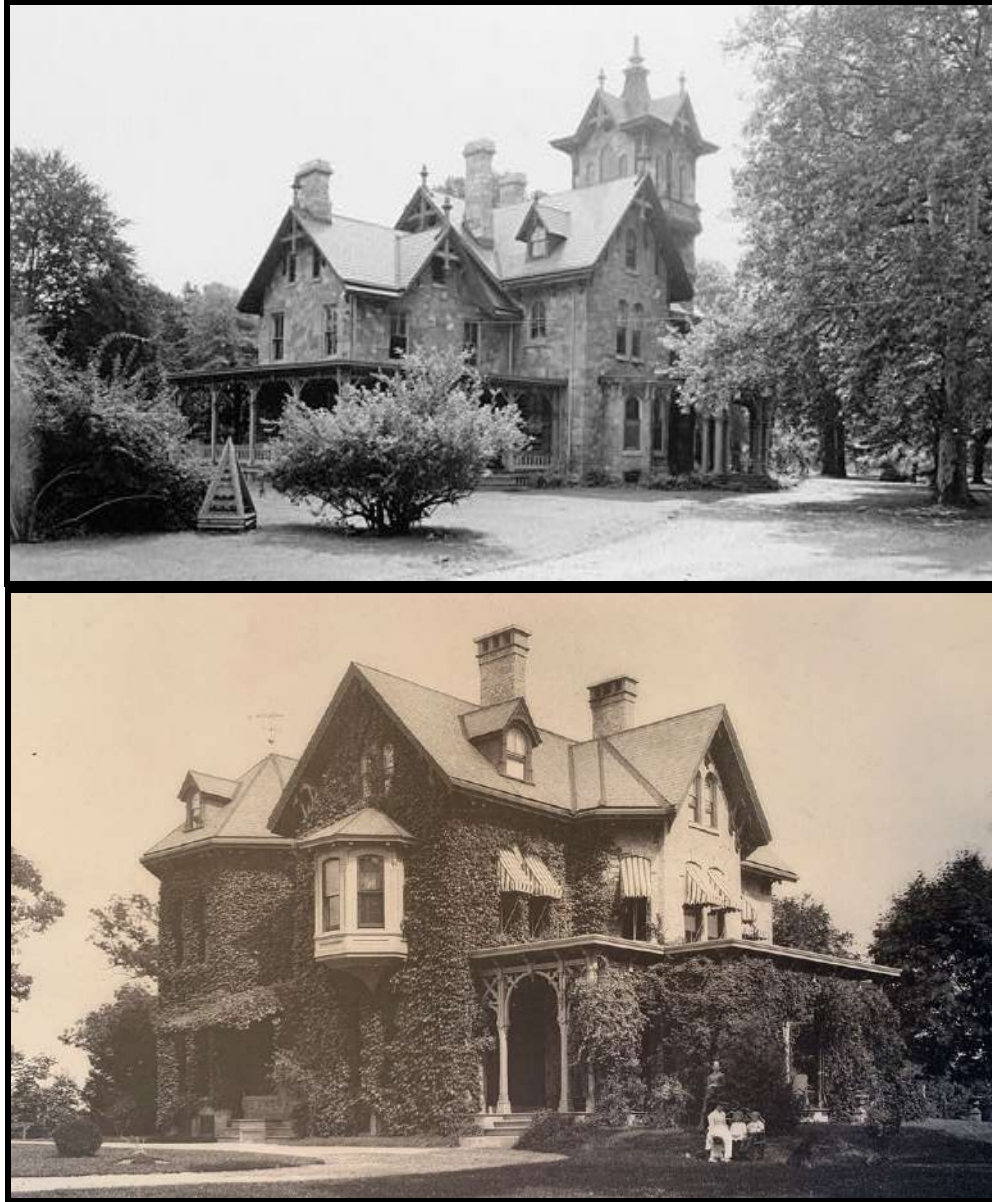


Figure 123. Top: Designed between 1865 and 1868, this house represents the mid-nineteenth century architecture styles that influenced the early work of Hutton. *Loch Aerie* (later *Glenloch*, later *Lockwood*) was commissioned by William E. Lockwood in Fraser, Pennsylvania. Figure 124. Bottom: Looking southeast, the photograph is of the Main Block of *The Chestnuts*—the subject property—designed not long after the mansion shown above shows the stylistic transition that is taking place in the 1870s in Hutton’s work, as part of a larger evolution of Victorian-era architecture.

### **CRITERION E: ADDISON HUTTON, ARCHITECT**

The original buildings of *The Chestnuts*, including the Main Block—shown above in Figure 123, Gardener’s Cottage, and Carriage House & Stable, comprise a significant design-ensemble by the eminent Quaker architect, Addison Hutton, a designer whose work significantly impacted

and influenced the built environment of the Quaker City and the larger region.<sup>130</sup> One of the great attributes of Hutton's dynamic skill set as an architect was his ability to adapt with the evolving tastes of the increasingly flamboyant Victorian-era, while also retaining a sense of individuality in aesthetic design and execution. Part of this stylistic adaptability led to a prolific, varied, and truly creative oeuvre that represents the transition from the Romantic era of Victorian architectural style to full-blown eclecticism—an aesthetic profusion, which spanned from the mid- to late-nineteenth century.



Figure 125. Top left: In 1877, Stephen O. Fuguet, tobacco merchant, commissioned Addison Hutton to design the building shown in this figure: “Sylvula,” a suburban residence that survives to-date at 931 Montgomery Avenue in Bryn Mawr (extant). Source: Figure 126. Top right: This figure is of “Midhope” at Haverford Station, a design by Hutton completed in 1875 for Professor James Curtis Booth, a prominent chemist. Figure 127. Bottom: Designed by Hutton, the Residence of J.W. Townsend at 825 Montgomery Avenue in Bryn Mawr (demolished).<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Addison Hutton papers, Coll. no. 1122, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library; Addison Hutton Ledger Book, 53-V-003, Hutton-Savery, Scheetz & Savery Collection, The Athenæum of Philadelphia.

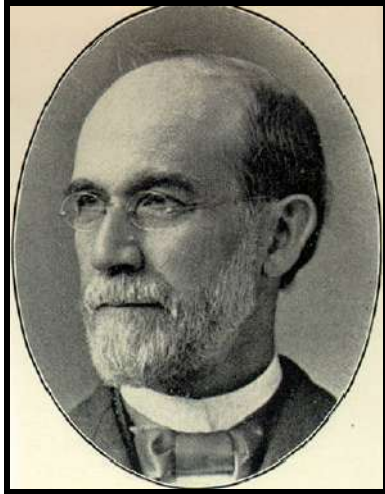
<sup>131</sup> Yarnall, Elizabeth Biddle. *Addison Hutton: Quaker Architect, 1834-1916*. (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1974), 70.

Hutton successfully designed all types of buildings. In fact, while working to design and complete David Scull, Jr.'s buildings for *The Chestnuts*, he was also progressing on a large addition to J.B. Lippincott's Bookstore on Market Street, which began in c1869-70; a mansion for J.B. Lippincott on Rittenhouse Square (demolished in 1972), which also began in c1869-70; the Orphan Asylum in 64<sup>th</sup> Street near Haverford Avenue at Overbrook; the West Chester Normal School at West Chester (demolished in 1971); and numerous houses. This was by far the most active period of Hutton's career since it began more than ten years earlier in the office of Samuel Sloan. 1871 would be equally engaging year for Hutton with the Central Market House at 17<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets; the Provident Life and Trust Company at 108 South Fourth Street; the Pennsylvania Company for Insurances on Lives and Granting Annuities at 431 Chestnut Street; the Ridgeway Library at Broad and Christian Streets; and numerous houses, including his own on Montgomery Avenue at Bryn Mawr. This two-year span not only meant architectural independence and success for Hutton, it also marked a notable transition from an execution of architectural style firmly rooted in the influence of Samuel Sloan, the renowned Philadelphia architect, to a more inventive eclecticism of various architectural stylistic influence. Among the designs executed between 1869 and 1871, Hutton exhibited a variety of stylistic practices and influences; however, his residential work was what was truly evolving from a more severe romanticism to the more fluid aesthetics of the 1870s.

The subject property gauges the transition of Hutton's residential work, being at the center of a stylistic disparity found between the decidedly mid-nineteenth century, Sloan-inspired *Loch Aerie* aka Glenloch (later known as *Lockwood*) commissioned by William E. Lockwood (1842-1906) in 1869—Figure 123, and houses like “Midhope” at Haverford Station—Figure 126, commissioned by James Cutis Booth, a prominent chemist. As the increased complexity of architectural style in the Victorian era caught the popular imagination of Philadelphians and Americans nationwide, Hutton's designs reflected that trajectory, and the subject property represents that architectural transition.



Figure 128. Torworth, the Residence of Justice Strawbridge, at School House Lane and Wissahickon Avenue, remodeled on designs by Addison Hutton. Source: East Falls Local.



1898			
Owner - Mitchell & Fletcher			
Building - Additional Store Building			
Location - 5708 Elm Ave. Phila.			
6-3	1	Plans Elevations & Sections	1/2-1/0 D.P. Tracer
6-13	2	Elevations	1/8-1/0 D.P. Tracer
7-11	3	Plans, Elevations & Sections	1/8-1/0 Lucas
7-29	4	Details of Doors & Window Frames	7-8 D.P. Tracer
7-29	5	" " " " " " " "	7-8 D.P. " "
7-30	6	" " " " " " " "	7-8 D.P. " "
7-30	7	" " " " " " " "	" " " " " "
7-30	8	" " " " " " " "	" " " " " "
10-21	9	Plans of Third Floor	1/2-1/0 " " "
10-24	10	Detail of Shed over Back Yard	1/2-1/0 " " "
10-24	11	Plans & Elevation to carry 2nd Floor junction	1/2-1/0 " " "
11-3	12	Detail Middle Roof Balustrade Work etc.	1/2-1/0 " " "
11-26	13	Plans & Elevation for Base in East Side of Store	1/2-1/0 " " "
11-28	14	Sketch of Store Front	1/2-1/0 " " "
12-29	15	Elevation & Plan of Store Front	1/2-1/0 " " "
12-24	16	Detail of Store Front	F.S. " " "
12-24	17	" " " " " " " "	F.S. " " "

Figure 129. Addison Hutton. Source: Moses King *Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians* (New York: Blanchard Press, 1901), p. 86; Figure 130. From the ledger of Addison Hutton in 1898, this section detailing his work for Mitchell, Fletcher & Co., Inc. on the subject property. Source: Addison Hutton Ledger Book, 53-V-003, Hutton-Savery, Scheetz & Savery Collection, The Athenæum of Philadelphia.

### HISTORIC CONTEXT: ADDISON HUTTON, ARCHITECT

A concise biography on Addison Hutton was written by Sandra L. Tatman, formerly of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, for the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings (PAB) Database, which was previously tendered to the Philadelphia Historical Commission in the nomination for the Cope-Mifflin House at 48–60 E. Penn Street. The biography is as following:

Addison Hutton was one of the principal Philadelphia architects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was born in Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and was a birthright member of the Society of Friends. Before coming to Philadelphia in 1857 he alternated working as a carpenter and a schoolteacher, learning architectural drawing from one of his fellow workmen in French's Sash and Door Factory in Salem, Ohio. After resuming teaching in the Fairview School, Westmoreland County, he was recommended to architect Samuel Sloan, then a noted designer of hospitals, with whom he was associated as an office assistant and draftsman from 1857 until 1861. During that time he supervised the building of "Longwood" in Natchez, Mississippi, for Dr. Haller Nutt. In 1862 Hutton received his first known independent architectural commission, a cottage for Henry Morris to be built at Newport, Rhode Island; and by September 1863, he was located in his own office at 400 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. Soon after, he became engaged to and eventually married Rebecca Savery, great-granddaughter of the Philadelphia cabinetmaker William Savery.

Hutton was so successful in his independent work that Samuel Sloan approached him in 1864 to join in a partnership, with an office located at 152 South Fourth Street, Philadelphia. This association lasted until 1868 with Sloan & Hutton

producing a number of designs for state hospitals, churches, and residences. Following the dissolution of the partnership, Sloan moved temporarily to New York, leaving Hutton to finish whatever remained from their office. The first of these in Philadelphia was the new building to be erected for the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society at the northwest corner of Washington Square. Hutton's firm was awarded this commission over the designs of James H. Windrim, Steven D. Button and Furness & Hewitt. Hutton completed the building without Sloan's aid and was successfully launched as an independent architect. Immediately following this commission, he designed an addition to Joshua Lippincott's bookstore on Market Street, at nearly the same time working on designs for the Arch Street Methodist Church. Hutton working independently and with various younger architects, including a short-lived partnership with John Ord (Hutton & Ord) around 1877 to 1890. Others, such as Charles L. Hillman and James Shirk, worked various with Hutton until he was joined in partnership by his nephews Albert and Addison Savery in 1904. Later William Scheetz was added to this association, and with Savery, Scheetz & Savery he completed the design for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia. In 1907 Hutton retired from active practice but continued to be listed in the firm's drawings and letterhead as "Consulting Architect." By 1910 he had fully retired.<sup>132</sup>

The career of Addison Hutton spanned some 53 years; for approximately 40 of those years he worked alone, accepting residential, school, business, hotel, religious, and hospital commissions. Although he was a member of the Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA, and in 1902 was employed as a Lecturer on Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, his participation in the Pennsylvania State Capitol competition of 1901 violated the ruling of the Chapter and resulted in his expulsion from the Chapter in February 1902. However, Hutton successfully petitioned the Court and was reinstated by October 1902.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Addison Hutton, Architect (1834–1916)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed December 2019.

<sup>133</sup> *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Addison Hutton, Architect (1834–1916)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed December 2019.





Figure 131. A painting of Will Price, Architect. Figure 132. A photograph of Will Price. Source: [www.philadelphiabuildings.org](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org).

### **CRITERION E: WILLIAM LIGHTFOOT PRICE, ARCHITECT**

The design for Cherry Cottage and enhancements to the original buildings of *The Chestnuts*, including the Main Block, and Carriage House & Stable, comprise a significant design-ensemble by the distinguished Quaker architect, William “Will” Lightfoot Price, a designer whose work significantly impacted and influenced the built environment of the City of Philadelphia, the larger region, and beyond.<sup>134</sup> Studying under Hutton, and later a devotee to the Philadelphia architect, Frank Furness, in whose office he worked early on in his career, Price would become one of the most distinctive architects in the Annals of Philadelphia history.

Price enjoyed a prolific career as a residential architect, specializing in suburban homes and other buildings on a domestic scale. He was one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States, his aesthetic motifs being chiefly connected with England and Europe rather than what had largely dominated American taste. Eventually, he established a partnership with his brother Frank Price, with whom he practiced chiefly residential design. Much of the brothers’ work included houses for developers Wendell & Smith of Overbrook Farms, Pelham, and St. David’s fame; the unique homes designed by various young architects for Wendell & Smith shaped the development of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century suburban Philadelphia.<sup>135</sup> After splitting from his brother in the early 1890s to practice independently, Price successfully designed several utopian Arts and Crafts communities, including Arden, Delaware, and Rose

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<sup>134</sup> Thomas/Price Collection, Athenæum of Philadelphia.

<sup>135</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, “William Lightfoot Price (1861-1916),” PAB Database.

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Valley, Pennsylvania, as well as the incredible Chateausque Woodmont estate in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.<sup>136</sup>

Price's work at *The Chestnuts* includes at least one unique work in his design for the fanciful Cherry Cottage. Aligned with the principles of the Arts & Crafts Movement, the design included native stone for the base of the building with the upper portion appearing to be of timber frame with plaster, which was likely painted a very specific color based on the design. Both the main roof and that of the bay window featured red clay tile, which was indicative of his designs for similar buildings. The completed work is indicative of his designs, but is all the more special due to its diminutive size and scale, fitting into the larger estate.



Figure 133. “Rest Cottage,” a Price-designed house in Arden, Pennsylvania. Source: Wikipedia. Figure 134. Left: The primary (northeast) and side (northwest) elevations of Cherry Cottage. Figure 135. Right: The primary (northeast) and side (northwest) elevations of Cherry Cottage. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2019.

<sup>136</sup> Beisert, Oscar. Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Musical Art Club, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (Philadelphia: Keeping Society, 2018), 16-18. This nomination included written contributions from Laura DiPasquale Zupan, Historic Preservation Planner with the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

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Additions and other improvements to the property included his enlargement of the Main Block with 1a. Arcade Addition in 1898 and potentially the 1b. Porch Addition between 1900 and 1910. 1a. Arcade Addition is very much in the style of Price's evolving work, modernizing Hutton's original design in an organic fashion, making the Main Block look more like the old estate it was emulating. The other alterations and additions to the house featured columns that were indicative of the Arts & Crafts movement, like those found on the reconfigured entrance and the large Porch Addition, as were the use of stucco and timber work in some of the additions. Overall, Price's enhancements to the property reflect his influence in the employment of the Arts & Crafts Movement, as well as his effect on local suburban architectural fashions.



Figure 136. Thunderbird Lodge (1904), an adaptation of an existing stone barn to become a residence. Source: Wikipedia.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: WILLIAM “WILL” LIGHTFOOT PRICE, ARCHITECT**

A concise biography on Will Price was written by Sandra L. Tatman, formerly of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, for the PAB Database. The biography is as following:

William L. Price was one of an influential group of architects working during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Philadelphia. Aside from his importance in the area of design based on Arts and Crafts Movement ideals, Price was one of the founders of an arts and crafts community, Rose Valley, outside of Philadelphia. He attended the Westtown School, but left in 1877 to practice

carpentry, abandoning that for architecture when he entered the office of Quaker architect Addison Hutton in 1878. According to the obituary published by the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, Price also spent some time with Furness & Evans; however, that information has not been documented by other sources. By 1881 Price and his brother Frank L. Price had established a partnership which would last until 1895, with a practice chiefly based on residential design, including houses for Wendell & Smith, the developers of Wayne and St. David's, PA, as well as the Pelham and Overbrook neighborhoods of Philadelphia. In 1895 Price began to practice independently, but in 1903 he established a partnership with M. Hawley McLanahan which would endure under the name of Price & McLanahan until his death, with McLanahan continuing to use the name for several years thereafter and eventually producing a successor firm, McLanahan & Bencker. Although well-known for residential design, Price's work also included the Traymore Hotel in Atlantic City, NJ, and Jacob Reed's Sons store in Philadelphia.

As interested in social reform movements as he was in architecture, Price helped Frank Stephens to found Arden, DE, a single-tax community outside of Wilmington. In 1901 he helped establish Rose Valley, an arts and crafts community in which many architects were involved, but none so vitally as Price. Although the earlier parts of the community were based on existing buildings, Price later designed a number of residences, among those several for the Rose Valley Improvement Company. Price was joined in the Rose Valley endeavor by his brother Walter Price and Walter Price's partner, William McKee Walton, as well as by younger architects like Carl deMoll and John M. Dickey.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "Will Price, Architect (1861–1916)," by Sandra L. Tatman, accessed February 2020.

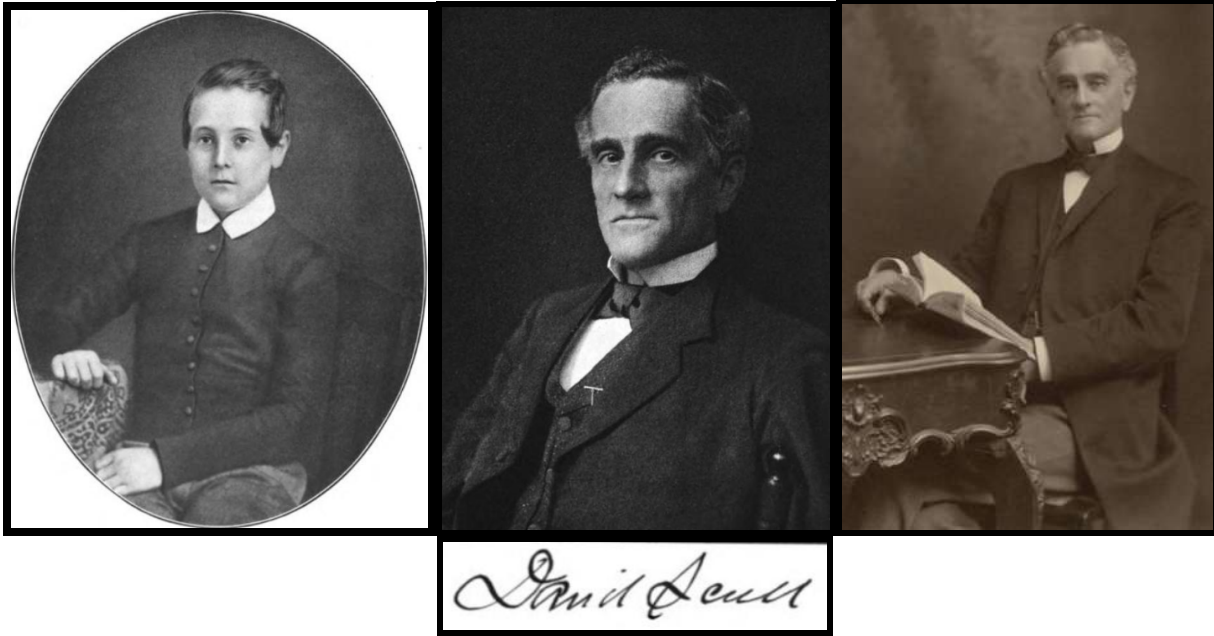


Figure 137. Left: David Scull as a boy. Source: David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908). Figure 138. Middle: David Scull in middle age. Source: David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi. Figure 139. Right: David Scull in old age. Source: Haverford College Archives.

### **CRITERION A—DAVID SCULL, JR. (1836-1907)**

*The Chestnuts* was the country place of David Scull, Jr. and his family from the time they purchased the property and began planning for its development in 1865 through the 1919, when the it was sold to the Vaughan family. Scull was a significant Quaker merchant, financier, and philanthropist, who made significant contributions to the City of Philadelphia and the larger region. He was just outside the city limits, he served as a manager at Haverford College and on the Board of Trustees at Bryn Mawr College, and he was instrumental in the physical development and beautification of both campuses. Scull was the primary driver behind the development of College Lane, a beautiful place in both architecture and landscape at Haverford. He was also instrumental in erecting many of the institutional buildings at Bryn Mawr. Further proof of his love of landscape was shown through the development of both Haverford and Bryn Mawr. This was further exhibited in 1881, when Scull became a founding member of the Committee on Lawn and Landscape Gardening at Bryn Mawr, which led to the further beautification and development of the campus.<sup>138</sup> These were just a few of Scull's philanthropic endeavors, but, regardless, they are invariably linked to his ability to create and commission beautiful, picturesque environments, a trait that is represented in his extant estate, the subject property.

<sup>138</sup> Board of Trustees of Bryn Mawr College, minutes, vol. 1, 1880-1890.



Figure 140. David Scull, Jr. on his way to meeting. Source: David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi. Figure 141. On the next page is a photograph of Hannah Ellicott Coale Scull as a young woman. Source: David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: BIOGRAPHY OF DAVID SCULL, JR.**

Descending from a distinguished line of Quaker ancestors, David Scull, Jr., was born to David Scull (1799-1884) and Lydia Lippincott (1801-1854) on January 17, 1836 in Sculltown (later renamed Auburn), Salem County, New Jersey.<sup>139</sup> David Scull, Sr., was the son of Gideon and Sarah Scull of Sculltown.<sup>140</sup> Like many Quakers of their generation, the Sculls moved from Sculltown to Philadelphia in 1837, at which time his father became a dry goods merchant. They first lived in the “old Quaker neighborhood” on Marshall Street.<sup>141</sup> David Scull, Sr., remained in the dry goods business until 1850, at which time he became a wool merchant.<sup>142</sup> By this time the Sculls lived at 815 Arch Street in what was the “[new] Quaker neighborhood,” where Lydia

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<sup>139</sup> Swarthmore, *Quaker Meeting Records*. Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

<sup>140</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

<sup>141</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 7-9.

<sup>142</sup> Henry Hall. *America's Successful Men of Affairs*. (New York: New York Tribune, 1896), 696.

Lippincott Scull died in 1854.<sup>143</sup> David Scull, Jr. gained a step-mother on January 5, 1859, when his father remarried to Hannah Davis Wood (1809-1895), the daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Wood, originally of Greenwich, New Jersey.<sup>144</sup> Like many prosperous Quakers of the day, David Scull, Jr.'s early education took place at Westtown Boarding School. Afterwards, he would go on the Introductory Department of the Haverford School, matriculating in 1849 and graduating in 1854.<sup>145</sup>

On February 17, 1861, Scull married Hannah Ellicott Coale (1837-1871) from a Quaker family of Baltimore, Maryland, the daughter of William E. Coale and Hannah Carey.<sup>146</sup> Hannah visited Philadelphia to serve as a bridesmaid in a friend's wedding, where she first met David Scull, Jr.<sup>147</sup> They were lifelong members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Meeting. Their only child, William E. Scull, was born on March 2, 1862 in their home at 126 North Tenth Street in Philadelphia.<sup>148</sup> However, their residence at that location was short-lived, as described by William E. Scull in his autobiography:

When the neighborhood became a place for warehouses, all of the family moved uptown, the Chestons and Thomases side by side on Madison Avenue, with a big garden entrance between them.<sup>149</sup>



As was also the custom of the time, David Scull, Jr. had joined his father's firm after college, at which time the business then located at 125 Market Street.<sup>150</sup> It appears that the Sculls owned at least one woolen mill, a four-story brick building at the southeast corner of North Twelfth and Thompson Streets.<sup>151</sup> After his father's retirement, David Scull, Jr. remained a wool dealer, entering into a short-lived partnership with fellow Quaker William Baxter.<sup>152</sup> Eventually, he partnered with his brother Edward Lawrence Scull (1846-1884) to form David Scull, Jr. & Bro., a business relationship that lasted from approximately 1864 to 1884. Another brother, Gideon Delaphine Scull (1824-1889) also joined the business. While one brother died relatively early

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<sup>143</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2.

<sup>144</sup> Ancestry.com. U.S., *Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

<sup>145</sup> David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi.

<sup>146</sup> Swarthmore, *Quaker Meeting Records*. Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

<sup>147</sup> David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi.

<sup>148</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2.

<sup>149</sup> William Ellis Scull, *Sometime Quaker, An Autobiography*. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1939), 1-2.

<sup>150</sup> "David Scull, Noted Friend, Passes Away," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 November 1907, 16.

<sup>151</sup> "Woolen Mill.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 26 February 1873, 5.

<sup>152</sup> *Philadelphia City Directory* (1863).

and another retired, David Scull, Jr. continued the business until 1891 when he too retired.<sup>153</sup> In addition to the wool trade, David Scull, Jr. was a founder of the Mortgage Trust Company of Philadelphia in 1886, serving as its Vice-President. And even after his retirement, he was a co-founder of the Standard Roller Bearing Company in 1898.<sup>154</sup>



Figure 142. Merion Hall, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, one of the buildings constructed under the leadership and philanthropy of David Scull, Jr. Source: *Demorest's Family Magazine*, October 1885.

Beyond his professional endeavors he was greatly involved in civic and community affairs. In 1865, he was elected a Manager of Haverford College, a position that he filled until the time of his death. He served as Treasurer from 1866 to 1883, exhibiting “great interest in the details of the college management.” He was also a great proponent of expanding the college and its buildings, conceiving “the great improvement on the College Lane, which brought to the college a beautiful row of houses and a considerable addition to its productive resources.”<sup>155</sup> In 1878, he was elected an Overseer of the William Penn Charter School, serving on that board until the end of his life. He was also one of the founders of Bryn Mawr College. He served as secretary of the Trustees of Bryn Mawr College until 1895. From 1895 to 1904, he was the Vice President, and from 1904 until the time of his death he was the President. In addition to serving as a Trustee, he also served on the Committee on Buildings from 1880 to 1904—and as the Chairman of that committee from 1885 to 1904, and on the Committee on Lawn and Landscape Gardening. During this time, Scull also worked with his own personal architect, Addison Hutton, who was engaged in designing buildings for both Haverford and Bryn Mawr.<sup>156</sup> Scull was described by the President of Bryn Mawr College regarding his many years of service:

<sup>153</sup> Henry Hall. *America's Successful Men of Affairs*. (New York: New York Tribune, 1896), 696.

<sup>154</sup> Henry Hall. *America's Successful Men of Affairs*. (New York: New York Tribune, 1896), 696.

<sup>155</sup> David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi.

<sup>156</sup> Board of Trustees of Bryn Mawr College, minutes, vol. 1, 1880-1890.



Every college building, after Taylor Hall and Merion Hall which were planned by the Founder of the College himself, was built under the supervision of David Scull as Chairman of the Trustees' Committee on Buildings and Grounds; Radnor Denbeigh, the Pembrokes, Rockefeller and the Library took their places in beautiful succession on the college campus, each in its appointed place. Their harmonious arrangement and unity of design are due in great part to David Scull's love of beauty, to his belief in following expert opinion, to his open-mindedness, his readiness to be convinced and, above all, to his great love of the college and his single-hearted determination to give it the very best.<sup>157</sup>

David Scull, Jr. died on November 22, 1907 at 9:40 AM.<sup>158</sup> He was laid to rest in the Friends' South-Western Burial Ground in the Family Plot No. 120, Section B.<sup>159</sup>

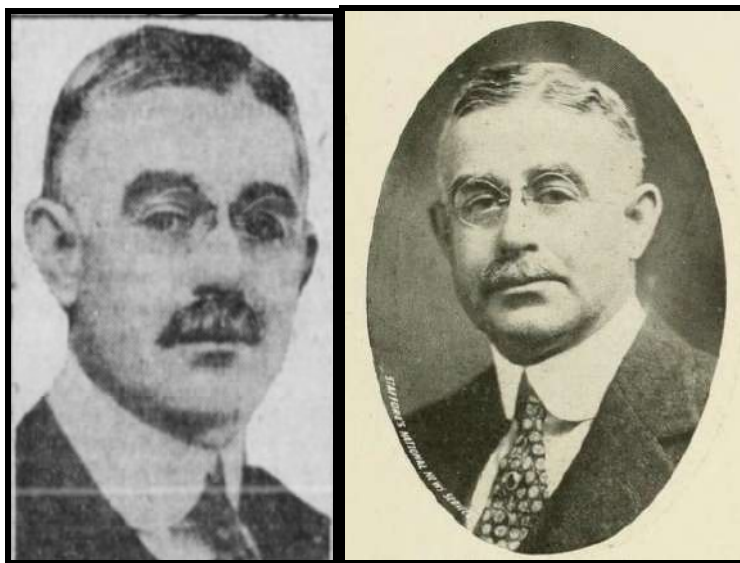


Figure 143. Left: Charles P. Vaughan in 1930. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 February 1930, 2. Figure 144. Right: Charles P. Vaughan. Source: Internet Archive.

### **CRITERION A—CHARLES P. VAUGHAN (1867-1936)**

The subject property was the country place of Charles P. Vaughan and his family from the time they purchased the property in 1919, and continued its development and improvement through 1940, when the place was sold to the Sisters of Visitation, a contemplative Roman Catholic sisterhood. Vaughan was a significant industrialist, who founded and enlarged the Vaughan Machine Co. at Peabody, Massachusetts, which was one of the largest leather working machine companies in the world. He later owned and enlarged the Dugan, Hood, & Co., Inc.,

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<sup>157</sup> David Scull. *Union with God in Thought and Faith: Reflections of the Enlargement of Religious Life Through Modern Knowledge*. (John C. Winston, 1908), vi.

<sup>158</sup> Pennsylvania (State). Death certificates, 1906–1963. Series 11.90 (1,905 cartons). Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Record Group 11. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

<sup>159</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

Manufacturers of Fine Glazed Kid, Philadelphia. He was also an important philanthropist engaged in civic matters, serving as President of both Bucknell University and the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.<sup>160</sup> Charles P. Vaughan made important contributions to the industrial age in the United States, specifically, in Peabody, Massachusetts, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In addition, he was a philanthropist in Philadelphia and the larger Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### **HISTORIC CONTEXT: CHARLES P. VAUGHAN, MANUFACTURER**

Under the Vaughans ownership, the name of the estate would change from *Leighton Place* to *Oak Knoll* and, eventually, *Oak Ledge*.<sup>161</sup> Charles P. Vaughan was a manufacturer—President of Dungan, Hood, & Co., Inc., Fine Glazed Kid. He was born in 1867 at New Portland, Maine, the son of Joseph Warren Vaughan and Martha J. Cutts, and was educated in Peabody, Massachusetts, as well as at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. His wife and two daughters were the ladies mentioned in the deed transaction. He founded the Vaughan Machine Co. at Peabody, Massachusetts, which was the largest leather working machine business in the world. He sold this company in 1901. In 1902, he bought into Dugan, Hood & Company, Inc. with his brother Ira Vaughan, removing to live in Philadelphia.<sup>162</sup> He was also President of Bucknell University and the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.<sup>163</sup> Vaughan would eventually become Vice President of the Overbrook Farms Club in the 1930s.<sup>164</sup> Following heart complications and surgery, he died on March 20, 1936 at Methodist Episcopal Hospital in Philadelphia.<sup>165</sup> At the time of his death he was reported to be worth approximately \$1,069,919.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> “Former Bucknell Trustee Leaves \$1,069,919 Estate,” *The Daily Item* (Sunbury), 22 May 1939, 3.

<sup>161</sup> Various articles in 1925 in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* refer to the property as *Oak Knoll*, including “Miss Katherine Vaughan, daughter of...,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 October 1925, 4. Various articles starting in 1926 refer to the subject property as *Oak Ledge*, including *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 October 1928, 22.

<sup>162</sup> Stafford, Hartwell. *Who’s Who in Philadelphia in Wartime*. (Philadelphia: Stafford’s National News Service, 1920), 191.

<sup>163</sup> “Former Bucknell Trustee Leaves \$1,069,919 Estate,” *The Daily Item* (Sunbury), 22 May 1939, 3.

<sup>164</sup> D’Apery, Tello J. *Overbrook Farms: Its Historical Background, Growth, and Community Life*. (Overbrook Farms, Philadelphia: Magee Press, 1936), 34 & 99.

<sup>165</sup> Pennsylvania (State). Death certificates, 1906–1963. Series 11.90 (1,905 cartons). Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Record Group 11. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

<sup>166</sup> “Former Bucknell Trustee Leaves \$1,069,919 Estate,” *The Daily Item* (Sunbury), 22 May 1939, 3.

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This nomination is being filed by the Overbrook Farms Club and the Keeping Society of Philadelphia. The nomination was prepared by Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist with assistance from J. M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian, and Kelly E. Wiles, Architectural Historian. This nomination was prepared with advice and information from Margaret “Pixie” Biddle (1948-2020), a descendant (in-law) of David Scull, Jr., and W. Scott Baumann, a descendant of Eugène A. Baumann. The following repositories aided in the preparation of this nomination: Ancestry.com; City Archives of Philadelphia; Google Books; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Library Company of Philadelphia; Lower Merion Historical Society; Newspapers.com; PAB Database; etc.

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