

Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc.

Summer 2014

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PHW

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CONTACT

Phone
(540) 667-3577

E-mail
phwi@verizon.net

Website
www.phwi.org



PHW CELEBRATES 50 YEARS! GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, SEPT. 19

Please join us in the celebration of Preservation of Historic Winchester's 50th Anniversary with an evening of music, light hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine, and fun at the Taylor Hotel Pavilion. This casual, outdoor event in the mixed grass and paved multilevel Taylor Hotel Pavilion is a party honoring PHW's accomplishments over the past fifty years. PHW has enjoyed this longevity and success because of our excellent and motivated volunteers, board of directors, and staff through the decades. This event is a celebration those past accomplishments, while looking forward to another fifty years of preservation in Winchester.

This special event will be limited to 200 attendees on a first come, first served basis, so be sure you reserve your spot! Admission is FREE to current PHW members as a thank you for your continued support. Not a current PHW member? Admission is \$25 per person or \$45 per couple and includes a 1 year membership to PHW.

Special thanks go out to the Robert Larson Trio, musicians; and Becky Parrish of "A Matter of Taste," caterer. They are sure to make this a special evening for us.

Date: Friday, September 19, 2014

Time: 6-9 p.m.

Place: The Taylor Hotel Pavilion, 125 N. Loudoun St.

Inclement Weather Place: Bright Box Theater, 15 N. Loudoun St.

Dress: Casual, prepare for the weather and wear flat shoes

Cost: Free to current PHW members OR \$25 per person or \$45 per couple

Reserve Your Tickets (preorders accepted)

In person at the PHW Office, 530 Amherst St.

By email at phwi@verizon.net

By phone at (540) 667-3577

By PayPal for new or renewing PHW members at www.phwi.org/anniversary.php ♦

ANNUAL MEETING 2014 BY JOHN BARKER

The 50th Annual Meeting for PHW was held on July 22, 2014, at the Selma Estate, next door to the Hexagon House. While it was a bit of a celebration to kick off our 50th year of operation, it was mostly to recognize and honor the accomplishments of the past year in local preservation efforts. I want to take a moment to thank Mr. Tom Dick and his family for allowing us the use of Selma, and to show this beautiful estate to our guests.

The first order of business was to acknowledge the efforts of Ed Acker, Board Member and Vice President of Education, for his continued work on the Lunch and Learn Series. Ed started this program in 2012, now in its second season, where we have seen the audience grow from 10 attendees to over 60. (Cont.)

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ANNUAL MEETING 2014 (CONT.)



*PHW Directors and Staff at Selma
(standing) Bruce Downing, Mary Riley, Sharon Collette
(seated) Sandra Bosley, John Barker, Karen Clay*

Thank you's go out to all our presenters for this past year, Bill Buettin with United Bank, Chuck Swartz with Reader & Swartz Architects, Historian Maral Kalbian, David Logan with Vintage Construction, Sandra Bosley with PHW, and Tim Youmans with the City of Winchester.

Our own Sandra Bosley was quite busy this year. Naturally the HHT takes a significant amount of time as always. There were other events, a membership drive at the Wilbur Feltner Museum (Shenandoah University), organizing the Church Tour, BAR meetings, Top of Virginia Builder's Association Home Show, guided tours of downtown, research for homeowners, well, you get the picture. Sandra also moderated a discussion on the Changing Role of House Museums, a presentation with the Friends of Handley Regional Library, that included Long Branch Plantation, the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley & Glen Burnie Historic House, and Belle Grove Plantation. Held at the Library, this drew a good audience interested in learning how these museums are adapting to current trends.

In commemoration of National Preservation Month, held

every May, PHW sponsored a tour of local church buildings, highlighting four local churches in historic Old Town Winchester. The Old Stone Church & Lutheran Wall, Centenary Reformed UCC, First Presbyterian Church, and Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church were featured to raise awareness not only of their history and architecture, but also of the unique challenges of preserving places of worship.

Our Holiday House Tour 2013 "Stroll on Stewart Street" featured some beautiful homes on South Stewart and Washington Streets, as well as the always enjoyable Bough & Dough Shop held at the Winchester Little Theater. The Saturday evening tour and preview party at the home of Bruce and Donna Downing went off without a hitch. But we'll bounce back and make up for it with a great tour this year.

The surprise for the afternoon came from Mayor Liz Minor, who on behalf of the City of Winchester, presented PHW with a proclamation declaring June 22, 2014, as PHW day, in honor of our hard work for preservation in Winchester over the past 50 years. (Cont. page 7)



The City of Winchester and the Winchester EDA receive their Patron awards for the Taylor Hotel.

THE AMERICAN SHOPPING MALL AND THE COLD WAR

BY ED ACKER

Ah, the good old days in the 1950s when we didn't have to go through metal detectors, body scanners and CCTV cameras to feel safe and secure. But wait a moment, those were also the days when we had fallout shelters in most public buildings and duck and cover drills under our school desks. Thank goodness I don't have to explain what that was all about to my rising 3rd grade grandson.



Fallout shelter sign, Junior High School #14, Brooklyn, NY

On June 11, 2014 an article circulated in the preservation online literature; *How the Cold War Shaped the Design of American Malls*, by Mami Epstein, whose thesis is that the design for the first enclosed shopping mall built in America was driven by American's cold war fears and the need for shelter and a controlled safe and secure environment, and that the mall should be located outside the blast zone of the city core in the event of atomic attack.

I take exception to the idea that cold war shelter was a primary design determinant for the American shopping mall. The first enclosed mall in America under discussion is Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis, built in 1956. There were many other historical forces in the 1950s which I think had more influence on the mall design that I will discuss later. Disclosure: I also have my own anecdotal experience

working as a young college student and office boy for the architect, Victor Gruen in his New York City office in 1958-1959.

No doubt the building would have been designated as a fallout shelter since it had a large capacity to hold people, was robustly designed, and was publically accessible. So was my junior high school which still had the old fallout shelter sign on the wall seen in the figure above. So was the basement of the steel frame and masonry apartment house I grew up in. Southdale, with its high masonry walls, would have been designed to withstand the snow and wind loads of its Minnesota environment.



Southdale Central Court: Early aerial view: highway, vacant field and housing tracts beyond

Southdale Center's original two stories of storefronts faced inward onto a common enclosed air conditioned mall with large full height 50-60 ft. clear span landscaped courts with trees, fountains, and shopper amenities.(cont.)

AMERICAN SHOPPING MALL (CONT.)

This was not your typical main street. It was safe and secure from the outside world and unexpected street encounters with “undesirables.” The exterior walls faced vast surrounding parking lots served by the suburban highway network. Southdale’s commercial success set the mold for the 3,000 or so enclosed malls that followed, although commercial interests later reduced shopping mall design to simplistic formulae that replicated their dull appearance across the entire nation.

Southdale was designed by Victor Gruen, a native Viennese who escaped the Nazis in 1938. He came to New York City with \$8 in cash and was able to survive by designing a Fifth Avenue storefront for Lederer, a leather goods retailer and fellow Viennese. This design was well received and he found further design work and in time moved to Los Angeles and become a successful designer of retail buildings in tune with the new highway automobile culture of LA, and where he established his own architectural firm, which survives him to this day. By the 1950s his clients included the J.L. Hudson and Dayton retail department store chains. In 1952 he designed Northland Center, a suburban Detroit shopping mall for Hudson, which had many of the planning and design features later contained in Southdale, but the common mall spaces were exposed to the elements with covered arcades along the storefronts.

Two years later the Dayton Company, future parent of Target, commissioned Gruen to design the Southdale Center. Unlike their competitors, Dayton’s wanted this to be an enclosed mall, insulated from the cold snowy winters and hot summers of the upper Midwest. Thus Southdale was designed to simultaneously give customers a better shopping experience, with urban-like amenities on the common mall, free and easy auto access and parking, and much easier maintenance for the mall operators.

At the time I worked for Gruen his firm had about 135 employees in total, with 15-20 employees in New York. This was my first experience in an architectural office. I transitioned from engineering to architecture as a result of being exposed to the real work in his office, the people on the staff, the architectural books in his library, and the great city neighborhood we worked in.

One of my ongoing tasks was to paste up the press releases and news clippings we received weekly onto



Victor Gruen with his inevitable cigarette holder.

pages in thick 4" loose leaf binders maintained by the PR department. Aside from gaining great skills using rubber cement this was mind-numbingly dull work. Except, I started reading this stuff, much of it about Northland and Southdale and shopping centers in general, and also about Gruen’s urban planning and architectural efforts in downtown Rochester NY, New Rochelle NY, Stamford, Conn., and Boston.

In those two years of looking at Gruen’s news clippings I recall no mention of cold war fallout shelters being a design determinant of the shopping centers, nor their locations being determined by atomic blast resistance from the inner city core. Nor can I recall any such discussion in the office or around the water cooler. I believe the mall’s design was determined by purely commercial and merchandizing needs, building code requirements, visibility and appearance from the highway at car speed, and its location by highway access sufficient to support the center’s traffic and car parking.

I later worked on several AT&T buildings which housed mission critical telephone switching equipment. They were totally fireproof windowless buildings, built of heavily reinforced concrete walls at least 10-12" thick, reinforced concrete structural frames, and had thick concrete floor slabs. This was blast-resistive structural design, and much more robust than Southdale or any shopping center would

AMERICAN SHOPPING MALL (CONT.)

ever economically need to be.

Ever the urbane European, Gruen freely admitted he modeled Southdale on the famous four-block long Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II Mall in Milan, Italy, built in 1861. Gruen's vision for the American shopping mall experience was to also include offices, hotels, multi-level parking garages, apartments, medical offices, and civic and religious facilities. Most importantly, his was not just a suburban vision. Gruen was very PR savvy and always promoting an urban version of his vision for American cities and downtown areas, often with the same retail clients whose corporate headquarters and flagship department stores were located in downtown cities. They were very much interested that their city stores be economically competitive with their suburban locations.

Let's put this all into some other historical context besides the cold war. We are just one decade after World War II. Americans are expanding their families in what will become known as the baby boom era. Suburban development is happening everywhere as farmland and open space is quickly disappearing, transforming into highways and cloverleaf interchanges, commercial strips lining the highways, vast housing tracts with cul de sac street patterns, and new schools and civic buildings built to serve to burgeoning population. In 1956 we started the U.S. interstate highway system which opened up new opportunities for suburban development still farther removed from the urban cores.

With this suburban expansion occurs the exodus from American cities of its white middle class population and the gutting of the core city economies. This left many cities overburdened with poor, elderly, and often black or other minority populations with no political or economic means to gain any of the property tax benefit of the suburban expansion. At the same time the old city trolley car networks were torn up, only occasionally replaced by buses, isolating the urban poor from the new suburbia. When Gruen attempted to transpose his urban planning

vision into the declining urban environment the results generally failed as American cities fell further and then bottomed out for several decades. Gruen retired to his native Austria, unhappy that his legacy was twisted into being the father of the typical dull suburban shopping mall and that his urban visions were unable to take hold, and remain largely unknown.

Only in this century are we seeing a renaissance of the American city which includes the multi-use planning ideas of Victor Gruen and many others, often executed on a smaller and more incremental scale, infilling in the manner of Jane Jacobs' ideas. We also have the discovery of the value and benefits of the urban experience by a new generation of young people, many who grew up in and now reject the suburban life style. But this had to be preceded by the modern historic preservation movement which began in the 1960s, most publically with the destruction of Penn Station in NYC; the blocking of further progress of the interstate highway system through dense urban areas (by Jane Jacobs et al in the late 1960s); and the early economic foothold gained by artists, gay communities, a 1970s-1980s generation of young people, and small business entrepreneurs as they all reclaimed some cities block by block, and neighborhood by neighborhood. These were the latter 20th century urban preservation pioneers.

References:

How the Cold War Shaped the Design of American Malls, Mami Epstein, Curbed Features, 6/6/2014.

Shopping Town USA, Victor Gruen, the Cold War, and the Shopping Mall, Anette Baldauf, Eurozine, 2/13/2008.

Mall Maker, Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, M. Jeffrey Hardwick, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. ♦

CONGRATULATIONS TO HELENE HATCHER

PHW was pleased to offer the chance for a Beyer print framed at EBS Gallery to visitors at our booth at the July 26th Design Expo downtown. About thirty five people took a chance on the print. The lucky

winner was Helene Hatcher of Berryville.

Congratulations, Helene! We know you'll love your personal "View of Winchester!" ♦

SAVE OLD JOHN KERR—IT'S ELEMENTARY!

Barbara Laidlaw donated this “blast from the past” to PHW. Her daughter, Tina, wrote this letter to City Council in the midst of PHW’s struggle to champion for the Old John Kerr School building. As you may know, although PHW’s offer to purchase the building was rejected, the organization remained instrumental in keeping its endangered status highly visible and relevant for several years through the late 1970s and early 1980s. One of our upcoming lectures through the “Lunch and Learn” series will address this topic, among other Shenandoah University preservation projects in the downtown. In the meantime, take a look back at a then young preservationist’s plea to City Council on behalf of the town’s beloved old school:

Dear City Council:

I am writing to you about a concern I have, a concern that asks, “What is going to happen to Old John Kerr?” Old John Kerr has been a part of this community for a long time, maybe even longer than some of you have been a part of it. A lot of things have gone on in that building. A lot of people’s memories are in that building. How would you like it if in a few years you show your grandchildren Old John Kerr and say, “This is where I went to school” and see a parking lot? I wouldn’t like it a bit. But, most of all, Old John Kerr is historical.

Earlier you wanted to turn it into a parking lot, but the people of the city wouldn’t let you. PHW and Melco Inc. made offers for the building, but you turned them down. How long will it be before your decision is made? Old John Kerr has been sitting there for years and by the time you make your decision it will have no chance left at all!

You talk about where to get the money to preserve it. I’m sure a lot of people would donate money to preserve it.

A group of kids studied architecture and historical buildings this summer and Old John Kerr is a historical building needing to be saved.

The prices PHW and Melco Inc. both offered are reasonable, but no, you want a higher price. By the time someone might buy it for the price you want, the building would be in ruins.

A lot of people cared enough about the building to keep it from becoming a parking lot, they would probably be the ones to donate money for preserving it.

Hurry up and make your decision and please make the right decision before it’s too late!

Yours truly,
Tina Laidlaw

P.S. I happen to be a kid who cares about what happens to Old John Kerr!

ANNUAL MEETING 2014 (CONT.)

We bid adieu this year to Board of Directors Larry Belkin, Dan McCoig, Bill Buettin, Cal Allen, and Patrick Farris. We also welcomed new Directors Kathy Cresegiona and Sarah Smith, and inducted our longtime friend, mentor, past Board Member and President (twice I believe) Frank Wright to our Honorary Council.

The afternoon wrapped up with the presentation of our Preservation Awards for 2013-2014, including:

Awards of Merit

Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum
Alec & Lindsay Bouldin & Richard Shannon, 525 South Braddock St.
Debra Prutzman, for the Braddock Street Sport Shop
Glaize & Bros. Properties, for the former Glaize Lumber on Cameron Street
Sara D'Amato, for the Winchester Woolen Mill on Millwood Avenue

Patron Awards

City of Winchester, for their participation and support of the Taylor Hotel project
Winchester EDA, for the Taylor Hotel Redevelopment
Brian Wishneff & Associates, for the Taylor Hotel Redevelopment

Ben Belchic Award

Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, for the Glen Burnie House Restoration

Katherine Rockwood Revolving Fund Award

Joe & Sharon Collette, for the renovation of the Grim-Moore House

Lucille Lozier Award

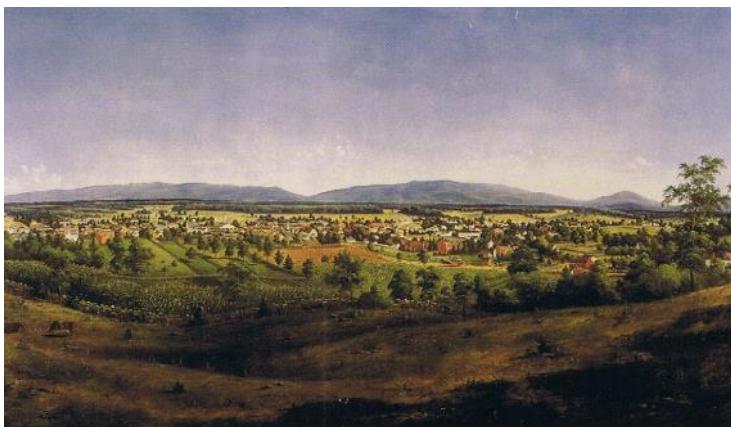
Adams Company, for the renovation of 315-317 South Loudoun Street
Oakcrest Companies, for the renovation of The Old Star Building on Boscawen Street

So thank you, and congratulations for another great year at PHW. Thank you to our Board of Directors, membership, and volunteers, all past and present. Without everyone pitching in we would not accomplish our goals and mission – to preserve the history and architecture of Winchester!

We look forward to our 50th year of operation, and the celebrations we have planned. Please let us know if you have any ideas, thoughts, or questions for us. We love to hear from our members, and to be sure we are doing a good job for you. Remember, this is just the start of the next 50! ♦



“A VIEW OF WINCHESTER” PRINTS



Have you admired the Edward Beyer print of “A View of Winchester” but never known where you could buy your own copy? The prints, along with an identification key, are available at the PHW Office at the Hexagon House, the Gift Shop at the MSV, and also at EBS Gallery at 25 N. Loudoun St. in Winchester. Unframed prints are \$190 plus tax.

If you stop by EBS Gallery for your print, you can also have it custom framed to your specifications on site (framing extra). The supply of Beyer prints is dwindling—get yours before they’re gone! ♦



Preservation
of Historic
Winchester

Hexagon House ♦ 530 Amherst St. ♦ Winchester, VA 22601

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NEWS

Summer 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 19: PHW's 50th Anniversary Celebration

PHW celebrates its Golden Anniversary this September 19 from 6-9 PM. The casual, outdoor event is scheduled to be held at the Taylor Hotel Pavilion. In case of inclement weather, we will move indoors to the Bright Box Theater. See the front page for more info and how to reserve your spot!

Lunch and Learn Lecture: Sept. 23

PHW's Lunch and Learn series returns this fall! Join us at the Winchester Little Theatre, noon, to learn about the renovation project underway there now. Presenters will include perennial favorite David Logan, as well as architect Tim Machado.

Holiday House Tour: Dec. 6 and 7

Mark your calendars! PHW will revisit our old stomping grounds of Potato Hill with a selection of log houses primarily the 500 and 600 blocks of South Loudoun Street, including several PHW Revolving Fund houses.♦

ARE YOU A PHW MEMBER?



Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc., is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Winchester's architectural heritage. PHW depends on income from membership and contributions to achieve its goals.

All contributions above membership are tax deductible.

Join today by completing this form and returning it to PHW, 530 Amherst St., Winchester, VA 22601.

Individual \$25 Family/Business \$45
 Corporate \$100 Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

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E-mail: _____

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