

Heidelberg House

Dr. Arthur Rose Guerard, original owner, wrote the following description of the house for a realtor to advertise the house for sale. This paper was found in R.S. Galloway's papers after his death. "The Mansion: Exterior, Swiss architecture, substantial construction, elegant equipment. Building wood-frame, encased cement stucco or pebble-dash, metal roof, wide double windows. 150 x 60 ft. Three stories with two wings, 26 x 30 ft., two stories high. Ceilings, 12, 10, and 9 feet. Long verandas on all sides, some enclosed in glass; two port-cocheres. Interior, comfortable, convenient and handsomely finished in hard wood, antique oak, black walnut, red cherry and yellow pine; inlaid parquet floors, carved mantles, wainscoting and stairways. Contains forty-five bedrooms (usually large), two parlors, two dining rooms, assembly room. Library, office, kitchen, pantries, store rooms, cellar, etc. In all sixty rooms, fourteen bath and toilet rooms, hot and cold water, steam heat, open fire-places, six chimneys, lighting plant, electric bells, and telephone system, fire apparatus, etc."

The house is an example of the stick-style architecture popular in Europe and America in the 1800's. Stick style is a type of Queen Anne architecture characterized by embedded corner towers, wrap-around porches, and spindle detailing, particularly at the gable peaks. The hardwood frame building was put together with large wooden pins.

Mrs. Guerard's father designed the original building to resemble the type of home in which she had lived in Switzerland. Desiring his daughter to have the amenities he felt befitted her social class, he sent most of the materials you see in the house today, including the floors of imported birch, oak, and linden.

The Grounds

Dr. Arthur Rose Guerard wrote this description in an advertisement for the sale of Heidelberg. "Heidelberg Estate contains 63 64/100 acres, of which 50 are in truck and vegetable farm, orchard and meadow, and 15 in part, lawn and gardens, all in a high state of cultivation. The park and garden contain 25 or more kinds of trees, deciduous and evergreens; three avenues of white pines, spruce, and linden, respectively; and seventy-five or more varieties of flowering shrubs and vines. The orchard contains twelve hundred or more bearing trees, mostly apple, and many kinds of small fruits and berries. The truck farm furnishes all varieties of vegetables in such an abundance that a canning plant was erected on the property with capacity of ten thousand cans per day, to preserve and pack the surplus fruits and vegetables. A fine mountain stream, or creek, flows through the estate, and there are several strong, pure springs. Heidelberg manor house stands on a commanding eminence in the middle of the park, over-looking lake and mountains, constituting one of the most beautiful sites in western North Carolina. There are several cottages nearby on the grounds; barn and outbuildings at a distance below the hill. Farm, orchard and meadow beyond. Two roads enter the property, one from the Highway, Green-Asheville, and the other from the station, connecting with the Highway, Spartanburg-Asheville."

Family Background

In early childhood, Dr. Guerard would spend the summer in Flat Rock with his mother. Years later, Dr. and Mrs. Guerard were extending their honeymoon at Cutler Hall on the French Broad River near Asheville when Eugenie fell in love with this area. It reminded her so much of her

native land, and she was so homesick for Switzerland, that Dr. Guerard bought land and built a summer cottage, the beginning of the Heidelberg House in Flat Rock in 1886.

Dr. Guerard was a Charlestonian of French Huguenot descent who traveled widely and studied at several European universities, among them Heidelberg. Eugenie, nee Engels, was born of Swiss royalty and her father was a large land owner and contractor. Although Eugenie was attractive and well dressed, she never mastered English and was not accepted by Charleston society. Consequently, she was unhappy in this coastal city that was so unlike her home in the high mountains of Switzerland. The Heidelberg House, built overlooking the old Highland Lake with the mountains in the distance, made her far happier. In 1895 the Guerards sold their home in Charleston and expanded their home in Flat Rock by adding the East Tower, the wing with the dormer windows, and the wine cellar.

Mrs. Eugenie Guerard died May 7th, 1900, leaving behind seven children. Dr. Guerard was away studying medicine in New York at the time, where he was admitted to practice and taught at Bellevue Hospital.

Dr. Guerard's second wife was Madelaine DiMarcarellos, a native of Bavaria and a widow with two children. They had five more children. In 1903, they enlarged the house again. Dr. Guerard suffered a financial reverse and planned to offset this by opening the enlarged house as a Tuberculosis Sanatorium. This was unsuccessful, so he opened the house to summer guests and planned to open the Heidelberg Academy, a modern home and garden school for girls, in 1914-1915. The beginning of World War I prevented this opening, and in 1921 the ARP denomination acquired the house and grounds.

Self Guided Tour

The stained glass around the front porch (1) is original to the house and imported from Germany. It is the same type of glass Willet Hauser makes today. Dr. Guerard added this when he upgraded the house to make it their permanent home.

The Entrance Hall (2) is a large open foyer, and a tradle lathed archway, which was shipped from Germany, leads to the stairs. On the wall to the left is a portrait of Arthur Rose Guerard. The front doors are carved oak with beveled glass. There were three elegant crystal chandeliers in the entrance hall and the two parlors. The ones present in the house today were reproduced in the early 1990's by a firm in Eden, North Carolina from a picture of the original chandeliers. Through the archway is a beautiful fireplace which, we are told, was painted by Eugenie Guerard. The house was equipped with gas lights, and above the fireplace is one of the original brackets. The hearth is Dutch blue delft shipped from Holland.

The parlor to the left (3) is called the "McGill Parlor." This was the living room in the original home. The tile on the fireplace is French. The mantle is rosewood.

The parlor to the right (4) was a bedroom in the original home. The tile in the fireplace in this room is also French. The mantle is ebony and the top of the mantle was a gift from the second Mrs. Guerard to a Mr. Potts, who looked after the furniture from the home when the family fled from creditors. The furniture was hidden in rail cars in East Flat Rock.

The tower room (5) beyond the right hand parlor was used for a time as Dr. Guerard's office and was later used as the Bonclarken reservation office.

The side glassed-in porch (6) was used as a conservatory where the children could take their music lessons.

The present registration lobby was the family's dining room (7). The laundry (8) was located where the staff works behind the desk. Behind this, where the offices are located, was the pantry (9) and the kitchen (10).

The room to the right of the stairs, presently the library, was called the Children's Room (11). To the right is the Powder Room which was originally their dressing room (12). When the house was enlarged, a wine cellar was added below this room with a dumb waiter going between the two. This was then the Wine Room. The desks in this room are from the Horseshoe Dorm rooms of the University of South Carolina. The tile on the fireplace is German.

The wing off of the back hall is the Billiard Room (13), where the men would gather after dinner. All of the woodwork in this room, now Hotel Classroom 1, is cherry.

The back porch was a glassed in Garden Room (14) with double doors leading into the back hall. The double doors are now windows and a central door leads into the back hall.

The main staircase (15) is made of chestnut wood. Note the dust catchers, which are metal with a star on each, in the corners of every step.

At the top of the stairs is a family sitting area surrounded by bedrooms. The Todd Suite, on your right at the top of the stairs, was Dr. and Mrs. Guerard's bedroom. It is the only one with a porch. This porch was called Mrs. Guerard's "Balcony of Switzerland" as she could rock and see the mountains in the distance.

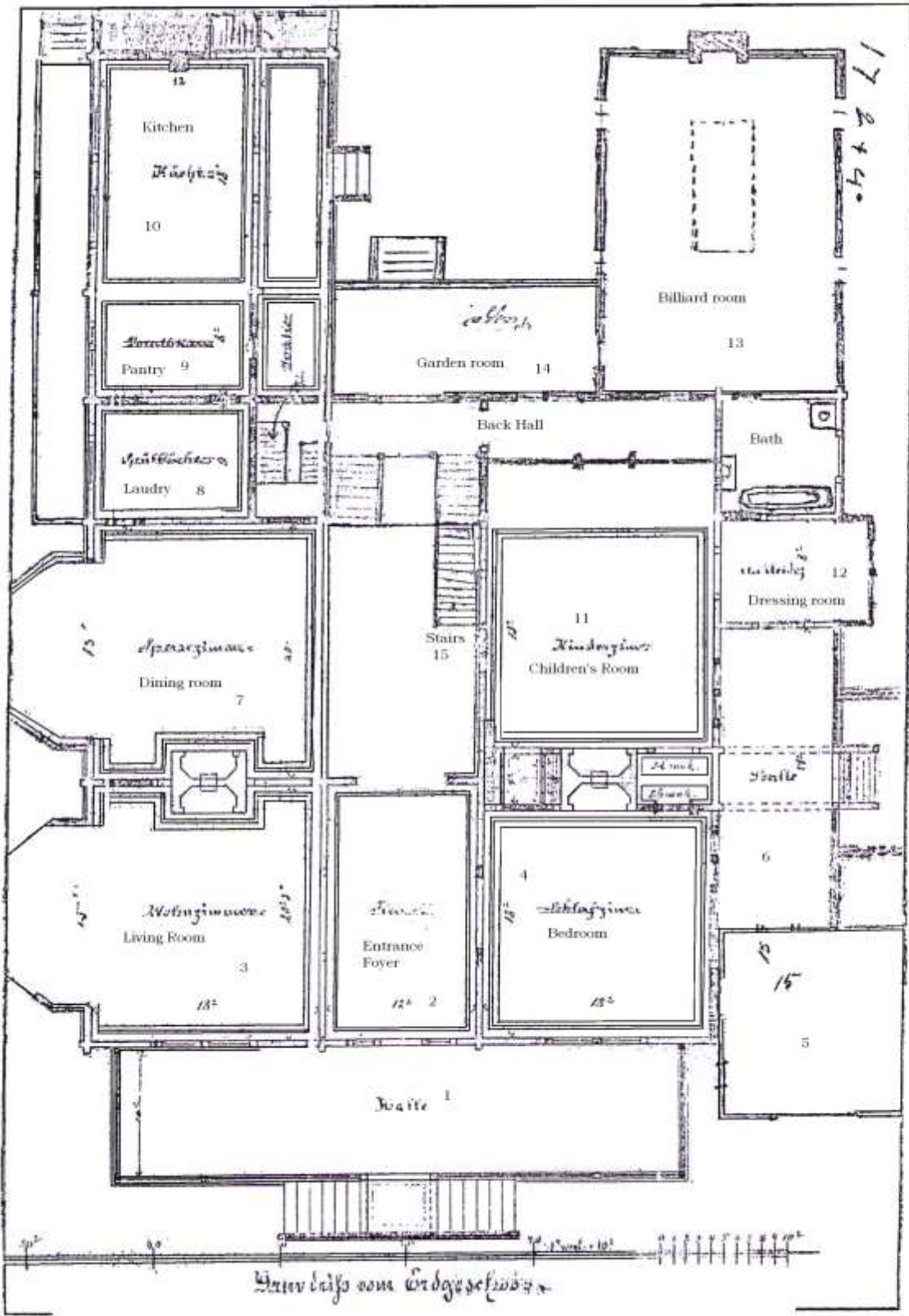
The Willis Suite, located across from the Guerard's bedroom was the guest bedroom. The tile on the fireplace is from Germany.

The Moore Suite, which has tile with cattails and lily pads, was the nursery for the children. In this room you can see the piping used for heat or water in the floor.

The Blair Suite, located in the back of the house, was very plain compared to the family rooms and was used as the nanny's bedroom. Low ceilings and no decoration on the fireplace show that she was not of the same social status as the family.

The wing to the left of the original house is the addition. The large room on the first floor is the music room. It has two large fireplaces with mantles that were etched by Madelaine Guerard. The bronze plaques in the fireplaces (depicting lyre and student of literature) were done by Mrs. Eugenie Guerard. The Music room was used as a ballroom and for dancing and music lessons for the children.

On the first, second, and third floors of this wing are dorm style bedrooms, some with private baths and others with access to hall bathrooms. This is where the school and sanatorium were to be housed.



Floor Plan of the downstairs of the 1886 portion of the house. Note the original German room labels and measurements.