

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: 221 W. Upsal Street

Postal code: 19119

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Jesse A. Tilge House

Current/Common Name: _____

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: Residential

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Boundary revised at time of designation

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 1887 to 1904

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1887

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: George T. Pearson

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Unknown

Original owner: Jesse A. Tilge

Other significant persons: _____

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

Organization Philadelphia Historical Commission Date September 6, 2022

Name with Title Jon Farnham, Executive Director Email Jon.farnham@phila.gov

Street Address 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor Telephone 215-686-7660

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19119

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: September 6, 2022

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: September 6, 2022

Date of Notice Issuance: September 7, 2022

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Estate of Samuel Dorfman

Address: 221 W. Upsal Street

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19119

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: October 19, 2022

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: November 10, 2022

Date of Final Action: November 10, 2022

Designated Rejected

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION



Figure 1. The parcel at 221 W. Upsal Street. Source: Atlas.phila.gov.

A portion of ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon, described according to a Survey and Plan thereof made by Walter Jones, Esquire, Surveyor and Regulator of the Ninth Survey District of the City of Philadelphia on the thirty-first day of May A.D., 1887, as follows, to wit:

SITUATE on the Northwest side of Upsal Street at the distance of Two hundred (200) feet Southwestward from the Southwest side of Cherokee (formerly Jefferson) Street in the Twenty-second Ward of the City of Philadelphia, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said Upsal Street, One hundred (100) feet and extending of that width in length or depth, Northwestward between parallel lines at right angles to the said Upsal Street, ~~Three hundred eighty-two (382) feet, four and one-quarter (4-1/4) inches~~ **191 feet** on the Northeast line thereof and ~~Three hundred eighty-two (382) feet, four and three-quarter (4-3/4) inches~~ **191 feet** on the Southwest line thereof to Sharpnack (formerly Good) Street.

Parcel: 083-N22-0013
OPA Account: 223022700

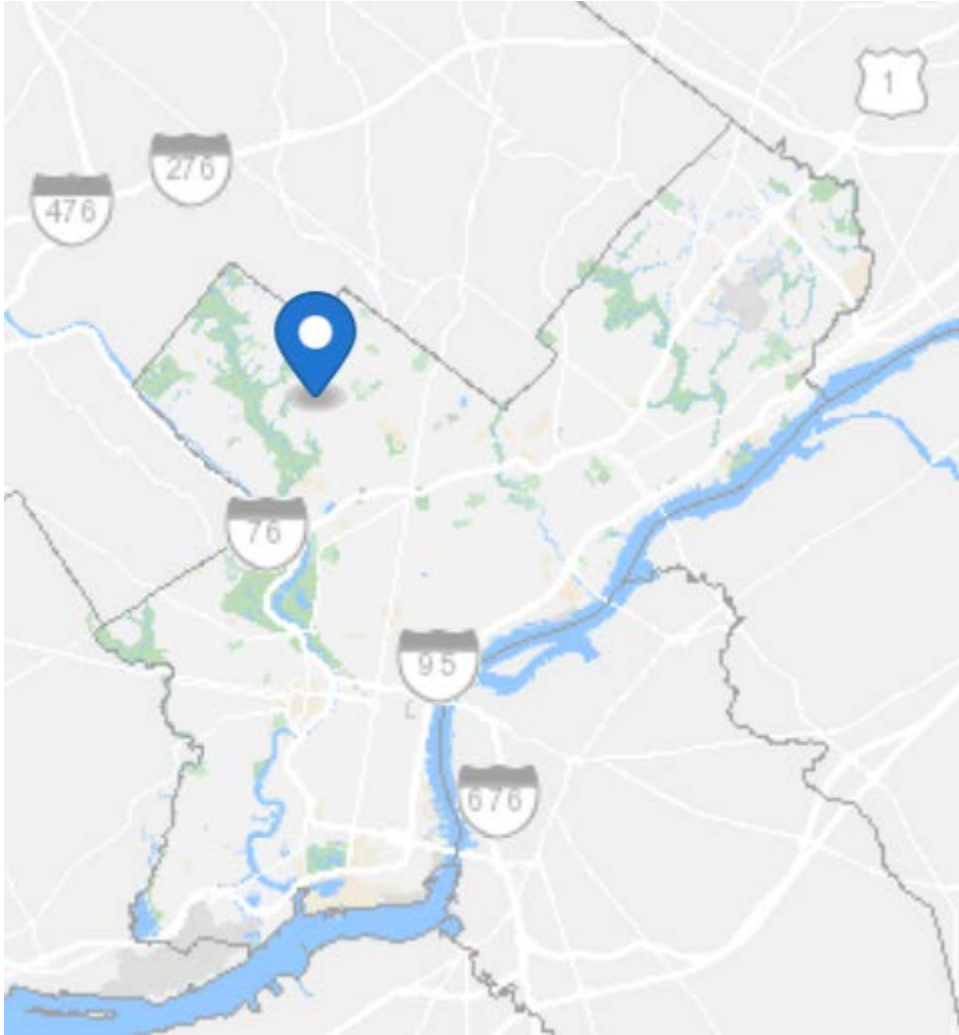


Figure 2. Location of 221 W. Upsal Street in the City of Philadelphia. Source: Atlas.phila.gov.

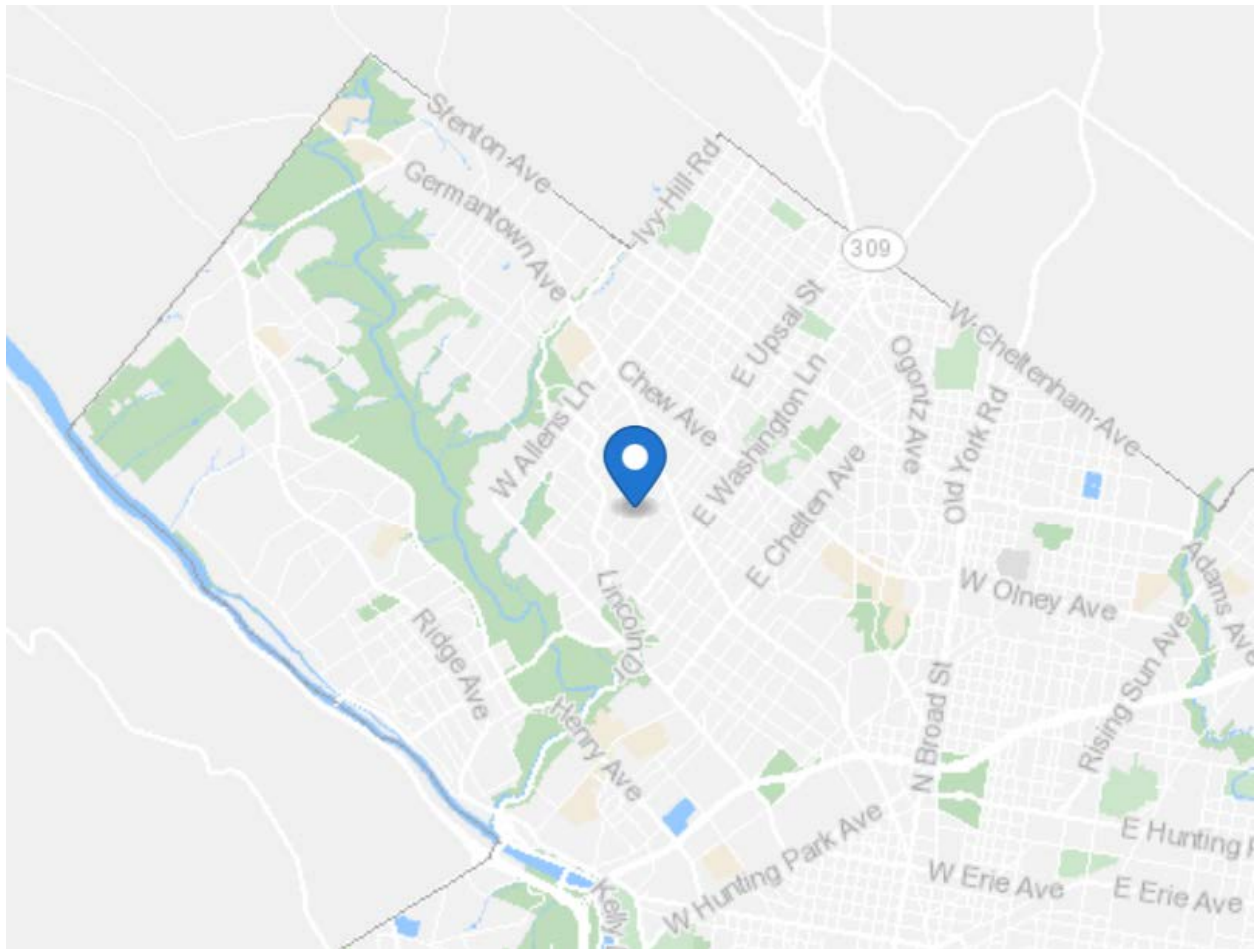


Figure 3 Location of 221 W. Upsal Street Street in the West Mount Airy neighborhood in northwest Philadelphia. Source: Atlas.phila.gov.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION



Figure 4. View of 221 W. Upsal Street, August 26, 2022. Source: Historical Commission.

The building at 221 W. Upsal Street is a large, single-family, detached dwelling set on a large lot on the north side of Upsal Street in West Mt. Airy. The house stands on a hill overlooking the street with a stone retaining wall with steps running along the sidewalk before turning north and running along a driveway at the eastern edge of the property. The front façade of the house is set back about 65 feet from the curb. The neighborhood has a mix of single-family detached and semi-detached houses and multi-family apartment buildings with occasional institutional buildings such as churches and schools. The land is hilly and green with trees and lawns (Figure 8).

The three-story building includes many of the hallmarks of the Queen Anne style. It is comprised of two abutting gambrel-roofed volumes perpendicular to the street that intersect with a gable-roofed volume that is parallel to the street. The western gambrel-roofed volume is punctuated by a two-story, double-wide bay that transitions into a pair of dormers at the roof. The eastern gambrel-roofed volume is punctuated by a large gambrel-roofed dormer. The cross-volume extends to the east and has a steep hipped roof with a dormer with paired windows facing the street. At the front façade, the central volume projects out beyond the volumes to either side. A large, covered porch wraps from the south-facing front façade around the west-facing façade and onto the north-facing back façade. A small, covered porch extends off the northeast corner of the house.

The first two stories of the building are clad in Wissahickon schist of irregular sizes but roughly cut in rectangular forms. The third floor at the gable ends and dormers are clad in clapboard.

The gable ends cantilever out beyond the planes of the facades. A broad cornice separates the stone lower floors from the wood-clad upper floor. The window sills and other façade features like a large decorative lintel at the second floor level of the central, projecting section are limestone or cast stone. The decorative lintel includes a plaque with the construction date, 1887. The roof is clad in grey, rectangular, rough slate. Two chimneys penetrate the roof, at the ridge of the cross-gable and at the east-facing façade.

The windows are large, decorative, and of varying shapes and sizes, many with complex muntin patterns and leaded glass. The central, projecting section of the front façade include three unique windows: an arched window with complex mullions and muntins at the first floor, a colossal window with leaded glass and complex mullions and muntins at the first-to-second-floor stairs, and a triple window with leaded glass at the second floor. The windows in the front-façade gambrel ends are equally complex and idiosyncratic.



Figure 5. View of 221 W. Upsal Street, August 26, 2022. Source: Historical Commission.

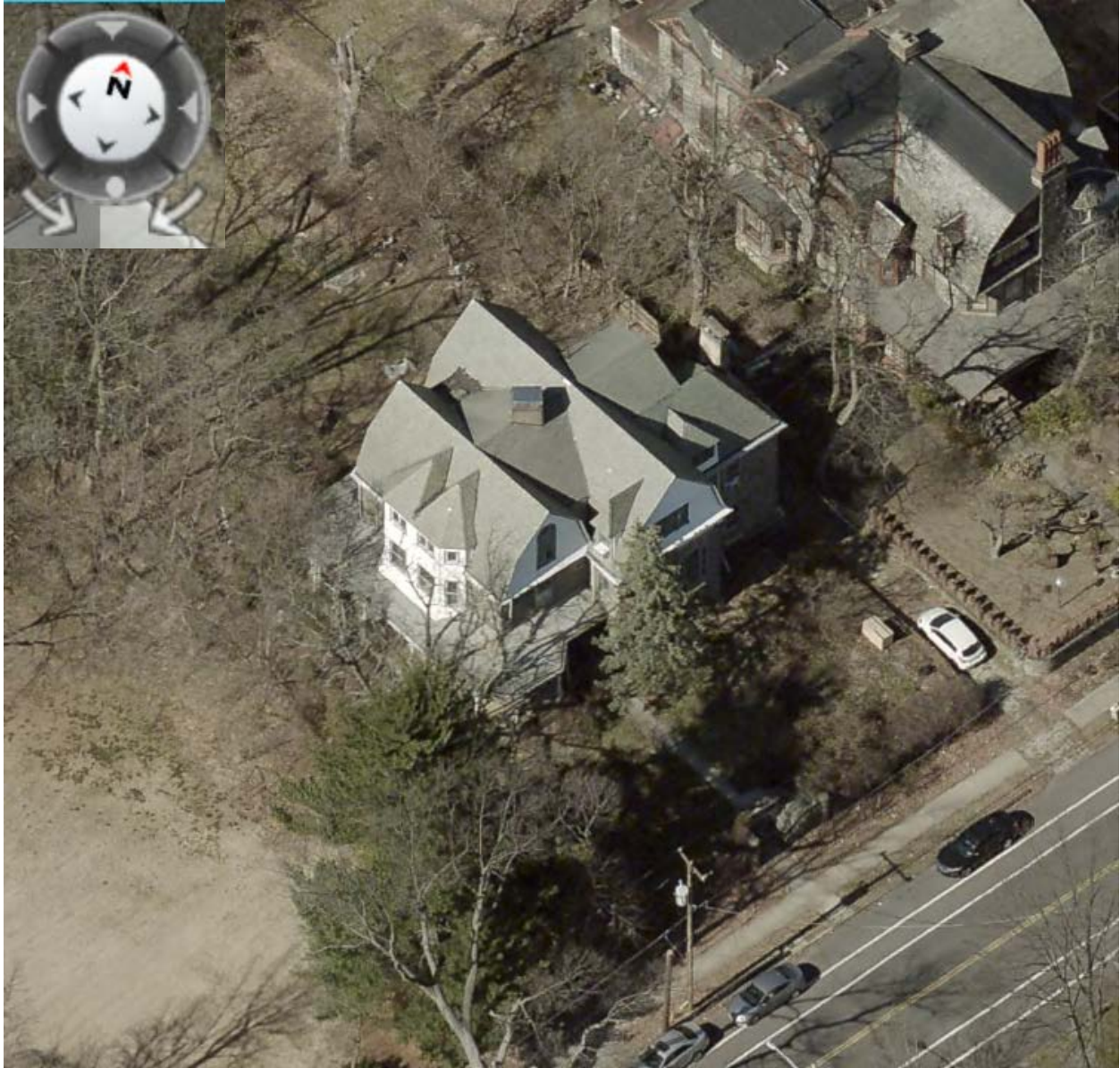


Figure 6. Aerial view of 221. W. Upsal Street, March 4, 2022. Source: Pictometry.

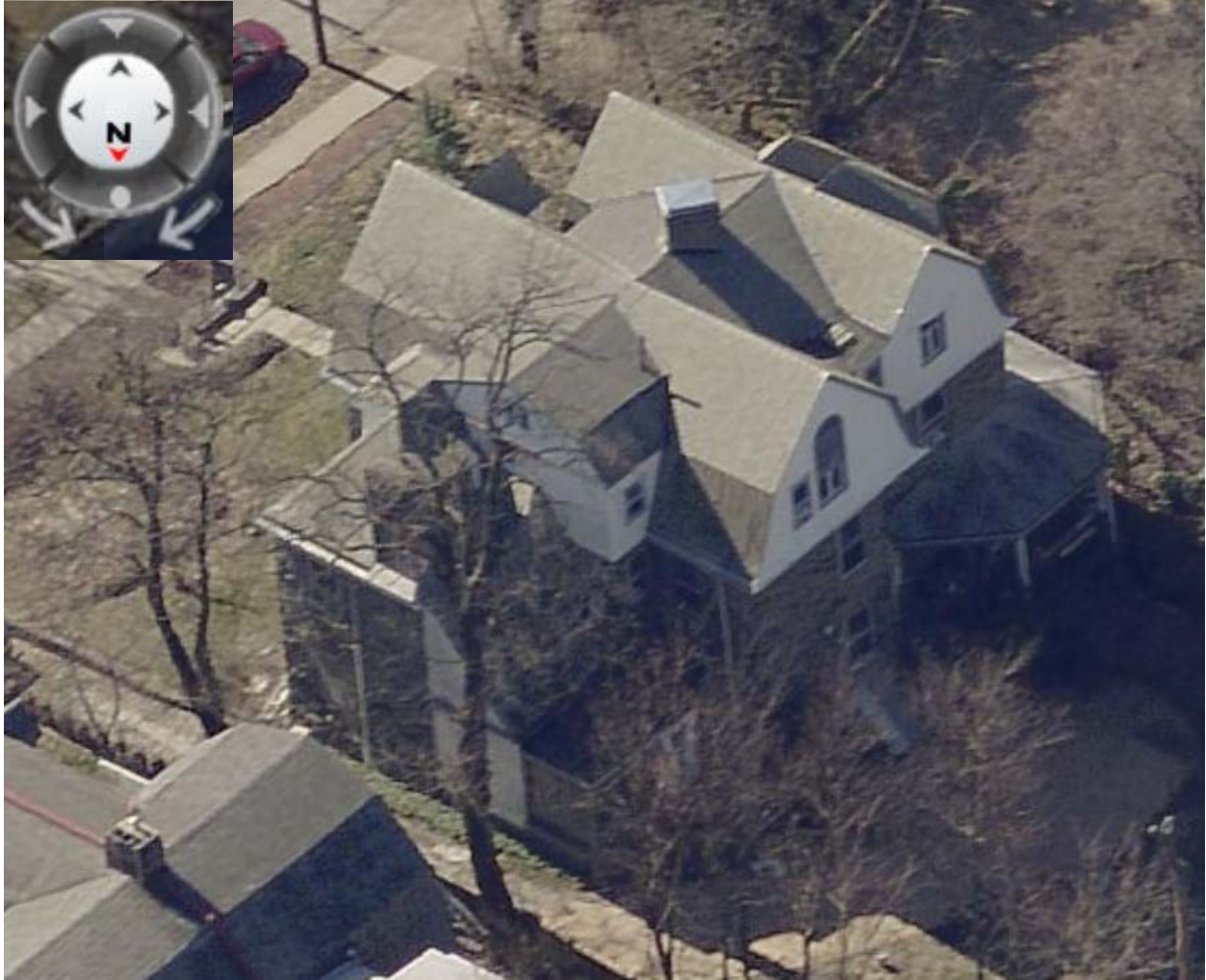


Figure 7. Aerial view of 221. W. Upsal Street, March 26, 2019. Source: Pictometry.



Figure 8. View of neighborhood around 221 W. Upsal Street, March 30, 2017. Source: Pictometry.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 221 W. Upsal Street, known as the Jesse A. Tilge House, is historically significant and should be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The property satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E as delineated in Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code. Satisfying Criterion D, the Tilge House “embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style,” the Queen Anne style. Satisfying Criterion E, the Tilge House was designed by George T. Pearson, an architect whose work has significantly influenced the architectural, economic, social, and cultural development of the City of Philadelphia.

QUEEN ANNE STYLE

An article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 1893 described the Jesse A. Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street as “one of the most attractive residences at Upsal... It is built of gray stone, in architecture Queen Anne, with here and there a suggestion of Gothic and Colonial.” The Queen Anne style, with its distinctive form, abundance of decorative detail, corner towers, expansive porches, and richly patterned wall surfaces, typifies the architecture of the Victorian age for many people. Examples of the Queen Anne style can be found in communities across the country in numerous variations of form and detail. It was the most popular style for houses in the United States in the period from 1880 to 1900 and was often employed for large-scale buildings as well. In Philadelphia, the Queen Anne style can be found in urban rowhouses and suburban semi-detached and detached dwellings as well as commercial and institutional buildings.¹

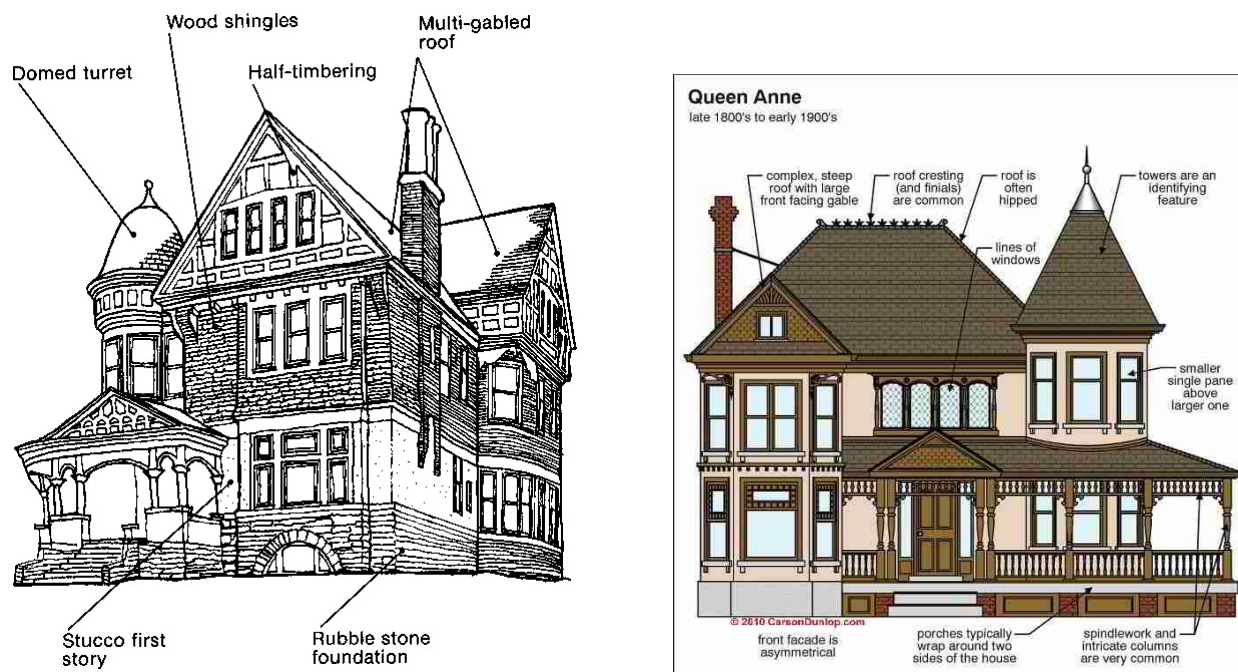


Figure 9. Left: Diagram of typical Queen Anne House. Source: City of Cincinnati. Right: Diagram of typical Queen Anne House. Source: Pinterest.

The style was created and promoted by Richard Norman Shaw and other English architects beginning in the late 1860s and 1870s. The name refers to the Renaissance style of

¹ For a summary of the Queen Anne style, see: Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred H. Knopf, 1984), pp. 262-287.

architecture popular during the reign of England's Queen Anne (1702-1714). However, the Queen Anne style is more closely related to the medieval forms of the preceding Elizabethan and Jacobean eras in England. The Watts Sherman House designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and built in Newport, Rhode Island in 1874 is considered by many to be the first Queen Anne style building in America. Featuring heavily textured, shingled wall surfaces, prominent brick chimneys and intersecting gables, it was faithful to the designs promoted by Shaw and other English architects. Owing to its shingled walls, the Watts Sherman House is also seen as an early example of the Shingle style, which developed at the same time and is closely related to the Queen Anne style. The Queen Anne style grew in popularity in America after the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, where the impressive half-timbered, medieval looking buildings erected by the British government caught the imagination of the public and were met with great acclaim (Figure 10). The best example of the English strain of Queen Anne in Philadelphia is Wilson Eyre's Anglecot at 401 E. Evergreen Avenue in Chestnut Hill of 1883 (Figure 11).



Figure 10. English Commission Building, Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia.

The Queen Anne style was popularized in the United States with pattern books and one of the country's first architectural magazines, *The American Architect and Building News*, which began publication in 1876. In the United States, the Queen Anne style evolved from the early English designs to become a distinctly American style with numerous, sometimes regional, variations. Wood trim called spindlework was an American innovation made possible by the technological advances in the mass production and the ease of improved railroad transport. While the Queen Anne style took a variety of forms, certain key elements are commonly found across the

variations. Queen Anne buildings almost always have steep roofs with cross gables, asymmetrical front façades, dormers of varying sizes, and expansive porches with decorative wood trim. Round and polygonal front corner towers with conical roofs are a distinctive feature found on many but not all Queen Anne style buildings. Queen Anne buildings often include projecting oriel and bay windows. Windows are typically of varied sizes and shapes and enlivened with complex muntin patterns, small decorative panes, and stained glass. Wall surfaces are usually highly decorative with variety of textures from patterned shingles to half timbering, to stone and brick, to bas relief friezes. Porches, gables, and other projecting wood features are typically trimmed with wood spindlework. Chimneys are often monumental, decorated, and textured.



Figure 11. Wilson Eyre Jr., Anglecot, 401 E. Evergreen Avenue, 1883.

In Philadelphia's northwest neighborhoods, architects G.W. and W.D. Hewitt and George T. Pearson developed unique forms of the Queen Anne style for large single-family houses constructed on land west of Germantown Avenue along the Pennsylvania Railroad's commuter line, which opened in 1884. The Hewitt brothers designed Queen Anne style houses on land platted for suburban development by H. Henry Houston, a director of the Pennsylvania Railroad, along the rail line. The Hewitts' houses for Houston include the Louis C. Sauveur House at 8205 Seminole Avenue of 1885, and the house at 8635 Seminole Avenue of 1887, both near the Highland Station in Chestnut Hill (Figure 12); three houses at the corner of W. Tulpehocken Street and Wayne Avenue, 6135 Wayne Avenue and 258 and 266 W. Tulpehocken Street, built in 1886, near the Tulpehocken Station in Germantown (Figure 13); and three houses at 8020, 8030, and 8040 St. Martins Lane, built in 1889, near the St. Martins Station in Chestnut Hill (Figure 14).



Figure 12. Left: Louis C. Sauveur House, G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 8205 Seminole Avenue, 1885. Right: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 8635 Seminole Avenue, 1887.



Figure 13. Upper left: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 6135 Wayne Avenue, 1886. Upper right: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 258 W. Tulpehocken Street, 1886. Lower left: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 266 W. Tulpehocken Street, 1886.



Figure 14. Upper left: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, Hillary House, 8020 Saint Martins Lane, 1889. Upper right: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 8030 Saint Martins Lane, 1889. Lower left: G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston, 8040 Saint Martins Lane, 1889.

All of these grand houses designed by G.W. and W.D. Hewitt for Henry H. Houston in the 1880s exhibit characteristics of the Queen Anne style. They are complex, vertically oriented forms, created by the intersection of gabled volumes. The primary volumes are clad in stone, anchored to the ground, while lighter, secondary wood volumes — gables, bays, and porches — project from them, seeming to float. Large, open porches, sometimes with multiple levels, wrap the buildings. The secondary volumes are highly textured and decorated with wood ornament. The roofs are steep, clad in slate, and broken by dormers and tall chimneys. The windows varying in size and shape and are often grouped in sets of two and three.

ARCHITECT GEORGE T. PEARSON

While the Hewitts were designing Queen Anne houses for Henry H. Houston in Northwest Philadelphia, architect George T. Pearson (1847-1920) was designing a more original, eclectic, even idiosyncratic collection of Queen Anne houses and commercial buildings for the same neighborhoods. Pearson was born in Trenton, New Jersey to William and Frances M. Pearson, and attended the New Jersey Model School and Trenton Academy. He began his apprenticeship in Elizabeth, New Jersey with architect Charles Graham, and first appeared in the Philadelphia city directories in 1871, listed as an architect. By 1872, Pearson was employed by influential architect Addison Hutton as a draftsman. He later worked for John McArthur, Jr., architect of City Hall, then under construction. Pearson opened his own office in 1880 and worked chiefly as a residential architect.² He lived in Germantown throughout his career, much of it in a unique Flemish-Jacobean Revival house with organ loft and studio of his own design at 125 W. Walnut Lane. Constructed in 1893 from parts of an older structure, the unusual house, which can be classified as Queen Anne in style, shows Pearson at his most innovative and unconventional (Figure 15).³ Pearson joined the T-Square Club in 1896 and was a member of both the national and the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The T-Square Club was a select group of Philadelphia architects with an Arts and Crafts philosophy that was affiliated with but independent of the AIA. Pearson was multi-talented; he was an accomplished musician, artist, and builder as well as an architect.



Figure 15. George T. Pearson House, 125 W. Walnut Lane, 1893.

² Pearson's biography was adapted from Sandra L. Tatman's biography at the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website, <https://philadelphiabuildings.org>

³ The Historical Commission designated the property at 125 W. Walnut Lane as historic on June 14, 2013. See the nomination in the Historical Commission's archives. See also the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 8, December 6, 1893, p. i.

While Pearson was chiefly a residential architect, is said to have designed 300 houses during the first seven years of his practice, and is best known for his Queen Anne style mansions for Philadelphia's mercantile and industrial capitalist elite, he also designed several resort hotels and churches, as well as a few office buildings for Germantown as well as the Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill neighborhoods of Northwest Philadelphia and beyond. His work can be found throughout the eastern United States. He benefitted greatly from the patronage of John B. Stetson, the Philadelphia hat manufacturer, for whom he designed a residence, factory buildings, and the Stetson University in Deland, Florida. The designs from Pearson's early period tend to be more in line with national trends in the Queen Anne Style, such as his designs for the residence of Elizabeth Pearsall Smith at 45 E. Penn Street of 1881, and the residence of Selena Willing at 51 E. Penn Street of 1882, both in Germantown (Figure 16).⁴ These two commissions show his fluency with textbook examples of the Queen Anne style as adapted to suburban domestic architecture.



Figure 16. Left: George T. Pearson, Elizabeth Pearsall Smith House, 45 E. Penn Street, 1881. Right: George T. Pearson, Selena Willing House, 51 E. Penn Street, 1882.

In 1885, Pearson designed the Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building for a prominent location at Germantown Avenue & School House Lane in central Germantown. With its cross-gables, steep roofs, dormers, decorative chimneys, various textured surfaces, and detailed ornament, the building was emphatically Queen Anne in style (Figure 17).

⁴ The Historical Commission designated the property at 51 E. Penn Street as historic on June 29, 1971.



Figure 17. George T. Pearson, Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building, Germantown Avenue & School House Lane, 1885 (demolished). Source: HABS PA-1014.

Pearson designed two important Queen Anne mansions for locations in Northwest Philadelphia that have been lost to demolition. He designed a grand house for railroad magnate Frederick Kimball, called Red Gate, on School House Lane, which was completed in the mid-1880s (Figure 18). Like Pearson's other Queen Anne compositions, the house featured an asymmetrical massing with cross gables, varied materials and textures, steep roofs, tall ornamental chimneys, large porches, and varied windows and window-pane configurations. Red Gate was demolished by Philadelphia University in 2006.



Figure 18. Left: George T. Pearson, Red Gate, School House Lane, 1885. Source: Unknown. Right: George T. Pearson, Uwchllan, 229 W. Upsal Street, 1887. Source: *King's Views of Philadelphia*, 1901.

In 1887, Pearson designed Uwchllan, a mansion for Cornelius N. Weygandt, the president of the Western National Bank, on five acres of the former Carpenter estate at 229 W. Upsal Street, directly adjacent to and west of the Jesse A. Tilge House (Figure 18).⁵ Like Red Gate and the

⁵ Uwchllan, designed by George T. Pearson, stood to the west of the Jesse A. Tilge House. To the east of the Tilge House, at 203-205 and 211-213 W. Upsal Street stand two Pearson-designed twin houses in the Queen Anne style, also built in 1887. See *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 2, May 2, 1887, p. 193.

Tilge House, Uwchllan was Queen Anne style structure with an asymmetrical massing, stone facades, wood-clad projecting bays, steep roofs, tall chimneys, porches, and other features of the style. Uwchllan was demolished for the construction of a 154-unit, nine-story apartment building, the Pelham Park Apartments, in 1945.

Pearson designed numerous Queen Anne style houses for locations in Northwest Philadelphia in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The William A. Church House at 5335 Knox Street in the Penn-Knox neighborhood of Germantown, constructed in 1887, is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style, with its complex intersecting volumes, corner tower-like volume, multi-level porch, steep roofs, dormers, tall chimney, and various textures and materials.⁶



Figure 19. Left: George T. Pearson, William A. Church House, 5335 Knox Street, 1887. Right: George T. Pearson for John T. Roberts, 5376 Wingohocking Heights, 1887.

In 1887, Pearson designed four houses for developer John T. Roberts for Wingohocking Heights, a short dead-end street on the southeastern edge of Germantown. The houses have unusual shapes owing to their broad, shallow lots on a hill, but the house at 6376 Wingohocking Terrace otherwise betrays all of the elements of the Queen Anne style including stone and wood-clad sections, a steep hipped roof with hipped dormers, and varied window sizes and configurations with leaded glass and complex muntin patterns including a colossal arched window at the stair hall (Figure 19).⁷

Pearson continued to develop his unique brand of the Queen Anne through the 1880s and into the 1890s. Pearson's 1889 design for the Thomas Flavell House at 5340 Greene Street in Germantown combines the key elements of the Queen Anne Style (Figure 20). The asymmetrical façade anchored by a corner tower with unique roofline, the steeply pitched roofs with an unusual conical dormer and tall chimney, the large porch with spindlework, and the exuberant use of multiple contrasting materials including brick, wood, local schist stone, slate and terracotta, all indicate its Queen Anne style. The design successfully brings together contrasting forms and materials into a highly successful, unified composition that embodies the Queen Anne style.⁸

Pearson's 1895 design for the John McIlhenny House at 346 Pelham Road in the Pelham section of West Mt. Airy shows the architect still working in the Queen Anne manner but in a

⁶ The Historical Commission designated the property at 5335 Knox Street as historic on March 29, 1966.

⁷ *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 2, May 2, 1887, p. 193.

⁸ The Historical Commission designated the property at 5340 Greene Street as historic on July 12, 2013.

more subtle style predicated more on harmony than contrast (Figure 20). The building is still composed of intersecting volumes with hipped roofs, dormers, and chimneys that are articulated with projecting bays, varied window types, and porches ornamented with woodwork, but the design is more fluid and elegant, less sharp and urgent.⁹



Figure 20. Left: George T. Pearson, Thomas Flavell House, 5340 Greene Street, 1889. Right: George T. Pearson, John McIlhenny House, 346 Pelham Road, 1895.

PEARSON DESIGNS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE JESSE A. TILGE HOUSE

Pearson's Perseverance Lodge No. 46 of the Knights of Pythias at 8425-27 Germantown Avenue in Chestnut Hill, which was illustrated in *The American Architect and Building News* in June 1889, likewise shows Pearson's skill and inventiveness with the Queen Anne style and is closely related to the Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street (Figure 28). The intersecting gables and hipped roof with dormers and spire at the front of the Queen Anne fraternal hall give character to the large monolithic volume behind the front façade. Like that of the Tilge House, the front façade of the Perseverance Lodge is comprised of a heavy stone base with round-arch openings at the first floor and cantilvered gable ends clad in wood that float above the earthbound base. Both Queen Anne buildings feature cross-gables, asymmetry, stone-clad lower floors, wood-clad gable ends, steep roofs, hipped dormers, prominent chimneys, ganged windows, windows of various sizes and shapes, and arched openings at the first floor. The Perseverance Lodge is the commercial kin to the grand Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street.¹⁰

⁹ *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 10, March 13, 1895, p. i. *The American Architect and Building News*, v. 48, n. 1006, April 6, 1895, p. 5 announced the commission. *The American Architect and Building News*, v. 49, n. 1019, July 6, 1895, p. 7 and plate included a rendering of a version of the design that was not implemented.

¹⁰ The Perseverance Lodge was significantly damaged by fire on August 16, 2022. See: Carla Robinson, Tom Beck and Kristin Holmes, "Fire destroys Chestnut Hill landmark," *Chestnut Hill Local*, August 17, 2022, <https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/stories/fire-destroys-chestnut-hill-landmark,24650>

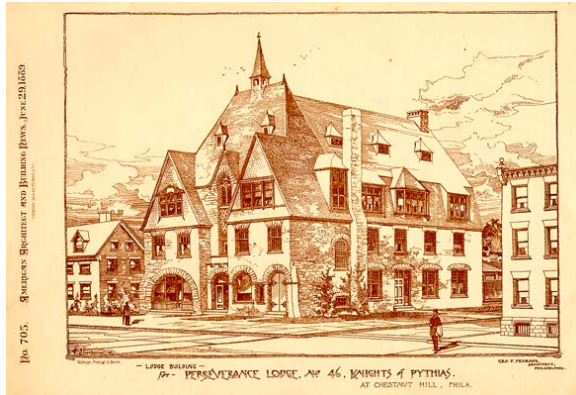


Figure 21. Left: George T. Pearson, Perserverance Lodge No. 46 of the Knights of Pythias, 8425-27 Germantown Avenue, 1889. Source: *The American Architect and Building News*, June 29, 1889. Right: George T. Pearson, Perserverance Lodge No. 46 of the Knights of Pythias, 8425-27 Germantown Avenue, storefront modified in 1960, April 22, 2018. Source: Pictometry.

If the Perseverance Lodge was commercial kin to the Tilge House, the twin house at 108 and 110 W. Johnson Street in Germantown was its semi-detached counterpart (Figure 29). George T. Pearson not only designed grand houses for industrialists and merchants, but he also designed many houses for the middle class. Pearson prepared plans for the twin in 1887 for William H. Brunner, a real estate developer and contractor who Pearson had worked with on the Wakefield Presbyterian Church in Germantown.¹¹ The twin house at 108 and 110 W. Johnson Street has all of the hallmarks of the Queen Anne style exhibited by the Tilge House, but it is simpler and smaller. The lower two floors are stone and topped by a steeply pitched gable clad at the end in wood that projects out beyond the plane of the stone. A second smaller, intersecting gable serves as a roof to the porch of the twin on the left. The front façade is asymmetrical, with the asymmetry established by dissimilar entry porches at the left and right. The windows are of varied sizes and those in the gable end are grouped in threes. The steep roof sports many hipped roof dormers. The side faces include projecting bays. Although more modest than the Tilge House, the Brunner twin house exemplifies most aspects of the Queen Anne style.



Figure 22. George T. Pearson for William H. Brunner, 108 and 110 W. Johnson Street, 1887.

¹¹ *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, v. 2, February 7, 1887, p. 54.

JESSE A. TILGE

Jesse A. Tilge, who commissioned the house at 221 W. Upsal Street from George T. Pearson in 1887, was born in Philadelphia on May 13, 1836 (Figure 21). The Tilge family had emigrated from Leipzig, Germany to Germantown in the eighteenth century. His father, Henry Tilge, was the founder and president of Henry Tilge & Co., and importer and dealer of hatters' materials. Located in what is now called the Old City section of Philadelphia, the hat business moved to various locations including 232 N. 3rd Street before the firm constructed a headquarters at 306 New Street in 1875, where the Henry Tilge & Co. building still stands. Jesse A. Tilge succeeded his father, eventually taking over the hat business and rising to a level of national prominence in the hat industry. Later in life, he merged the Tilge company with The Hatters' Fur Exchange, Inc., of which he became president (Figure 21). Although the merged company was headquartered in New York City, Tilge remained in Philadelphia. Outside of his working life, Tilge was a director of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and a member of the Art Club, Bachelors' Barge Club, Union League, and Orpheus. Tilge was married to Mary Tutton Tilge and the couple had two daughters. After his wife died in 1902, Tilge sold the property at 221 W. Upsal Street to Conyers A. Button, the owner of a hosiery mill in Germantown, in 1904. Tilge died on August 4, 1915 and was buried at Laurel Hill Cemetery.¹²



JESSE ADOLPH TILGE
Henry Tilge & Co., Manfrs. and Merchants
Imp'rs Hatters' Furs, Materials and Trimmings

JESSE A. TILGE, Pres.	ANTONIN CHAPAL, Vice-Pres.	J. W. C. CAMPBELL, Treas.
Cable Address, FURMEN—NEW YORK		Telephone 4541 & 4542 SPRING
Code: { A. S. C.—Western Union		
Libere		

The Hatters Fur Exchange

Nos. 23-29 Washington Place
N. W. Cor. Greene St. NEW YORK, U. S. A.

**HATTERS FUR, CONEY, RABBIT,
HARE and NUTRIA SKINS, FUR
PIECES, WASTES, ETC., ETC.**

Consignments solicited with or without advances

Figure 23. Left: Portrait of Jesse A. Tilge, *King's Notable Philadelphians*, p. 70. Right: An advertisement published in *The American Hatter*, v. 45, no. 1, August 1915, p. 117.

JESSE A. TILGE HOUSE, 221 W. UPSAL STREET

The G.M. Hopkins' *Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia* of 1871 shows that the north side of W. Upsal Street between Germantown Avenue and Green Street was owned by the Estate of George W. Carpenter and undeveloped at the time (Figure 24). In March 1887, John W. Moffly purchased a large piece of the Carpenter property along

¹² "Jesse A. Tilge," *The American Hatter*, v. 45, no. 2, September 1915, p. 2.

Upsal Street from Ellen D. Carpenter and subdivided it for development.¹³ In June 1887, Moffly sold the parcel at 221 W. Upsal Street to Jesse A. Tilge.¹⁴

European settlement in Germantown began in the late seventeenth century but Germantown remained a linear village along the north-south spine of Germantown Avenue, a major transportation route, until the mid and late nineteenth century. Land distant from Germantown Avenue to the east and west remained undeveloped or used as farmland until advances in transportation coupled with overcrowding in the city center opened Northwest Philadelphia for suburban development. The Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad began running from North Philadelphia to Germantown east of Germantown Avenue in 1832. It was extended to Chestnut Hill in 1854. The line was leased by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in 1870. The Pennsylvania Railroad opened a commuter line west of Germantown Avenue to Chestnut Hill in 1884. The Pennsylvania Railroad line, with stations for commuters on the western edges of Germantown, Mt. Airy, and Chestnut Hill including one at the intersection of Greene and Upsal Streets, very near to the property in question, prompting suburban development in the picturesque, wooded area along Upsal Street. The Upsal Station, as it is still known, offered direct commuter access from West Mt. Airy to Broad Street Station at 15th and Market Streets, to the west of City Hall. Designed by architects William Brown and William Bleddyn Powell, who were under contract to the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Upsal Station building sported Queen Anne styling, the fashion of the day (Figure 25).



Figure 24. Detail from Plate 1 of the G.M. Hopkins' *Atlas of the Late Borough of Germantown, 22nd Ward, City of Philadelphia*, 1871, showing future location of 221 W. Upsal Street.

¹³ Ellen D. Carpenter to John W. Moffly, March 3, 1887, Department of Records Deed GGP-217-376.

¹⁴ John W. Moffly to Jesse A. Tilge, June 9, 1887, Department of Records Deed GGP-276-47.



Figure 25. Upsal Station, Pennsylvania Railroad, c. 1900. Source: Chestnut Hill Conservancy.

Tilge purchased the lot at 221 W. Upsal Street and commissioned architect George T. Pearson to design a grand house for it in 1887. The *Philadelphia Real Estate Register and Builders Guide* announced in June 1887 that “Jesse Tilge, Germantown, Philadelphia, will erect a handsome house for himself and his family on Upsal street.”¹⁵ While Baist’s 1888 atlas of the City of Philadelphia does not depict the Tilge House, Bromley’s 1889 atlas does depict it, indicating that it had been constructed by the time of publication (Figure 26).¹⁶

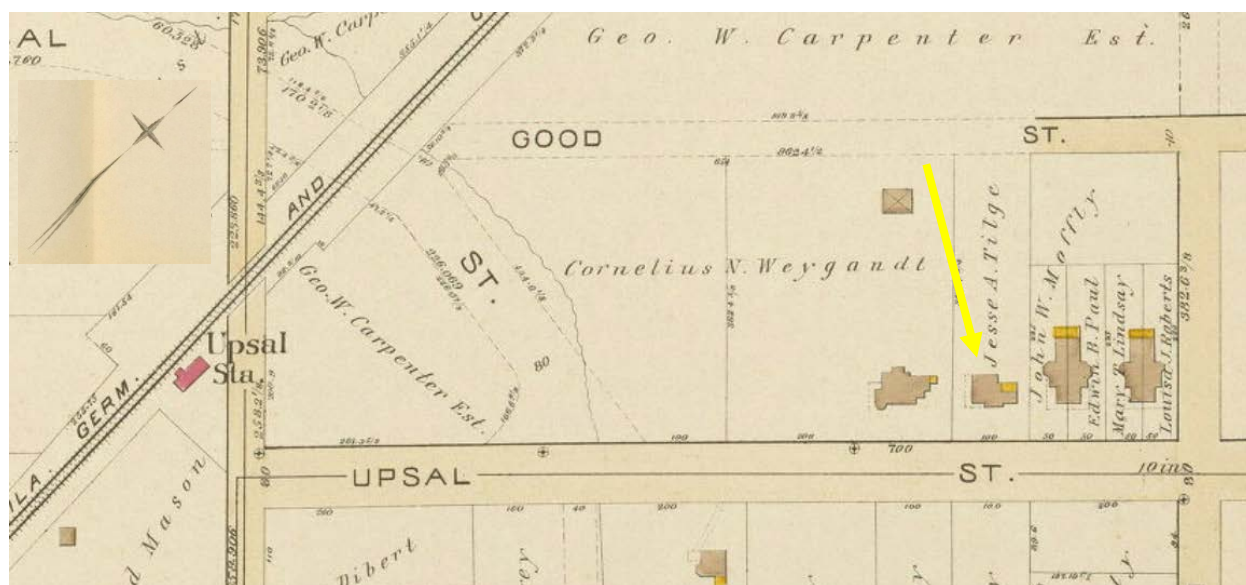


Figure 26. Detail of an 1889 map showing the house at 221 W. Upsal Street and its proximity to the Upsal commuter railroad station, Geo. W. & Walter S. Bromley, Civil Engineers, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward, 1889*.

¹⁵ *Philadelphia Real Estate Register and Builders Guide*, vol 2., June 20, 1887, p. 279.

¹⁶ George William Baist, *Baist's Property Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Penna, complete in one volume, 1888*; Geo. W. & Walter S. Bromley, *Civil Engineers Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Volume 7, 22nd Ward, 1889*.

An article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 1893 described and pictured the house a few years after its construction (Figure 28), declaring that “one of the most attractive residences at Upsal is the home of Jesse A. Tilge.”

It is built of gray stone, in architecture Queen Anne, with here and there a suggestion of Gothic and Colonial; thus, the roof, supported by carved wooden pillars resting on a stone base, is Colonial in design, while the vestibule of stone suggests Gothic ideas. In any description of general effect of Mr. Tilge’s place, the velvety turf, the shrubberies and the splendid trees, to which the slopes and inequalities of the ground give a fine effect; the luxurious creepers climbing up the walls and fences; the ivy which the climate allows to grow almost in perfection, must not be forgotten.¹⁷



Figure 27. George T. Pearson, Jesse A. Tilge House, 221 W. Upsal Street, 1887. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission.

¹⁷ “Some Attractive Homes,” *Inquirer*, May 21, 1893, p. 21.



Figure 28. Rendering of the Jesse A. Tilge House, 221 W. Upsal Street, *Inquirer*, May 21, 1893, p. 21.



Figure 29. Aerial view of the Jesse A. Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street, with the Cornelius Weygandt House in the foreground, November 21, 1931. Source: J. Victor Dallin Aerial Survey Collection, Hagley Museum and Library.

The Jesse A. Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne architectural style, satisfying Criterion for Designation D. Although it does not sport a corner tower or turret, it does include all of the other primary characteristics of the Queen Anne style. Its basic form results from the intersection of two gambrel-topped volumes perpendicular to the street and a gabled volume parallel to the street, creating a typically complex, Queen Anne form with myriad roof pitches, valleys, and peaks. The gambrel ends cantilever out beyond the planes of the stone facades below and appear to float in space, as is typical of the style. The rooflines are steep and are articulated with various picturesque, hipped dormers, some emerging from bays, as well as ornate chimneys. The facades are comprised of various stone, masonry, wood, and glass materials of various colors and textures, like a collage. A large porch wraps nearly half of the building. The windows are varied and complex, provided an encyclopedia of Queen Anne window styles. The colossal window on the front façade at the stair hall is perhaps the most impressive window from Philadelphia's Queen Anne past and echoes the similar stair hall window at Pearson's 5376 Wingohocking Heights house of the same year (Figure 19). The masterful arched window competes with the stair hall window for dominance, reflecting the grand entry space behind it and echoing the original arched openings at Pearson's Perseverance Lodge (Figure 21). The Tilge House is a tour-de-force of Queen Anne design.

While no documents directly connect George T. Pearson to the Tilge House, the design can safely and certainly be attributed to Pearson. Not only does the building betray the hand of Pearson, an idiosyncratic architect with a unique style, but the designs for Perseverance Lodge and the Bruner twin, both of the same year, are undeniably genetically related to the Tilge House. Moreover, it is documented that Pearson designed all other houses on the odd side of the 200 block of W. Upsal Street, the two twins to the east and Uwchlan, the Weygandt mansion, now demolished, to the west. And finally, Pearson undertook alterations to the Tilge House for its second owner, Conyers Button, in 1905. It is extremely likely that Button retained Pearson because he had designed the house two decades earlier and was best equipped to alter it.¹⁸ It can be concluded that the Jesse A. Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street is the work of George T. Pearson, an architect who has influenced the architectural, economic, social, and cultural development of the City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion for Designation E. Pearson was a prolific and accomplished architect whose career in Philadelphia spanned more than four decades. Although he designed buildings up and down the East Coast, he is best known for his work in Northwest Philadelphia, where he constructed hundreds of buildings, forever influencing the development of that section of the city. Moreover, the Historical Commission has designated numerous Pearson-designed buildings individually and as contributing to historic districts and has explicitly found that Pearson-designed buildings satisfied Criterion for Designation E at least four times in the past: Happy Hollow Playground, 4740 Wayne Avenue, and the George T. Pearson House, 125 W. Walnut Lane, both designated on June 14, 2013; 5340 Greene Street, the Thomas Flavell House, designated July 12, 2013; and Keewaydin, 7709 Cherokee Street, 540 W. Moreland Avenue, and 545 W. Mermaid Lane, designated February 14, 2020. Finally, in 2017, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission recommended as part of its Phila2035 planning process that the Historical Commission create a George T. Pearson Thematic Historic District including the property at 221 W. Upsal Street.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Philadelphia Real Estate Register and Builders Guide*, v. 20, February 22, 1905, p. 115.

¹⁹ Philadelphia City Planning Commission, *Philadelphia2035: Upper Northwest District Plan, Existing Conditions, Issues, and Opportunities*, December 2017, p. 132.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the Jesse A. Tilge House at 221 W. Upsal Street embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne architectural style, satisfying Criterion for Designation D; and is the work of an architect, George T. Pearson, who has influenced the architectural, economic, social, and cultural development of the City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion for Designation E. The property at 221 W. Upsal Street is eligible for and merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

8. MAJOR SOURCES CITED

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