

Newcomb House

Newcomb House — 1601 Maine — 1891 — Romanesque Revival

The Newcomb House at 1601 Maine Street (better known as Stillwell Hall) was built in 1890-91 for the prominent Quincy manufacturer, Richard F. Newcomb. Its style is called Richardsonian Romanesque due to many characteristics typical of structures designed by H.H. Richardson, nationally known architect who adapted his distinctive Romanesque Revival designs; local architect on this, the largest single family dwelling in Quincy, was Harvey Chatten.

Romanesque characteristics to note in the Newcomb House are the massive exterior stone, use of spiky or leafy architectural ornamentation carved in high relief, contrasting material textures and colors, weathered bronze trim contrasting with red tile roof, subdivision of windows with stone transom bars, and the forceful, bold form of the building itself.

The layout of the Newcomb House develops from a central living hall, around which are grouped a formal parlor and a den on the west side and an informal sitting room and dining room on the east. An entrance vestibule joins the living hall with the front porch. A library is tucked away under the great staircase. The kitchen and service areas are in the north wing. The full basement originally included a wine cellar which had direct access from the den on the main floor.

The second floor features a generous central hall leading to bedrooms originally for the Newcomb's daughters on the west side and a double suite for the Newcombs themselves on the east. Mrs. Newcomb's room included a large dressing chamber. The second floor included servants' quarters in the north wing. The third floor housed the room used by the Newcomb's son, as well as a billard room, a large trunk storage room, another storage room, linen room, walk-in cedar closets, a sewing room, a central hall, and a room for a manservant. Originally the Newcomb House included an elevator in the service wing connecting all floors.

The interior of the house is notable for the variety of fine woods used in its construction and trimming. On the first floor are quartered oak, mahogany, birch and pine; quartered oak, cherry, sycamore and yellow pine are on the second floor; butternut, pine and cedar finish the third floor.

Additional to the typical Richardsonian details of the exterior are the interior features including elaborately carved wood in the central hall and leaded art glass, much of which still remains. Some interior features such as mantels, hearths, and shutters have been removed. A large porch on the north between the den and living room on the west has been removed.

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