

Gardner House

2325 Maine Street • Arts and Crafts style • 1908 • Harvey Chatten, arch.

The "Bert" Gardner House at the northwest corner of Twenty-fourth and Maine Streets is a Quincy residence that has long been the subject of speculation and interest. Architecturally the house is of interest in that it represents a fusing of several different styles and periods, and incorporates a variety of differing features, both inside and out.

Designed in 1908 by the well-known Quincy architect Harvey Chatten, the house until its recent sale had been continuously in the Gardner family. Chatten, son of one of the men involved in laying out the original town of Quincy, was responsible for many of the city's stately homes and public buildings. The old Quincy High School at Twelfth and Maine Sts., the Stern building, the old City Hall at Third and Hampshire Sts., and the old Herald-Whig building when it was remodeled in 1907, were products of the Chatten studio. Among the more prominent private homes designed by Chatten are those at 228 S. Eighteenth St., 224 S. Twentieth St., 1834 Jersey St. and 1800 Maine St. Chatten, like many of his contemporary successors, determined the styles of local homes and contributed greatly to Quincy's streets and boulevards becoming lined with imposing structures.

Little is known of the arrangements between Gardner and Chatten, but appearances lend credence to the theory that Chatten was given a fairly free hand both on outer styling and on the interior floor plan and the appointments. Compromises between architect and owner seem to be indicated by the fact that while the principal chandeliers of alabaster and carved teak are classic Greco-Roman style and the marble of the fireplaces is Italian, the mantels in several cases are of colonial design. Rather severe oak trim in the woodwork and doors, typical of the period, is used throughout the first floor, while softer mouldings trim the second floor. Living room walls are treated with boiserie mouldings and all main-level floors are of two-inch oak. The exterior brick came from Morgan county. The large sweeps of the roof reach out to encompass an enclosed porch off the living room on the east side of the house and a port-couchere along the west side, making the building appear to be larger than its actual size.

The visitor to the Gardner House is greeted by an extraordinarily large foyer at the base of the single stairway to the second floor. To the back of this staircase on the ground floor is a large open gallery with a northern exposure, giving full view of the spacious rear grounds. This was said to be the favorite room of the late Mrs. Gardner. To the right of the entry is the large living room, and dining room and kitchen are to the left. Private chambers, bedrooms and dressing areas are located on the second floor.

Never known to be socially gregarious, the Gardners nevertheless for their own enjoyment furnished the house with both domestic and European antiques, oriental rugs of great value and accessories from many parts of the world. At some time during the past twenty years, a major rebuilding of the kitchen and baths was carried out, using modern appliances, fixtures and construction materials.

Accompanying the large house on the block-deep lot is a three-car garage with furnished room, presumably built for a groundskeeper and driver.