

Florham

Restored Lenfell Hall Debuts

The day was glorious, the mood festive, and the elegant Lenfell Hall was once again in the spotlight. On May 11, the Friends hosted a well-attended reception organized by trustees Shannie Doremus and Audrey Parker for FDU officials, faculty, and friends to celebrate completion of the Friends' major undertaking, the restoration of Lenfell Hall, created by renowned architects McKim, Mead & White between 1893-1897 as the country house of Hamilton McK. Twombly and Florence Vanderbilt and their family.

Friends President Emma Joy Dana spoke of the Friends' mission, and introduced outgoing FDU President Frank Mertz, who thanked the Friends for their efforts and stressed the importance of the restored room as a part of the environment of learning the University seeks to foster. Committee heads Barbara Keefauver and Phyllis Conway spoke briefly about the restoration project, thanking all who assisted in the work and funding. John Fritz, former dean and professor of history at FDU, provided the audience with a brief history of the former Vanderbilt-Twombly Mansion. An important message, underscored by Barbara Keefauver, is that the restored Lenfell Hall will not only benefit the University, but will be "a wonderful asset to the community at large since it is open for individual events."

Background

Restoration is always a complex issue. Lifestyles change. Stewardship of buildings often shifts from the private to public sector. Thus when FDU executive vice president Carl



The Friends, faculty, and guests enjoy restored Lenfell Hall

Viola asked the Friends to become involved in the project two years ago, the objective was to produce an adaptive restoration, which would both preserve and/or replicate the original Gilded Age elegance of the spacious Drawing Room, while still accommodating the diverse needs of the University. The Friends Committee, headed by Barbara Keefauver and Phyllis Conway, worked in cooperation with Dr. Peter Falley, provost of the FDU Madison campus, and Dr. Charles R. Dees, Jr. senior vice president for institutional advancement at FDU, and other university officers and planners, especially President Frank Mertz.

Blueprint for progress

The overall objectives of the restoration of the historic room, which is enriched by exceptional marble mantels, surrounds, and elegant plaster work, included replacement of the chevron-pattern floor; restoration of the

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Fairleigh Dickinson University

Greetings from the President

We're excited to report that the Friends' major project, the restoration of Lenfell Hall, has been completed. I hope that you will all visit the Mansion at Fairleigh Dickinson to see this beautiful room. We offer heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who helped to make this restoration a reality.

The Friends' participation in Florham Park's Centennial festivities on May 23, with an authentic "Ice Cream Social," was another of our spring ventures. The Italian Gardens,

our ongoing restoration project, are looking particularly lovely. We plan to finish the restoration by repairing the peripheral walks.

Again, we urge you to support our efforts either by renewing your membership or becoming a new member. We are deeply grateful to all who have continued to support us.

Emma Joy Dana

Holiday Ball a Success

The bagpipes piped, the Louis Gordon Quintet played, and over 110 people dined and danced in Lenfell Hall on December 12 at the second "Holiday Ball." The Ball raised an impressive \$19,000, which benefited the restoration of Lenfell Hall. The sixteen-member Benefit Committee was co-chaired once again by Mrs. William L. Keefauver and Mrs. Karl Meister. In what has become a tradition, Mrs.

William Y. Dear, Jr. served as Honorary Chair of the Committee and created unique favors for the guests. The extensive refurbishing of Lenfell Hall in 1958 was made possible by the generosity of Mrs. Dear's stepfather, the late Leonard Dreyfuss. The gala continues to generate enthusiasm from area residents, and tentative plans are underway for a third holiday gala.

Ice Cream Social

For a number of years after they established their residence at "Florham" in the 1890s, Hamilton McK. and Florence Vanderbilt Twombly annually invited to their estate the residents of Florham Park for an ice cream social. The Friends of Florham revived that "Florham" custom this May as part of Florham Park's celebration of the community's centennial. In cooperation with Fairleigh Dickinson University and Florham Park's Centennial Committee chaired by Councilman Thomas Hadley, the Friends sponsored in the Clowney Gardens a "social" with free ice cream—generously provided by Welsh Farms—for 500 guests. In addition to the ice cream, lemonade, milk, cookies, balloons, and frisbees, were available to the cele-

brants.

Appropriately, on a day dedicated to remembering not only "Florham's" customs but the origins and history of Florham Park, forget-me-not seeds were another free memento. Through the good offices of the Friends also, Chatham resident John Kapferer, a member of and director of the Lucent Pioneer Clown Troupe, made a guest appearance. He and his internationally known troupe have offered pro bono entertainment visits in Russia, South Korea, and Bosnia.

Members of the Friends committee that worked with Mr. Hadley and his associates were Emma Joy Dana, John Fritz, Kim Dougherty, and Audrey Parker.

Restored Lenfell Hall (continued from page 1)

nineteenth-century window treatment; repainting of the walls and woodwork to approximate the original tones; removal of the recently added stepped stage, and replacement with movable modular platforms; and replacement of the substitute windows and doors with either the originals or with faithful reproductions. The Committee's plan also included replacement of the window-unit air conditioners with a less intrusive system; installation of an audio system, which is technically efficient but aesthetically unobtrusive; and, finally, selection and procurement of historically appropriate seating.

The Committee, which also included Friends president Emma Joy Dana, Library Director Dr. James Fraser, John Fritz, and Richard Simon, did extensive research, and visited historically significant buildings to seek possible creative approaches to producing historically sensitive and aesthetically compatible adaptations. The color selected for the walls, for example, replicates that of the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, while the color selected for the woodwork is that used by the British National Trust. Stessel and Neugebauer, of Summit, NJ, made the draperies and valances from a fabric created specifically for this project by Scalamandré, Inc. The gold-toned cotton-damask and silk trim material is a reproduction of a fabric used at Marble House, Newport, RI, another great Vanderbilt family home.

Getting there

The translation of the vision of a restored Lenfell Hall into reality was underpinned by the Friends' active fundraising campaign, which included individual contributions from the two benefit Holiday Balls.

Calling All Sleuths

The Friends ask your help in putting the finishing touches on the restoration of Lenfell Hall. We are trying to locate several of the original furnishings of this elegant room of the Mansion, which were offered in the two auctions of the Twombly Estate by Parke Berne in 1955. These items include two pairs of

The Friends also worked with the University in soliciting support from the Hyde and Watson Foundation; the F.M. Kirby Foundation; the Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Foundation; the Hidden Pond Founda-

tion; and the Tomlinson Family Foundation. In addition, generous *pro bono* contributors of expertise included Peter Dorne, AIA; Charles John, AIA; and Phyllis Conway, interior designer. Carmine Toto, painting contractor, and Scalamandré, Inc., also offered generous assistance to the project, which cost \$200,000.

With the successful completion of this major restoration, the Friends have managed to ensure that the link with the past remains unbroken, while the demands of the modern age--and the modern university--have been accommodated. A rather free interpretation of the words of Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, could apply to the Friends' efforts: "We save old buildings because we need to preserve the marks left on our national landscape by the many people who have shaped it. We need our collective memory."



Friends of Florham Committee members Audrey Parker, President Emma Joy Dana, Phyllis Conway, Barbara Keefauver, and Shannie Doremus at Lenfell Hall reception (l-r).

original andirons, tall brass melon-form finials and iron stem on scrolled supports, in French Gothic design; one Louis XIV cast iron fire-back (48"H x 34-36" W); two sets of steel and brass fire tools; and two wrought iron log baskets. If you have any information about these valuable pieces, please call 973-539-3647.

Striking Gold With Scalamandré

In the early moments of the Friends of Florham celebration of a restored Lenfell Hall on May 17, Scalamandré representatives Ed Goodman and Mary Beth Brown paused to examine the Scalamandré-created fabrics in the valances and draperies set in place just days before. Mr. Goodman, head of Scalamandré's silk and fringe department, who makes frequent trips to China in his searches for silk, paused to run the knuckles of his right hand slowly over the fringe tassels adorning the gold-toned draperies. "Individually hand tied," Mr. Goodman said. "And this is mulberry silk," he added with an approving smile. "How can you tell?" a somewhat skeptical member of the Friends inquired. "By the smoothness," Mr. Goodman answered as Ms. Brown nodded with a colleague's respect for his expertise. "Silkworms feeding on other types of leaves produce a coarser type of silk."

For the Friends gathered around Mr. Goodman, the incident reinforced their conviction that probably no one but his firm could have provided the sort of scrupulously "documentary" product design essential to the their challenging restoration effort.

Barbara Keefauver and Phyllis Conway, leaders of the Friends' attempt to recreate as accurately and faithfully as possible the impressive interior the Twomblys knew as a Drawing Room, regarded Scalamandré as uniquely qualified to create the fabrics required.

They knew, for instance, of the firm's traditional commitment to impeccably sensitive restorations. They also knew of Scalamandré's contributions to nearly 1,000 projects, including extraordinary ones like those at Rosecliff, Marble House, The Breakers, the Wadsworth Atheneum, Washington D.C.'s Treasury Build-

ing, the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's home in Nashville, San Simeon, and the great Virginia plantation, Prestwold in Clarksville, VA. Perhaps equally important, they knew of the sixty-eight-year-old firm's widely recognized generosity to worthy projects like the Lenfell restoration. (The draperies displayed at the May reception required five separate "strikes," or color samples, that Scalamandré produced free of charge for the Friends.)

The meticulousness of the kind of Scalamandré procedures that resulted in the restored window treatments in Lenfell Hall is attested to by one representative passage in a recent publication of the Long Island City firm founded by Franco Scalamandré and continued by his heirs and relatives. Production of a given fabric begins, the passage reveals, with exhaustive study and analysis of the "woven document" to be recreated. "...after we've learned all that we can about the document's background," says Executive Vice President for Products Robert F.S. Bitter, "it is transferred to the Art Studio, where skilled personnel analyze it for the fiber content, such as silk or cotton yarn size, and the number of yarns per inch in the vertical and horizontal directions. We also determine what type of weave was used in the original, say, dobby or jacquard, and if it's jacquard, whether it be damask, brocatelle, liseré or a specially designed weave structure."

For that sort of devotion to the spirit of restoration and to the type of creativity and diligence displayed by Friends volunteers like Mrs. Keefauver and Mrs. Conway, all of the friends of Friends of Florham and of Fairleigh Dickinson University as well have reason to be lastingly grateful.



Friends of Florham Committee members Dr. James Fraser, John Fritz, Richard Simon, and Walter Savage "framed" by Lenfell Hall's new draperies, with fabric created by Scalamandré (l-r).

Looking For A Lily

A search is on for a long-lost lily which first came into being exactly 100 years ago in the greenhouses at Florham. It was in 1899 that Arthur Herrington, the Vanderbilt-Twombly estate head gardener, created a new hybrid daylily which he registered under the name "Florham."

The Friends of Florham heard about the existence of the Florham daylily just a year or so ago from a curator at Reynolda Gardens in Winston-Salem, NC. Reynolda was restoring the formal gardens installed at that estate in 1917 by Thomas Sears, landscape architect, and found that he had included a new daylily, *Hemerocallis florham*, in his plantings. Reference to the "bible" on daylilies, the book *Daylilies* by A.B. Stout, originally published in 1934, provided a full description of the Florham cultivar, including the registration announcement made in 1899. Further research indicated that the Florham daylily, a canary yellow variety, was the first American hybrid. It was much used in hybridizing work and many present-day varieties are clearly genetic descendants of their "Florham" ancestor. *H. florham* was a hybrid of the species *Hemerocallis Thunbergii* and *Hemerocallis aurantiaca*, both known to be growing at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England, in 1890, when English horticulturalists began actively hybridizing daylilies. It is interesting to note that Arthur Herrington, who was brought from England by Hamilton Twombly in 1896 to head up his gardens, had been employed at Kew Gardens for the prior decade and must have been familiar with the developments in daylily hybridizing.

The search for the Florham daylily began in the fall of 1997. Trustee Richard C. Simon, who led the search, contacted several of the top *Hemerocallis* experts in the country: Dr. Darrel Apps, former Director of Longwood Gardens and editor of the 1986 republication of A. B. Stout's *Daylilies*; Gregory Piotrowski, daylily expert and former horticulturist at the New York Botanical Gardens; and the American *Hemerocallis* Society. All were familiar with the Florham lily and its historic importance, but no one knew exactly where it could be found. It was suggested we contact a nursery in Tennessee. We did, but, sadly, we learned that their stock had died out a few years ago and no records existed of its whereabouts.

The search continues for *Hemerocallis florham*. The Garden Club of America has kindly listed the search on its new website and other growers have been contacted, but a specimen has yet to be located.

The existence of a Florham-developed daylily was an exciting discovery for the Friends of Florham. Actively involved in restoring gardens on the estate, the Friends envision propagating *H. florham* as an authentic planting material for the grounds.



Friends Offer Tours of Mansion and Gardens

Have you ever wondered about the architecture of the Mansion, the design of the Italian Garden, or the siting of the pergola? As part of their ongoing efforts to inform the public about the history of "Florham" and the importance of the university to the area commu-

nity, the Friends are providing guided tours to interested groups by appointment. For information, and the costs of tours, call 267-1408. All proceeds will be directed to the historic preservation projects of the Friends at the University.

Become a Friend

Join the Friends of Florham. Participate directly in our efforts to preserve the architectural history of Florham, and support our informative program series. Your support will make a difference.

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