

# **ARCHITECTURAL CERAMICS IN PHILADELPHIA**

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## **PHILADELPHIA CITY HALL Broad and Market Streets**

City Hall was designed by Philadelphia architect John McArthur, Jr., with Thomas U. Walter, and built 1871-1901. It is recognized as one of the best and most impressive examples of Second Empire style architecture in the country. In 1973, John Maass wrote, “The building has . . . been regarded as a marvel of the age, as an obsolete relic, as a grotesque monstrosity, as a period piece of quaint charm, and now as a masterpiece of American architecture.”

Tiles can be found in the pavements of the covered walkways leading into the large open courtyard on the exterior ground floor. Walk through the arched portals leading in from North Broad Street, South Broad Street or East Market Street and you will see running borders of encaustic tiles in geometric patterns of cream, blue, red, brown and buff. The tiles were made in Germany circa 1880-1900 by Villeroy and Boch, Mettlach, and by Mosaic Fabrik in Sinzig-am-Rhein. This type of tile was commonly used throughout public buildings in the area, although most are now gone. The tiles are in fair to excellent condition, but have suffered from years of neglect.

Tiles are located throughout the interior, too. Some fine, colorful relief tiles made in Trenton, New Jersey, especially by Trent Tile Company and the Providential Tile Works, can be found throughout the endless hallways and in many offices and public rooms. The main corridors on the fifth and sixth floors are especially impressive. An extremely fine tiled fireplace with classically inspired figures, possibly modelled by Isaac Broome or William Gallimore and probably manufactured in the late 1880s or early ‘90s by Trent Tile or Providential Tile Works, can be found in a small chamber adjacent to the Supreme Court rooms. English-made tiles are found throughout the building, too. In an office on the sixth floor are two large wall panels each composed of twenty-one 8-inch square tiles made by Minton China Works of Stoke-on-Trent, England. They are black and white transfer-printed tiles with scenes from Sir Walter Scott’s popular *Waverley* novels, a series of twelve different scenes that were designed by the British artist, John Moyr Smith (1839-1912), and first offered in 1878. Only eleven in the series are represented here though: “The Antiquary” was not used in either panel.

Public tours of City Hall, including the tower with the statue of William Penn by Alexander Milne Calder (1846-1923), who did all the sculpture found throughout the building, are available daily.

## **ONE EAST PENN SQUARE BUILDING 1-21 N. Juniper Street, at Market Street and East Penn Square**

This outstanding Art Deco building was originally the home of the Market Street National Bank and was designed by Philadelphia architects Ritter and Shay (fl. 1920-c.1936) in 1930. The unique, colorfully glazed architectural terra cotta, including the “Mayan necklace” wrapping around the lower part of the building, was manufactured by the local firm of O. W. Ketcham Terra Cotta Works, originally located north of Chester in nearby Crum Lynne, Pennsylvania. Detailed drawings of this building’s terra cotta exist in the collections of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. It was converted into a hotel in 2000-01 and is now the Marriott Residence Inn.

## **WITHERSPOON BUILDING 1319-1323 Walnut Street, at 120-150 S. Juniper Street**

Built for the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath Schoolwork between 1895 and 1897, the Witherspoon Building, named for John Witherspoon, founder of Princeton University, displays an elaborate (and excessive) mixture of sculptural terra cotta elements, including heads, evangelists, angels, medallions and shields over its entire façade. Much of the terra cotta was manufactured by the local firm of Conkling Armstrong Terra Cotta Company, which was founded in 1895 and was located on Wissahickon Avenue at Juanita Street. Several statues were designed by Alexander Stirling Calder (1870-1945), including a series of twelve large figures of historically prominent clergymen, six of which were removed in 1961 and are now displayed in the courtyard of the Presbyterian Historical Society on Lombard Street. Some terra cotta elements may have been made by O. W. Ketcham Terra Cotta Works, too. The building’s architect, Joseph M. Huston, is best known today for designing the Pennsylvania State Capitol Building in Harrisburg after the turn of the century.

## **JACOB REED’S SONS STORE BUILDING**

## 1424 Chestnut Street

Jacob Reed's Sons Store was designed by the architect William L. Price, whose firm, Price and McLanahan, was located at 1624 Walnut Street in Philadelphia. Completed in 1904-05 for Alan H. Reed, owner of the well-established men's clothing store, it is considered an important transitional work for Price, who planned it late in 1903. Although the building is progressive in its use of reinforced concrete (perhaps the first commercial use of it in the city), it remains moderately traditional in the choice of stylistic sources, drawing upon Northern Italian models of the fifteenth century. The façade, which articulates the functional spaces of the interior, is composed of dark red brick embellished with colorful tiles and is topped with a red tile roof. The interior is dominated by a sculptural barrel vault over the original sales space, which is flanked by two side aisles and is supported by a series of large concrete columns also decorated with tiles.

William L. Price (1861-1916) is best remembered today as the architect and theorist who founded the Arts and Crafts utopian community at Rose Valley, near Media, just west of Philadelphia. He was also a highly creative architect of both residential and commercial buildings; his masterpieces are considered to be Atlantic City's Traymore Hotel (1906 and 1914-15; now demolished) and Chicago's Freight Terminal (1914-19). In most of his mature works, Price attempted to merge craft values with the scale and materials of modern architecture. He was committed to the social ideal of improving life through art.

Price often revealed his Arts and Crafts interests by his selection of handmade tiles from Henry Chapman Mercer's Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. To get the product he desired, Price often submitted his own designs for tile panels, which Mercer produced to his specifications. In the case of Reed's, however, the architect allowed Mercer a free hand in designing the mosaics that are found on the exterior and interior. "Use stone, plaster, brick, concrete, tile, anything you will," Price later wrote in 1909, "but use them for what they are, and let their qualities be shown forth as well as their purpose, and above all keep ornament out, unless you can get real artsmen to put it in, and even then it must tell some story of purpose or interests."

Pottery records from 1904 indicate that Price and McLanahan placed their orders for tiles with Mercer on July 23rd and December 29th (MPTW Job #1904-07). It was a large and costly commission. The elaborate design for the soffit of the monumental arch in the main entrance totaled \$726.40. The soffit was composed of three round and two half-round mosaics, each nearly five feet in diameter (or 116 square feet total), depicting subjects relating to the American garment industry, past and present: (left to right) "Pattern Making," "Spinning," "Shearing Sheep," "Indian Weaving," and "Tailoring." The mosaics are tied together with a border of green-colored tiles against a background of plain red quarries. Mercer sent his own man in Doylestown, Herman Sell, to Philadelphia in late 1904 to personally set this complicated composition.

Tiling for the exterior totaled just over \$1,000.00, a substantial amount for the day. This not only included the tiles and mosaics for the soffit, but also allowed for the frieze border containing small, round mosaics in the coved cornice near the roof, the tile arrangements over and under the windows, and the tiled ceiling border in the arcaded loggia on the top floor.

In addition, nearly \$500.00 was spent in early 1905 for tiles used to decorate the interior. Mercer created little tulip mosaics based on motifs derived from Pennsylvania-German stove plates, and produced 116 of them in three different shapes and sizes to be used on the walls and around the capitals of the concrete columns. Some of these finished mosaics remained in the Pottery's stock afterwards and were later used to decorate Mercer's new factory during its construction in 1911-12.

When the Jacob Reed's Sons Store closed in February 1983 and the building's future preservation was in peril, Thomas Hine, architectural critic for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, wrote that it "is probably Philadelphia's best commercial building of its size, and it has few peers nationwide. Its excellence does not overwhelm the viewer, although anyone who has ever taken a close look at the building, both inside and out, must conclude that it is mildly outrageous. Its three-story arched entrance can still surprise people who have been walking past it for years."

Although it is now a retail drug store, the building looks much the same today as it did when it opened in 1905.

## **CROZER BUILDING 1420-22 Chestnut Street**

Philadelphia abounds with great examples of architectural terra cotta, but one of the best is the Crozer Building next door to the Jacob Reed's Sons Store on Chestnut Street. The building was designed by Frank Miles Day (1861-1918), a well-known Philadelphia architect at the turn of the century. Day is chiefly remembered for his neo-Gothic buildings for major American universities, including Princeton, Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Crozer Building was built in 1896-99 for the American Baptist Publication Society and named after one of its principal benefactors. The exterior, made of Pompeian brick and elaborately textured terra cotta, was derived from Italian and French Renaissance sources. The street level has been completely altered, but most above that is original, including the terra-cotta balcony projecting from the fifth floor and all the trim surrounding the windows. The top of the building, which is reminiscent of a Loire chateau, is a profusion of fanciful terra cotta roofs, chimneys, pilasters and ornament that

works as an integrated whole chiefly because of the building material. The local firm of Conkling Armstrong Terra Cotta Works was the contractor for the terra cotta.

## **PENGUIN PLACE 201 Camac Street**

An interesting installation of six decorative tiles surrounds an office's exterior doorway on this old, narrow street in Center City. They include a charging knight, lotus, shield and heraldic birds, among others, and were probably set here in the late 1920s. The tile maker was the Wheatley Tile and Pottery Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.

## **RITTENHOUSE REGENCY Rittenhouse Square, 225 S. 18th Street**

Formerly the Penn Athletic Club, the building contains four large, round terra cotta panels depicting Greek athletes high on the facade facing Rittenhouse Square. The protruding lion heads and frames surrounding the windows are also architectural terra cotta. Originally the interior contained outstanding tile installations by the Enfield Pottery and Tile Works, but they were destroyed years ago. The building is currently being converted into a Sheraton Hotel.

## **FOUNTAIN, RITTENHOUSE SQUARE Walnut Street, between 18th and 19th Streets**

Rittenhouse Square was one of four original eight-acre public squares laid out by William Penn's surveyor in his 1682 plan for Philadelphia. In the 19th century it was named for David Rittenhouse, the colonial astronomer, clockmaker and first director of the United States Mint. As the city grew and expanded northward during the mid-19th century, the area became a fashionable residential neighborhood and many of Philadelphia's finest families built large, elegant mansions around the square. A few mansions remain, including the Fell-Van Rensselaer House at 1801 Walnut Street. The house was designed in 1896-98 by the Boston-based firm of Peabody and Stearns for Sara Drexell Fell and her soon-to-be husband Alexander Van Rensselaer of New York. Many critics consider the house to be one of the finest examples of Beaux Arts design in the country. Although it has been converted into a retail store (Urban Outfitters), some

remnants of the sumptuous interior remain, including Mrs. Van Rensselaer's Doges Room with its ceiling of Popes and large ornate fireplace with marble mosaic facing.

Over the years Rittenhouse Square has gradually transformed into its present appearance. Sculptures like Antoine Louis Barye's famous *Lion Crushing a Serpent* (1832) was placed in the park in 1892. Early in this century, public funds were collected to further improve and beautify the park. Albert Laessle's spirited bronze goat *Billy* (1914) was purchased and eventually set on its current granite base in 1919. Under the leadership of men like Dr. J. William White, the square was made into one of the most enjoyable open spaces in center city.

In 1913, architect Paul Philippe Cret was engaged to redesign Rittenhouse Square as part of a general improvement of the area. He prepared plans for a children's pool and fountain that became the centerpiece of the park. Cret (1876-1945), a native of Lyons, France, came to Philadelphia in 1903 to teach architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. Over the course of his career, he won many important architectural commissions in the area, including the Delaware River (Benjamin Franklin) Bridge, the Federal Reserve Building, the Rodin Museum, and the gallery for the Barnes Foundation in nearby Merion. His reputation was not limited to Philadelphia, however. Cret also designed the monumental Detroit Institute of Arts, the Indianapolis Public Library, the Hartford County Building and Courthouse in Connecticut, and the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D. C., among others. His application of classicism to the civic commissions received made Paul Cret one of the most accomplished architects of the twentieth century.

For many projects, Cret incorporated faience tiles into the designs. The fountain and pool in Rittenhouse Square was no exception. Cret's original specifications, dated July 9, 1913, indicate that "handmade" tiles were to surround a marble mask spout "provided by owner" on the fountain wall, with a simple line border of tiles edging the pool. The tiles were to be in turquoise blue and green in a "seaweed pattern in special shapes, with simple animal tiles of other colors, four shapes." Quotes for the tiles were solicited from only two companies: Henry C. Mercer's Moravian Pottery and Tile Works and J. H. Dulles Allen's Enfield Pottery and Tile Works. Mercer estimated the work to come in at \$580.00 for blue or green glazed mosaic tiles to cover the 90 square feet of wall space (MPTW Job #1913-57). Allen's quote is unknown but it must have suited the architect since Enfield won the contract for the tiles.

Cret prepared full-size cartoons for the allover seaweed pattern, which survive in the collection of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. His design of blue and green mosaic pieces set into a concrete background and surrounding a white marble head of Neptune (after the original found in the Borghese gardens in Italy) was carried out by Enfield in late 1913 or early 1914. A photograph in the Philadelphia city archives shows the fountain soon after its completion, with children sailing toy boats in the shallow pool. The fountain wall is clearly shown covered with the seaweed pattern, with tile turtles,

snails, bees and salamanders asymmetrically placed among the leafy branches. The delightful effect must have been very lively and colorful.

Unfortunately, this original scheme only lasted a few years. While Cret was fighting for France during World War I and was away from Philadelphia from 1914 to 1918, Eli Kirk Price, head of the city's Art Jury, decided that the Enfield tile needed to be removed from the fountain because he "objected to its effect." Something a little more subdued and dignified seems to have been desired. Joseph H. Dulles Allen, President of Enfield, wrote to his friend Cret in Paris about this situation on November 16, 1917, saying "the Committee was now considering doing something more there [in Rittenhouse Square], and that they would approach me about it. Since, then, I have received the impression that they would wait until your return, which is, of course, what I would advise them to do in any event." It is uncertain if the Art Jury waited for Cret's return or not, but the original tiles were removed in 1918 and replaced with the arrangement of turquoise faience tiles that remains in place today. These replacements were also made by the Enfield Pottery and Tile Works. Cret may have recommended this alternative scheme, though. A nearly identical tile arrangement was used in 1913 to line a similar pool and fountain in the "Blue Aztec Garden" of the Pan American Union Building (now called Organization of American States Building) in Washington, D.C., a site designed by Cret in association with Albert Kelsey in 1908-10.

The square has undergone various changes in more recent times, including some major planting done in 1941. In 1956 the children's pool was enhanced with the addition of Paul Manship's bronze *Duck Girl* (1911), which still stands amid the reflecting waters. Today, the park is maintained by the Friends of Rittenhouse Square and the Fairmount Park Commission.

## **CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY 1904 Walnut Street, Rittenhouse Square**

Located on the northwest corner of Rittenhouse Square, the Church of the Holy Trinity was completed in 1859. This Episcopal church was the work of Scottish-born architect John Notman and is a very early example of the Romanesque style in America. The tower, added in 1868, was designed by G. W. Hewitt. Inside, the church boasts one of the finest collections of stained glass in the United States, including four windows and a sky light by Tiffany Studios of New York.

A vast and impressive red quarry pavement made by the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works can be found throughout the aisles, chancel and altar area. The tiles were ordered from Mercer's Doylestown company during the summer of 1914. Over 10,250 four-inch "English Quarry" tiles, or 1,139 square feet, were provided, along with an assortment of other variously sized plain tiles and decorative inserts, including four large "Evangelists" tiles that can be found near the altar. The tiles alone cost \$878.14. In early

January 1939, a small quantity of additional tiles, totaling 22 square feet, was ordered for “repair job.”

## **RESIDENCE 2034 Locust Street**

Two four-inch Arts and Crafts tiles in dark green and turquoise mat glazes are embedded diagonally into the brick façade of this house. The tiles were made by the famous Rookwood Pottery Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.

## **VENEZ VOIR BUILDING 2050 Locust Street**

The restrained elegance of this Art Deco storefront has been beautifully augmented with tiles from the Enfield Pottery and Tile Works. Three large black and silver glazed panels, each molded in flattened relief with a stylized raven, top the fluted pilasters across the front. The bird design was repeated in the building’s wrought-iron and brass door. The first deed for this building was recorded in 1926, when it opened as “Venez Voir,” a retail shop selling objet d’art. The architect remains unknown. These tiles may have been specially created for this site in 1926, but the company used the same design in trade magazine advertisements as late as 1929. Since 1962 the building has been a doctor’s office. “Come and have a look!”

## **RESIDENCE 244 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street**

This house, built for James Spear *circa* 1882, was designed by the Philadelphia architect Addison Hutton (1834-1916). Hutton had a long and successful career designing schools, hotels, churches, hospitals, businesses and residences throughout the city. The rich and exuberant use of sculptural terra cotta displayed on the façade is typical of many urban dwelling during the 1870s and ‘80s.

## **MARCEL VITI HOUSE 2129 Spruce Street**

The Marcel Viti House started out much like its neighbors in the 2100 block of Spruce Street. Originally built of red brick and trimmed with carved stone around its entrance door and over its tall windows, the house was typical of Second Empire style houses built for middle-class families in this area during the 1870s. As is the case for most of these row houses, the architect of 2129 is no longer known. Many of the residences along this street are constructed of brownstone, which became a popular building material in the mid-19th century because it was attractive, easily carved and inexpensive. By 1880 it was discovered that this soft sandstone badly deteriorated over time and therefore ceased being a popular material for construction. Amid these brownstones are several notable houses by prominent Philadelphia architects, including the Ellis residence at 2113, which was designed by Frank Furness, and the fine Colonial Revival-style house at 2123 by Wilson Eyre.

By the 1890s the Viti family had purchased 2129 Spruce Street. Marcel A. Viti, a lawyer and the Swedish vice-consul, owned the building during most of this time, and in the autumn of 1913 decided that it needed a “make over.” He had plans drawn up for the remodeling of the house’s façade by Thomas M. Seeds, Jr., his contractor. Viti seems to have acted as his own architect. He called upon the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown and asked Henry Mercer to prepare designs to surface the house’s street front with hand-made tiles. Basically he wanted to remove the heavy, somber Victorian style of the house and apply a lighter, more fashionable Arts and Crafts treatment to it.

The tile installation as it appears today is composed of golden buff three-inch quarries set diagonally along the second and third stories. The windows on the upper levels are banded with glazed blanks and Mercer’s “Byzantine” decorative inserts. The first-floor section is tiled with dark red quarries set in an allover grid pattern. They are meant to contrast with the lighter tiles above and yet create a harmonious effect. The double arched windows are banded with dark red tiles and framed with fluted tile pilasters. Around the entrance a grapevine border composed of brocade grapes and leaves is set against golden buff plain tiles. Tiles also line the vestibule inside the main door.

Viti took great interest in the tiles made for his house and obsessed over every detail of their proportion, color effect and installation. All the tiles in his original order were made and sent to the site between November 1913 and March 1914 and were installed by Bernard J. Farnell, a tile setter recommended by Mercer. By early April 1914, the tile installation seems to have been completed. But the owner was not pleased with the results. Correspondence between Viti and Frank K. Swain, manager of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, exist in the company’s records (MPTW Job #1913-76) and show that Viti did not like the coloration of the three-inch quarries facing the basement and first-story sections and that he insisted they be remade. Tiles were removed; tiles were reset. Viti was also tremendously concerned over the projection of the tile pilasters framing the double windows. He never was satisfied with any of the

“corrections” that were made over the next two years. To this day the windows along the first story still do not seem quite right.

On January 23, 1915, Viti wrote to Swain at the Pottery and expressed his dissatisfaction with the façade:

*“Nearly all the new tiles have been set at my house and the result is a marked improvement over the prior conditions, but unfortunately the change has served a double purpose through making more prominent the tile work above the first floor. . . .*

*“The appearance of the upper floors really makes the house uninhabitable with any degree of comfort. Entirely irrespective of the trimming of the windows the violent contrasts in colors and tones gave a result impossible to endure. I am absolutely indifferent to the opinion of others when satisfied with my conclusions, but I would mention, merely to show that my opinion is not individual, that the original front caused consternation and dismay to almost every passerby. Laughter, ridicule and sadness seemed to be expressed on all sides. And since the lower floor has been changed I have been astounded to be stopped on the street to be congratulated on the change. The criticism has not been confined to the immediate neighborhood, and now that persons I know realize I was not the father of the original idea they no longer hesitate to express their opinions and repeat the uncomplimentary remarks made by others, from which I realize that the subject has been one of wide comment. I would not be surprised if it has affected the market value of the house and as I told you it has had a bad effect on my health through the unpleasant sensation caused by having it recalled just before meals when I enter my house for that purpose.”*

Viti had attempted to paint some of the tiles so they would blend in and he also oiled them to make the whole harmonize, but he does not seem to have gotten the finish he wanted. After he wrote, the Pottery sent more tiles in February 1915 to alter what had been done. After some doing, the tiling was eventually left as it appears today in the spring of that year.

The final bill totaled \$408.14, but because Swain was anxious to close the books on this whole matter and avoid some legal action, he asked Viti to just pay \$170.80. Viti complied and sent a check on June 21st, although he maintained reservations about the finished work. By this time, Frank Swain had clearly had his fill of Viti and rightly ignored his “concerns.” The Moravian Pottery and Tile Works took a loss of \$237.34 on this job.

Marcel Viti lived at 2129 Spruce Street until his death in 1952; his sister continued on until her own death in 1960. The current owner purchased the house in 1964, after it had sat empty for four years. It is still a private, single-family residence.

**VALIANT BUILDING  
1822 Chestnut Street**

This store front on Chestnut Street is trimmed with outstanding polychrome architectural terra cotta. Surrounding the windows and doorway are realistically modeled fruit and black birds. Above the door is a large terra cotta roundel depicting a female personification of the arts.

**ROBERT MORRIS BUILDING  
1705 Arch Street, at the corner of 17th and Arch Streets**

The facade of this building is an impressive example of architectural terra cotta. Built in 1914-15, with additional floors added later in 1921-22, by the firm of Ballinger and Perrot, it was originally constructed as a hotel for the Methodist church. The architects chose cream-colored glazed terra cotta modeled in a flamboyant Gothic style. Bands of polychrome glazed terra cotta were used for the adjoining storefront on Arch Street.

**PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS  
118 North Broad Street, at Cherry Street**

Built from 1872 to 1876, the academy is the most outstanding example of Frank Furness's architecture and one of the most magnificent Victorian buildings in the United States. The polychrome surface of the exterior is a combination of pressed brick, carved brownstone and other ornamental materials, but not architectural terra cotta. Inside, the entry is paved with a fine English encaustic tile floor that was restored in 1976. Along the wainscot walls of the stair hall is a fine installation of blue and white tiles. In the academy's galleries are displayed all the great icons of American art. For access and further information, call (215) 972-7600.

**PACKARD MOTOR CAR BUILDING  
317-21 North Broad Street**

Originally built in 1910 by Detroit architect Albert Kahn as offices and showrooms for the Packard Motor Car Company, this white glazed, terra-cotta clad commercial structure was one of the earliest to use reinforced concrete. The showroom,

remodeled in 1927 by Philip Tyre, was lavishly designed with a beamed ceiling and a Spanish tile floor, now sadly hidden. In 1986 the building was converted into luxury apartments.

## **THE CURTIS BUILDING 6th and Walnut Streets**

The Curtis Building was designed by Philadelphia architect Edgar V. Seeler in 1910. Formerly home to the Curtis Publishing Company, which produced well-loved magazines like *Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Jack and Jill*, the building was renovated in 1990 by the firms Oldham and Seltz and John Milner Associates. It is now an office building called The Curtis Center.

In the building's impressive marble lobby, within the main doors opposite Independence Hall, can be found one of Philadelphia's most exquisite treasures: "The Dream Garden." Designed by Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966), whose illustrations often graced the covers of Curtis publications, and executed by Tiffany Studios of New York City, this "favrite" glass mosaic was completed and installed in 1916.

The following text was prepared by the Curtis Center as a descriptive label for "The Dream Garden" and can be found near the mosaic in the lobby:

"This 15' x 49' glass mosaic, an inspiring example of creative collaboration and artistic innovation on a grand scale, is one of only three such works of its kind ever undertaken by the famed Tiffany Studios, under the direction of Louis Comfort Tiffany. It was the last created and is generally considered to be the most beautiful.

"*Saturday Evening Post* publisher Cyrus Curtis and *Ladies' Home Journal* publisher Edward Bok believed that art belonged in public buildings where many people could enjoy it, and chose this sweeping wall space as the place for the crowning touch to the Curtis Publishing Company's magnificent new headquarters.

"The Dream Garden" originated as an oil painting commissioned of famed Philadelphia-born artist Maxfield Parrish, whose meticulous fantasies had long impressed Bok. In June 1914, Tiffany began the work of translating Parrish's vision of world without time, trouble, and tension, into the luminous beauty of this glass mosaic.

"The mosaic's images are rendered in 'favrite' glass following a complex hand-firing process developed by Tiffany to produce over 100,000 pieces of glass in

260 color tones. Most of the glass was set in 24 panels in Tiffany's New York studios. Installing the panels in this location took six months. The finished work was hailed by art critics as 'a veritable wonderpiece' at the official unveiling in 1916. The amazing variety of opaque, translucent, and transparent glass, entirely lighted from the lobby, achieves perspective effects that have never been duplicated.

"Protection of 'The Dream Garden' during the extensive renovations of 1985-1986 that transformed this historic building into The Curtis Center involved close cooperation among the developer, contractor, craftsmen, and art conservators from Philadelphia and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. As a result, 'The Dream Garden' continues to fulfill Tiffany's wish that 'it may stand in the years to come for a development in glass-making and its application to art.'"

Soon after its completion, Louis C. Tiffany himself commented on "The Dream Garden" in a brochure issued by the Curtis Publishing Company:

"In translating this painting so that its poetical and luminous idealism should find its way even to the comparatively uneducated eye, the medium used is of supreme importance, and it seemed impossible to secure the effect desired on canvas and with paint. In glass, however, selecting the lustrous, the transparent, the opaque and the opalescent, and each with its own texture, a result is secured which does illustrate the mystery, and it tells the story, giving play to imagination, which is the message it seeks to convey."

"As a matter of fact, it is practically a new art. Never before has it been possible to give the perspective in mosaics as it is shown in this picture, and the most remarkable and beautiful effect is secured when different lights play upon this completed mosaic."

"It will be found that the mountains recede, the trees and foliage stand out distinctly, and, as the light changes, the purple shadows will creep slowly from the base of the mountain to its top; the canyons and the waterfalls, the thickets and the flowers, all tell their story and interpret Mr. Parrish's dream."

"I trust it may stand in the years to come for a development in glass-making and its application to art which will give to students a feeling that in this year of nineteen hundred and fifteen [sic] something worthy has been produced for the benefit of mankind, and that it may serve as an incentive to others to carry even farther the true mission of the mosaic."