

Prominent Village Architects



WILLIAM AUGUSTUS BATES

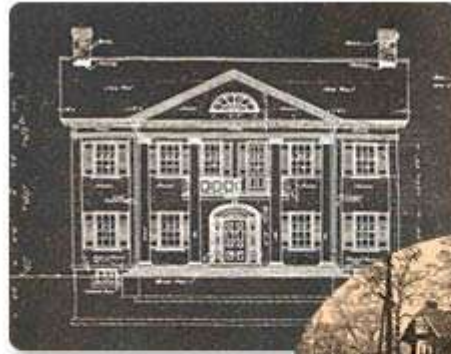
William Bates, Bronxville's earliest architect of renown, is best known for his role in the creation of Lawrence Park, Bronxville's turn-of-the-century artists' colony.

Bates was brought to Bronxville by William Lawrence in the 1890s to help with the creation of Lawrence's "model suburb" and to design a house for Elizabeth Custer, the widow of General George Custer. The historic home on Park Avenue is typical of Bates' architectural style in the Park, and exemplifies the naturalistic approach to development that was envisioned by Lawrence.



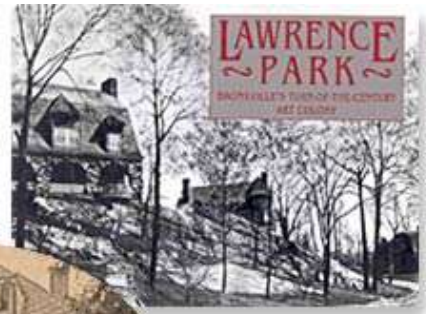
His meandering, simply detailed yet substantial homes were planted into the rocky terrain. The Century Association best described this in a memorial to Bates: "In his country houses... his buildings were so admirably adjusted to their surroundings as perhaps to symbolize the grace and harmony of his own unspoken meditations."

From Monroe, Michigan, Bates studied architecture in the offices of Herter Brothers in New York City. Though his taste was eclectic, the Lawrence Park houses Bates designed before 1905 reflect his enthusiasm for Shingle Style design. Bates' three decades of design also produced Georgian, English Manor, Colonial, Spanish Mission and, occasionally, Arts & Crafts houses.



To optimize natural light, Bates ensured the majority of living spaces faced south, with east-west arrangements planned according to their use during the day...the living room and entertainment space were often on the southwest side, where the setting sun would add a gentle glow to the evening's activities. Interiors were organized in a rational and generally efficient manner with grouped windows in a combination of sizes, styles and shapes to provide a pleasing pattern and ample daylight, main staircases descending in a central entry hall, and bedrooms of almost luxuriant size. One of the most typical motifs that recurs in Bates' Lawrence Park houses is a rounded or octagonal form used for a bay, turret or tower.

At least 35 of Bates' homes are still standing in Bronxville's historic district. Many can be seen in the book, "Lawrence Park, Bronxville's Turn-of-the-Century Art Colony." While Lawrence commissioned much of his Bronxville work, Bates frequently drew plans for individual homeowners as well.



This architect was also responsible for several important early Village landmarks: the Gramatan Inn, the Hotel Gramatan, the Casino social club, the 1906 Village Hall and the 1906 Village school. "Westlands," the mansion Bates built as a home for Sarah and William Lawrence in Lawrence Park West, is now the administration building of Sarah Lawrence College.

Around 1910 Kenneth G. How joined Bates' New York City office. In the mid-1910s, the firm designed Bronxville's early community house groups, a multifamily-living concept imported from England and virtually unknown at the time in this country. Most of the early apartment houses in the Village were also Bates' & How's work.



Although Bates owned Village land jointly with his brother Charles and made Bronxville his home, he never married nor designed a house for himself. By his 1922 death, his Bronxville legacy included more than 50 private homes, more than a half-dozen community house groups and several large apartment houses.

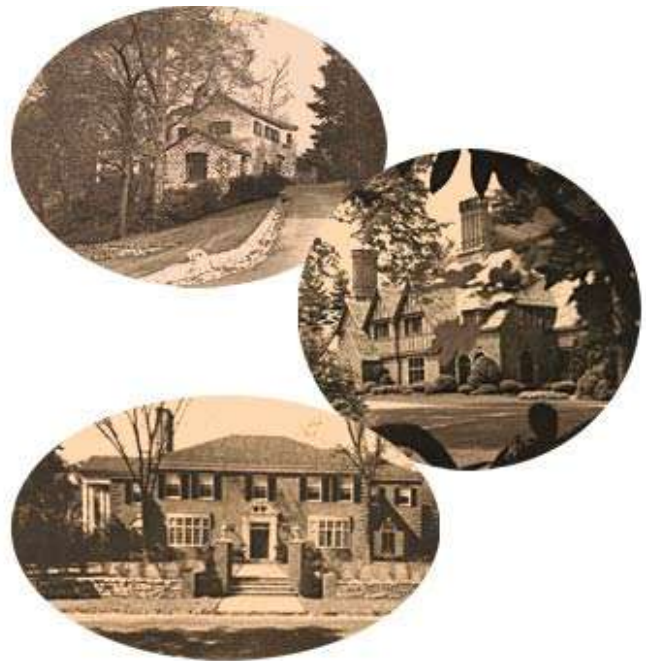


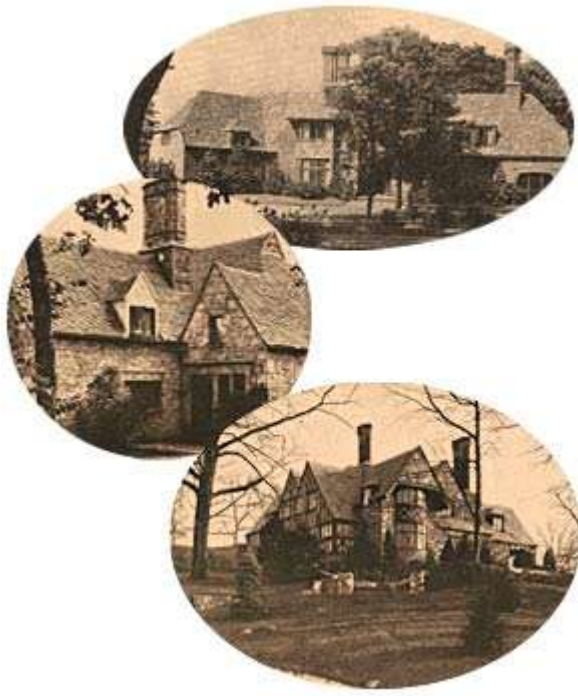


CHARLES LEWIS BOWMAN

Lewis Bowman was a widely respected local architect who created architecturally grand and extravagant houses. Born in New York City in 1890, he came of age in Mount Vernon, went away to Ithaca where he determined his life's work at the Cornell University School of Architecture and eventually returned to Bronxville to reside, practice and raise a family. With his passion for Westchester County's rocky terrain and ancient woods, Bowman profoundly influenced Bronxville during the decade of its greatest growth.

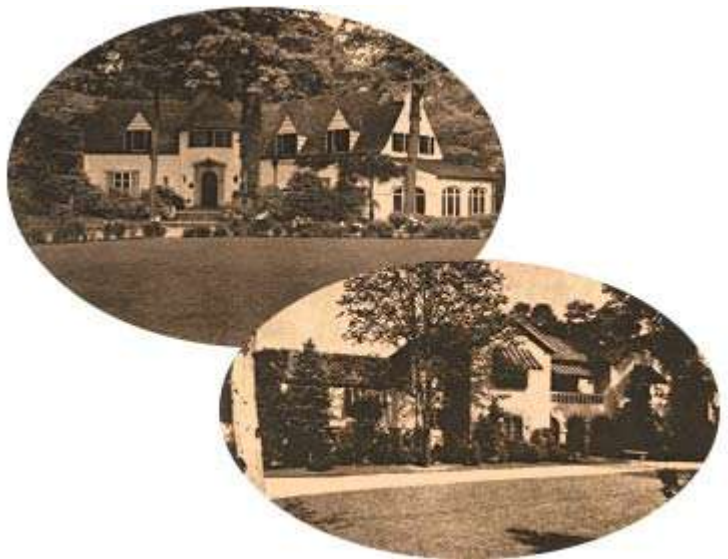
Although his earliest work was in Mount Vernon, and his grandest houses were constructed elsewhere, Bowman is most closely associated with Bronxville. His presence made a big difference for this small village, for Lewis Bowman conjured up the elegant atmosphere of some of its loveliest streets and landscapes. He nestled half-timbered estates between granite precipices, where they could be glimpsed just beyond boxwood hedges and pillars. His stately Georgian edifices of luminous Belgian brick arose among stands of tall oaks and tulip trees, and his perfectly proportioned Colonial mansions stood back from winding roads across broad lawns.





A stroll through Bronxville neighborhoods reveals his English architectural roots with Jacobean designs displaying steep slate roofs, rich with stone or brickwork, timbering, leaded glass windows and clustered chimneys. His Cotswald Cottages boasted stone construction, usually quarried from the site, clay tile roofs, asymmetry, and somewhat austere aspects. One might come upon a stockbroker Tudor with its multi-layered planes of facade and complex rooflines usually broken by two strong vertical lines of the chimneys.

A master at his craft, Bowman also was known to design his homes in accordance with the wishes of its proposed owner. He created a French style home with unusual rich white painted textured brick and classic limestone surrounding the door. In addition, he designed Mediterraneans which displayed Spanish tile roofs, arched entrances and stucco exteriors.





If you venture into a Bowman house you see interiors with a stylistic mix of design depending upon the layout of the home. His vast living rooms often display oak paneling, exposed structural timbers, textured stucco and limestone fireplaces. Stair halls often contained these fireplaces as well as oak paneled walls and rough-adzed beams and massive balusters. Walls are adorned with carved crown and doorway moldings and ceilings often contain elaborate plaster reliefs.

Bowman left his mark on Bronxville, designing 53 homes, all but one of which survive today. He was a suburban architect whose work was prominently featured in architectural journals of the time. He was masterful in his use of building materials and his houses are an architectural wonder whether you view them from the street or the yard. The homes he designed feel, not merely important but abiding, a gift which remains with Bronxville today.



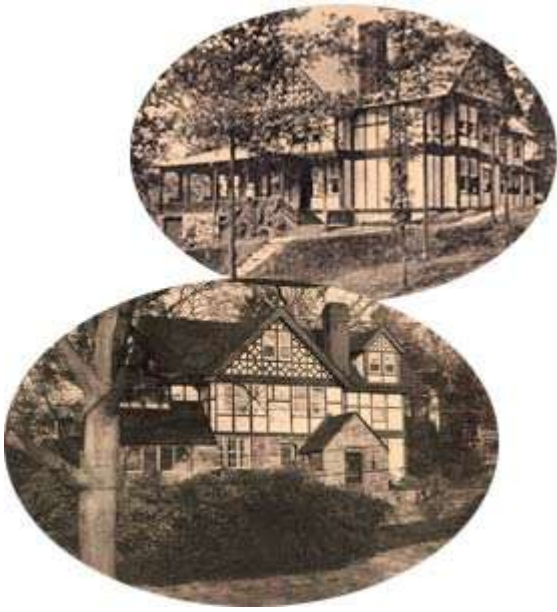


PENROSE STOUT

Penrose Stout lived and did most of his work on Bronxville from 1919 until he died suddenly of a heart attack in 1934 at the age of 47. He was born in Montgomery, Alabama and graduated from Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University in 1909 with a degree in architecture. He worked in Florida and New York before enlisting in the Air Corps in 1917. He saw service in France during World War I and was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for bravery. Following his 1919 discharge, Stout moved to Bronxville to Crow's Nest, the home of his cousin Frank Chambers. In 1921 he married Lucia Meigs, granddaughter of William Lawrence.

For a time Stout worked in New York for Harry Lindeberg, a prominent architect of country estates. His first commissions in Bronxville were from his wife's aunt, Anna Lawrence Bisland. Working for the Lawrence family, Stout began extensive renovations on the Manor House and gardens at 8 Prescott Avenue, the 1850s, Italianate-style home on Prescott Farm that Lawrence purchased and used originally as temporary living quarters for people whose homes were being built in the Park.





Another house in the heart of the original Lawrence Park on which Stout made a major mark is at 29 Prescott Avenue, originally designed around 1894 by William Bates. In 1929 the interior was gutted and completely redesigned by Stout. Floors were added, rooms were rearranged, a new front entrance with stonework was built and a stone terrace was added. Exterior balconies on the second floor were removed to enlarge the bedrooms. It virtually became a new home.

In 1924, Stout designed Merestone Terrace, eleven English-style townhouses within Lawrence Park on Prescott Avenue, opposite the driveway entrance to the Hotel Gramatan. Around this time Stout also designed, Park Avenue Terrace, a Mediterranean style residence community with straight walled exteriors and red tiled roofs.



Two years later Stout substantially enlarged the Gate House at the foot of Valley Road, which since 1912 had been used to manage the Lawrence family businesses. And, sometime in the early 1930's Stout designed Meadow Gardens, a group of colonial style, seven room, three bath units.

Stout went on to design many distinctive houses, including his own home on Midland Avenue near the Bronxville Women's Club, also his work. Perhaps the best Bronxville example of his work is the Germantown Colonial Style house he designed for Arthur and Virginia Lawrence in Lawrence Park West; it now belongs to Sarah Lawrence College and is known as Andrews House.

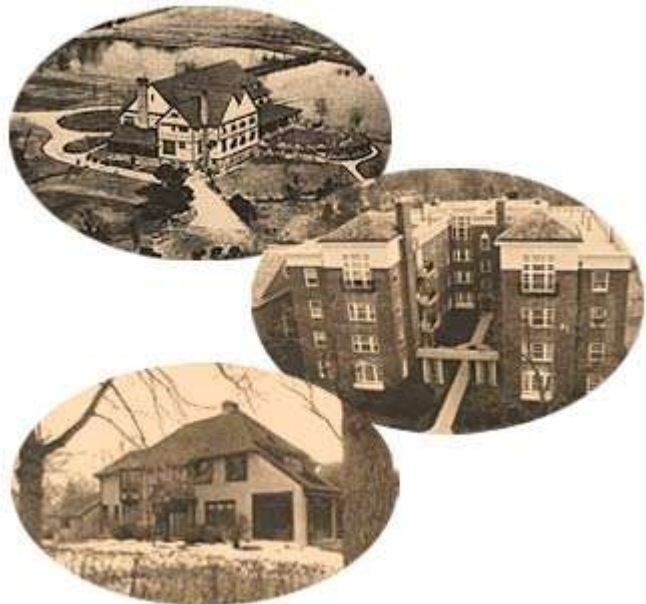




HARRY LESLIE WALKER

Harry Leslie Walker was an architect who changed the face of central Bronxville during the formative boom years between 1913 and 1942. He began his life in 1877 in the small town of Oak Park, Illinois, nine miles west of Chicago where he was exposed to the work of some of the greatest American architects of the period. A series of teenage jobs in architectural offices, including a brief stint in Frank Lloyd Wright's, reinforced Walker's artistic talents. After training at the Armour Institute of Technology and the Chicago Art Institute, Walker received his BS degree in 1900 from M.I.T.

The young architect spent almost a decade in Atlanta, Georgia, designing notable public buildings before moving his practice to New York and his home to Meadowdale in Bronxville in 1910. By 1914 he had built the Pondfield Court apartments and was soon to design private homes for his friend, horticulturist Herbert Durand, and for himself at 25 and 21 Sycamore Street, respectively. In 1918 he designed and built an English-style country house at 30 Elm Rock Road, set among gardens, where he resided for the rest of his life.



Walker designed three of the four prominent structures enhancing the beauty of Bronxville's "Four Corners". First Bronxville's school, then the Reformed Church and finally the Library on the corners of Pondfield and Midland Roads, creating a significant civic square.

For the Bronxville School, Walker designed two separate but similar brick buildings in a graceful collegiate-Gothic style in collaboration with the firm of Guilbert and Betelle. The elementary and high schools were completed in 1924, and by 1930, the two buildings were successfully linked with the majestic central section, also designed by Walker.



Across Pondfield, Walker's designs for the Norman-Gothic stone Reformed Church edifice were executed during 1925-1926. When the 1906 village hall-library complex near the train station became outmoded, it was Walker who produced the handsome Georgian-style brick library across from architect Randolph Evan's stately new Village Hall both dedicated in 1942.

Locally, Walker was an early member of the Planning Commission, which drew up the first Village zoning laws, and for years served as the advisory architect. From his New York City offices, Walker became nationally known for versatile plans for hospitals, schools, banks, clubs, offices and private homes. As a matter of fact Bronxville's original Gramatan National Bank building designed by Walker survives today as the Bank of New York on Kraft Avenue.

