

Ellwanger and Barry Nursery Office
668 Mt. Hope Avenue
Rochester
Monroe County
New York

HABS No. NY-5650

HABS
NY,
28-ROCH,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Location: 668 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, Monroe County,
New York

Present Owner
and Occupant: The University of Rochester, River Campus Station,
Rochester, New York

Present Use: Offices of University plant

Statement of
Significance: This adaptation of a residential form in the Gothic
Revival style for use as an office for a nursery
illustrates the preference of the romantic and
picturesque qualities found in landscape gardening
at mid-century. The Ellwanger and Barry Office is
located in the Mt. Hope-Highland Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1854.
2. Architect: Built from plans by Alexander Jackson Davis.
3. Original and subsequent owners: "the north part of lot
18 in the town of Brighton, bounded as follows: on the
north by the boundary of said lot; on the east by the
boundary of said lot; on the south by lands belonging to
Lyman Munger; and on the west by Henrietta Road."

1839 Deed, March 20, 1839, Book 46, p. 474.
From: Harvey Gilman and Nancy, his wife.
To: George Ellwanger and Thomas Rogers.
For: \$1,900.00.

1840 Deed, May 5, 1840, Book 50, p. 391.
From: Thomas Rogers.
To: George Ellwanger.
For: \$6,000.00.
His half share of the above described property.

1840 Deed, July 6, 1840, Book 57, p. 102.
From: George Ellwanger.
To: Patrick Barry.
For: \$1,000.00.
An equal one half share of the above described property.

- 1900 Deed, August 14, 1900, Book 630, p. 403.
From: George Ellwanger and Cornelia B., his wife,
Harriet H. Barry, William C. Barry and Minnie
Y., his wife, Charles P. Barry and Julia W.,
his wife, Harriet E. Barry Liesching, John H.
Barry and Grace H., his wife, all being the
widow, devisees and only heirs at law of the
estate of Patrick Barry, deceased.
To: Ellwanger and Barry Nursery Company.
For: \$1.00.
The above described property, not including the
Patrick Barry homestead.
- 1918 Deed, July 30, 1918, Book 1039, p. 332.
From: Ellwanger and Barry (name changed from
Ellwanger and Barry Nursery Company on
November 26, 1900) and its directors,
Frederic G. Barry, William C. Barry, Arthur W.
Barry, Bernhard Liesching, Laura S. Ellwanger,
and Charles J. Maloy.
To: Ellwanger and Barry Realty Company.
For: \$1.00.
\$22.00 in stamps. A parcel of land in lot 18
bounded thus: on the west by the center line of Mt.
Hope Avenue; on the north by the north line of lot 18;
on the east by the center line of South Avenue; and on
the south by properties previously conveyed to
Patrick Barry and Lyman Mumford.
- 1963 Deed, August 19, 1963, Book 3501, p. 326.
From: Ellwanger and Barry Realty Company.
To: The University of Rochester.
For: \$50,000.00.
\$55.00 in stamps. Parcels in lots 17 and 18, including
the parcel on which the office is located.
4. Builder or contractor: Unknown, but Ellwanger and Barry
were probably their own contractors.
 5. Original plans: None known.
 6. Alterations and additions: A rather large screened and
gabled addition was joined to the east side. The entrance
was changed from the west side to the north side with the
addition of a five-sided projecting porch. This work was
done about 1890.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

When the building was constructed, the firm of Ellwanger and Barry was the largest nursery establishment in the world. There were over 30,000 square feet of greenhouses, employing about 200 men. Travelling salesmen and office help were in addition to this figure. Following the opening of Japan to trading with the West, the firm received an unlimited order from Japan for a selection of specimens to be chosen by the partners, primarily Barry, the horticulturist. Ellwanger appears to have been the businessman of the partnership. Both men were prominent in business and community affairs, serving on bank boards and in elective offices. Barry was elected as the alderman of the 12th Ward in 1860. Both partners lived adjacent to the nursery. All Ellwanger property was located on the west side of Mt. Hope Avenue. All Barry houses were on the east side of the street.

It is interesting to note that Ellwanger and Barry selected the design by Davis, one of America's proponents of the Gothic Revival and collaborator with A. J. Downing in The Architecture of Country Houses, first published in 1850. Downing, a nurseryman in Newburgh, New York, published several books, A Treatise on the Theory and Practise of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America (1841), and The Fruits and Fruit Trees of North America (1845). In 1846, he began publication of The Horticulturist, to which Patrick Barry also contributed.

Included with the Mt. Hope-Highland Historic District are four Gothic Revival cottages built by Ellwanger and Barry for employees between 1855 and 1868.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: "Bird's Eye View of Mt. Hope Nurseries," from Moore's Rural New Yorker, vol. XXII, No. 17, Oct. 22, 1870. The office is shown with entrance to the north, with flanking pointed arched windows, one each side. Therefore, either the entrance was never changed from the west side, or the date of alteration is incorrect.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed books, Office of Monroe County Clerk.

Dockets of Incorporation, Office of Monroe County Clerk.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Card, Marian. "Ellwanger and Barry Office."
Genesee County Scrapbook, Vol. IV, Rochester
Historical Society, 1953.

McIntosh, Prof. W. H. History of Monroe County,
New York. Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign and Everts,
1877.

Prepared by Kevin Patrick Harrington
Society for the Preser-
vation of Landmarks in
Western New York.
December 9, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The small cottage with simplified picturesque Gothic Revival details was conceived as part of the extensive nursery landscape surrounding it.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Thirty-two feet by thirty-nine feet; originally three-bay entrance facade; two story; originally T-shape plan with three-story tower at southwest crossing.
2. Foundations: Lightly dressed limestone foundation is slightly elevated and topped with a narrow limestone drip course.
3. Wall construction: The brick walls of the original structure were stuccoed and scored to resemble dressed stonework. The scoring has not been continued with major repair work to the stucco. The c. 1890 addition is brick. A small flat unadorned shield is located above the tower. A more elaborate sculpted shield is centered above the first floor window at the south end of the west facade.
4. Structural system: Masonry walls are load bearing.
5. Chimneys: A large brick chimney with three brick chimney pots rises through the east-west ridge of the original portion of the structure.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The original entrance on the west is composed of glazed diamond pattern double leaf panels with three-part toplight, all set in a slightly inflected arch. The north entrance doorway is set in a five-sided bay entrance porch. The double leaf door is similar to that on the west. At present, an inaccessible door is apparent on the south side of the tower. A screen door is set in a pointed arched doorway.
 - b. Windows: All windows in the original portion are glazed in a diamond pattern. The original doorway is flanked by narrow double hung lancet windows. In the second story, the lancet windows flank an arched French casement window, above which is located a small round window glazed in a quatrefoil pattern. All arched windows have deeply molded sides. All other first floor windows in the original portion are paired narrow double hung diamond glazed sashes set in deeply molded frames. A three bay oriel window set with more elaborate diamond patterned glazed casement windows is located on the second floor, south facade. The square tower has narrow lancet windows at each level of the stairway. Three round windows mark the third floor of the tower. All windows of the eastern addition are narrow paired double hung windows with single light sashes. The second floor window of the north facade has an arched glazed toplight.
7. Roof: The steeply pitched asbestos shingled roof is finished with screen gables which are topped with metal and stone coping. A skylight is located on the east-west ridge of the original portion of the structure. Molded eaves are finished with wooden troughs. The square tower is capped with a deeply molded belt course above which rises a battlement.
8. Porches, stoops: The five-sided north entrance porch consists of solid panels flanking the door with flanking narrow, double hung, diamond glazed windows. Four stone steps provide access to this slightly elevated porch. A bulkhead is located at the south side of the last addition.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The north entrance opens into the reception area which runs parallel to the original west facade and includes the first floor of the tower. Access is provided to a meeting room in the south wing and the center L-shaped office. A bath and small office are located in the southeast and northeast corners respectively. The room arrangement is similar in the upper story. The basement has been remodeled for additional office space.
2. Stairways: The main, enclosed stairway is located along the north wall, to the east of the entrance. A single flight of stairs to the east of the meeting room leads to the basement. A narrow spiral staircase in the tower extends from the second floor to the top.
3. Flooring: All floors are natural oak. The reception area is carpeted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are painted. The second floor office, located in the south wing, has a beamed and vaulted ceiling.
5. Doorways and doors: There are some four panel doors and some contemporary doors, all painted white and set in simply molded doorways. A three-and-one-half foot high walnut door opens to the tower.
6. Special decorative features: Windows have interior paneled shutters, some painted and some natural. The reception room has a white marble fireplace with small cartouche. The meeting room has a deep rose marble fireplace with two consoles and a cartouche.
7. Hardware: Nothing of note.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Radiators.
 - b. Lighting: No original fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The office originally faced west toward Mt. Hope Avenue. The structure is set back a short distance from the street. A low stone wall at the street is fitted with a cast iron railing.

This is a continuation of the fencing and post arrangement of the Patrick Barry House (HABS No. NY-5651) which is immediately adjacent to the south.

2. Historic landscape design: The structure is set in the original arboretum of the Ellwanger and Barry Nursery. Thus, it is surrounded by large and rare plantings. The adjoining Highland Park was formed from a gift of twenty acres from Ellwanger and Barry to the city in 1887.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: Stone walks lead from the north entrance to the street, the driveway, and around the office to the east.

Prepared by Amy Hecker
Society For the Pre-
servation of Land-
marks in Western New
York
March, 1973

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project of twenty-six selections of historical and architecturally significant Rochester structures was undertaken in 1966, by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc., Mrs. Patrick Harrington, Executive Director, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, James C. Massey, Chief. The project was under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Senior Historian. Architectural and historical descriptions were contributed by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc. General photographic documentation was undertaken by Hans Padelt, Senior Engineer, Graflex, on a contractual basis with the Historic American Buildings Survey. The final documentation and editing was done by Susan R. Slade in 1978, for transmittal to the Library of Congress and the impending publication of the Historic American Buildings Survey New York State catalogue.