

THE GOTHIC
102 South High Street and 52-58 East Mill Street
Akron
Summit County
Ohio

HABS OH-2484
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
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THE GOTHIC

HABS No. OH-2484

Location: 102 South High Street and 52-58 East Mill Street, Akron, Summit County, Ohio

The coordinates for the Gothic Building are lat: 41.082143 and long: -81.516992, and they were obtained through Google Earth in January 2012 with WGS84 datum. There is no restriction on the release of the location data to the public.

Significance: Built in 1902 in downtown Akron, the Gothic represents the emergence of Tudor Revival architectural styles and the multi-family residential structure during the early twentieth century. The Gothic retains its original form, general plan and Tudor Revival architectural character as designed by prolific local architect Frank O. Weary.

Description: The Gothic is a four-story brick masonry former apartment/commercial structure located on a corner site in the Akron central business district. The exterior walls have a quoin pattern of yellow and orange glazed brick facing.

The building is rectangular in plan, four bays wide on its north elevation, and three bays wide on its east elevation. Both street façades, and the upper portion of the west façade, feature patterned yellow and orange brickwork and an arcade at the ground floor of Tudor arched openings. Each arch is formed of header bricks with a sandstone keystone. The fourth floor, on both the north and east facades, is separated from the lower floors by a yellow brick belt course. The now exposed south elevation is unornamented painted brick; originally the Gothic shared this party wall with the Colonial Theater's auditorium.

The door opening to access the upper floor apartments is located off-center on the east façade facing South High Street. This wide Tudor arch of brick and sandstone frames the recessed entrance. A corbelled Gothic arch frames the Gothic arch door. The single door entrance door is of solid wood. In addition to the Tudor arch openings on the first floor of the north and east elevations, Tudor arch windows appear on the fourth floor of the north, east, and west elevations. The upper sash of these windows is pointed with curved muntins. The second and third floor street façades have rectangular window openings, some with three-part Chicago-style sash.

The roof of the building is hipped in form and features a shed form skylight set against the south parapet wall. Today the long-missing skylight has been replaced with a modern insulated translucent panel system of the same size and pitch of the original skylight.

Interior materials include plaster on wood lath covering the walls and ceilings. Due to a neglected roof leak, much of the upper floor plaster has deteriorated. Many of the interior doors are extant. These are five panel wood doors with transoms. Wood trim around most of the doors and windows is of simply cut boards with a decorative backband. Floors throughout are wood boards. A few of the former dining rooms and parlors feature ghosts and fragments of low relief plaster or composition ornament on the ceilings.

There is evidence of flues for fireplaces or stoves in a few rooms. A few of the suites were altered by the addition of arched openings and removal of partitions to accommodate later commercial uses such as doctor's offices.

History: At the turn of the twentieth century, the city of Akron became the center of tremendous growth in the rubber industry, due to the growth of local firms Goodyear and Firestone. Akron became the rubber capital of the world and the population grew from 50,000 residents in 1904 to 200,000 in 1920.

In 1901, the Akron Realty Company sold the corner lot at South High and East Mill Streets to Jennie A. Dobson and Grace B. McIntosh for \$6,000. The deed specified architectural guidelines for the future structure to be built on the site. "It is agreed that grantees shall erect on said land a brick building with a front harmonious and in substantial conformity with the Mill Street front of the Colonial Theatre and that same shall be finished by October 1, 1902." The lead developer of the theatre, W.W. McIntosh, of the Akron Realty Co. was also directly involved with the upcoming Gothic Building.

Jennie A. Dobson was the wife of Russell T. Dobson, who was the part owner of the *Akron Democrat* and sole owner of the *Beacon Journal Company* at that time. Grace B. McIntosh was the wife of William McIntosh, the Secretary of the Banker's Securities Co and General Manager of the Akron Realty Co. who owned the property by using his wife's name on the deed. Dobson and McIntosh were among the first group of developers responding to the changing economy, the new transportation opportunities, and the housing demands for the middle class in the changing urban landscape. The introduction of middle class multifamily housing was visible across the big cities in the nation replacing the tenements and boarding houses of the nineteenth century.

On Saturday, December 28, 1901, the *Akron Beacon Journal* published an article describing project: "The building will be four stories in height and will be modern in every particular, the entire cost being \$15,000. There will be four store rooms on Mill Street and each of the three floors above will have two suites of apartments, making six in all." The architect, Frank O. Weary, was a prolific and experienced local designer. Weary was born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin in 1849 and moved to Akron with his parents in 1851. His father, Simon B. Weary, was a carpenter by trade and established a planing mill, lumber and general building business. Frank O. Weary began to study architecture as an apprentice in the

office of Heard & Blythe in Cleveland before moving to Boston, Massachusetts to complete his training. Weary later moved to Chicago to work on the reconstruction of the city after the Great Fire of 1871. In 1875, he returned to Akron and was given the commission for the Akron Rural Cemetery (Glendale Cemetery Group) Memorial Chapel, a Gothic Revival style structure.

In 1885, Weary entered into partnership with architect George W. Kramer. While in partnership with Kramer, Weary's commissions included the Carroll County Courthouse (1885), Hancock County Courthouse (1886), Akron (Central) High School (1886) and Akron Savings Bank (1891). The firm designed numerous churches, in addition to courthouses, schools and jail structures in Ohio, California, Colorado, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Alabama, and New York.

Weary served as the architect for Oberlin College, and designed from 1886 to 1892, Talcott Hall, Peters Hall, Baldwin Cottage and Shurtleff Cottage, all of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Other commissions that followed included Buchtel Hall at the University of Akron (1900), Miller School (1900), Lane School (1902), Fraunfelter School (1904) and the Carnegie Free Library (1903-1904). Like other architects whose careers spanned the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Frank O. Weary's work exhibited a variety of popular architectural modes from High Victorian to Neoclassical to the Tudor Revival used for this apartment building.

During construction the building name was changed to the Gothic, as reflected in the tiled floor of the apartment entrance lobby and the listing in the 1903 City Directory. McIntosh owned the Gothic until 1940. Commercial activity continued on the first floor and the apartments above slowly were converted to commercial functions such as doctor's offices.

Sources:

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Summit County Administration Building. Deeds.

Historians: Chambers, Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects, Ltd, Yolita E. Rausche, Lauren Pinney Burge, Michael R. Sanbury, Ashley N. Cramer, Elizabeth Corbin Murphy.

Project

Information: The Project documentation was performed by Michael R. Sanbury and Ashley N. Cramer of Chambers, Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects, Ltd. Photographs and prior documentation provided by Chambers, Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects, Ltd. and Alan Burge Architecture.