

ENGLISH VILLAGE
Loves Lane and Arthur's Round Table Circle
Wynnewood
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-6017

HABS
PA
46-WYNN,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 9719
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ENGLISH VILLAGE

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Location: Loves Lane & Arthurs Round Table, Wynnewood, Montgomery Co., Pennsylvania.

Significance: The English Village is an example of a planned early twentieth century middle class development which achieves its character through its replication of English country architectural and landscape designs.

Description: English Village is an early twentieth century development of Tudor Revival houses built in an irregular pattern along two serpentine, streets. The development includes approximately thirty-two housing units. There are almost an equal number of single and double houses, with the single houses concentrated along Loves Lane. The houses are set close to the street to replicate an "English Village" appearance. Great emphasis was placed on allowing the materials to display their own natural color and texture, and each of the homes was placed to catch the morning sun. The lots are approximately 6,000 - 8,000 square feet and have landscapes featuring flagstone and brick paths and driveways, iron light posts, unusual gates and a variety of fencing.

The houses are two stories built of wood, stone and brick in a variety of asymmetrical plans. The double houses consist of two L-shaped units placed together with a shared center courtyard used either as a yard or a driveway. The houses have gable fronts with half-timbering executed with hand-hewn lumber of unusual shape. The roofs originally had wood shingles, although most have been replaced by asphalt shingles. The chimneys are brick and stone or just brick, many with corbelled brick chimney caps. Most windows are leaded casement with patterns based on a variation of rectangular or diamond-shaped lights and sometimes made of hand-blown or colored glass. Many houses feature bay windows with fixed multi-light leaded glass sash. Gable and shed dormers exist along the steeply pitched cross-gabled roofs sometimes with jerkin heads. The entrances generally consist of arched stone door surrounds with heavy batten doors.

On the interior, the English country aesthetic is achieved through features such as rough-cast stucco walls, low ceilings hand-hewn stained beams, wide random-width oak floorboards (built over tongue and groove pine), board-and-batten doors with iron hinges and stone chimneys. The vestibule floors are covered with Mercer tiles (Moravian Tile Works, Doylestown, PA.) in varying designs. The balusters are sawn in distinctive heavy patterns, likely fashioned after those in English cottages. The homes originally featured a built-in Welsh cupboard in the dining room and multi-light French doors leading to a terrace.

History: The English Village is a development of houses patterned after the English country style. The homes were designed by architect S. Arthur Love and built by his brother, Donald Love. The first house, a twin style, was completed in the winter of 1925. The others were finished by 1928. The enclave recreates the provincial allure of the cottages in the Cotswold region of England. It also reflects reformers idea about the role of the home as a place of tranquility, a refuge away from the chaos and pressure of one's daily life.

When initially built, it received widespread acclaim for its faithful representation of an English country village. The authenticity of detail in the English Village houses probably derives from first hand observations; according to newspaper accounts and owner histories, Donald Love was stationed in Shropshire, England during World War I and made sketches of a number of dwellings that aroused his admiration. It is also documented that after graduating from architectural school, S. Arthur Love spent a year traveling in Europe and likely spent time in England. In addition, some of the materials, such as the leaded casement windows, were imported from England. They also made use of old brick, timber from early barns, and even railroad ties, which helped the houses appear appropriately weathered.

The houses originally sold for around \$28,000 - \$38,000. However, during the Great Depression, many people lost their homes and several houses became rental units. The neighborhood recovered quickly and the homes soon returned to owner-occupied dwellings. Since that time, occupants have remained enthusiastically loyal to the English Village community.

According to a longtime resident, the quiet streets and strong sense of community in the English Village attract persons of varied professions from throughout the Delaware Valley. This initially included the Love brothers. In addition, its novel concept seems to have appealed to a considerable number of artists, sculptors and writers who have made the English Village their home. The original exteriors features of the houses have remained largely intact. However, several owners have chosen to turn their garages into living space. Also, the Township removed the old-fashioned lamps that originally lined the streets because they no longer provide public lighting to this area.

S. Arthur Love (1890-?) was born in Philadelphia and received a B.S. in architecture in 1912 and a M.S. in 1913 from the University of Pennsylvania. He is listed as a architect in the Philadelphia city directories from 1914-1918 and again from 1926-30, however few of his designs are known. The Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects lists only two residences, a loft building, a garage and a few additions and alterations.

Sources:

"Artists and Literari Live in Quiet Enclave." (Article provided by Robert DeSilets with no source or date).

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Davie, W. Galsworthy. Old Cottages, Farmhouses and Other Stone Buildings n the Cotswold District. London: B.T. Batsford, 1905.

Fox, P. "Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form: English Village." December 1988.

Gowans, Alan. The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture. Cambridge, MA: Mit Press, 1987. (Chapter Eight: Medieval Revival Styles).

Hazlett and Moss. Records # 1726, Plan Book No. 11 beginning June 1, 1926, Pages 158-170. Hazlett and Moss was a Philadelphia real estate, mortgage, insurance, and trust estate agency that managed financing for the construction of residential developments in the city and suburbs. Included in Plan Book No. 11 are thirteen drawings of an English Village double house. They include a site plan, cellar floor plan showing first floor framing, cellar plan, first and second floor plans, front, side and rear elevations, section through the living room, section through the garage, revised rear elevation, and revised plan of the first floor kitchen and maids room.

Jackson, Allen W. The Half-Timber House: Its Origin, Design, Modern Plan and Construction. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1919.

Lower Merion Township. Building Permit # 3408 with Plan # 1343 dated March 26, 1925 and Permit # 4199 with Plan # 1687 dated November 19, 1925. These appear to be the original building permits. Unfortunately, the Township no longer has copies of the plans.

Reiley, Gene. Interview with HABS Historian. Mr. Reiley bought his house at 8 English Village (413 Arthurs Round Table) in 1939 and moved in 1940. He has lived there ever since. Mr. Reiley first discovered the English Village when he was an appraiser for the Home Owners Loan Corporation during the Great Depression. The interview provided invaluable information about the history and architecture of the enclave.

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Tatman, Sandra L. and Roger W. Moss. Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985, p. 492.

Historian: Janet G. Blutstein, HABS Historian, 1994.