

PRESERVATION MATTERS

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 27

MAY-JUNE 2007

NUMBER 3

Historic Building Art Contest

The City of Urbana's Historic Preservation Commission recently hosted an art show and contest about historic preservation for local high school students during Preservation Month. Original student artwork and essays were displayed May 15th through 27th at National Register-listed Lincoln Square Village. Judges with backgrounds in architecture, historic preservation, and art, reviewed all fifty submissions and selected first, second and third place winners.

This project aimed to develop an interest in historic buildings and historic preservation in Urbana through artistic expression. High school students at Urbana High School and University High School submitted an artistic representation of a historic building accompanied by a short essay describing the building's history.

This project was made possible by the following sponsors: Art Coop, Busey Bank, Cinema Gallery, International Galleries, the Preservation and Conservation Association, the Urbana Business Association, the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission, Lincoln Square Village, and the City of Urbana.

Mumford House Lilli Pearson, first place

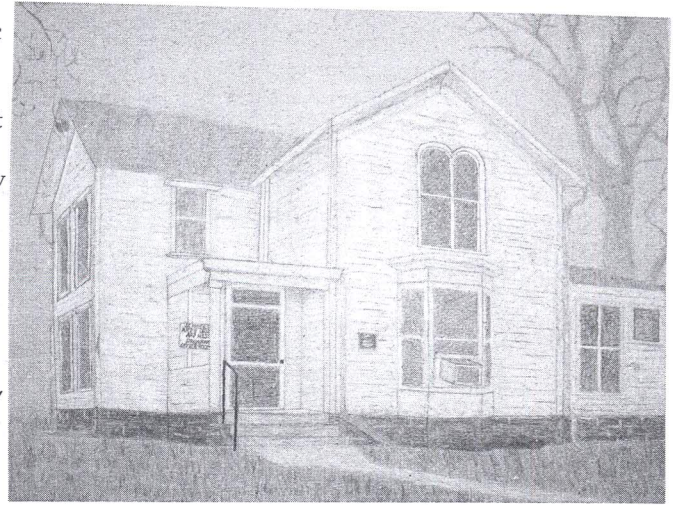
In the middle of the superbuildings of the University of Illinois campus, there is a small, white farmhouse that is distinctly out of place. Mumford House, the building in question, is located at 1403 West Laredo Taft Drive in Urbana. The house is owned by the University of Illinois, and was formerly occupied by the art history department. It is now vacant.

Mumford House, built in 1870, is the oldest existing building on the U of I campus. It was built to be a model farm house,

showing simple, domestic architecture in the Victorian Gothic style. Mumford House only cost \$2500 at the time it was built. An 1870-71 report by university trustees elaborated on the features that made Mumford House so unique. The front hall of the "Farm House," as it was originally named, allowed entry to the office, parlor, and the kitchen. The convenience of the traffic flow was novel in 1870 farmhouses and has only received attention in more recent years. Other innovative features of the house were its office and its closet space for storage.

Mumford House was used as the residence of the dean of the College of Agriculture until 1939, and housed many influential figures. The first dean to occupy the house was Thomas J. Burrill, who is today recognized as the father of plant pathology, among many other things. Professor George Morrow was another resident. The university's experimental soil plots are named after him. The Morrow Plots are the oldest of their kind in America. Herbert W. Mumford was the last dean to live in Mumford House, and the home still bears his name. Mumford House later became headquarters for the Small Homes Council/Building Research Council, until the art history department began using the building in 1971.

Lisa Lipinski, a graduate student in art history, prepared an application for Mumford House to be added to the National Register of Historic Places. The application was accepted in September of 1989. Mumford House now has a plaque declaring its status. Lipinski said that it is unknown who designed the house, but that it was built by a university carpenter.



Mumford House - First Place composition by Lilli Pearson

Mumford House is a building full of history. Built as a model of agriculture, many influential heads of the agriculture department lived in the house, including Burrill and Morrow. Mumford House is now the oldest building on campus, constructed almost 140 years ago, and has had many uses in its life. Mumford even has the honor of being named to the National Register of Historic Places. But it appears that Mumford House has been neglected. It needs a new coat of paint and its stairs are sagging. Although it has not been well cared for, this building still holds status in our community and will hopefully last a very long time.

Harker Hall Youyang Gu, second place

Harker Hall, first known as the Chemical Laboratory, was designed by Nathan Clifford Ricker, Professor of Architecture, and John M. Van Odsel, architect of University Hall. Built by N.C. Terrill & Company between 1877 and 1878, the building was dedicated in April of 1878. Harker Hall was Ricker's first major work, and it represents Ricker's philosophy of combining historical reference with current technological advancements.

