

## **HENRY HOBSON RICHARDSON - WILLIAM HENRY GRATWICK HOUSE 776 DELAWARE AVENUE. BUFFALO, NEW YORK**

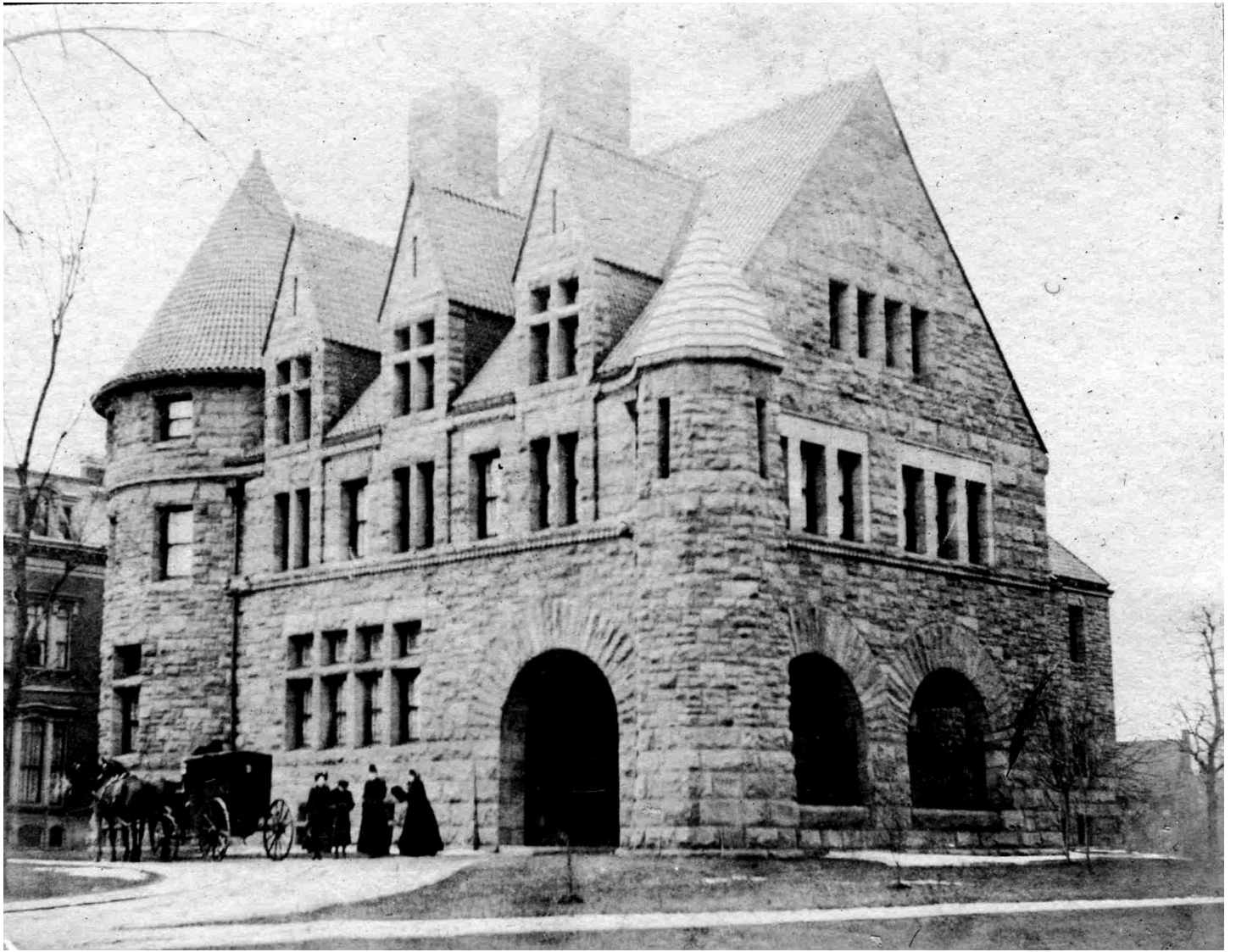
The Gratwick house is the last commission listed by Marianna Griswold Van Rensselaer in her biography *Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works*. According to her list, the project entered the office in February 1886. By the time of his death less than three months later, April 27, 1886, Richardson had determined the general conception of the house, both in plan and elevation. On March 13th Richardson wrote George Shepley, one of his assistants, that "Mr. Gratwick's plan ... is settled, unless they pull it all to pieces in Buffalo, where I forwarded revised studies last night." Too ill to travel, he directed Shepley to go to Buffalo to take charge of matters there.

After Richardson's death, his successor firm, Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, took over the commission and saw it to completion. James F. O'Gorman notes in *H. H. Richardson and His Office-Selected Drawings* that working drawings continued to be produced between July and September 1886, with some details added as late as 1888. In September 1887 the *Real Estate and Builders' Monthly* stated that the house, which was then under construction, was "the most notable architectural work going on in Buffalo. ...The warm, light tint of the brown stone chosen as the material of this house is also very pleasing."

The Gratwicks took possession of their new mansion the last week of October, 1888. It had been completed at a cost of \$104,342, approximately \$2,950,000 in 2018 dollars.

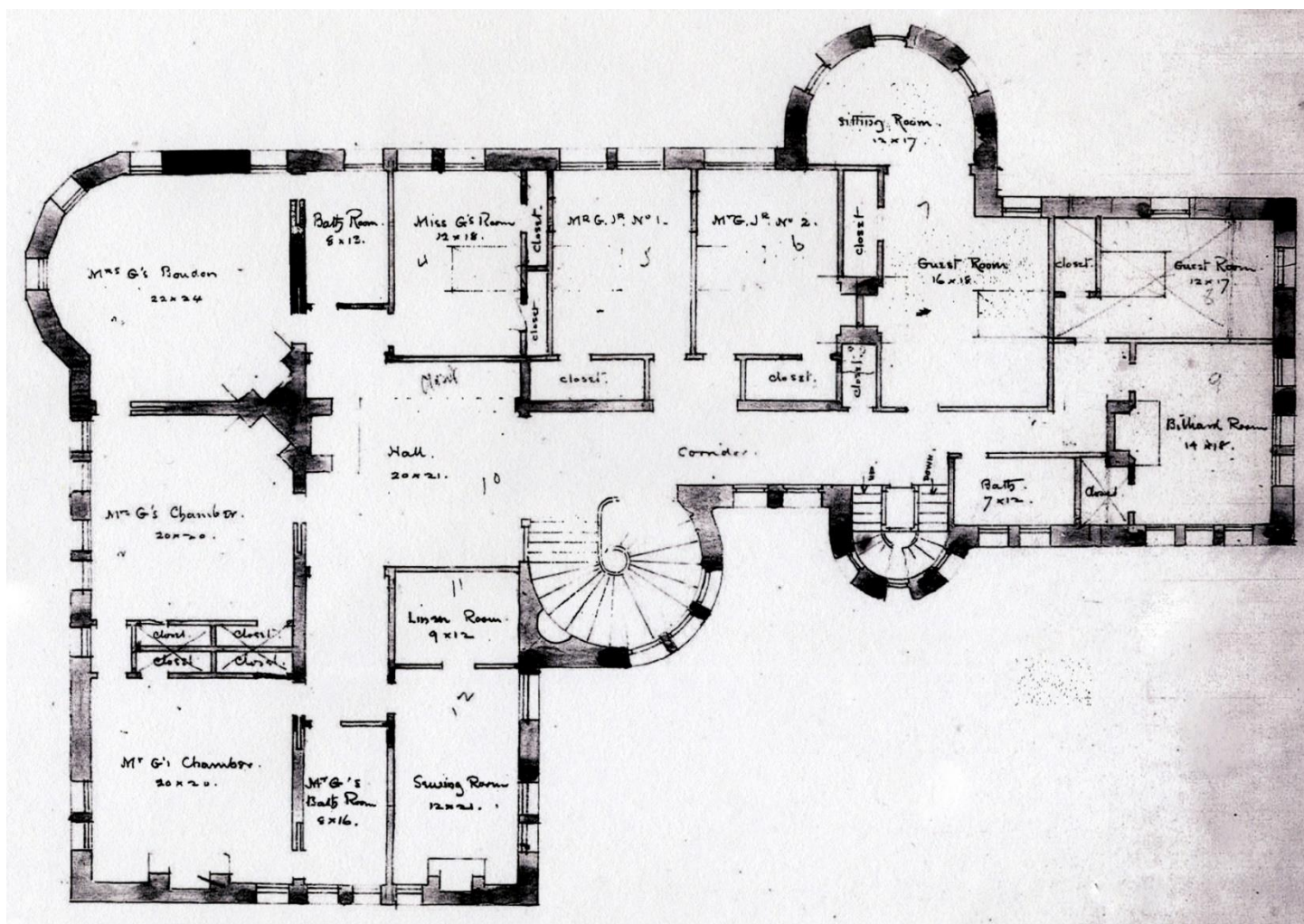
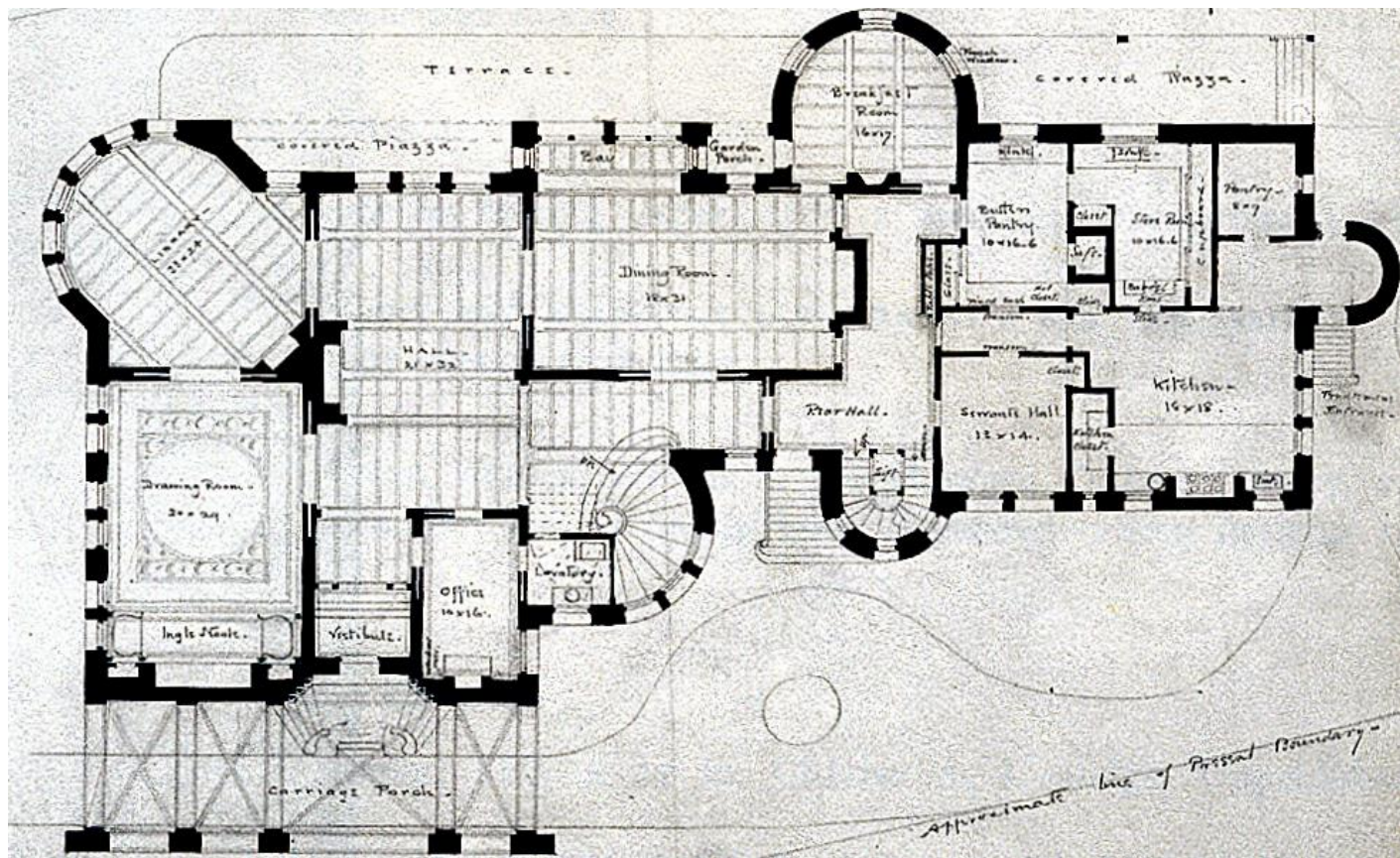
















These interior photographs of the Gratwick mansion were taken by the Bliss Brothers, 368 Main Street, Buffalo. The first floor of the house was a succession of monumental spaces focusing on the living hall with its floor to ceiling mantelpiece.







The Gratwick House at 776 Delaware Avenue was demolished September- November, 1919

The Gratwick house was torn by the Philadelphia House Wrecking Company, sub-contractors of the Western Building Company of Buffalo. Ads in the *Buffalo Courier* offered any and all parts of the house for sale: electric and gas fixtures, toilet outfits, radiators, refrigerator, laundry dryer, mirrors, mantels, mahogany doors, plate glass and stained windows, cedar cabinets, mahogany and other fine paneling, silver vault, steel wall safe, imported silk upholstery, quartered oak and maple flooring, refrigerator, laundry dryer, Spanish roof tile, copper gutters, brown stone, brick, joists, etc.

Ascension Episcopal Church's parish house, 16 Linwood Avenue, designed by E. B. Green & Sons in 1920, was built of Medina sandstone reused from the Gratwick house.

*Allentown Neighbor*. Fall 2012. p.9



Ascension Episcopal Church Parish Hall