

HOMES OF HISTORIC DISTINCTION

Home of architect Louis A. Abramson

When Christine and Gary Sisler purchased their Indian Hill Road home in 1994, they were entranced by its architectural charm, park-like setting and scenic views. They soon discovered that their new home had been a project close to the heart of architect Louis Allen Abramson (1887-1985). Their scenic property was recently named a Home of Historic Distinction by the Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Abramson, who practiced in New York City, was a well-known specialist in the design of hospitals, synagogues, apartments and also designed the restaurants at the 1939 World's Fair. As a young architect, he had studied with eminent Beaux Arts practitioners such as John Duncan and was a staunch admirer of pioneer skyscraper architect Cass Gilbert, designer of the Woolworth Building. In the 1930s, however, Abramson began to embrace the future and designed a series of modernistic restaurants, including several of the now-legendary Horn and Hardart Automats.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANCY MILANESE

In 1945, Abramson acquired the Westchester property, which crowns the Indian Hill neighborhood and borders the Kitchewank Indian Hill burial grounds, as a country retreat. Using as his starting point, a generic Cape Cod kit home that had already been constructed on the site, Abramson modified the original design, adding numerous gables and dormers and using mullion-free com-

mercial glass windows to best take advantage of the expansive views over Jefferson Valley. Not quite as modernistic as some of his other projects, the home was intended as his getaway from the bustle of Manhattan. Over the years, he added rambling stone-walls, stairways, a spring fed koi pond, and porches—to better appreciate the vistas to be had at every turn. After enjoying it for almost 40 years, Abramson fi-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANCY MILANESE

nally sold his home in 1984, just a year before his death.

The Sislers consider themselves extremely fortunate to be owners of such an unusual property. Over the past 23 years, they have raised their three children there and hosted countless family events, community activities and children's parties. A favorite time of year for visitors is the autumn, when foliage colors are at a peak. Family members have spotted deer, turkeys, hawks and even an occasional bear or moose from the porches of the home.

The Sislers undertook a renovation of the home in 2012, taking great care to maintain and preserve Abramson's original designs. On their list of upcoming projects is the restoration of an apple orchard featuring heritage and heirloom cider and apple

trees. The home is slated to be one of the properties on Yorktown's Historic House Tour in 2018.

The Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission is always seeking applicants for the Homes of Historic Distinction Program. To qualify, homes must have historical significance based on age, architectural style, past ownership or association with a person or event important to Yorktown's history. Through the program, plaques designating the basic facts about each house's history are fabricated and installed on or near the home. The commission will work with each homeowner on appropriate wording for the plaque and will assist in research. The cost for the application and the plaque is \$100. Applications are available online at yorktownny.org/planning or by emailing nmilanese@yorktownny.org.

This article was submitted by the Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission as part of a series highlighting Yorktown Homes of Historic Distinction.

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