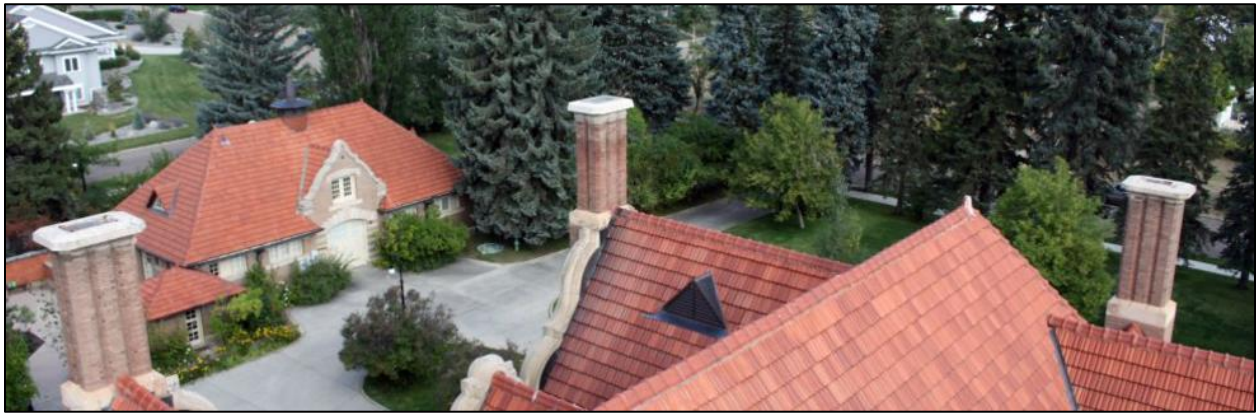


This Old Home

By Trail End State Historic Site Groundskeeper Rodney Adams; from *Trail End Notes*, November 2008

Occasionally, when he is not up to his eyeballs in leaves, snow, dirt or other materials that need to be moved about, Trail End groundskeeper Rod Adams puts pen to paper and records his impressions of the historic site. Here are his most recent musings:



Trail End Roof & Carriage House, undated (TESHS Collection)

A fall chill is in the air as I walk the grounds of Trail End. The first brilliant rays of sunshine top the eastern hills and flow into the valley below, creating a kaleidoscope of color.

The beauty of this day, so different from the past week when a blanket of white snow, pure as heaven's clouds, had clung with an icy grip to trees and bushes not yet ready to forget the warmth of summer breezes.

Snow dotted by leaves no longer able to cling to the branches which had been their lifeline lay about in a litter of bright colors and twisted shapes, giving beauty to the stormy gloom a day ahead of its season.

I pause in front of Trail End.

The sun, still low in the east, is casting spreading gold streamers across the deep green expanse of lawn. Sunlight merges with the branches and remaining leaves creating soft dappled patterns, while the trunks of large trees that frame Trail End on the east cast harsh night-like shadows of a length that makes me think of Jack and the Beanstalk.

My gaze follows the shadows to the old brick mansion, the soft silvery blue of the juniper trees, shimmering reds, oranges and yellows of barberry and cotoneaster bejeweling the front of the house like rubies and topaz.

The rough enduring Montana granite hides behind the bushes. You can almost sense the strength it lends to the foundation. The steps of the same granite, tamed and smoothed by man and machinery and worn by man's footsteps, from a distance appear a soft gray. A closer look would reveal nature's own salt and pepper speckling of the stone.

The Kansas brick, stacked straight and true, deep tan with its own pepper speckle, drenched in bright sunshine appears in a gold sheen. Even the soft red mortar lines are hidden.

Indiana limestone columns rise gracefully from the front porch, supporting stone rails and balusters. The crisp hard lines of stone cornices blend with architectural elegance into the softly curved Flemish gables, interrupted only by massive brick chimneys capped with stone, jutting beyond the gables on both ends and the back of the mansion.

A roof of thick red Missouri tile, tested by 100 years of Wyoming weather, creates deep horizontal lines in a sea of curved corrugations, contrasting beautifully with this morning's cloudless blue sky soaring above it.

All this flows together to create a look of enduring elegance not seen in other homes in the region.

Crossing the main drive, I marvel at the landscaping, so well fitted to the mansion. The main drive, studded by trees on the east, with sloping banks on either side, leads to a large squared oval turn-around at the front of the house.

This drive interconnects with the back circular drive, both exiting off the same street, creating the north lawn. A line of tall slender blue spruce trees forms a wind break.

Letting my mind wander, I think of a time nearly 100 years ago when the sweat of men and horses working together moved soil and plants to create this landscape of natural beauty, surrounding the Kendrick family's dream home.

Best we not leave out the Carriage House, which served as the Kendrick's home for nearly three years while Trail End was being built. Built of the same building materials, its look mimics Trail End, though dwarfed in size.

Its driveway on the west enters a high walled, stone-capped courtyard with tall decorative steel gates, allowing passage to the back circular drive and the meandering walkways of the south lawn.

The real tools of my trade are calling me. I lay aside my pen and pick up the shovel. Today's work, digging and separating iris and phlox in the gardens along the main drive.

Time passes quickly when one is working his hands in soft brown earth.

I note that the day is slipping away. Shadows now point back in the direction from whence they came. Brilliant sunshine lights the golden leaves of tall cottonwood trees, like shimmering torches in the valley.

Shadow has fallen on what was sun-drenched, now darkening the face of Trail End. Day is fading, but the quiet strength and elegance of this old home are never changing.



© 2020 – Trail End Guilds, Inc. & Trail End State Historic Site

All Rights Reserved

For more information, visit www.trailend.org