

Trail End Landscaping

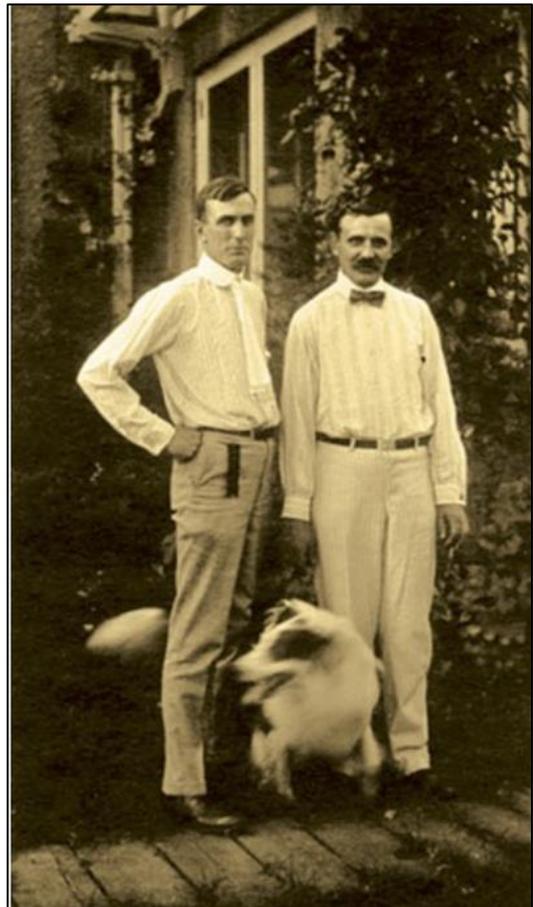
By Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen

Trail End was built on a piece of land in Nielsen Heights, a development on an empty hill on the northwest side of Sheridan. No other homes were nearby; early photos show few trees and fewer streets. Most of the hill was not yet served by electricity, telephone, city water or sewer. The main benefit seemed to be the vistas to the south and east, views that may have prompted Kendrick to build where he did. For a man interested in making an impression, it was ideal: the house was visible from nearly every part of town. Kendrick purchased the land in 1895, but didn't begin construction until 1908. Landscape efforts came much later, beginning in 1911.

MORELL & NICHOLS

Three years into his building project, John Kendrick contracted with the Minneapolis firm of Morell & Nichols for the development of landscape drawings for Trail End. The plans submitted by Morell & Nichols are significant to more than just Trail End as they appear to be the first landscape architecture plans prepared for any private home in the state of Wyoming.

Massachusetts-born Arthur R. Nichols (1880-1970), the first graduate of MIT's short-lived landscape architecture program, was a thoughtful designer who desired to work with the characteristics of the property and avoid over-planning. He had an impressive career prior to working on Trail End, including involvement with John D. Rockefeller's estate in Pocantico Hills, New York; Monument Valley Park in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Long Island, New York's Long Beach development. In 1909, he formed a partnership with Anthony Urbanski Morell and relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Morell (1875-1924) was an artistic and creative landscape architect who began his career in New York. Born in France, he had a certain European flair that was appreciated by his clients. Together, Morell & Nichols' combination of creativity and simplicity proved popular. Their

design services included city parks, cemeteries, college campuses and resort grounds, as well as private properties.

THE NATURAL STYLE

At Trail End, the primary intent of the landscaping plan was to create an informal outdoor space. Following what is known as the Natural Style, Morell & Nichols eschewed formal gardens and intricate hedge arrangements in favor of informal groupings of native trees with paths meandering throughout. As the architects noted,

You will notice in the planting scheme that in the outlined groups there are located a number of evergreen and deciduous trees which in combination with the flowering shrubs and the herbaceous plants make the group strong, giving same a natural landscaping effect.

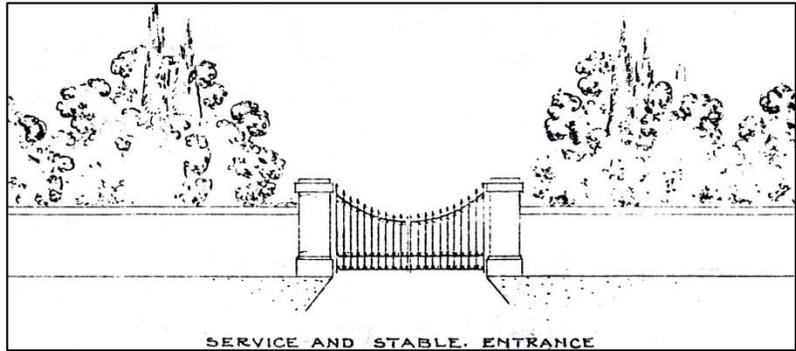
In addition, the Natural Style called for the creation of openings in the tree and shrub plantings so that surrounding areas could be seen. Using tall, fast-growing Canada Poplar, Morell & Nichols successfully framed offsite vistas. They created views within the property through the use of spirea, dogwood and lilac. Where the views weren't as desirable – on the north and west – Blue Spruce and Ponderosa Pine were used as screens, blocking out the view of houses, schools and streets.



Native juniper trees were placed throughout the property. While most of the other trees were purchased from tree farms and nurseries – including the exotic Southern Catalpa and Norwegian Maple – the hardy local junipers were dug up from the OW Ranch and brought into Sheridan on large flatbed wagons.

UNFINISHED FEATURES

The original plan was for Trail End's four-acre grounds to be surrounded by a brick wall, while the service entrance, main entrance, and Carriage House drive were to have elaborate wrought-iron gates. Although the Kendricks purchased the brick and had the footing for the



walls poured, they didn't have the work completed. The belief is that, when Kendrick was elected Governor and had to move to Cheyenne, work was put on hold and eventually abandoned when the family moved to Washington, DC.

Another project involved the erection of an elaborate pergola at the south end of the sidewalks overlooking the Big Goose Valley. Steps were to lead from the pergola to a pool or reflecting pond (where the sunken rose garden is today). Again, like the gates, the pool and pergola projects were put aside.



© 2020 - Trail End State Historic Site

All Rights Reserved

For more information, visit www.trailend.org