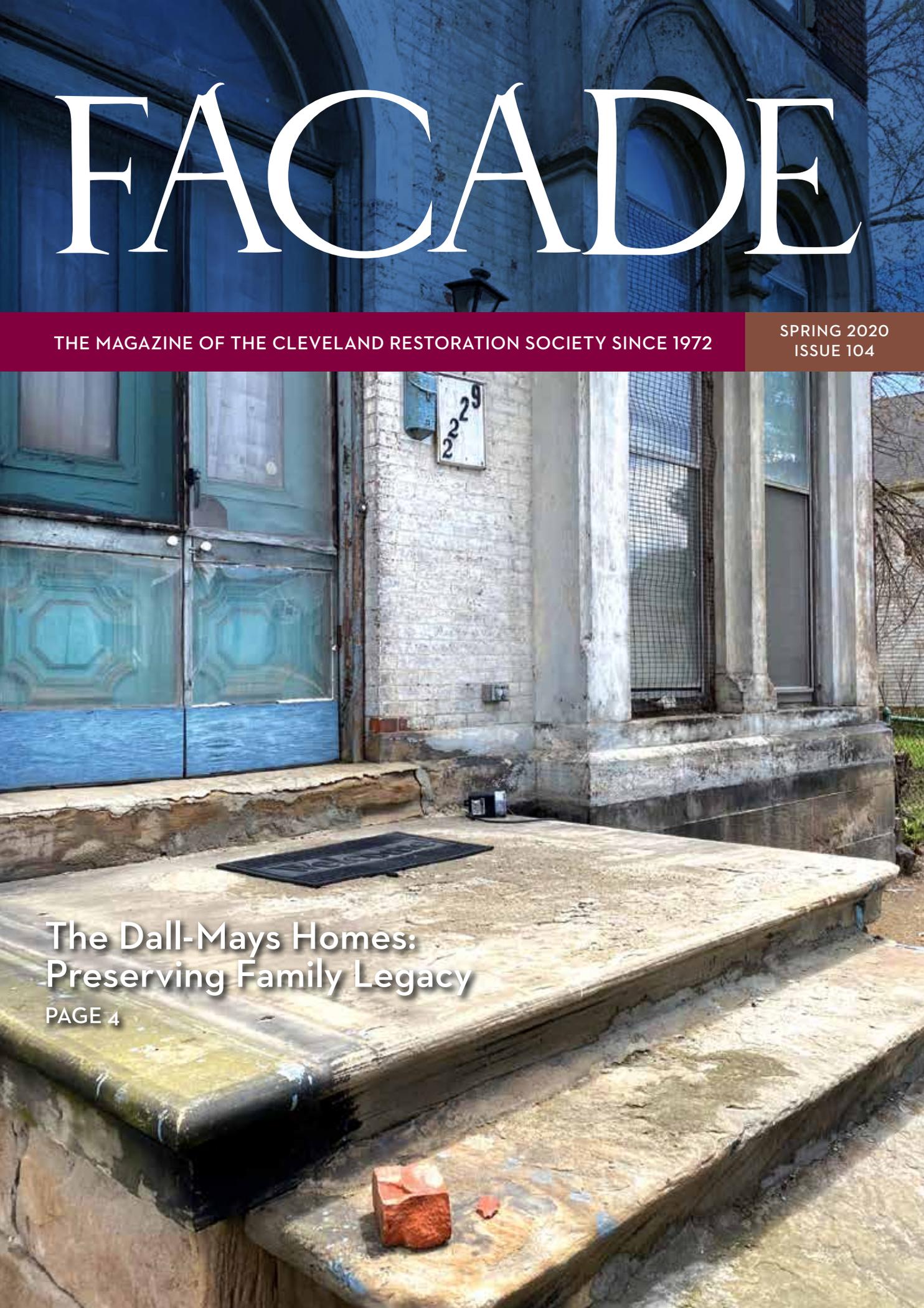


FACADE

The background image shows a close-up of a building's entrance. On the left is a teal-colored door with decorative glass panels. To the right are stone steps leading up to a doorway with a wire mesh screen. A small white sign with the number '2229' is mounted on the wall. The overall scene is in a slightly desaturated, blue-toned color palette.

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The Dall-Mays Homes:
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THE DALL-MAYS HOMES: PRESERVING FAMILY LEGACY

By Anthony Hiti

Over the course of the past 16 months, the Cleveland Restoration Society has been working diligently to stabilize and save two severely threatened landmarks on East 46th Street in Cleveland. Known as the Dall-Mays houses, these rare structures from the 1870s were condemned by the City of Cleveland and slated for likely demolition. As Cleveland Restoration Society has successfully done in the past, a special taskforce was established to rescue these historic structures from imminent loss. Although the final fate of these dwellings is not yet determined, ongoing efforts signal an optimistic future for these distinguished residences. Hopefully, a new and enduring chapter will be added to the storied legacy of the Dall-Mays houses, which celebrates both our city's early history and the Mays family's dedicated stewardship of these homes.

The two houses, located at 2225 and 2229 East 46th Street in Cleveland's Central neighborhood, were originally erected by Andrew Dall, Jr. and his brother, James, sons of master mason Andrew Dall, Sr. The Andrew Dall house (2229 East 46th Street - formerly Kennard Street) was built between 1875 and 1877 and is in the Italianate style. The two-and-a-half-story structure with a side bay window is constructed of brick and stone masonry, and features a low-pitched roof with overhanging eaves supported by ornamental brackets. An elaborate cornice incorporates attic windows within decorative molded panels. The front elevation is highlighted by a pair of tall, narrow round-arch windows with pointed stone-carved hood moldings. A sandstone stoop suggests that a wood framed porch with balustraded balcony, typical of the Italianate style, likely graced the front entrance. The interior of the house is largely intact with the exception of some water damage and

earlier modifications to create separate apartments on the second floor. The refined interior features stone fireplace mantels, an elegant stair with wood carved newel and balustrade, and molded plaster trims and cornices.

The James Dall house, located next door at 2225 East 46th Street, was constructed between 1878 and 1881. The brick and stone house is distinguished by steeply pitched roofs, a projecting central bay and stone-capped dormer window. Intricate wood details, including drop pendants typical of the Eastlake style, remain at the gable pediments. Carved stone window and door surrounds feature a geometric sawtooth pattern and floret medallion. Historic evidence indicates that, like its neighbor, a period porch originally embellished the front facade of the house. In keeping with the highly decorative Eastlake style, the porch would have likely exhibited robust lathe-shaped wooden posts, railings and balustrades, along with scroll-





Photo courtesy of Cleveland Restoration Society

sawn braces and trim. The interior elements, including the original staircase with lathe-turned spindles and massive wood newels, fireplace surrounds, door and window casings and plaster moldings, are all in generally good condition.

The fascinating story of the family who built these homes began in 1852 when Andrew Dall, Sr. (1821-87), a trained stone mason from Markinch, Fife, Scotland, came to Cleveland along with his wife, Elizabeth (Davidson), and children William, James and Andrew, Jr. The Dalls later had two children born in Cleveland;

Robert, who went on to become an important builder in Toledo, Ohio, and Elizabeth (John Protheroe). Not long after his arrival, Dall became a recognized contractor and builder in his rapidly growing adopted city, and

was responsible for many important Cleveland structures, including the Franklin Thomas Backus Residence (1858), Euclid Avenue Opera House (1875), St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1876), and the Adelbert College Dormitory (1881). Andrew Dall, Sr. died in 1887 and, along with his wife, is buried at Woodland Cemetery.

The fascinating story of the family who built these homes began in 1852 when Andrew Dall, Sr. (1821-87), a trained stone mason from Markinch, Fife, Scotland, came to Cleveland along with his wife, Elizabeth (Davidson), and children William, James and Andrew, Jr.

His son, Andrew Dall, Jr. (1850-1923), was educated in the Cleveland public schools, learned the construction trade from his father and joined him in partnership in 1874. By 1877, Andrew Dall, Jr. had taken over the reins of

the firm and erected numerous buildings in Cleveland and other cities, including the Wilshire Building (1881) the City Hall in Troy, Ohio (1877) and the Euclid Avenue residence for Sylvester T. Everett (1887), designed by



A



B

A) Porch removal in progress. This is the first time the City of Cleveland has partnered with Cleveland Restoration Society to remove hazardous, non-historic elements of a building. With the porches gone, the buildings are safer and architectural clues that will guide reconstruction are now visible.

B) The James Dall house, located next door at 2225 East 46th Street, was constructed between 1878 and 1881. Intricate wood details, including drop pendants typical of the Eastlake style, remain at the gable pediments.

C) An elaborate cornice incorporates attic windows within decorative molded panels. While in serious need of repair, there is a significant amount of detail remaining to inform exactly what elements should be replaced.

D) To date, this is the only historic photo of either Dall house that has been found. The corner of 2229 is visible to the left of the photograph and may provide clues regarding the original Italianate style front porch.



D

Photo courtesy of Anthony Hiti

Photo courtesy of the Cuyahoga County Archives



C

Photo courtesy of Anthony Hiti

architect Charles F. Schweinfurth. This led the Dall firm to become the contractor-of-choice for virtually all of Schweinfurth's buildings, including several other Millionaire's Row mansions. In 1888 he joined with Arthur McAllister to form the McAllister & Dall Company, which established itself among the most prominent construction companies in Ohio. In addition to constructing their own thirteen-story office building (1895) on Public Square, the firm was responsible for the Samuel Mather Summer Residence (Shoreby) in Bratenahl (1889),

the Society for Savings Bank (1889), the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument (1894), and the Erie County Savings Bank (1893) in Buffalo, New York.

Andrew Dall, Jr. married Alice Jane Bennet in 1873 and they had six children, Emma (Drake), William, Elizabeth, John, Joseph and Irene. By 1899, the eldest son, William, who apprenticed as an architect under Schweinfurth, joined his father and the firm became known as Andrew Dall & Son. Together, they directed the construction of



Carved stone window and door surrounds feature a geometric sawtooth pattern and floret medallion.

the Union Club (1905), Trinity Cathedral (1907), and the Cuyahoga County Courthouse (1912), among other buildings. William Dall continued the firm into the 1920s, constructing banks, schools and government buildings in Ohio, Maryland and Washington, DC. Andrew Dall, Jr. died in 1923 and, along with his wife and other family members, is buried in Lakeview Cemetery.

It is known that the Dalls were responsible for the construction of the two houses on East 46th Street, owned them for only a few years and sold the properties in 1879. Historic records reveal that the houses were modified and expanded in the early 1900s to create apartment units. During these modifications, the original front porches were replaced with new historically inappropriate porches, which significantly altered the appearance

of the structures. Both houses had several subsequent owners in the intervening years as the surrounding neighborhood experienced significant disinvestment and decline.

In 1975, when the properties were purchased by James and Frances Mays, the inspiring second chapter of these storied homes began. James and Frances not only recognized and treasured the significance of the two homes, but they celebrated and promoted them to the enduring benefit of the community. An African American couple without children, they held the flame for preservation without any assistance from the majority white population. They believed in the value of these homes in a neighborhood which became increasingly disenfranchised, doing the best they could as the



Photo courtesy of Anthony Hiti



Photo courtesy of Robert and Norman Mays



Photo courtesy of Anthony Hiti

tide flowed against them. To recognize their heroic efforts and significant contribution, the properties have been renamed the Dall-Mays Houses.

As part of their great work, James and Frances Mays established the Andrew and James Dall Restoration Society, Inc., opening up a portion of the 2225 house as a museum and gallery dedicated to the Dall family history and to African American heritage. They presented information about urban renewal through historic preservation on display boards and exhibited their extensive collection of books, antiques and items depicting African American history. Frances Mays obtained a license from the Ohio Association of Historical Societies & Museums for the "Dall Restoration Society, Inc." The Dall Restoration Society appeared in the *Directory of Historical Organizations in Ohio*, a statewide publication of preservation related sites, organizations and resources.

James and Frances were grassroots preservationists. Through their dedicated passion and promotion, the homes were designated historic both locally and na-

E) The front elevation is highlighted by a pair of tall, narrow round-arch windows with pointed stone-carved hood moldings.

F) This print was hanging in the house museum, date unknown.

G) The Dall-Mays homes as they currently stand, awaiting rehabilitation.

tionally. Frances Mays worked with John D. Cimperman, Director of the Cleveland Landmarks Commission, to have the homes designated as Cleveland Landmarks in 1982. In 1984, Frances engaged historian Eric Johannessen to nominate the properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to providing a residence for themselves and their tenants, the Mays' home became a vibrant focus for gracious gatherings, garden parties and tea socials, accompanied by learning and enrichment.

Sadly, in recent years, Frances Mays passed away and her husband, James, was moved into a nursing home. Without their stewardship, the houses quickly fell into disrepair and became the subject of a city condemna-



The following images (H-L) were taken at a birthday party for the homes, ca. 1980

H) Cutting the cake.

I) Frances Mays (left) with John D. Cimperman and Mays family member.

J) Guests enjoying the birthday of the historic homes.

K) Frances Mays (center) with Honorary Life Trustees of the Cleveland Restoration Society Robert C. Gaede, FAIA (left) and Clay Herrick (right).

L) Cake for the Dall house birthdays.

M) James and Frances Mays celebrating Christmas in the house.

N) Guests and family enjoy tea in the museum house. Frances was known for entertaining.

Photos courtesy of Robert and Norman Mays



tion notice. Gratefully, James Mays' nephews, Norman and Robert Mays, reached out to Cleveland Restoration Society to help them rescue the buildings from a potentially tragic fate and thereby honor their aunt and uncle's remarkable legacy.

Cleveland Restoration Society immediately convened a taskforce capably led by our Board Chair, Scott Holbrook. It is comprised of Cleveland Restoration Society staff, board members, lawyers, architects, contractors, historians, antique experts, community stakeholders and real-estate professionals, along with Norman and Robert Mays. Over the last year, the taskforce has met monthly to develop and implement a plan to stabilize the properties and determine a strategy for their future rehabilitation. The first crucial step was to have Robert Mays, a family member supportive of the homes' preservation, appointed legal guardian of the properties. With *pro bono* legal assistance from a Cleveland Restoration Society trustee, the Court has granted him official authority to direct future actions for the benefit of the houses.

Next, the two front porches, which were in a perilous state of collapse and not original to the historic buildings, needed to be surgically removed to prevent further damage to the property. With unprecedented cooperation and support from Ayonna Blue Donald, Director of Building and Housing for the City of Cleveland, specifications were prepared, bids were taken and a contract was awarded for the selective demolition of the two front porches and a side porch, along with the removal of scaffolding, overgrowth and debris. Director Donald's involvement in our efforts, on behalf of the City, has been invaluable and encouraging.

With the inappropriate porches removed, much of the original craftsmanship and detailing on the homes' exteriors are now revealed. Currently, an architectural historian is preparing illustrations that will depict how the houses may have originally appeared with historically correct porches. Once the hazardous porches were demolished and safe access to the houses provided, Cleveland Restoration Society also moved quickly to have a more durable temporary roof professionally installed by 1st Choice Roofing. This has reduced water infiltration and has moderated damage to the interior plaster walls and ceiling.

Taskforce members are now working with Robert and Norman Mays to remove objects that are of value to their family along with other important documents and artifacts. The remaining items in the homes can then be readied for re-sale, salvage or disposal. Concurrent with all of these efforts, Cleveland Restoration Society has raised over \$80,000 from the State Historic Preserva-



Photos courtesy of Robert and Norman Mays

tion Office, Ingalls Foundation and the 1772 Foundation. These desperately needed funds will be used to further stabilize the buildings and prepare them for future rehabilitation.

Despite the numerous hurdles and challenges Cleveland Restoration Society has already cleared, the future of these historic homes remains uncertain. Through its special taskforce and guided by the legacy of the Mays family, Cleveland Restoration Society remains committed to finding a new and productive use that will ensure many more chapters of life for these remarkable landmark homes. ❖