

There is still time to register for the VSA **Fall Study Tour to Saint Louis, MO October 22-25, 2024**. This four-day “Gateway to the West” tour includes guided tours on foot, private home visits, museums, an opening reception in a truly marvelous mansion, group dinner, and more. And what trip to St. Louis would be complete without visiting the iconic Gateway Arch?



See our [TOUR BROCHURE](#) for complete tour details with registration and hotel reservation information.

Our headquarters hotel is the Chase Park Plaza Hotel, located in the Central West End neighborhood, where we have reserved a block of upgraded suites at a discounted group rate. Please use this link to make hotel reservations:

<https://book.passkey.com/go/VSARoomBlock>

As this Study Tour is limited to 25 participants, we strongly recommend that all members who plan to attend register with the Society as soon as possible and make their hotel reservations prior to the hotel cut-off date of **September 30, 2024**. Registration can be made by mail, by phoning the office, or online through [Ticket Leap](#).

We're looking forward to seeing you in Saint Louis in October!

## **2025 Edith Wharton Writing Residency in Partnership with Straw Dog Writers Guild**

The Edith Wharton & Straw Dog Writers Guild Writers-in-Residence Program offers one-week residencies during the month of March to nine emerging poets, fiction writers, playwrights, screenwriters, and creative nonfiction writers.

The Residency is hosted by The Mount, the former home of Edith Wharton, a 1902 Georgian revival mansion in Lenox, Massachusetts. Residents will be provided a \$500 stipend; dedicated private workspaces at The Mount; and lodging at a nearby inn in the Berkshires.

Writers-in-residence will work at The Mount in Lenox, MA. Edith Wharton designed The Mount, a Georgian revival mansion, on a wooded parcel on the shores of Laurel Lake and lived there from 1902 to 1911. Wharton called The Mount her “first true home,” where she emerged as a writer and produced some of her most iconic works. Today, The Mount is a historic house museum and cultural center that interprets the artistic, literary, and humanitarian legacy of Edith Wharton.

Nine emerging poets, fiction writers, playwrights, screenwriters, and creative nonfiction writers will be selected for the 2025 Edith Wharton Writing Residency. ***Please view the website to check the qualifications in each genre of writing.*** [Home - The Mount | Edith Wharton's Home](#)

Applications close on **October 1, 2024** or once 300 applications have been received. Finalists will be announced on **November 15, 2024**. Residents will be announced on **December 13, 2024**.



**Cindy Casey**, president of the VSA, and **Travis Brock Kennedy**, vice president, have submitted their resignations effective immediately. **Kevin Rose**, immediate past president of the Society, has been elected by the VSA Board of Directors, to serve as the interim president until a new president can be elected.

## ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

After 11 years as Director of Lippitt House Museum, **Carrie Taylor** (Newport 2015) is leaving to be the next Executive Director of Windsor Historical Society in Connecticut. Carrie's leadership at Lippitt House Museum has centered civic engagement in programming and provided historical context to the stories of the Lippitt family, their servants, the building, and collections.

We are thankful for her many accomplishments including a site-specific public art installation, community conversations with local activists, an original theatrical experience,



and civics classes for adult English Language Learners. She also oversaw the universal handi-cap access project so that everyone regardless of physical ability can visit Lippitt House and the restoration of the batten-seam, lead-coated copper roof. Her last day is Friday.

**Carie Taylor:** “**Lippitt House Museum** is a special place for the stories it can tell about Rhode Island’s history and the opportunities it provides to bring com-

munity members together. I'll look back at my time in RI as an opportunity where I got to meet wonderful people and work with a dedicated team of talented professionals. I'm looking forward to my next chapter at the **Windsor Historical Society** and new adventures in Connecticut.”

[Home - Windsor Historical Society](#)



**Fred R. Casteel** (1940-2024, Newport '11) of Dallas, TX, recipient of the Albert Gallatin Award, the US Treasury Department's highest award for career service, and donor to the Newport Scholarship fund.

[Frederick Casteel Obituary \(1940 - 2024\) - Dallas, TX - Dallas Morning News \(dallasnews.com\)](#)

**Mary Cope** (London 1983) moved from her longtime apartment to a senior living center, The Apsley on the Upper West Side. She no longer has a phone but appreciates visitors.

The **Historic Albany Foundation** celebrated **Roger K. Reid** (Newport '16) and Ronald Symansky with the Preservation Initiative Award at Albany's Cathedral of All Saints on September 26, 2024, for the restoration of their early twentieth-century South Allen Street residence. After they moved from San Francisco to be with Ron's mother, they began systematically updating and repairing the house, keeping it true to Ron's great grandfather's designs and perhaps accentuating it a bit.



**Chicago 2024 Victorian Society Summer School  
Vendula Hnídková**



Prague, Czech Republic

*Vendula is an architectural historian and curator who focuses on modern and contemporary architectural production.*

This June, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Victorian Summer School in Chicago, a program that promised to deepen my understanding of architecture, history, and culture from the Victorian era to the twentieth century. Over the course, I engaged in lectures, walking tours, and rich discussions that significantly enhanced my personal and professional growth. From my arrival at the Congress Plaza Hotel to the farewell dinner at Glessner House, this experience offered me abundant opportunities for learning and connection.

**Day One: Arrival and Anticipation**

On Wednesday, I was buzzing with anticipation, eager to meet fellow participants and instructors who shared my passion for architecture and history. This was not just an academic endeavor; it was a chance to connect with like-minded individuals and delve deeper into a subject close to my heart.

**Day Two: Foundations of Chicago's Architectural Heritage**

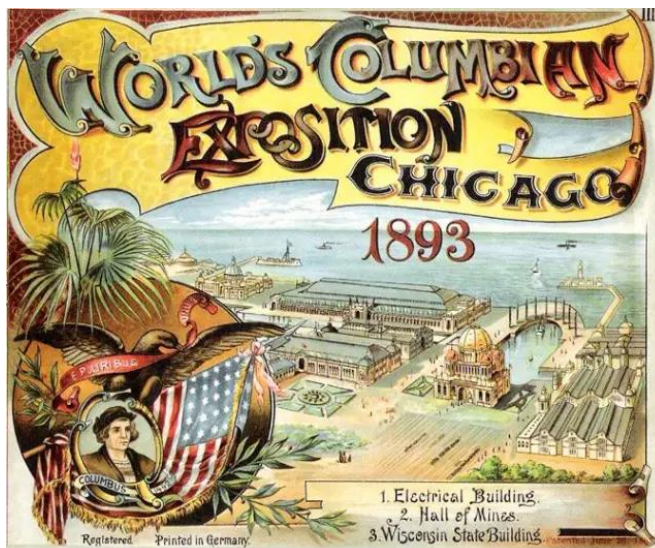
Thursday began with early morning anticipation, and as I joined my fellow attendees in the hotel lobby, the sense of camaraderie was palpable. Our destination was the Cliff Dwellers Club, where the day began with a spectacular view of the lake from the club's terrace. This was followed by an overview of Chicago's remarkable history and an

introduction to its architectural landscape. The lectures painted a vivid picture of the city's evolution during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and sparked my appreciation for the carefully crafted buildings that surrounded us.

The walking tours through The Loop and The Art Institute of Chicago truly brought the words from our lectures to life. Walking among the towering skyscrapers and majestic historical buildings, I felt like an explorer navigating through layers of history. This firsthand exposure to architectural masterpieces reinforced my desire to learn more about how design and urban planning intersect with history and culture.

### **Days Three and Four: Exploring the Victorian World**

The next day was filled with Diane's fascinating lecture on the World's Columbian Exposition that shaped the city. I was only sorry that we missed some of the other scheduled lectures in the course of the summer school because I was so eager to learn more.



One of the highlights of my experience was the tour of Jackson Park, the site of the World's Columbian Exposition. Reflecting on the purpose of the exposition and how it showcased American innovation and culture was enlightening. It is clear that the World's Columbian Exposition is Diane's scholarly passion, and we had the opportunity to immerse ourselves in her vast knowledge. The Japanese Pavilion was also a wonderful place for our picnic.

From my personal research perspective, the visit to the model company town, the Town of Pullman, was of the utmost importance. The brilliant tour guide gave us a profound insight into the past and present of the model town. It also provided me with insights into the connections between architecture, community identity, and historical narrative - an integrative approach that I plan to apply in my own professional practice.



## Days Five and Six: Modern Influences and Farewell



One of the most memorable moments of my experience at the Victorian Summer School was our visit to the Farnsworth House, designed by Mies van der Rohe. As we approached the house, its elegant, minimalist form emerged from the landscape, exemplifying van der Rohe's maxim

that "less is more." The structure's seamless integration with its natural surroundings was a testament to the architect's vision of blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces. Standing inside the glass walls of the home, I was struck by how each element was meticulously considered to enhance the experience of space and light. The open layout encouraged a sense of tranquility, while the surrounding vistas offered a stunning backdrop that highlighted the beauty of nature. This visit deepened my understanding of modernist principles and demonstrated how thoughtful design can foster a profound connection between people and their environment, inspiring me to think critically about the impact of architectural choices in my own work.

By the time we concluded our tours at important sites like Unity Temple and the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, I realized how profoundly my perspective had shifted. It should be noted that one of the highlights of the entire program was the Glessner House. It was a thought-provoking glimpse into the lifestyle of a Victorian family and Chicago community. Choosing it for the farewell dinner was a brilliant option.

## Personal and Professional Growth

Professionally, attending the Victorian Summer School has equipped me with a broader understanding of architectural history and has inspired me to incorporate some new

historical perspectives into my own work, recognizing the importance of context when examining built environment that reflects community values.

On a personal level, interacting with people from diverse backgrounds who share a passion for architecture has rekindled my enthusiasm for lifelong learning. I would also like to emphasize that our guides were dedicated and inspiring individuals who sparked our interest in various aspects of art and architecture.

In conclusion, the Victorian Summer School in Chicago was more than just an educational program; it was an enriching experience that shaped my identity as an architectural historian. I left with a wealth of knowledge and an unwavering belief in the power of architecture to connect us with our past, while also challenging us to envision a more thoughtful future. The memories created during that week will inspire my work for years to come.

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**London Summer School 2024**  
**Julie Fuller**



*Julie Fuller is the Digital Humanities Educational Technology at Bard Graduate Center in New York City. She earned a Ph.D. in English at the Graduate Center, CUNY in 2023 with a dissertation on athletic women in mid- to late-Victorian popular representation.*

I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to take a deep dive into British cultural heritage at the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Victorian Society London Summer School. Kit Webb, Anne Mallek, and our various expert guides throughout the program of visits, tours, and lectures—as well as the wide-ranging interests and perspectives of my colleagues taking the course—made it an exciting and enriching learning environment. Participating in the program was a great benefit to me as a professionalization experience.

Attending this two-week intensive course in historical art, architecture, design, and preservation expanded my knowledge of forms, styles, and materials, and my understanding of the methods of inquiry and ways of looking practiced by professionals working in these fields.

I am employed at a graduate school for the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture studies, where I work to develop creative, engaging, and accessible digital approaches to scholarship that explores the cultural history of the material world. Many of our graduates go on to careers in the kinds of museums, galleries, and cultural heritage institutions that we were given behind-the-scenes access to during Summer



School. The privately guided tours we had of incredible sites and collections provided me with insights that have enhanced my ability to support the academic and professional development of the students I work with.

The immersive Summer School program also afforded me with plenty of opportunities to imagine innovative ways that interactive technology could be used to showcase heritage sites for a public audience. With each visit and tour, I was exposed to a diverse range of art and architecture that sparked new ideas for compelling educational experiences that can draw out the untold, forgotten, and obscured histories in heritage sites.

Participating in the program prompted me to consider how digital tools and methods can be of service in preservation work by helping audiences to recognize historic features of the built environment and notice the material history around them every day. Interactive digital tools that draw attention to the kind of architectural design features we discovered on our guided walks with experts or that show changes in the visual landscape around heritage sites, for instance, can advance the general public's awareness of and interest in cultural heritage and increase community support for preservation cases.

The new inspiration for creating engaging online projects that I gained while attending Summer School is an asset to my ongoing professional work in the digital humanities as well as my long-term goal of directing digital project development at a museum or cultural heritage institution.

I am very grateful to the Victorian Society in America and the Summer Schools Alumni Association for the scholarship award that enabled me to explore incredible works of Victorian art and architecture first-hand. Partaking in this experience was even more valuable to me due to the social interaction I had with the other participants. I am particularly glad that financial assistance made it possible for me to join the program this year because there was a retired professor in attendance whose research influenced my dissertation! I was thrilled to have the opportunity to talk at length with her about my work and digest aspects of our shared Summer School experience. Attending the program was a wonderful and fortuitous way to extend my personal and professional networks!



Viewing trade catalogs at the Museum of the Home reserve collection



Viewing vestments at Holy Angel's Church Hoar Cross

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## A Remarkable Experience: My Time at the VSA Newport Summer School

**Noah Duell**



*Noah Duell is a second year Master of Architectural History student at the University of Virginia and Donor Stewardship Officer at the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello. Beyond his passion for historic preservation and presidential history, Noah enjoys reading, running, and traveling to see his family in his native upstate New York.*

Any essay about my time in Newport as part of the Victorian Society in America Summer School program must begin with a sincere expression of my gratitude for those who made it possible. Beyond my classmates and instructors – who were an excellent cross-section of everything that makes our related fields so rewarding – I am indebted to the generous supporters of the VSA Summer School Program whose contributions enabled my participation. I wish I could thank these individuals in person, but I hope this short essay sufficiently demonstrates my gratitude. I look forward to joining their ranks at the first opportunity so that I might support the next generation of students, who surely deserve to take part in this remarkable experience.

As a graduate architectural history student studying early America, Victorian Newport may seem like a strange bedfellow. But the excellence of the Summer School is only matched by its breadth. During the program, we visited sites ranging from the early-18th century to the mid-20th century. One of the earliest constructed sites in our

itinerary was Peter Harrison's Redwood Library (1747–50), one of the finest Palladian buildings in the United States. Seeing the Redwood for the first time after spending hours reading about it was incredible. To my classmates (and to almost anyone else who would listen), I said with no real exaggeration that I could have visited this place alone and walked away entirely pleased with my visit to Newport.



*The author beaming in front of the Redwood Library, June 4, 2024.*

Fortunately for me, this was not the only visit of the trip. Instead, it was only one of more than 50 places in nine days. Often in situations like these, our tendency to believe that we might revisit at some far-off date, thereby robbing ourselves of some of the joy that comes from the extraordinary and ephemeral. As it was happening, however, it was abundantly clear to us that we were in the midst of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We wasted no moment, said yes to everything, and enjoyed all that the program and city had to offer.

As just one example, during one period of precious free time, a few classmates and I availed ourselves of a tour of the Touro Synagogue, one of the few places *not* on our itinerary. After a nice late morning there, we walked in the light rain to a nearby restaurant for lunch. Between our ordering food and leaving, a brief but torrential downpour swept over Newport. From our lunch we shuffled into a charming used bookstore, where we each came across a rare find of one kind or another. Despite our soaked clothing and thankfully dry books, we were happy as an oyster to have spent the day together in a charming city.



*At left: the bookstore just after the torrent; at right: Touro Synagogue. June 6, 2024.*

Not long after the program, I received a follow-up email asking for feedback. I was then, as I am now, lost for more moving and emphatic words to convey how much I enjoyed my time at the Newport Summer School. It was enriching to be able to pursue my interests surrounded by people who shared, encouraged, and appreciated each other. I have since become an enthusiastic salesman for the program, encouraging my friends, colleagues, and classmates to apply.

Thank you again to everyone who made this trip one that I won't soon forget.

**How did Impressionism begin?** Discover the origins of the French art movement in a new look at the radical 1874 exhibition considered the birth of modern painting.

**“Paris 1874: The Impressionist Moment”**

National Gallery of Art Washington, D.C.

[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)

September 8, 2024 – January 19, 2025

A remarkable presentation of 130 works includes a rare reunion of many of the paintings first featured in that now-legendary exhibition. Revisit beloved paintings by Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, and Camille Pissarro and meet their lesser-known contemporaries. See the art norms they were rebelling against and learn what political and social shifts sparked their new approach to art.



*Zacharie Astruc, “Scène de somnambulisme,” 1871, watercolor, Collection Musée de l’Opéra de Vichy*

Impressionism is one of the most recognizable art movements in the world today, but it was revolutionary in its time. Originating in France in 1874, it was rejected by critics at first—only later embraced as a national symbol.

In the mid-19th century, France saw rapid technological and social changes. Gathering in cafés to discuss these societal transformations, the impressionists found opportunities for liberation. They changed the way they painted, in both subject matter and technique. They also met to discuss how, when, and where to exhibit their art.



*Auguste Renoir, “La Loge (The Theater Box),” 1874, oil on canvas, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) Photo © The Courtauld*

Don’t miss the unique chance to immerse yourself in the dynamic Parisian art scene of 1874—we are the only American stop for this historic exhibition.

[Paris 1874: The Impressionist Moment - Fine Art Connoisseur](#)



To make it easier than ever, please use our QR code to donate online.



Or renew your membership online, please visit and scroll down on the Alumni page on the VSA website at:

[Alumni Membership - Victorian Society](#)

Click on an amount that corresponds to the membership level and proceed to enter your credit card info. If you wish to contribute to a scholarship fund in addition to your membership level, click on CUSTOM AMOUNT, enter the total amount of your contribution plus the membership level, and then indicate to which scholarship fund you wish to donate.

Your prompt renewal using the Donate link is the fastest and easiest way to renew and is the easiest for our all-volunteer staff to process your renewal. If you prefer to renew by check, please print out and complete the Membership Renewal Form below, follow the instructions on the form, and mail it along with your check to the address indicated. Please make the check payable to **The Victorian Society in America** noting that it is for Alumni membership.

All donations are tax-exempt as provided by law. Donations at the Supporter level and above level are recognized in our eNewsletters and donations in any amount to the individual Scholarship Funds are also recognized. Except for some required administrative expenses, all of your membership fees and donations goes to student scholarships.

In 2024, the Alumni Association donated \$24,000 for scholarships. Your membership renewal is crucial to enable the Alumni Association to continue its scholarship support for future students. In fact, it is expected that scholarship demands will increase in the coming years. **THANK YOU** for your continued support.

**RENEWAL / ENROLLMENT FORM**  
**Alumni Association of The Victorian Society Summer Schools**



www.vsaalumni.org

Mail completed form along with your payment to:  
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 Call David: (703) 243-2350

**CHOOSE YOUR MEMBERSHIPS LEVEL**

- \$55 Individual       \$30 Student/Young Professional (35 years of age or younger)       \$100 Household
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TODAY'S DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**ADD SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT**

**YES!** I am providing additional contributions to support scholarships for deserving students of architecture, design, and preservation!

<input type="checkbox"/> Gwen Koch Memorial Newport Scholarship	
<input type="checkbox"/> Duchscherer Memorial Scholarship endorsed by Sibyl McCormac Groff and John Martine	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Prof. Richard Guy Wilson Newport Scholarship (\$3,500 full scholarship)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Gavin Stamp Memorial London Scholarship Fund (\$5,500 full scholarship)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Chicago (\$3,100 full scholarship)	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> General Scholarship Fund where needed most	\$
<b>Total Scholarship Support</b>	\$
<b>+ Membership Dues from above</b>	\$
<b>= TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>	\$

**YOUR INFORMATION**  I/We have included the Alumni Association in my/our estate plans. Kindly print.

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**MY NEWS** Email updates about new positions, licenses, degrees granted, moves, etc. to [dalamdin@gmail.com](mailto:dalamdin@gmail.com)

**PAYMENT** Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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- CHECK payable to "VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA, INC.," enclosed for the amount above of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check # \_\_\_\_\_. Please include ALUMNI ASSOCIATION in the memo line.



**Victorian Society in America Newport Summer School 2024  
Assistant Director's Report**

**Edward R. (Ted) Bosley, Hon. AIA**  
July 23, 2024

The VSA's 2024 Newport Summer School once again provided students with the invaluable opportunity to explore America's premier locus of design and craft to span five centuries. This year's cohort of 18 participants met other like-minded individuals, all of whom enthusiastically shared enthusiasm for architecture, decorative arts, the fine arts, history and preservation. As ever, the programs also afforded student participants a chance to hear from scholars in the field who collectively bring to bear centuries of knowledge and expertise. The program proved itself, once again, as well worth carrying into the future.

Not least among the Newport scholars was, of course, Prof. Richard Guy Wilson, whose 40+ years of association with the VSA, along with his personal commitment and personality, deliver knowledge that is deep, broad and engaging. Many others, including John Tschirch, Paul Miller and Pauline Metcalf also contributed significantly to the students understanding of key events, artistic trends and the people who had an impact on the unique creative culture in Newport since Colonial times.

This year's cohort of students was engaged and thoughtful in their reactions to what we were fortunate to see and hear during the many site visits that Prof. Wilson had scheduled. As ever, the calendar was packed, and the pace was demanding. One or two glitches occurred, as at Hunter House, where we were accidentally double booked due to a new public tour being offered there; everyone coped with good humor and grace.

The students bonded well with each other, even making new, fast friends. Our delightful and engaging student from outside North America, Tatiana, from Portugal, impressed Trudy Coxe, CEO of the Preservation Society of Newport County, who mentioned her from the podium as a potential future employee(!) during the lovely reception that was put on for us at Marble House. With gratitude for the opportunity to work with the VSA these past three years, I respectfully submit this report.

2024 Newport Scholarships 4 full, 1 three-quarter, 1 quarter = \$15,900



**NOTE:** Many thanks to **Pauline Metcalf**, a long-time, generous supporter of the VSA Summer Schools and the Alumni Association for once again inviting the 2024 Newport Summer School students and alumni to a lovely reception at Philmoney. Pauline's gracious hospitality and generous support of these wonderful receptions is always one of the most memorable events during the Newport Summer School.



## **VSA 2024 London Summer School Report**

### **Anne Mallek, Assistant Director**

While 2024 saw lower application numbers, this did not affect the quality of the applicants or the diversity of this year's London Summer School group, with 15 participants ranging in age from 24 to 80, and including professionals in historic preservation and architecture, digital humanities, marketing and theatre, graduate students in art history, interior design and architecture, academic faculty in literature and art, as well as members of the Savannah and DC chapters, and alumni of other VSA summer schools and study tours, and historic home owners. They hailed from Portugal, New York, New Jersey, Georgia, British Columbia, Maryland, Washington, DC, California, and Ukraine. An additional participant from the London 2023 program joined the group for the trip north and the day at Standen and Crossness Pumping Station. They had been allowed to make up the days they missed in 2023 due to COVID and were offered a discounted rate to do so.

Unfortunately, this year the group suffered more cases of COVID than in any other year to date, with 4 participants (including the Assistant Director) testing positive just in advance of their departure for the trip north, and one additional case just as they were leaving Liverpool. In each case, the directors communicated with the Summer School chairs, and were guided by CDC and NHS guidelines in determining when participants could rejoin the group.

Kit Wedd served once again as the indefatigable and endlessly informative program director, conducting walking tours of Albertopolis, London's East End, historic pubs in the City of London, the Cadogan estate, and even Bedford Park suburb, as not one, but two of our lecturers/guides also came down with COVID. Due to the call for a UK general election on July 4<sup>th</sup>, the program's annual visit to the Palace of Westminster with Rosemary Hill was also canceled at the last minute, though Kit was able to substitute a walking tour and visit to Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square, "the Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts Movement," with its magnificent Morris & Company window.



Towards the end of the program, the group enjoyed a day at the UK Victorian Society's headquarters in Bedford Park, where they heard lectures on Victorian Fashion, Gardens and Pottery. After a walking tour of Bedford Park, the group then spent a lovely evening with Victorian Society staff and members at a reception sponsored by the Alumni Association. See pic below.

With regard to this year's evaluations, most seemed happy with accommodations save for the Manchester Britannia, which we will likely drop after this year. High praise was also given for the quality of tour guides and docents who met us in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, and at other sites. Recommendations included making fewer single overnight stops, minimizing the number of churches and sites visited in total to allow more breathing room in the program for

both more time at the sites and to absorb and discuss information received/ask questions, and to get to know fellow participants better. This year the group stayed one night in Oxford just before returning to London – this was a part of a trial run to see if the group might enjoy Oxford a bit more with an extra evening there to explore (minus the daytime tourist crowds).

**Scholarships:** 8 full, 1 half, 1 three-quarter = \$47,670

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## VSA 2024 Chicago Summer School Report

### Tina Strauss, Program Director

The 8th Annual Chicago Summer School program took place from June 13th through June 18th. Thirteen students attended, accompanied by Director Tina Strauss, Assistant Director Diane Dillon and Principal Lecturer Richard Guy



Wilson. The group of 13 students included 4 international students - two students were from the Czech Republic, one was from India, and one was from Canada. The US.

Students were from all over the country—Minnesota to Louisiana and California to New York.

The program began with 2 days of lectures at the historic Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago. Speakers included Tim Whitman of the School of the Art Institute, architect Anne Sullivan and VSA Board member and historic house museum director, Jennifer Carlquist.

Tours included The Rookery, with preservation architect Gunny Harboe, a Loop tour with architect and Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy member, John Waters, and neighborhoods with Chicago tour guide, Sally Kalmbach. The group explored sites throughout Chicago and the surrounding suburbs, such as Pullman, Oak Park and River Forest. This year the group also visited Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois.



The students and leaders managed well in the unusually high temperatures. Tree-lined shady streets and air-conditioned Frank Lloyd Wright houses were especially welcome. The program concluded with a long farewell dinner celebrating the class as well

as Richard Guy Wilson's 42 years as director of the Newport School in the Glessner House dining room, hosted by Executive Director and Curator, William Tyre. Next year's Chicago program is scheduled for June 11th through June 17th, 2025.

**Scholarships:** \_3 full, 3 three-quarter, 2 half = \$18,175



## **The Heritage Society of the Alumni Association**

**The Heritage Society of the Alumni Association** supports our efforts to provide scholarships to the Summer Schools in the future. The Alumni Association is humbled to have an extraordinary group of supporters who feel so strongly about our primary mission to raise funds for student scholarships that they have generously included the Alumni Association in their estate planning. You are invited to join this special group of Alumni by making a planned gift such as a bequest in your will or beneficiary designations of IRAs or retirement plans.

**Hank Dunlop** has joined the Society with an RMD designation from his IRA. **John C. Freed**, a longtime VSA and Alumni Association supporter made provisions for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association in memory of his partner, **Paul Duchscherer**. **Paul Duchscherer** very thoughtfully made provisions in his trust for a \$10,000 bequest to the Alumni Association as well as designating the Alumni Association as the beneficiary of all future royalties from his many books and other publications. The **Bob and Carole Chapman Fund** very generously awarded a grant of \$10,000 to the Alumni Association Chapter in memory of **Carole Chapman**. **Darrell Lemke & Maryellen Trautman** made provisions for a bequest to the Alumni Association. These gifts and designations help ensure that current and future generations of students will be able to attend the educational opportunities presented by the VSA Summer Schools.

You can join these members of the Heritage Society of the Alumni Association and support the mission of the Alumni Association while maximizing the benefits of a deferred gift. Your gift becomes part of your estate planning to protect valuable assets from income, capital gains and/or estate taxes. Here are some popular estate planning techniques:

### **REQUESTS BY WILL OR LIVING TRUST**

You can leave a bequest in your will or trust. You retain control of your assets during your lifetime and avoid estate taxes. GIFTS OF LIFE INSURANCE, CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES, CHARITABLE LEAD TRUSTS, CHARITABLE REMAINDER ANNUITY TRUSTS, CHARITABLE REMAINDER UNITRUSTS, and a POOLED INCOME FUND are all some of the other estate planning techniques you can discuss with your financial advisor to provide funds to the Alumni Association to provide scholarships to future Summer School students.

### **Sample Bequest Language**

To include the Alumni Association in your will or trust, the following is suggested wording to take to your attorney: "After fulfilling other provisions, I give, devise and bequeath \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue and remainder of my estate (or \$\_\_\_\_\_ if a specific amount) to the Alumni Association of the Victorian Society Summer Schools, a 501 c (3) organization to benefit the Alumni Association (tax ID # 23-1710978), located at 24 Wilkins Ave Fl 1, Haddonfield, NJ 08033

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## Steve Schwarzman Is Turning His Newport Mansion, Miramar, Into a Museum

The Blackstone CEO is planning a lasting legacy by opening the Gilded Age mansion to the public for tours after his and his wife's deaths.



Michael Osean/Gustave White Sotheby's International Real Estate

In recent years, billionaires [have been buying up](#) some of the few remaining privately held Gilded Age mansions along Bellevue Avenue in Newport, Rhode Island. Now, one of the world's wealthiest men says Miramar, the property he purchased three years ago, will be open to the public after his and his wife Christine's deaths.

“Christine and I intend to set Miramar up as a private museum at the time of our deaths for the benefit of the public in perpetuity,” Stephen A. Schwarzman tells *Town & Country*. “We are honored to have been able to do this for the community and contribute to Newport's historic preservation.”



Michael Osean/Gustave White Sotheby's International Real Estate  
An exterior look at Miramar and its surrounding property.

Since [acquiring](#) the property for \$27 million in September 2021 in a deal brokered by Gustave White Sotheby's agent David Huberman, the Schwarzmans have undertaken an ambitious three-year renovation with the goal of restoring Miramar to its original



glory—complete with historically appropriate art and furnishings that will serve as an ideal example of Newport's Gilded Age art and architecture for the public. The museum will be run by a private foundation with an endowment to cover its operation and upkeep.

Ian Wardropper, director of the Frick Collection in New York, is a friend of the Schwarzmans and says they have “really put together the finest collection of French fine and decorative arts of the 18th century that [he has] seen in decades.”

“In the great tradition of the Gilded Age of Newport and the Gilded Age of New York, they are really taking this seriously and trying to get the very best objects they can find to make this house sing,” Wardropper adds.



Michael Osean/Gustave White Sotheby's International Real Estate  
A view of the dining room before the Schwarzman's' renovation.

Those objects include paintings and portraits by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, John Singer Sargent, Vigée Le Brun, Peter Lely, and the 18th-century French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau, among many others, according to a source close to the Schwarzmans.

The collection also includes a Royal Gobelin's tapestry by Jean Audran that Miramar's original owner purchased and installed in the dining room, and a Royal Secretary desk from Versailles circa 1784, the source says.

“Steve and Christine clearly have a love of preservation and that is a trait the people in this community share,” says Trudy Coxe, CEO of the Preservation Society of Newport County, which owns and administers other Newport mansions open to the public including Marble House and the Breakers. “They know the value of our history and have amassed a remarkable, culturally significant collection. What is even more impressive is that the collection is housed at Miramar, an exceptional example of architecture that could be a museum in its own right. They are making a significant contribution to the historic and cultural fabric of the city, and it will serve as an enduring legacy.”

As part of the restoration work at Miramar, the Schwarzmans stripped down seven layers of paint to reveal the interiors’ original wall colors and gilded moldings. They also installed early 18th-century French wood paneling to replace the now-lost early 18th-century French wood paneling that originally lined the living room.

The collection was assembled with assistance from experts to ensure its historical accuracy, and Schwarzman says he and Christine “couldn’t have done it without the many historians, curators, local contractors, and tradesmen who capably brought the property back to life.” The restoration project involved a team that numbered in the hundreds and included local Newport contractors Kirby Perkins.

Wardropper says the Schwarzmans are following in the footsteps of other great collectors. “Henry Clay Frick, when he was furnishing the mansion in Manhattan, used two of the top decorators of the 20th century, Elsie de Wolfe and the British firm White Allom,” Wardropper says. “They not only helped with the interior decoration of the mansion but also advised Frick on works to fill the mansion, so in that sense I think the Schwarzmans are following a time-honored tradition in the United States.”

He adds that he is excited about the opportunity for the public to tour Miramar. “It’s just something that will clearly be a great advantage and a boost to Newport, to have an example of a house like this that has been meticulously restored and which will boast one of the finest collections of French 18th-century furniture in the world,” he says.



Michael Osean/Gustave White Sotheby's International Real Estate

Miramar is a fitting property for Schwarzman, who grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia, where his father owned a dry goods store. The mansion was commissioned by Philadelphia streetcar tycoon George Dunton Widener as a summer home for his family. For the project, Widener tapped Philadelphia architect Horace Trumbauer, who had designed one of the largest houses in the United States, [Lynnewood Hall](#), for his parents. (Trumbauer also designed Newport's Clarendon Court and the Elms.)

Widener died in the 1912 sinking of the Titanic along with his son Harry, but his widow and Harry's mother, Eleanor Elkins Widener, survived and moved into Miramar when its

construction was completed in 1915. She hosted a housewarming party that August [touted by](#) the *New York Times* as “the largest social entertainment of the Summer.” Later that year, Eleanor married Alexander Hamilton Rice, Jr., an explorer and physician, and Miramar remained in their family until the 1950s. Subsequently, it was owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island and later a couple who operated a girls’ boarding school out of the mansion. David B. Ford, a former Goldman Sachs banker, bought it for \$17.15 million in 2006, which at the time was the highest price paid for a private residence in Rhode Island.

The plan to turn Miramar into a museum is a continuation of Schwarzman’s philanthropy. Over the past decade, he has made major gifts to the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#), the [University of Oxford](#), [Yale University](#), the [National Library of Israel](#), and the [USA Track and Field Foundation](#). In 2020, he [signed the Giving Pledge](#), adding to the charitable effort Bill Gates, Melinda French Gates, and Warren Buffett [founded](#) to encourage wealthy people to contribute the majority of their money to charity.

Closer to the Schwarzmans’ home in Newport, when a suspected sinkhole developed earlier this year along a portion of the 3.5-mile Cliff Walk that runs between the Gilded Age estates of Bellevue Avenue and the ocean, the couple [paid](#) for the repair so the public trail could reopen for the summer.



Michael Osean/Gustave White Sotheby's International Real Estate  
The Cliff Walk runs between the the Gilded Age estates like Miramar and the ocean.

“This was a truly remarkable effort on behalf of the property owners, the city, and a real service to the community,” Peter Janaros, who chairs Newport’s Cliff Walk Commission, [told](#) the *Newport Daily News* in June. “Everybody should be applauded all around: From our volunteer who first brought the potential hazard to the attention of the city, to the property owners, who were able to secure the proper state approvals and generously funded the repairs, we simply wouldn’t have been able to get this section of walkway reopened in time for summer if not for the incredible spirit of community that surrounds the Cliff Walk.”



“Miramar” Bellevue Avenue’s finest gilded age mansion.

### **A Gilded Age Masterpiece**

Miramar, originally built in 1913, is a stunning example of Gilded Age architecture. Designed by the renowned architect Horace Trumbauer, the mansion is set on 7.8 acres of pristine coastal land overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The estate boasts 27,000 square feet of living space, including 22 bedrooms, 15 bathrooms, and numerous grand reception rooms that reflect the opulence and grandeur of the early 20th century.



Built in 1913 for Eleanor Elkins Widener, architect Horace Trumbauer's design for Miramar was a neoclassical French petit palais, inspired by eighteenth-century French architecture.

As noted by *Town & Country*, Schwarzman purchased the property in 2021 for a reported \$17 million. Since then, he has invested millions more in its restoration, preserving its historic elements while updating the mansion to serve as a state-of-the-art museum.

### **A Personal Museum of Unrivaled Treasures**

The transformation of Miramar into a private museum is a testament to Schwarzman's passion for art and history. The mansion now houses an impressive collection of artworks, including pieces by Old Masters, rare antiques, and historical artifacts. According to the *Robb Report*, Schwarzman's collection is one of the most significant private holdings in the world, featuring items that span centuries and continents.



The 31,000 Sq Ft H-shaped main residence constructed of limestone and has a surrounding balustraded terrace.

In an interview, a representative for Schwarzman remarked, “Mr. Schwarzman’s vision for Miramar was to create a space where the past could be preserved and celebrated. The museum offers a unique experience, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the rich history of both the mansion and the collections it houses.”



The main residence contains 22+ bedrooms, 13 full baths, and 5 half baths.

## A Legacy of Preservation

Schwarzman's dedication to preserving history is evident not only in his restoration of Miramar but also in his broader philanthropic efforts. He has donated millions to cultural and educational institutions, including the New York Public Library and Oxford University. The creation of this private museum is a continuation of his commitment to cultural preservation, providing a unique space for future generations to appreciate the art and history of bygone eras.



Surrounded by a decorative fence with gated entry the estate is extremely private, stately, fountains, two tennis courts and magnificent plantings grace the grounds.

The *Town & Country* article highlights that while Miramar remains a private residence, Schwarzman plans to open the museum to select visitors by invitation only, making it one of the most exclusive cultural destinations in the world. The mansion's extensive grounds, which include formal gardens, a reflecting pool, and oceanfront vistas, further enhance the visitor experience, offering a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of America's Gilded Age elite.





Billionaire Steve Schwarzman

### Newport's Cultural Renaissance

The transformation of Miramar is part of a broader renaissance in [Newport](#), a city known for its historic mansions and cultural heritage. Newport has long been a playground for America's wealthiest families, and the addition of Schwarzman's private museum further cements the city's status as a cultural hub.



As noted by *Robb Report*, Newport has seen a resurgence in interest from wealthy individuals looking to invest in historic properties. Schwarzman's project is the latest example of this trend, showcasing how the city's storied past continues to inspire and attract new generations of collectors and philanthropists.



## Conclusion

Steve Schwarzman's conversion of the Miramar mansion into a private museum is a remarkable achievement, blending historic preservation with a deep appreciation for art and culture. This project not only honors the legacy of Newport's Gilded Age but also creates a lasting cultural institution that will inspire and educate future generations. With its exclusive collection and stunning setting, Miramar stands as a testament to Schwarzman's vision and commitment to preserving history.



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