

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE ON CARR'S HILL

William M. Kendall of McKim, Mead & White commented in his 20 November 1908 letter, after visiting the partially completed house, that “It is recommended that the radiators in the hall be made lower and wider [than what had apparently already been installed], reaching no higher than the top of the chair rail.” This change was apparently made at some point after Kendall’s letter, as the current radiators match the description of the preferred design and not of the initial installation that Kendall rejected. An earlier letter from McKim, Mead & White, dated 31 January 1907, says “In regard to radiators, we intend to inclose [sic] them with wood paneling, lined on the inside with sheet metal and provided with top and bottom registers; but inasmuch as during your recent visit to our office you questioned the necessity for this we have omitted the enclosures from the plans and specifications. They can be added if you think wise, though, of course, every such addition will increase the cost of the house.” Based on this correspondence, it is not clear whether the covers were installed before the house was completed, but the general framework of the present covers appears to date from President Alderman’s time at the university. In any event, the covers were in place by 1959, when modifications were made to them. The drawings prepared at that time indicate that the wood framework was existing and that the proposed alterations consisted of adding “brass wire lace—1/2” mesh” and “new panel molding” at the edge of the mesh. Before 1959, the covers were slightly taller, by 3 inches, but the height was reduced to make them more suitable for sitting.



The south vestibule doors as seen looking north from the main hall.

The south vestibule is the space that leads into the main hall from the front entrance. It is narrow in the north-south dimension, from an exterior pair of doors to an inner framed opening that once held a second pair of doors. It features richly finished walls, floor, and ceiling with a number of high-style Classic Revival details. There is a semi-circular niche with a clamshell top in both the east and west walls. (The niches were closed in at some point, probably in the 1950s, and were reopened when they were “re-discovered” as part of a renovation project in the 1980s.) The vestibule floor is a diagonal checkerboard pattern of gray and black stone. Both the exterior doors and interior doors have sidelights and elliptical fanlights with richly patterned glass divided by curved muntins featuring ovals and quarter circles. The mullions and jambs are formed with fluted pilasters and similar molded wood profiles.

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The niches in the south-vestibule were re-discovered and reopened after years of being plastered.