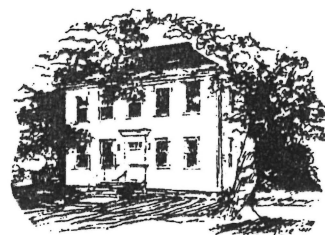


IMAGES

. . . then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



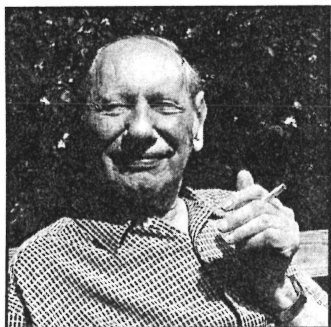
Buckingham Lodge
1861

Hans Nuetzel: An Architect's Story

Indian Hill's custom built homes reflect their architect's expertise. Hans Nuetzel's residences in the community are numerous, and his connection to the village has lasted more than forty years.

Nuetzel was raised in Germany, where his career options were limited because he was partly Jewish. In 1949, with a degree in Architecture from the University of Munich, he had an opportunity to move to the U.S.; and he came to Cincinnati with his wife and elderly father. Though fluent in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and German, he didn't speak English and had no money. Over the next few years, he picked up English (without any formal instruction), worked for Carl Strauss as a project architect, and designed and built his own hilltop home in Anderson Township (where he still resides.) Next he was employed by Cellarius, where he first had contact with Indian Hill, while doing the architectural drawings for Indian Hill Church. With Cellarius he designed many traditional buildings - including 20 at Miami University.

Though the firm focused on larger commercial projects, Nuetzel was fascinated by the prospect of doing houses for individual people and spent evenings pursuing this goal. He designed houses in Finneytown and Ludlow, before his first commission in Indian Hill. One of Nuetzel's neighbors on Five Mile Road was the late Henry Fletcher Kinney, a prominent landscape architect, who recommended Nuetzel to an Indian Hill couple, who hired him the next day. A second commission on the same lane followed—both contemporary homes. One job led to another, and Hans Nuetzel's reputation grew in Indian Hill.



The one guiding principle he stood by was to make the house fit its environment. He valued the input of his clients and worked with them to create their ideal homes. Among these were an assertive home that resembled freestanding sculpture in a meadow, a rustic residence crafted from Pennsylvania barn timbers with a silo for a studio, and numerous wood or fieldstone homes that nestled into their sites. When working with clients, the first thing that Nuetzel wanted was to see the client's site. When one couple was told that a possible site would lead to an ordinary home, they purchased a different lot where Nuetzel then created an elegant modern villa for them. Clients described their needs, but trusted Nuetzel with the creative process. Dialogue and discussion were ongoing for the average two years of construction. As he guided his clients through the process, he addressed them gently, saying "Children, this"... or "Children, that."

Nuetzel joined the firm of Gartner, Burdick, Bauer-Nilsen in 1973 and worked there for twenty years. He continued designing individual homes, setting aside the time period of 8:00 until 11:00 p.m., six nights a week. He supervised construction of these homes during his lunch hour (GBBN's office was in Madisonville.) or on weekends. As his residential clientele grew, he also did remodeling projects on existing homes, summer homes in Michigan, and dwellings in Long Island, N.Y., and Maine. At the same time, he worked all around Greater Cincinnati, including designing 30 to 35 homes in Indian Hill.

Nuetzel has a history in the village, yet his work is ongoing today. He blends his homes into their lots, designing houses that do not tell all on first sight. He likes his houses to be a surprise, unfolding their drama in stages. While his homes reflect current trends, each is unique to the client and the site. Nuetzel appreciates the Arcadian beauty of Indian Hill, and his numerous houses here display his cognizance of Nature. Using natural light, views, or a secluded woodland setting - whatever the landscape offers - he creates living spaces. His later homes can be identified by the Nuetzel signature - a distinctly angled chimney cap.

Hans Nuetzel is dedicated to his work, and his clients remain his friends. Now retired from the large firm, he has more time for hobbies (reading and Tai Chi) and his own work. He is currently engaged in a private commission in the village, one that, like others he has completed, will have a masterful spark and sensitivity to its natural surrounding.