



# THE CARPENTER HOUSE

*A brief history of the building which houses Rome Art and Community Center*

The Carpenter house is an excellent example of English Tudor architecture. Arthur Carpenter, one of Rome's most successful industrialists, owner of Rome Metallic Bedsted Co., and his wife Grace Carpenter built the amazing home in 1923. Together with its extensive grounds it is now the Rome Art and Community. Open to all Romans and everyone in the surrounding area. RACC welcomes almost 5,000 visitors annually including visitors from all over the US.

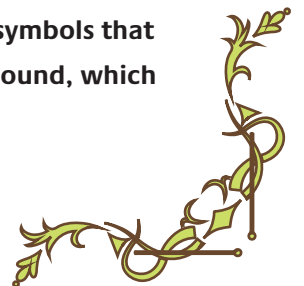
We owe our gratitude to Mrs. Grace Carpenter for the beauty we see. Her directives to the architect



were classic! She knew exactly what she wanted, and she summarized it all with one sentence: "I want a house that Jane Austen would have wanted to live in"

Grace Carpenter, a woman not known for conformity, helped build a house full of so many imperfect-perfections that it is a true work of art. The main building achieves its one of a kind look through many unconventional ways. Every single brick in its exterior was a "reject". Their imperfections, when massed, provides the building with its color and texture. The carefully placed chimneys were purposely made crooked. The steeply pitched roof with its thick, colored slate, weighing some 70 tons, and the leaded paned windows are in style of English manor houses of the Elizabethan Era.

The relief fireplaces, ceilings, and carvings over the oak stairs are richly ornamented with symbols that represent English crests and coats of arms. The Carpenter's favorite symbol was the Greyhound, which can be spotted secretly throughout the home in special details.





While the house itself is, one of a kind, Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter didn't stop there. They hired the world famous art collector, Joseph Duveen, to make the inside furnishings just as unique as the house. The local community watched, during the summer of 1923, as a parade of trucks brought priceless court cupboards, 17th Century chairs, wall hanging, floor coverings, and old antique furnishings and art treasure from New York.

The furnishings, walls and plank flooring were all coordinated to avoid a sense of newness. Fine Paintings included a hall painting from the Canaletto School, which still hangs in the building. The oak-paneled library contained an outstanding book collection displayed on shelves which covered two walls from floor to ceiling. An Antique gate-leg table, circa 1650. This library was the favorite room for entertaining family and friends over cocktails and demitasse.

Surrounding the beautiful Carpenter house were well-planned gardens and lawns. The lawn immediately north of the house was maintained as a putting green since the Carpenters were avid golfers. The extreme north side of the property in the past had an area that included a lily pond surrounded by jack-in-the-pulpits, lady's slippers, ivy, and rare botanical specimens. A number of the dogwood trees planted at the time continue to flourish even with Rome being in such a northern latitude.

The property's enormous lawn has huge bearded firs and a rare magnolia. The stately vase-shaped elms that shaded the era where neighborhood boys played football in uniforms given to them by Mrs. Carpenter. A favorite birthday celebration for Mrs. Carpenter was a party for these same children.

Mrs. Carpenter herself was an amateur artist and had studied in New York City. Her studio on the third floor was replete with its "north window". To the disagreement of some of her friends Grace Carpenter thought "anyone can paint". With her array of easels, oils and partially completed works, most of which included people. She produced paintings with an interest on circus clowns, a few sculpture pieces and wrote two small books, "Friends of the Road" and The Besieging Spirit". These two collections of her litanies mirrored her lifelong devotion to Episcopal Church.

After the deaths of Arthur and Grace Carpenter, the City of Rome bought the property in 1966 for the purpose of housing a non-profit organization the Rome Art and Community Center. It is devoted not only to culture and arts in the broadest sense, but also serves as a meeting place for many community organizations unrelated to the art field.



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