



# PITTOCK PAPERS

## TRANSFORMING A HISTORIC HOUSE INTO A 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MUSEUM

Henry Pittock was a visionary entrepreneur and early adopter of technology—traits that are now serving as inspiration for Pittock Mansion's new strategic plan for enhancing the visitor experience. While Henry's embrace of Industrial Age innovation led him to build an architecturally impressive house with the latest technology, bringing that formerly state-of-the-art technology to 21st-century standards presents challenges. It's not as simple as ripping out the old and replacing it with the latest and greatest. So, how does a historic house museum get a much-needed technological upgrade? Carefully and thoughtfully.

The Mansion's architect, Edward Foulkes, had experience designing commercial buildings outfitted with the latest conveniences. Foulkes designed Pittock a very modern home by 1914 standards that included innovations such as thermostat-controlled central heating, elevator, electric dumbwaiter, Western Electric intercom system, central vacuuming, refrigerator room, and elaborate showers. Most of the innovations listed above required a source of energy, and in 1914, the "way of the future" was electricity.

While the Mansion's original electrical panel was more than strong enough to support the home's original electrical needs, the transition from family home



An original fuse box (left) and original electrical switchboard (right).

to historic house museum has necessitated adding computer workstations and office equipment. As the number of workstations and equipment increased, so have signs that the electrical system is taxed: regular office activities on the Mansion's third floor sometimes blow fuses; lights in the office space above Admissions dim when printers turn on; and outlets on both the third floor and in the Garage are at capacity, preventing the Mansion from adding more workstations for new staff as the team grows to

(continued on page 7)

## GATE LODGE PORTICO: A MODEL FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

One of the guiding principles of preserving historic buildings is any repair or restoration work should not alter the authenticity of how the structure looks. While the brick and concrete elements of the Pittock estate's historic

buildings are better equipped to handle the elements over time, wooden components are more vulnerable and often require more maintenance and repair throughout their lifetime.

While doing routine maintenance on the grounds this past fall, Portland Parks & Recreation carpenters discovered extensive water damage to one of the Gate Lodge's most striking features, the portico.

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## SPECIAL TOURS & EVENTS



### Special Museum Store Discount Days

JULY 8 & OCT. 14

*New member benefit!* Shop in the Museum Store on these special days for an extra 10% off for a total of 20% off your purchase! Purchases made in the Museum Store support Pittock Mansion and its mission.

MEMBERS ONLY  
SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY



### Day Camp for Kids: Life in 1914\*

JULY 18 or 19  
9AM - 12:30PM

Children ages 8-12 are invited to go back in time and behind the scenes to experience what life was like 100 years ago through engaging, hands-on activities.

ADMISSION: MEMBERS \$25  
NON-MEMBERS \$35



### Summer Music Series

WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS JUNE - AUG.  
3PM - 5PM

Join us for live piano music in the Music Room. Local volunteer musicians will play the 1887 Steinway grand piano that Henry Pittock's children and grandchildren played.

FREE WITH ADMISSION  
BASED ON VOLUNTEER AVAILABILITY

\*Prepayment and reservations are required. Call 503.823.3624.

## EXHIBITS



Souvenir from an 1898 trip to Czech spa town Marienbad.

### Untold Stories of Pittock Mansion Treasures

JULY 15 - NOV. 12

Pittock Mansion has artifacts whose stories are rarely told: a punch bowl purchased as a souvenir from an 1898 trip to a Czech spa town, a toy swing Governor Tom McCall played with as a child, a still life painting by Oregon free spirit and activist C.E.S. Wood. In this exhibit, explore the histories of lesser-known—but equally compelling—objects.



Explore Pittock Mansion decorated for the holidays!

### A Very Portland Christmas

NOV. 20 - DEC. 31\*

\*CLOSED THANKSGIVING & CHRISTMAS DAY

Enjoy the wonders of the season at Pittock Mansion's annual holiday display, a Portland tradition for over 50 years. This year, experience the iconic places, people, and events of Portland—Powell's Books, Packy the elephant, and Peacock Lane—as they are incorporated into the decorative stylings of volunteers and professional designers who transform the Mansion into a holiday wonderland.



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

From dedicated citizens to active members like you, from city officials to the staff—to preserve, share, and pass on Portland's story through Pittock Mansion is truly a group effort. And you, the members, have transformed the Mansion into a vital gathering place for the community.

The technical tasks—restoring worn stone or wood, ensuring the house is watertight, preparing the house to weather future natural disasters—can be challenging and at times daunting. Yet, when we approach the work together with the shared goal to ensure this home remains an engaging, valuable place, so much is possible.

In this edition, you'll read about some recent and upcoming efforts to care for the estate and build the technological base necessary to further enhance the visitor experience. The success of these projects, like those that came before and those to come, depends entirely on joint effort: yours, ours, and the City's.

As dedicated citizens, as active members, you demonstrate your connection to Pittock Mansion through your support. And it is you who preserves Pittock Mansion so that it can be shared with everyone, both near and far, who come here to connect with our city's culture and history.

Together, we are all stewards of not only the past but the future as well. Together, we make what is possible a reality.

With gratitude,



Marta E. Bones  
Executive Director



Estate steward James Skene and his family by the Gate Lodge portico circa 1945. Read about recent repairs to the Gate Lodge's portico beginning on page 1.

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The mission of Pittock Mansion Society is to inspire understanding and stewardship of Portland history through Pittock Mansion, its collections, and programs.

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In 1964, spurred by the fundraising efforts of concerned citizens, the City of Portland bought Pittock Mansion, originally home to Portland pioneers Henry and Georgiana Pittock. Today, Pittock Mansion Society and Portland Parks & Recreation work in collaboration to operate and maintain the museum and the surrounding 46-acre park, which have been open to the public since 1965.

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The repaired portico now graces the Gate Lodge.

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## GATE LODGE PORTICO: A MODEL FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Parks carpenters previously repaired the portico in 1977, but one of the vulnerabilities of this wooden structure is that its columns are prone to rot from water wicking up through their bases. In addition to the rotted columns, the carpenters also discovered rot throughout the dentil-ornamented frieze, the decorative band running along the bottom of the portico's arch.

To make the necessary repairs, Parks carpenters removed the portico and transported it to their carpentry shop. Using 1913 architectural drawings, historic photographs, and the original structure as reference, the carpenters were able to repair the portico to match its original appearance. The carpenters reused as much historic material as

possible, and parts of the decorative frieze that were too rotten to save were used as patterns for crafting replacements. Samples of the original trim are now stored in Pittock Mansion's artifact collection for future reference.

To better protect the portico from water damage in the future, carpenters added a water-repellent membrane just below the curved arch of the portico. Next, they patched the rotted bases of the columns, applied a marine epoxy, and added hidden ventilation holes and screening at the tops of the columns to combat future moisture. The carpenters also reinforced the back of the portico and the side lattice panels. With the repairs completed, the carpenters carefully reattached the portico and installed new copper roofing.

The portico survived its first century, and now, thanks to thoughtful repair work, the portico will be there to greet Gate Lodge visitors through the next century. And, when the time comes for the portico to be repaired once more, meticulous documentation of the structure will be available so future carpenters know how to preserve the authenticity of this piece of historic architecture.

Captions for photos at right, top to bottom:

1. Years of water infiltration rotted wood in the portico's columns and frieze.
2. Repair work underway at the Portland Parks & Recreation carpentry shop.
3. Carpenters repaired rotted columns in a way that will help prevent future water infiltration.
4. Portland Parks & Recreation staff installing the repaired portico.



(continued from page 1)

## TRANSFORMING...INTO A 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MUSEUM

accommodate the museum's increasing visitation.

This spring, as a first step to finding a solution for the electrical system, On Electrical Group (OEG) conducted a pro-bono circuit tracing of our electrical systems. The goal was to evaluate current concerns, determine if they pose safety risks, and present suggestions for resolving the issues, keeping in mind the site's historical preservation requirements.

OEG found the Mansion's third floor has adequate power for our current usage and can accommodate additional workspaces once circuit use is reorganized; currently, some circuits are overloaded, while others are underutilized. In the Garage, OEG found an appropriate number of circuits feeding the Museum Store, Admissions, and second floor office space, but the main feeder in the basement of the Mansion is undersized for the number of electric loads added to the Garage over the years. This is not a safety concern, but it indicates the Garage is at maximum capacity. Additional workspaces cannot be added until the existing conductors in the Mansion's basement are replaced with larger ones, which is an expensive endeavor. As a result, the Mansion is examining options and working on a plan of action.

Another obstacle to providing a 21st-century museum experience at Pittock Mansion is an outdated and underpowered internet connection. If Henry Pittock was living in the Mansion today, it is likely he would insist upon the highest speed internet available! However, due to the Mansion's remote location, the infrastructure necessary to upgrade to high speed internet is not readily available.

The underpowered internet connection causes a number of operations problems: it slows the processing of credit card payments, thereby increasing visitors' wait time at Admissions; it prevents us from updating to a state-of-the-art point of sale system with online ticket sales and gift card capabilities; it is too weak to support multimedia presentations, limiting our programming options; and it prohibits the Mansion from providing WiFi for visitors.

After months of research and negotiation, the Mansion has recently reached an agreement with Comcast that will bring high speed internet infrastructure up to the Mansion. Once installed, the Mansion will have the high speed internet connection necessary

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## Pittock Mansion

3229 NW Pittock Drive  
Portland, OR 97210

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### Have You Moved?

Please contact Lara C. Miller  
to update your information.  
lmiller@pittockmansion.org  
503.823.1651

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### Interested in Volunteering?

Please contact Kyla Foster  
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Follow us on



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### See inside for

Transforming a Historic House 1  
into a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Museum

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nonprofit organization, proudly  
serving the community since 1968.



Circuit tracing discovered work is needed before  
adding new electrical loads to the Garage.

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## TRANSFORMING A HISTORIC HOUSE INTO A 21<sup>ST</sup>-CENTURY MUSEUM

to work on the technology-based visitor experience enhancements outlined in the strategic plan.

Henry Pittock built a technologically advanced modern home for himself and his family. As a result of his forward-thinking, the Mansion had the technological infrastructure necessary to transition to a historic house museum. And now, thanks to OEG and Comcast, the Mansion has begun its transformation into a 21st-century museum. Stay tuned!