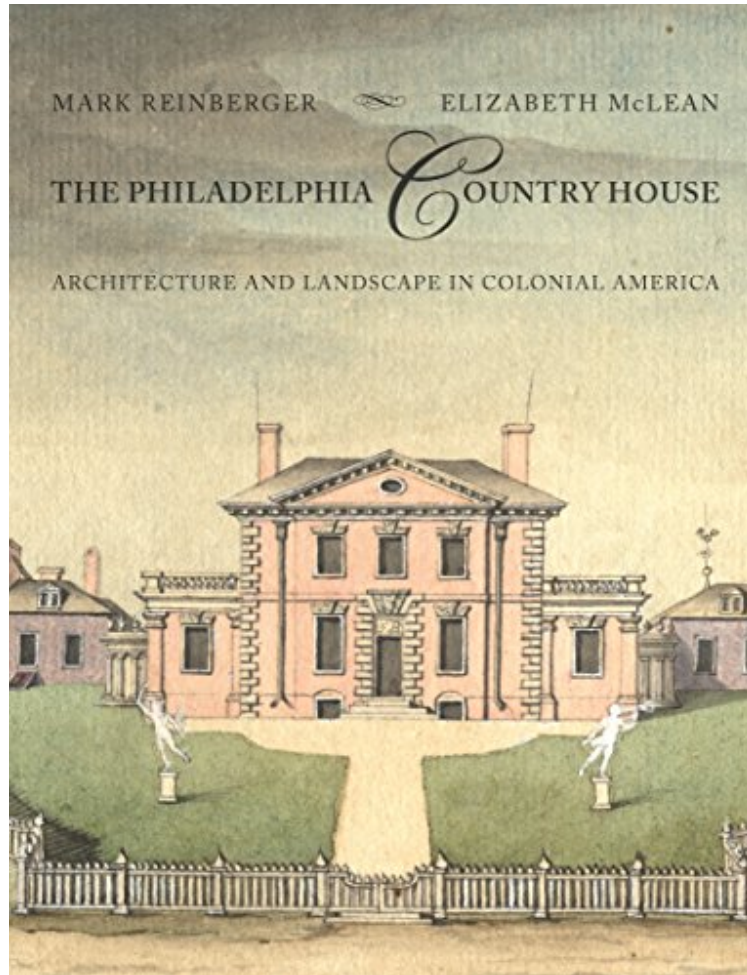


# The Philadelphia Country House

Mark E Reinberger, Elizabeth McLean  
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**Mark E Reinberger, Elizabeth McLean : The Philadelphia Country House** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Philadelphia Country House:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Brian BallVery clear, well written6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Superb, entertaining and informative!By Steve S.This is a superb book! It provides a magnificent overview of the development of the country house in and around Philadelphia. There is an abundance of technical information in the book which provides a real gold mine for those interested in such details, bit it can easily be skimmed over by those not so inclined. The historical,pictures are fascinating, particularly the inclusion of some comparisons with New England trends and those in the "mother country" England itself. My only unfulfilled desire was to see some contemporary colored photographs of how the places appear today----but this is really a minor criticism in the face of the embarrassment of riches this book provides.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent History of Bourgeois Architecture in Colonial AmericaBy Erik M. AndersonAs an amateur student of architecture, I found this book surprisingly accessible, and filled with great information about the rise of the

"colonial" architecture used by the bourgeoisie in early America. It starts by giving a great synopsis of the architectural and landscape developments and trends in England that influenced the colonies. If you are looking to study early American architecture, this is a great resource. The reader also shouldn't be discouraged based on the title - the reason for the focus on Philadelphia is elaborated on in the book, but essentially the region saw the widest use of country houses for a variety of reasons. In fact, the entire first two chapters deal with architecture from areas other than Philadelphia. The book also provides extensive end notes useful for further reading.

Colonial Americans, if they could afford it, liked to emulate the fashions of London and the style and manners of English country society while at the same time thinking of themselves as distinctly American. The houses they built reflected this ongoing cultural tension. By the mid-eighteenth century, Americans had developed their own version of the bourgeois English countryseat, a class of estate equally distinct in social function and form from townhouses, rural plantations, and farms. The metropolis of Philadelphia was surrounded by a particularly extraordinary collection of country houses and landscapes. Taken together, these estates make up one of the most significant groups of homes in colonial America. In this masterly volume, Mark Reinberger, a senior architectural historian, and Elizabeth McLean, an accomplished scholar of landscape history, examine the country houses that the urban gentry built on the outskirts of Philadelphia in response to both local and international economic forces, social imperatives, and fashion. What do these structures and their gardens say about the taste of the people who conceived and executed them? How did their evolving forms demonstrate the persistence of European templates while embodying the spirit of American adaptation? *The Philadelphia Country House* explores the myriad ways in which these estates—which were located in the country but responded to the ideas and manners of the city—straddled the cultural divide between urban and rural. Moving from general trends and building principles to architectural interiors and landscape design, Reinberger and McLean take readers on an intimate tour of the fine, fashionable elements found in upstairs parlors and formal gardens. They also reveal the intricate working world of servants, cellars, and kitchen gardens. Highlighting an important aspect of American historic architecture, this handsome volume is illustrated with nearly 150 photographs, more than 60 line drawings, and two color galleries.

"Some of them stick in the minds of locals as place names, street names, or both - Belmont, Lansdowne, Stenton, Mount Pleasant. But they started as country houses, well-to-do Philadelphians' answer to English manor houses. You can read all about them and get a good look at them - inside and out - in this very handsome and informative book." (Philadelphia Inquirer)"Reinberger and McLean have succeeded in illuminating the nature and significance of a specific building type in colonial America, the country house or seat, focusing on those around the city of Philadelphia. The scholarship is extremely sound, the documentation is profuse, and the book effectively presents a tremendous amount of information on a significant topic that deserves elucidation. No comparable study exists." (Damie Stillman, University of Delaware Professor Emeritus)"In this illuminating and handsomely illustrated volume, Mark Reinberger, a senior architectural historian, and Elizabeth McLean, an accomplished scholar of landscape history, examine the country houses that the urban gentry built on the outskirts of Philadelphia in response to both local and international economic forces, social imperatives, and fashion." (Magnolia)"The Philadelphia Country House is the most complete study ever of the city's colonial rural residences. It is likely to remain the definitive word on its subject in the pre-Revolutionary period in Philadelphia's orbit for a long time to come. The volume has been years in the making, and the wealth and depth of information from archival sources and surviving sites that the authors have deployed here is prodigious. This well-illustrated volume includes current photographs complemented by numerous reproductions of historic images, as well as new analytical architectural drawings." (Pennsylvania Heritage)"Colonial Americans did, of course, emulate English architecture and society, yet they created new forms suitable for life in America. Nowhere is the tension better seen than in the bourgeois estates built by wealthy Colonists on the fringes of Philadelphia. Many of these houses still stand, in landscapes that retain much of their history. Through them, we learn about American versions of the classics. In a new book, architectural historian Mark Reinberger and Elizabeth Mclean, an accomplished scholar of landscape history, examine these country houses that nevertheless exhibited city manners." (Early Homes)"This scholarly achievement by Reinberger and McLean is a significant addition to American architecture studies... Recommended for specialists in American architecture and Philadelphia area studies and as a model of architectural and landscape scholarship." (Choice)"Overall this important contribution will become the standard reference on the subject." (Winterthur Portfolio)About the AuthorMark Reinberger is a professor of architecture at the University of Georgia. He is the author of *Utility and Beauty: Robert Wellford and Composition Ornament in America*. Elizabeth McLean is a research associate in botany at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. She is the coauthor of Peter Collinson and the Eighteenth-Century Natural History Exchange.