

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

PITKIN AND MOTT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

William Pitkin, Jr. was born in 1884 in Rochester, New York. Pitkin's family, prominent in Rochester, were involved in the nursery business for several generations. Rochester had been a major American center of the nursery trade from the 1830s, home of the Genesee Farmer, one of America's earliest farm and horticulture journals and home of Elwanger and Barry, the largest American nursery in the mid-nineteenth century. Pitkin graduated from Cornell University in 1911 with a degree in landscape architecture. He returned to Rochester where he practiced (Czerkas, 1997). He is known for designing estate landscapes in New York

State, Vermont and Ohio. He also is recognized for design of landscape around several country clubs. In 1914, he laid out the 840 acres Upper Arlington, Franklin County, Ohio (NR, 1985). The Upper Arlington design was much publicized in urban planning circles by the developer the community, King Thompson (City of Upper Arlington Bicentennial Committee, 1976). In 1919, Pitkin moved to Cleveland, establishing a design firm there (Czerkas, 1997). About this time, he took as a partner Seward H. Mott. Mott likely was related to Pitkin's wife, Marjorie Mott. Both Pitkin and Mott were members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, although neither became fellows (Birnbaum, 1997). Neither published many articles nor did either have their work frequently published, even in Your Garden, the landscape magazine directed at the local northeastern Ohio market. Two members of their firm, Willis Wiedorn and Carol Lawrence, were also members of ASLA in 1933. In 1937 William Pitkin returned to Rochester to run the family business after his father's death (Czerkas).

Little is known of the increasingly full work of the Pitkin and Mott firm. Initially, they were successful, although falling victims to the slow pace of landscape design during the 1930s depression. Their clients in northeastern Ohio were wealthy as they worked at the large country estate Mooreland, the site of Lakeland Community College in Mentor, and several large properties in Shaker Heights. Forest Glen residents suggest (unconfirmed) that Pitkin and Mott designed the elaborate and well remembered gardens of the Allsop House at 137 Newport Drive which no longer survive intact (Town Talk, 1931).

Pitkin and Mott succeeded in designing a neighborhood that is tranquil, manicured and imposing looking despite houses being on fairly small lots with modest side yards and small rear yards. The focus on an over-story of majestic deciduous shade trees was more successful by placing utility lines at the rear of lots, by setting houses deep on each lot, by restraining the location and width of driveways and by opening the front of each lot with tree belt, sidewalk and lawn. The restriction on fencing and the harmonious intermingling of landscaping continues to give the neighborhood the appearance that each front yard is part of the neighbor's front yard, too.