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Architectural Mysteries Of 'The Orchard House' At Southern Vermont College

By [JANE LINDHOLM \(/PEOPLE/JANE-LINDHOLM\)](/PEOPLE/JANE-LINDHOLM) & [RIC CENERI \(/PEOPLE/RIC-CENERI\)](/PEOPLE/RIC-CENERI) • JUL 5, 2018Tweet (<http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?>[url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fycg3omx6&text=Architectural%20Mysteries%20Of%20%27The%20Orchard%27%20At%20Southern%20Vermont%20College](http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fycg3omx6&text=Architectural%20Mysteries%20Of%20%27The%20Orchard%27%20At%20Southern%20Vermont%20College))

The former Everett Mansion on the campus of the Southern Vermont College is one of the state's architectural gems.

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The list of Vermont's architectural gems include the Statehouse, numerous unique barns and its iconic New England church buildings. But Southern Vermont College in Bennington is home to another structure that should be on the list: The Orchard House.

Now serving as the main building on campus, it was built in the 1910s by wealthy Ohio businessman Edward Everett. He made his fortune from producing Lightning jars, the precursors of the Mason jar. The Orchard House served as a summer home for Everett's family and was patterned after the English feudal mansions of the 14th century.



According to Southern Vermont College President David Evans, “the outside is made from blue limestone that was quarried on the property and down the road a little bit in Pownal, Vermont. It has red terra-cotta roof tiles that were made in Italy.”

But he notes, “it’s a terrible building for the Vermont climate. The terra cotta roof tiles are very subject to freeze/thaw cycles. And that’s always a problem. The windows are all single-pane windows. And, of course, it doesn’t have air conditioning. We struggle a little bit with that.”

Evans says that when it comes to The Orchard House, the views are its *raison d’être*. They include the Bennington Monument, downtown Bennington, Mount Anthony, and the steeple of the Old First Church.

(http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/vpr/files/styles/x_large/public/201807/Vpr-vermont-edition-orchard-house-southern-vermont-college-20180703_0.JPG)

A captivating wall sconce at The Orchard House at

Among the highlights of the building is what now serves as the college's library. It was the original dining room and music room for the Everetts. The room has the original tapestry wall paper, sterling silver fittings, solid sterling chandelier, Cuban mahogany and local black marble.

The Main Hall of the mansion was inspired by English country houses with a the barrel-vaulted ceiling, arched windows and vaults over the windows.



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This Italian-inspired cascade was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted's firm.

CREDIT RIC CENGERI / VPR

The building's courtyard includes a cascade reminiscent of ornate Italian gardens. It was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted's firm in the early 1920s.

And then there is an unique oddity that has become Evans' favorite touch in the home. “There’s only one of them. This sort of outdoor sconce with this lady’s arm sticking out of the wall holding the lamp. And it’s very, very Addams Family-like, I think. It’s just so creepy. I can’t imagine why anyone ever thought it was a good idea, but I just love it.”

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Editor's note: this story has been updated with a corrected spelling for Frederick Law Olmsted.

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