

Maurice Bathhouse

Designed by architect George Gleim, Jr., the present Maurice Bathhouse was built by William (Billy) Maurice to replace an existing Victorian-style building, the Independent Bathhouse, later renamed the Maurice Bathhouse after owner Charles Maurice (William's father).

The present building opened for business on January 1, 1912 and ushered in a new, more luxurious bathhouse milieu. The Maurice Bathhouse's architectural style is eclectic, but its major stylistic features are California Modern, as seen in the works of Louis Mullgardt and others in the Bay Region School, incorporating Mediterranean and Renaissance Revival styles.

When Sam W. Fordyce completed his bathhouse in 1915, Maurice hired the architects of the Fordyce Bathhouse, Mann and Stern of Little Rock, to renovate the Maurice. He purchased large stained glass skylights from the Rossbach Art Glass Company in Columbus, Ohio (later of Chicago), along with hand-painted canvas wall coverings. To the third floor he added a striking Craftsman style den complete with stained glass ceiling and a frieze entitled "Dutch Life" hand-painted by artist Frederick Wernicke. The room was dubbed the "Roycroft Den" to commemorate Elbart Hubbard, founder of the Roycrofters craftsman design studio, who died on the Lusitania. Hubbard published a booklet from his "Little Journey" series on the Maurice Bathhouse.

With a total floor space of 23,000 square feet, the three-story bathhouse had ample room for a complete range of services and amenities. The interior boasted a lobby lined with gilded oak pilasters with ionic capitals, large stained glass skylights in both bath halls and the men's pack room, private staterooms furnished with Mission Style oak pieces, and of course the Roycroft Den with its a stone hearth, stained glass clerestory, and plaster Bacchus mascarons. The Maurice also had a gymnasium, staterooms, a roof garden, twin elevators, and in the 1930s a therapeutic pool, situated in the basement. It was the only bathhouse on the Row to have such a pool. The Maurice closed in November 1974.

