

Refined, Functional, Elegant and Historic: The Highland Towers Apartments in Pittsburgh

BY SHERRY STOKES
PHOTOS BY RICHARD MORGAN

The Highland Towers apartments in the Shadyside neighborhood of Pittsburgh are as refined and functional today as they were a century ago. Designed by Frederick G. Scheibler, Jr., this 36-unit building is deemed one of the finest examples of early American Modern Architecture.

Thanks to the preservation efforts of Franklin West, Inc., which purchased the property in the early 1970s, Highland Towers was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. This year marks its 100th anniversary.

Scheibler, a famed Pittsburgh architect, shied away from 19th century conventions. Instead, he gleaned ideas from progressive art movements, such as Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Exposed beams, art-glass windows and hand-painted faux “mosaic tiles” punctuate the concrete walls in light-filled apartments. Mahogany and leaded glass doors set into built-in concrete cabinetry denote the attention to detail and quality that went into the building’s construction.

Committed to maintaining the aesthetics of Scheibler’s design, Franklin West, Inc. has made great efforts to conserve as much of the original structure as possible. Throughout many of the units, floor plans remain intact, and tenants walk on warm, finished beech wood floors that were laid in place 100 years ago. Because of the diligence that Franklin West, Inc. exercises in maintaining this historic treasure, Highland Towers remains the elegant, urban respite that Scheibler intended. ■

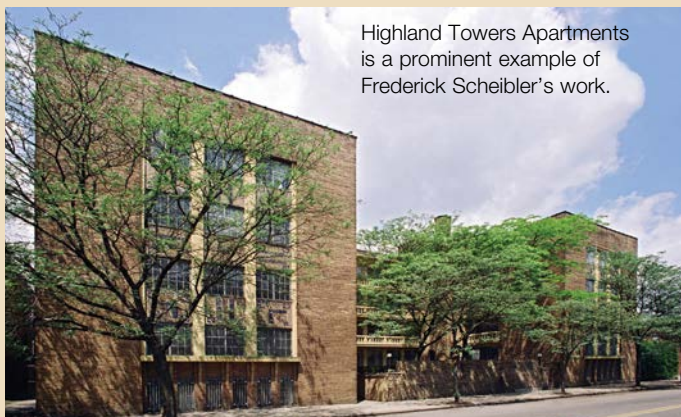


A fireplace tucked in the corner radiates cozy charm.



Built-in concrete cabinetry and an arched fireplace provide functionality and create interest.

Below: Beech wood floors complement earth-toned glass, while a partition lends an open feel to an apartment’s floor plan. At bottom: Large art-glass windows provide natural light



Highland Towers Apartments is a prominent example of Frederick Scheibler’s work.