

Sharp family in 1916. Located in Wilmington, DE, construction continued until 1923. Coffin was among the first women formally trained in landscape architecture. Typical of the time, the property is u h

Sharps collected the 35 statues that grace the gardens. Preservation Delaware saved the property and its gardens from demolition in 1990 and has run the property as a free public garden, open from dawn to dusk. In order to secure an %adaptive reuse+ for the mansion, however, the entire property is now up for sale, with the intention that Preservation Delaware would lease the garden back from the new owner. In the interim, Preservation Delaware wants get the word out to all that this valuable garden is here and is in need of your assistance.

## HISTORY

Marian Coffin was among the finest and most well known landscape architects of Americas &Country Place Era,+ which spanned the time between the rise of the Beaux Arts in the late 1800s and the outbreak of World War II. This era looked to Renaissance and Baroque &formal+ (geometric) garden design forms for inspiration, often borrowing design ideas from a variety of cultures (a practice sometimes referred to as &Beaux Arts eclecticism+). However, women landscape architects of this era often preferred to soften this formal geometry with plantings done in the informal style associated with English country gardens. Such was Coffins approach at Gibraltar, which she developed for H. Rodney Sharp between 1916 and 1923.



Moreover, the Gibraltar mansion has been in decline for many years and currently is uninhabitable. Preservation Delaware has attempted to secure an adaptive reuse for the mansion: currently, the entire Gibraltar property is for sale. This is part of a preservation strategy to save and restore the mansion while retaining the garden, which would be leased back from the purchaser. If all goes as is planned, the future of the Marian Coffin Garden at Gibraltar should be assured. However, the situation at present is very uncertain: thus this garden fully merits inclusion in Landslide 2006.