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Fort Pitt Block House Garden to Be Dedicated
Event Part of Block House 250 Commemoration

Point State Park, PA – April 23, 2014 – On its 250th anniversary, the grounds of the Fort Pitt Block House have gotten a much needed makeover, highlighted by the Edith Ammon Memorial Garden. A dedication of the new garden is scheduled for Thursday, April 24th at 11:45 am.

Last spring, the Fort Pitt Society, owners and operators of the historic Block House, asked local landscape architect, Jack LaQuatra of [LaQuatra Bonci Associates](http://LaQuatraBonciAssociates.com) to create a plan that would accomplish two goals: to create an attractive and welcoming outdoor space to be enjoyed by Block House visitors, and to pay tribute to Edith Darlington Ammon and the founding members of the Fort Pitt Society who worked so hard to preserve and protect the Block House.

Edith Ammon was born just outside of Pittsburgh in 1862 on her family's estate, Guyasuta. Her father, William McCullough Darlington, was a well-respected and wealthy lawyer. He married Mary Carson O'Hara, granddaughter of James O'Hara, Revolutionary War hero and early landowner in Pittsburgh. Edith joined the Pittsburgh Chapter of the DAR in 1891. She arrived at an exciting time as the chapter was in the process of gaining ownership and undertaking a major renovation of the Fort Pitt Block House. The building was restored to its original appearance as a defensive military redoubt and in 1894 the Block House was opened to the public with free admission. By 1902, despite the ladies efforts to stop it, the Block House became surrounded by warehouses and railroad tracks. To ensure that the Block House would be saved from future removal or destruction, Edith Ammon drafted a bill for the state legislature to protect historic structures from eminent domain. With the support of State Representative Michael H. Kennedy of Pittsburgh, the bill was passed in 1907, preserving the Block House and its history for years to come.

The garden, nestled in one corner of the grounds surrounding the Block House, features wide pathways and attractive beds of native plants culminating in a sandstone and bronze memorial to Edith Ammon. A rendering of Fort Pitt as depicted in 1795 is etched in the bluestone leading up to the monument.

“When we were asked by the Fort Pitt Society to provide ideas for designing a new garden at the Block House, we noticed something very interesting about the site,” shared LaQuatra. “Just as the two rivers become one to form Point State Park, two pathways in the park become one to create another triangle. This ‘mini point’ has become the Edith Ammon Memorial Garden. And just as the fountain is the park's focal point, a triangular stone plinth monument is the main feature of the garden.”

The design and installation of the garden was supported by a leadership grant from the [Colcom Foundation](http://ColcomFoundation.com) and critical inkind support from LaQuatra Bonci Associates and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural

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Resources, managers of [Point State Park](#). The names of the project's supporters are engraved in the walkways of the garden, in recognition of their contributions. Community members stepped up to support the project as well, purchasing more than 100 commemorative bricks and raising over \$17,000 in funds for the Block House and the new garden. Bricks are still available to be purchased and installed in the garden, information is available on the Block House website, www.fortpittblockhouse.com.

The dedication of the garden is one of many events planned throughout the year to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the building of the Fort Pitt Block House, Pittsburgh's oldest authenticated structure and all that remains of Fort Pitt. Thursday's event coincides with the [Pennsylvania State Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution](#)'s 117th annual State Conference, enabling many representatives of the DAR from around the state and country to participate and share in this important recognition of Pittsburgh's history.

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About The Fort Pitt Block House

The Fort Pitt Block House was originally constructed as a defensive redoubt for Fort Pitt, a key British fortification during the French and Indian War. After the conflicts on the Pennsylvania frontier ended, the brick-laid building served as a trading post for wares and munitions, and in the nineteenth century, it played host to families and even a candy shop. In 1894 the Block House was gifted to the Fort Pitt Society of the [Pittsburgh Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution](#) by then owner, Mary Schenley. Thanks to their efforts, the Block House remains in its original location in the heart of modern-day Point State Park with much of its bricks, stone and woodwork still intact from 1764. Operated as a historic site and museum, the Block House is free and open to the public. For more information and hours of operation, please visit www.fortpittblockhouse.com.