



# An Elegant Home on School Road

BY CAROL KALOS, PRESIDENT, WISSAHICKON VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**THIS LOVELY HOME** reflects the Second Empire architectural style. It stands on School Road, down the street from the 1895 School, the WVHS headquarters and museum. Second Empire architecture (late 1800s) reveals strong-looking buildings, each with elaborate trim, and, most prominently, a mansard roof, usually with dormers. A mansard roof has four sloping sides, which become steeper halfway down. The “Second Empire” refers to the Emperor Napoleon III’s Second French Empire (1852-1870), when the housing in ancient Paris was being renovated. The style was popular in the United States until about 1900. Philadelphia City Hall, built between 1877 and 1901, is one of our area’s most famous Second Empire landmarks. This home features three stories with a painted-brick exterior and an interior with nine-foot ceilings. Its dormers and windows are arched at the top, and at one time, the building boasted arched shutters to fit the windows. (Please see the old photos online.) Although the PA Historic Resource Survey Form (2000) notes that the structure dates from 1739, local realtors state that it was built in 1900, a year more fitting, considering its Second Empire style. Perhaps an earlier house stood at the site, causing this confusion.

Author Carol Kalos is president of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. Its 1895 School and its Franklinville School are open by appointment. The society’s monthly meetings feature a speaker; however, at the February meeting, its members will bring an item for “show and tell.” Please join us. All are welcome! In addition, WVHS is looking for 1976 Bicentennial souvenirs. For details: [www.WValleyHS.org](http://www.WValleyHS.org) or [Info@WValleyHS.org](mailto:Info@WValleyHS.org).