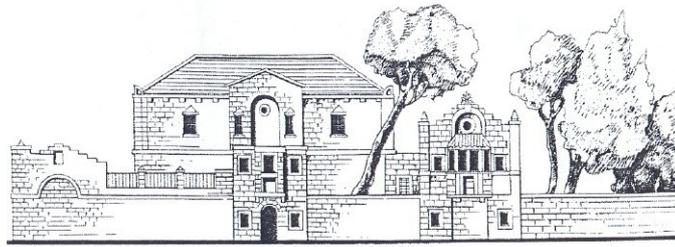


Tabor House

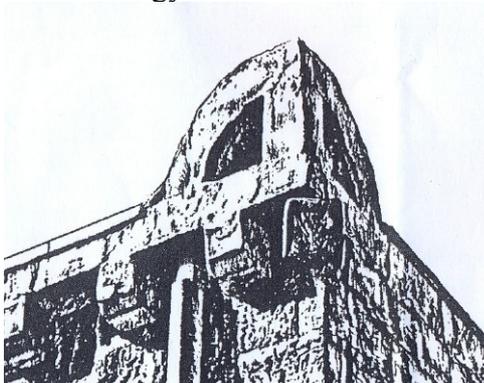


58 Prophets' Street
Hours: 9 AM - 1 PM, Mon.- Fri. (closed Sat. & Sun.)
Phone: 02-625-3822

Tabor House was the private residence of the 19th century missionary, architect and explorer Conrad Schick. Designed and built by Schick himself during the years 1882-1889, the house has many whimsical and personal features. The style is completely eclectic, with a blend of many motifs from classical antiquity and European and Middle Eastern architecture. Since 1951 Tabor House has been the home of the **Swedish Theological Institute**, which owns the building.

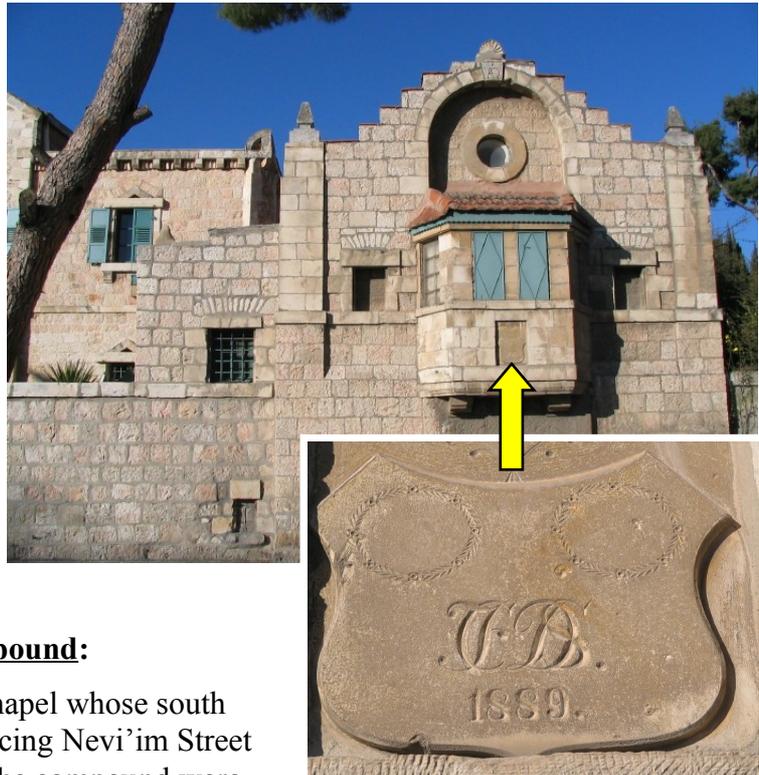
A view of the house from across Prophets Street:

- At the apex of each of the gables—on the façade of the house itself and the structures built into the surrounding wall—there is a shell or half-rosette motif, drawn from Hellenistic architecture.
- Along the roof-line runs a cornice, with corbels and dentils projecting underneath, all classical Greco-Roman features.
- The four corners of the main house are fashioned like the **horns** of an ancient altar, a unique and personal touch that reflects Schick's knowledge of both the Scriptures and archaeology.



- The bay projecting from the gate-house bears an inscribed panel that says: "**Thabor – Ps. 89:13.**" That verse reads: *North and South you have created them; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in your name*, the likely connection being that both mountains have been linked to the Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28ff and parallels). The bay itself is a wonderfully whimsical element: it is fashioned as a **machicolation**, a medieval defensive feature with a hole for pouring noxious or dangerous substances—the proverbial boiling oil—on intruders!

The projecting bay or balcony to the right of the main entrance graces the **façade of a family chapel** which is accessed from inside the compound. Above the bay is an arch whose keystone bears not only a **cross** but also the Greek letters alpha and omega (**ΑΩ**), a Christological symbol based on Revelation 22:13: *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.* On the front of the bay is a crest or shield inscribed with the superimposed initials “CS” and “FD,” those of Schick and his wife, Fredericka Dubler.



Architectural features inside the compound:

- East of the main house is the family chapel whose south façade is part of the compound wall facing Nevi'im Street
- The structures lining the west side of the compound were originally stables.
- In the courtyard behind the house, built into the west wall, is a curiosity: a copy of one of the “Gezer boundary inscriptions”. (The original stones, inscribed in both Hebrew and Greek, marked the limits of the Second Temple period settlement of Gezer.)

Conrad Schick

His early life & role as a missionary and teacher:

Schick was born in 1822 in Switzerland and as a youth showed great mechanical aptitude, holding jobs as an apprentice carpenter and repairing watches. His higher education was at a Protestant institution, the Pilgrim-Missions College near Basel. In 1846 the director there, a Mr. Spittler, sent Schick and several others—all of them mechanics or craftsmen—to Jerusalem as a team of missionary brethren, with the idea that they would live together, unmarried, in a “Bruderhaus” and teach vocational trades to the local youth. This venture was short-lived, however, and the original group slowly dispersed. Of those who remained in Jerusalem, two would make an especially memorable impact: Johan Shneller and Schick. By 1850 Schick had taken up with the so-called London Jews’ Society, the Anglican missionary venture then under the leadership of the Holy Land’s second Protestant Bishop, Gobat. It was an association Schick would maintain for the rest of his life. With the LJS, Schick was made head of their “School of Industry” based at Christ Church, teaching carpentry and other useful trades to young Jews. No longer under the constraints of the Bruderhaus, he married Fredericka Dubler, a German missionary.



Schick as Architect & Planner:

Along with all his other interests and involvements, Schick was a skilled and much sought-after architect, though largely self-taught. For a period he served as City Engineer, appointed by the Ottoman Turkish authorities. Among the many Jerusalem projects Schick was involved with over the years, both public and private, are:

- The original lepers' hospital in the Mamilla area (today's Agron St.), in the 1860s.
- The original Sanatorium building of the English Hospital on Prophets' Street (1863).
- The Talitha Kumi Orphanage (1868) ▶ (Remnants of this building are a familiar City Center landmark: After the structure was dismantled in 1980, the upper façade and other elements were preserved and re-erected in front of the Hamishbir store on King George V Street, about 50 meters southeast of the original site.)
- The Mea Shearim neighborhood (1870s). (Schick's plan—for a plot of only some 32 dunams—called for significant open, green areas within a perimeter of adjoining long houses. This original vision, however, was soon obscured under the pressures of crowding and over-building.)
- The Bukharian Quarter.
- The Batei Mahse neighborhood in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.
- The Hansen Government Hospital for Lepers (1885-87), which still stands in the Talbieh neighborhood.
- The paving of Hebron Road.
- The breaching of the walls of the Old City and construction of New Gate.



Schick as Explorer, Surveyor & Excavator:

One of the true pioneers of the scientific study of Jerusalem, Conrad Schick in his day probably knew more about the city's antiquities and topography than anyone else. Any tomb, wall, rock cutting, cistern or other ancient feature previously undocumented was likely to become the focus of his curiosity. In the 1860s he was instrumental in helping Charles Wilson of the Palestine Exploration Fund get established in Jerusalem and accompanied him on a number of his projects. Early in their association Wilson asked Schick to begin recording elevations of Jerusalem's subsurface bedrock wherever he found it exposed, in construction excavations, for example, and thus was born our modern understanding of the city's basic topography. Along the way, Schick also helped others of the PEF, like Tristram and Conder (Charles Warren, however, apparently had little use for him). Starting in the 1870s, a constant stream of Schick's submissions—over 200 reports and articles—flowed to London for publication in the PEF's *Quarterly Statement* (PEQ), often appearing under the title "Herr Schick's Reports from Jerusalem." He wrote for a German journal as well, the *Deutscher Palastina-Verein*. One weakness in Schick's output—this according to Charles Wilson, in Schick's obituary—was that many of his drawings and reports, especially in later years, failed to make a clear distinction between what he had actually seen and what he *assumed* to exist! Nevertheless, his plans and other technical drawings still prove invaluable to students of Jerusalem's antiquities. Of the dozens of ancient places Schick probed and reported on, here is a mere sampling:

- He excavated and published reports on *both* of the sites put forth at various times as the “Herodian family tomb”: the rolling-stone tomb complex near the King David Hotel and the round, *opus reticulatum* structure north of Damascus Gate.
- Working at times for the Ottoman authorities, Schick had occasion to explore and document the underground spaces and cisterns of the Haram, places usually barred to foreigners.
- Schick not only made a detailed drawing of the vaults of the Nea Church, but an 1898 PEQ report and plan indicate that—without realizing it—he was uncovering the eastern parts of Justinian’s great basilica! (It was left to Nachman Avigad, in his 1970s Jewish Quarter excavations, to bring the latter remains to light once again and to positively connect all of them with the Nea.)
- Schick identified and mapped the ancient Arrub and Biyar aqueducts, which supplied Solomon’s Pools from springs far to the south; the former followed a winding course through the Judean hills of some 40 km!
- In the PEQ of 1880 Schick provided the first published report of the discovery of the Siloam Inscription, a find made purely by chance by one of his own students playing near the end of Hezekiah’s Tunnel. Afterward, Schick supervised the clearing of silt and debris from the conduit so as to lower the water level.

Schick as Model-maker and Map-maker:

Schick’s technical skills, his leadership of the School of Industry, and his fascination with Jerusalem all came together in his many models of the city’s structures, both ancient and modern. Premier among these were his models, each several square meters in area, of the Haram/Temple Mount and surrounding areas, complete with the underlying topography. (As mentioned, the required research gained Schick access to many hidden spaces beneath the Haram platform.) One of these Haram models, along with a separate model of the Dome of the Rock, was commissioned by the Ottoman imperial authorities for display in their pavilion at the Vienna Exposition of 1873. It is said that Schick’s proceeds from this work—800 gold pounds—allowed him to fulfill the dream of building his own residence, Tabor House. Other versions of the Haram model depicted—in a speculative and sometimes fanciful way characteristic of the period—the ancient Temple Mounts of both Solomon and Herod.

Also in demand were the models of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Schick produced for the Ottoman authorities, the Greek Patriarchate and others. Built with removable sections (and color-coded!), they served as a visual aid as to how the church’s spaces were apportioned among the various Christian communities under the *Status Quo*. Many of Schick’s models have survived and are still on display, especially in Europe and here in Jerusalem: Two of the large Haram/Temple models [PHOTO] can be seen at the Paulus House hostel (Schmidt School) opposite Damascus Gate, while other models are housed in the Heritage Center at Christ Church. Finally, not least among Schick’s accomplishments are the many detailed maps of Jerusalem which bear his name.



Schick's Legacy:

Conrad Schick died on December 23, 1901 at the age of 79, and his wife Fredericka passed away a mere twelve days later. They are buried next to each other in the Protestant Cemetery on the southwestern flank of Mt. Zion (within the compound of Jerusalem University College, the old "Bishop Gobat School"). Schick's eulogy in the Hebrew press reflects the sincere sorrow of all Jerusalemites on his passing: "He was beloved and desirable to all the inhabitants of his city, without distinction of religion." Not surprisingly, there is a Jerusalem street named after him: the short lane leading to the Garden Tomb off Nablus Road (the two street signs, alas, mis-spell his name!). In 1896, when Schick was honored on the occasion of his 50 years in Jerusalem and for his many contributions to the city, his comments in response reflect the simple devotion and humility that seem to have characterized his life. He wrote: "My doing was nothing, except to make faults. It is only the Lord who has done—and enabled me to do—anything. His name be praised!"