

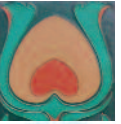


### VAN BRIGGLE TILES

The six-tile panels embedded in the brick screen walls at twenty locations represent various combinations of the twenty-four decorative art tiles being currently produced at Van Briggles Art Pottery in shades of blue and green. The tiles incorporate such floral motifs as columbine, iris, poppy, Lady Anne, bell flower, water lily, tulip, and orchid flowers. Additional art tiles can be seen in the Horticulture Arts Society's Monument Valley Park garden in the brick sun dial seating area directly south of the Van Briggles building, and also in brick planters throughout downtown Colorado Springs intersections.



## THE VAN BRIGGLE STORY DEPICTED IN ART




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*This artwork depicting the Van Briggles story was made possible by the generosity of Lee E. Schlessman, Class of 1950, and Dolores Schlessman, parents of 1975 and 1977 graduates, and Susan Duncan, Class of 1952, parent of a 1976 graduate.*

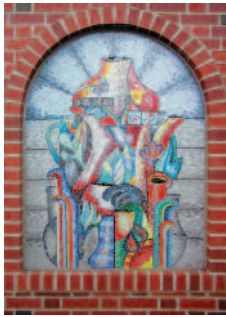
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## COLORADO COLLEGE

A UNIQUE INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE

By Artist & Sculptor  
Larry Terrafranca

With excerpts from the  
National Register of  
Historic Places  
Registration



### GLASS TILE MOSAIC – VAN BRIGGLE LEGACY

The southernmost glass tile mosaic panel celebrates over a century of Van Briggles art pottery. The Van Briggles Pottery is the longest-lived and best known producer of art pottery in Colorado, begun after Artus Van Briggles relocated to Colorado Springs with a few implements of his trade on March 21, 1899. The composition is layered with vessel forms and floral motifs in vivid colors. Artus adopted Art Nouveau themes in his work, employing decorations with figural representations that flowed into the shapes of his pottery. He combined the native clays with shapes to create works of colors inspired by those found in Colorado's landscape and sky, finished with his distinctive matte glazes.

Artus and Anne Van Briggles gathered examples of their "best and most innovative" works for exhibition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair where the pottery won numerous gold, silver, and bronze medals. The American public first became generally aware of the Colorado Springs pottery company at this event. Artus Van Briggles died of tuberculosis on July 4, 1904, the year of his exhibit at the World's Fair, at the age of thirty-five. Anne Van Briggles led the pottery company after her husband's death.



### GLASS TILE MOSAIC – ARTUS' IMPENDING DOOM

The center glass tile mosaic panel represents Artus Van Briggles' struggle with tuberculosis and his declining health, necessitating his move to Colorado Springs at the base of Pike's Peak in hopes of recuperation. Artus began experimenting with local clays and perfecting the matte glazes for his pottery. Fortuitously, his efforts captured the interest of Colorado College Professor William Streiby, head of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Department and himself a student of ceramics. Together they collaborated on ceramic tests perfecting the elements Van Briggles sought in pottery. The local mountains and Pike's Peak are prominently positioned near the top of the composition with earth colored forms referencing Garden of the Gods below, but also resembling hands.

A female face in the middle of the composition represents the Lorelei, Artus' muse and the famous subject of his first successful matte glaze figure ornamenting a vase in the spring of 1898, about the time he fell ill. In the German poem, the Lorelei dies from drowning in the Rhine River, and through a transformation, became a siren who lured fisherman to destruction as she sang on the rock from which she had leaped to her death. A male face pictured at the lower right, possibly Artus, is looking up at her, admiring and inspired to create his Lorelei vase. The black cat on the left, future creation of Anne Van Briggles in the form of the chimney cat is also facing the muse, completing the triangle. The triangle could be interpreted as a sign of the impending doom that befalls Artus.

The tent structures on the lower right symbolize the tuberculosis hospital and the main reason Artus was drawn to Colorado Springs. The remainder of the composition is filled with vessel forms and floral motifs.

### GLASS TILE MOSAIC – INDUSTRY OF POTTERY

The northernmost glass tile mosaic panel represents the industry of art pottery making. The pulleys run the pug mills and other clay preparation machinery. Upper left is a scale for measuring components of the craft. Two men are shown loading the kiln (pronounced "kill"). Vessel forms and floral motifs balance these features. In May 1907, the Gazette announced Van Briggles would erect a big factory enabling it to manufacture tile on a large scale. The "large and handsome" building would adjoin Monument Valley Park and be "composed largely of tile material and terra cotta, and special efforts are being made to have the design be of such artistic beauty that the building will be an additional point of interest for visitors in this City." Frank Riddle's paper for the American Ceramic Society in 1908 stated, "The building is divided into three main departments, the manufacturing, art, and executive department consisting of office, sales room, gloss warehouse and packing room. These departments, although separated, are in proper position in relation to one another. The manufacturing department is equipped with cement floors throughout as well as electric light and steam heat."



### LIMESTONE PILASTER CARVINGS

The Indiana limestone pilaster carvings represent favorite Van Briggles floral art design elements seen in some of their historic pottery and tile works. The ornate arches in the headers relate to the decorative arches in the north facing Van Briggles Pottery roof gables. Sculptor, Larry Terrafranca, added a little fun by carving six animals and insects into the floral designs on one of the pilasters. Many Van Briggles art pottery pieces and lamp shades incorporated animals and insects.

Look for the frog, snail, fly, butterfly, beetle, and Lady Bug.



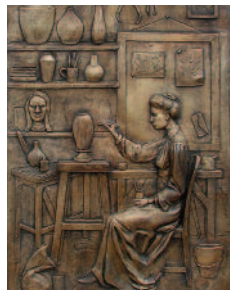
### BRONZE SCULPTURE PLAQUE- ARTUS

The composition shows Artus seated, working on a large vessel in his lab coat and cap. His head is framed by a window in the background. Artus is surrounded by the "furniture" of his studio, shelves, pots, books, broom & dust pan. On the shelf to the right is a mermaid looking over at her creator.



### BRONZE SCULPTURE PLAQUE- ANNE

Anne is shown seated in profile, face framed by a memo board covered with sketches. Her hair is done up in a bun. Her Victorian dress places her in time. Anne is also working but in a seated position. She is surrounded by the workings of a studio. On the left are pots and also an Indian portrait. Due to Artus' illness, Anne assumed steadily increasing responsibility for their business and took over much of the designing.



# What's going on at Van Briggles?

Posted by [Leslie](#) on Tuesday, April 12, 2011

**By George Eckhardt, Manager of Logistical Support**

Is all the activity going on at Van Briggles over the past couple of weeks an extreme makeover, a building demolition project, an archeological dig, or a new construction project?

The correct answer is all of the above. Thanks to the generous support from the Schlessman



family, longtime

Colorado College benefactors, the Van Briggles building exterior and surrounding landscape is receiving an extreme makeover, to be concluded by mid-June.

Much like the nearly completed Cutler Hall and Cossitt Hall improvements, both part of the Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), there is an improvement project at Van Briggles, 1125 Glen Ave., and the Transportation Shop across the street, 1144 Glen Ave. The project is intended to greatly improve the “gateway first impression” appearance for Colorado College and for the entry to historic Monument Valley Park for vehicle traffic traveling on Uintah Street.

The goal is to attractively screen the maintenance vehicle parking area on the north side of the Van Briggles building, and the fleet vehicle parking area across the street at the Transportation Shop. A Colorado College campus stone sign replica of the Cascade and Nevada parkway median signs will be installed at an angle along the Uintah Street east-bound traffic lanes, just before reaching the Uintah Bridge, to announce arrival at the college.

The Western Ridge residential buildings will be visible, directly over the top of the new sign. Also, the improvements will eliminate the street side parking on the west side of Van Briggles, and add attractive landscaping around the historic Van Briggles building and the Transportation Shop property to greatly improve aesthetics.

The local community and many other interested visitors to the historic building will have more access and interaction with the west side of the Van Briggles building to explore and photograph the unique architectural features. Hardly a day passes that curious and historically knowledgeable visitors do not stop to take photos and drop in through the front office for a look at the building interior to learn more about the Van Briggles pottery history. Many, too, are interested in the Historic Walking Tour Van Briggles National Register listing:

<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/welcome/walkingtour/vanbriggles.php> )

Decorative brick screen walls, much like the existing brick screen wall on the west side of the Van Briggles building, will be constructed around the north side parking area, and at the north side of the Transportation



Shop parking area.

In both projects the brick screen walls will be set back significantly from the property line boundaries to allow for attractive landscaping, which will provide a softer park-like or garden-like appearance, and still provide an uninterrupted view toward the campus' Western Ridge residences above Stewart Field as vehicular traffic approaches the college from I-25. The new landscaping will blend nicely with the attractive Horticultural Art Society garden on the south side of the Van Briggles building. The Van Briggles brick screen wall also will emphasize the northern view of the attractive upper Van Briggles building roof lines and showcase the building's many unique architectural features, such as the decorative tiled dormers and chimney stacks. The utilitarian chain link fences and gates will be replaced with attractive traditional custom wrought iron fencing typical for the historic period, containing subtle architectural elements borrowed from the Van Briggles building and existing screen wall.

The archeological dig is a result of demolition of the old Monument (Storage) Shed on the north side of the Van Briggles building along the Monument Creek bank and the excavation for the new screen wall.

From 1908 through the 1950's, Van Briggles Pottery used the backyard as a repository for kiln waste materials, used brick, and failed pottery and tile shards. Most of these bulky waste materials had to be removed and replaced with adequate soils for proper structural compaction for the new parking area surface and the new brick screen wall. The waste materials will be recycled as fill material in the deepest part of a large ditch on college- owned property located on West San Miguel Street just north of the Grounds Shop, which will provide a new storage lay-down yard replacing the lost Van Briggles storage yard. Many salvaged examples of 80 to 100 year-old glazed tile, terra cotta, and pottery shards will be useful for display and discussions for the annual Woman's Educational Society historical scholarship fundraising tour of Van Briggles, held each September (and scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011).

Discarded monument markers with names and dates also were found under the Monument Shed

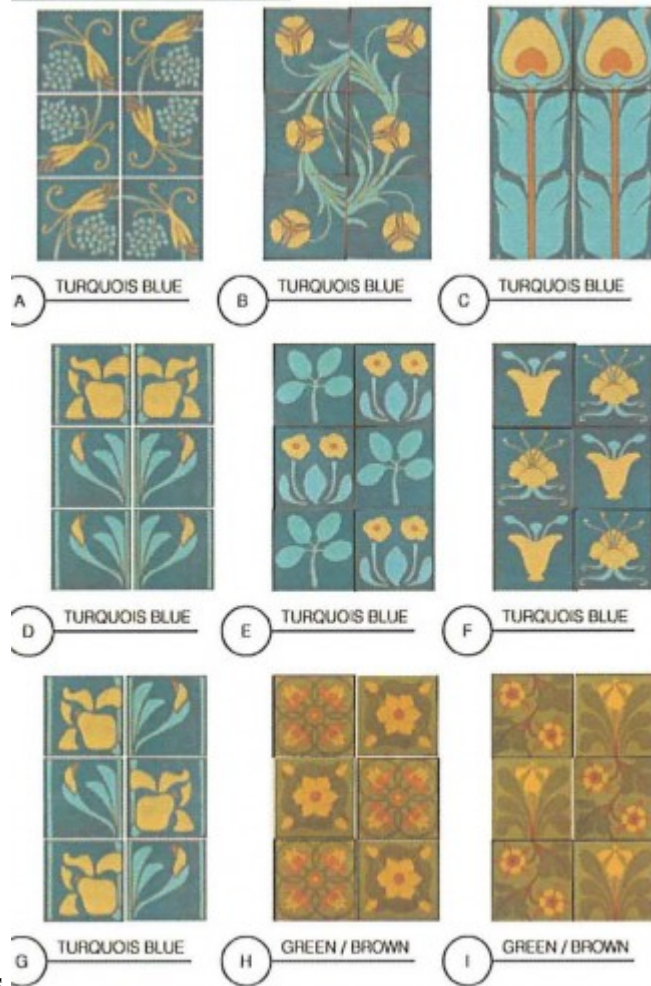


floors. Much of the discarded materials were used to fill in the undermined shed on the creek bank where soils were eroded and washed away during the infamous 1935 flood. It is noted on Van Briggles Pottery financial statements from 1937 and 1938 that the Monument Department was a significant part of the business as Van Briggles was recovering from the flood and the depression.

Unknown to most people, the Van Briggles building's three north side additions, done in years prior to college ownership, were constructed of exposed concrete block exterior walls. In 1968, after Colorado College purchased the Van Briggles Pottery, the building restoration and re-adaptation included removal of the two large brick kilns. The used kiln bricks were cleaned and installed on the exterior faces of the concrete block walls on the north side additions to improve the historic look of the building. The 1968 restoration did not address removal of the plywood faced flat roof overhangs on two of the three additions.

This project includes removal of the two remaining flat roof overhangs and construction of raised brick parapet walls to match the northeast addition, which was topped with a brick parapet wall capped with sandstone in 1968. Roger Renck, one of the retired owners of Renck & Roberts Masonry Company, which originally did the brick restoration work 42 years ago, is acting as the project masonry consultant. Renck was able to locate oversized recycled, historically accurate, matching bricks in a used brickyard in Denver for constructing the two parapet walls. The north side of the building roof line will have a uniform historic appearance as viewed over the top of the new brick screen walls.

The west side of the Van Briggles brick screen wall will feature a projected 30-foot-long wall section framed by two pilaster columns containing art work including limestone floral carvings,



bas relief bronze plaques of Artus and Anne Van Briggles at work, and brightly colored glass tile mosaic artwork panels, all created by local artist and sculptor Larry Terrafranca. The artwork will depict and celebrate the Van Briggles Pottery story, adding another interesting feature for visitors to enjoy and to photograph. Terrafranca previously recreated the black ceramic cat, which was missing from the southeastern brick chimney for more than 30 years. He also helped recreate very significant architectural art features on the Cutler Hall, Palmer Hall, and Jackson House historic preservation projects.

The brick screen walls also will incorporate decorative Van Briggle art tiles arranged in six-tile panels on each of the 13 brick pilaster columns. These art tiles are being produced by the current Van Briggle Art Pottery Company at 1024 S. Tejon St. The art feature wall will be surrounded on the west side by the Schlessman Family Garden, which will be a landscaped paver patio area with two bench seating areas for relaxation and enjoyment of the art works and scenery.

Removal of two rental houses on two college-owned properties near Van Briggle made these improvements possible. The loss of parking area at the north side of the Transportation Shop was compensated by removal of the college-owned rental house immediately south of the shop, creating additional fleet vehicle parking area. Likewise, the loss of indoor and outdoor storage and parking areas on the north side of the Van Briggle building will be compensated by the combination of two college-owned rental properties and construction of a new storage building at 228/232 West San Miguel St., directly north of the Grounds Shop. One rental house will be removed and the Facilities Services Construction Shop will move into the other rental house, which will remain. The perimeter of the new storage yard will be visually attractive with new landscaping and screening treatments which will include raised earth berms, new wood fencing, and new tree plantings.

# Worner Center, Van Briggle Exterior Undergo Developments

Issue: [August 2011 \(story list\)](#) | Section: [Around CC](#) <!--[Section: [Around CC](#)]-->

## Worner Center, Van Briggle Exterior Undergo Improvements

Two major improvement projects have been undertaken this summer at CC: a renovation of the Worner Campus Center and an enhancement of the Uintah Street entrance to the college.

The second project is a makeover of the exterior of the Van Briggle building and surrounding landscape. The makeover, funded by the Schlessman family, longtime Colorado College benefactors, showcases the historic building and creates a more attractive first impression of campus for those approaching the college from the west on Uintah Street.



The Van Briggle building houses CC's facilities services; the transportation shop — with a parking lot full of CC vans — is across the street. Attractive brick walls, set back from the property line, now screen the maintenance and fleet vehicle parking areas. The brick walls feature limestone carvings, bas relief bronze plaques of Artus and Anne Van Briggle, and glass tile mosaic panels, tying the wall in with the historical building behind it.

A large stone sign, similar to others on campus, sits just before the Uintah Street bridge, announcing arrival at the college. The Schlessman Family Garden includes a paver patio area with two bench seating areas, and the surrounding landscaping provides a soft, park-like atmosphere.

The project's completion was celebrated June 28, the same day as a ceremony announcing that the Children's Center will be renamed the Cheryl Schlessman Bennett Children's Center. The college will be constructing a new children's center south of the current location.