Glensheen was the home of Chester and Clara Congdon and their seven children. Construction began in 1905 and took three full years to tame the 22-acres on Lake Superior into a nature-filled, working estate. In addition to the 39-Room mansion, the grounds feature vegetable and formal gardens, a carriage house, gardener’s cottage, and boathouse. It was built at an estimated cost of $854,000.

Glensheen showcases the best of Minnesota Craftsmanship. Starting with the Tudor-inspired designs of architect Clarence H. Johnston, the estate features the work of several beloved artisans including those from the Minneapolis Handicraft Guild and renowned interior designer William A. French.

The historic Congdon Estate was bequeathed to the University of Minnesota Duluth with a nearly intact collection of furniture, decor, art and family items.

Chester Congdon found his success in Minnesota’s mining industry. As the attorney for the Oliver Mining Company, an operation located in the region’s Iron Range, Chester Congdon fended off the notorious businessman John D. Rockefeller from a hostile takeover of the mine. Chester’s perseverance paid off when several mining operations, including the Oliver Company, were acquired to form U.S. Steel. This transaction made investors, including Chester wealthy overnight.

The Congdons also used their fortune to donate land to start a highway running north from Duluth along the Lake Superior shoreline. Now known as the North Shore Scenic Drive, the route is beloved for its wilderness and sweeping lake views.
To North Shore

GARDENER’S COTTAGE
A- Bee Hives
B- Vegetable Garden
C- Sundial Garden
D- Rose Garden
E- Tennis Court
F- Bowling Green

GARDEN HOUSE
G- Office Entrance
H- Garage
I- The Landing

CARRIAGE HOUSE
J- Painting Studio
K- Outlook
L- Tischer Creek
M- Hammock Forest
N- Stone Arch Bridge
O- Chester’s Island

BOATHOUSE & PIER
P- West Porch
Q- Formal Garden
R- South Lawn
S- Winter Garden
T- Fox Forest

LAKE SUPERIOR

MANSION ENTRANCE

LIMITED MOBILITY ROUTE

BUILDING ENTRANCES

TOURS START HERE

JOURNEY TO MANSION

GIFT SHOP

PORTABLE TOILET

PHOTO LOCATION

There are 13 educational signs placed at prime locations around the estate. Using historical photographs, these quick reads tell the story of the Congdons and the original uses of the sites here at Glensheen. You won’t want to miss any!

1. Gardener’s Cottage
2. Vegetable gardens
3. Carriage House
4. Boathouse
5. Lake Superior
6. Tischer Creek
7. Stone Bridge & Trails
8. The Landscape
9. Servants’ Courtyard
10. West Gate
11. Bent Brook
12. Bowling Green & Tennis Court
13. The Greenhouse

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