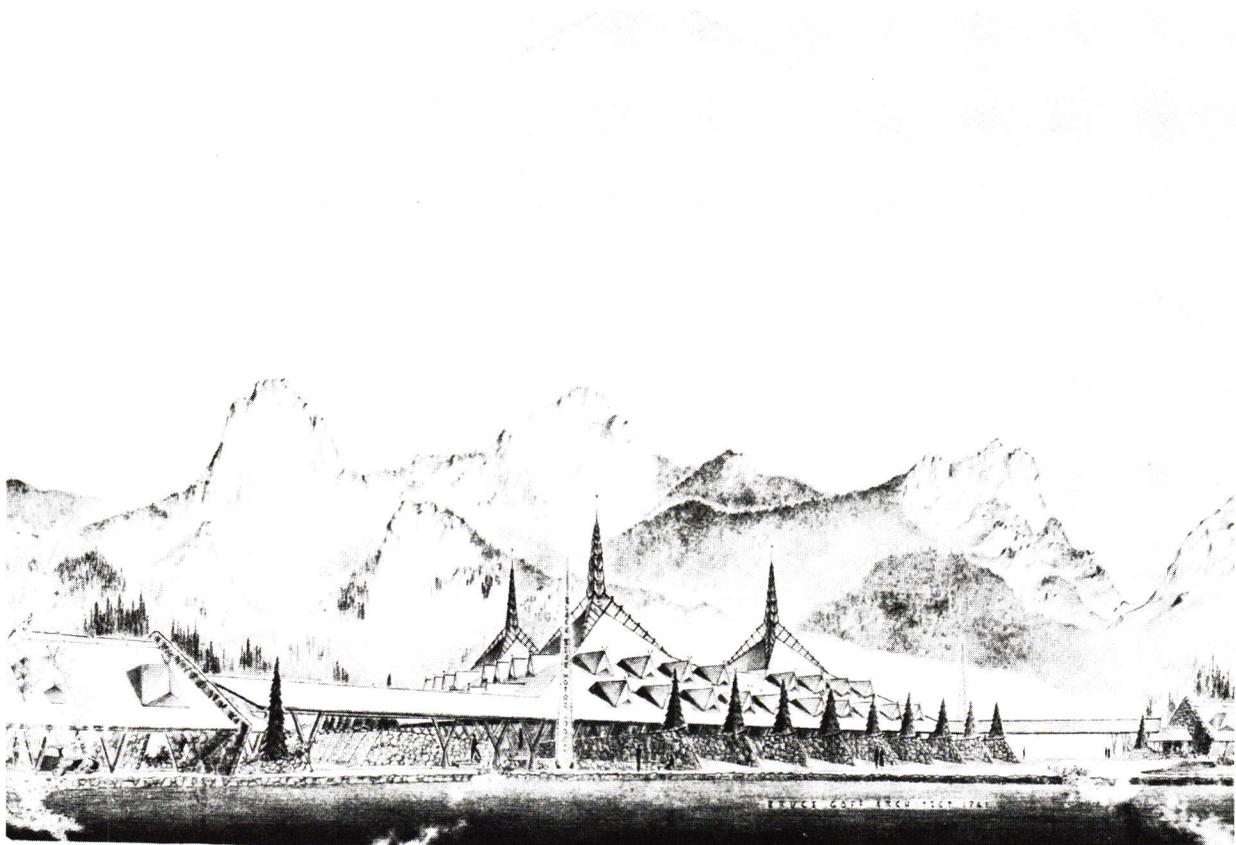


The
**PRAIRIE
SCHOOL**
Review

Volume VII, Number 2

Second Quarter, 1970

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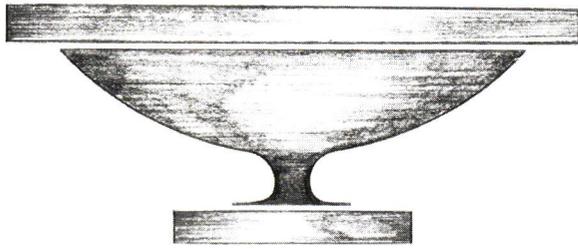


ABOVE: The Black Bear Motor Lodge project was to have been built at Jackson Hole, Wyoming in 1961. The forms seem particularly appropriate to the mountainous area where it was to be located.

COVER: Bruce Goff designed the Unseth house in Park Ridge, Illinois in 1940. The large triangular areas below the glass windows can be opened for ventilation. Photo by Robert Kostka.

All photographs and drawings courtesy of Bruce Goff unless otherwise noted.

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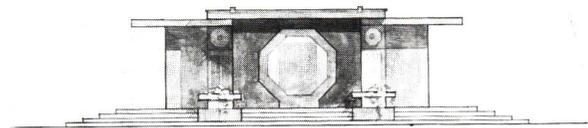
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CONTENTS

- 4 From the Editors
- 5 Bruce Goff and the New Tradition
by Robert Kostka
- 16 Earliest Work of John Lloyd Wright
- 20 Book Reviews
 The Rise of An American Architecture, Kaufmann
 Reviewed by H. F. Koeper
 Biographical Dictionary of American Architects,
 Deceased, Withey
 Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck
- 22 Letter to the Editors
- Preview
- 23 Selected Bibliography

This is a study for the Baughman bungalow proposed for Tulsa, Oklahoma by Goff in 1922. Materials were to be roman brick, cut stone, ceramic tile panels above the doors and windows with a shingle tile roof.



From the EDITORS

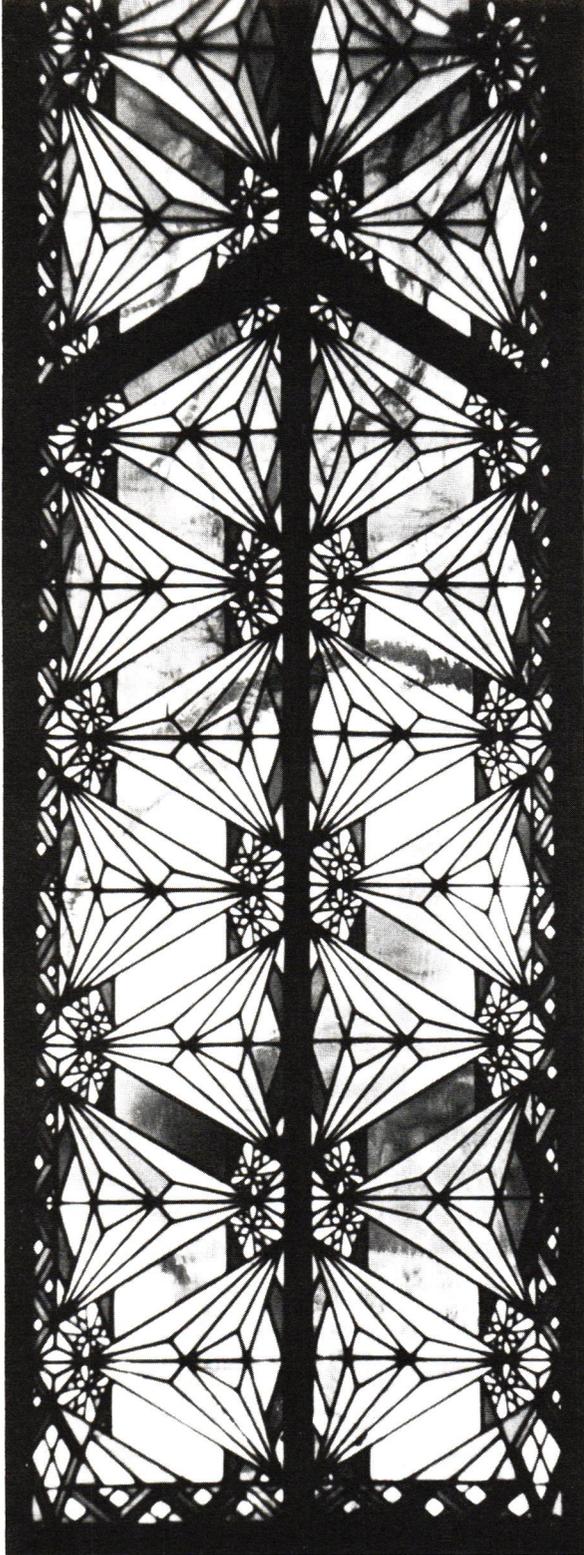
We have devoted several editorials to the operations of The Chicago School of Architecture Foundation which owns and occupies the John J. Glessner house in Chicago. The Glessner house is, of course, the last surviving building in Chicago designed by Henry Hobson Richardson. It now also has the distinction of being the first "Landmark Building" protected by the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance. This last honor is one which those persons involved at Glessner house would have gladly given to the Chicago Stock Exchange Building.

The Chicago School of Architecture Foundation has recently taken several bold steps forward which should not only insure the preservation and restoration of the Glessner House but will give a new viability to the Foundation itself. Professional council has been sought and found to aid and advise in the reorganization of the CSAF. This has resulted in several new members being added to the Foundation's Board of Directors and a number of leadership changes. These changes have already begun to generate new ideas and, more important, new money to carry out these ideas. Fortunately, all those persons who have worked so hard in the past in leadership positions will remain active on the Board and on committee assignments.

An Executive Secretary has been employed who will handle the day to day operations of the house including tours, records, sales, etc. An executive committee will be responsible for policy making decisions. Various committees have been appointed with well defined responsibilities and all appear to be hard at work. The house committee, for example, is working with the building's architect to prepare detailed restoration plans and a budget to carry them out. The finance committee has set a definite goal and roughly one third of the funds required have been raised. This committee has its hardest work ahead of it.

Most important is a commitment by the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects to lease space at Glessner for their permanent headquarters. The significance of this cannot be over emphasized. Not only does it give Glessner a prestigious tenent, but the local AIA will have quarters unrivaled by any other such group in the United States. Furthermore, the rent they pay will be used twice, once by the AIA and again by the CSAF. Other tenents will also be using parts of the house for similar architecturally oriented purposes. The establishment of a bookshop in the house will make publications which might not otherwise be obtainable to visitors.

It has now been nearly five years since the Chicago School of Architecture Foundation acquired the Glessner house. Much has happened in that time even though there were periods of inactivity and discouragement. The current momentum must be maintained.



Detail of a stained glass window in the Boston Avenue Methodist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Photo by Richard Helstern.

BRUCE GOFF *and the New Tradition*

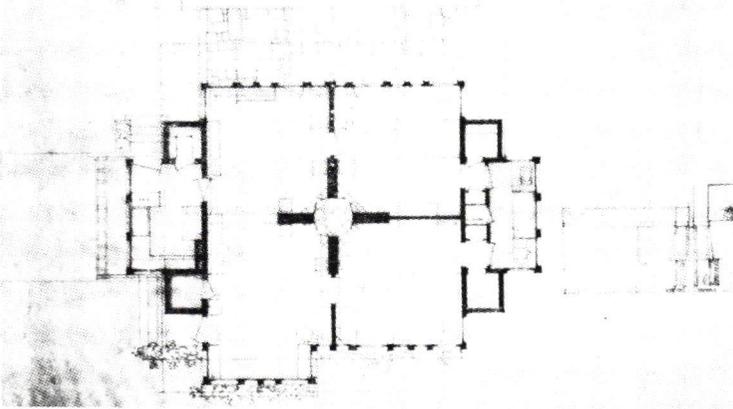
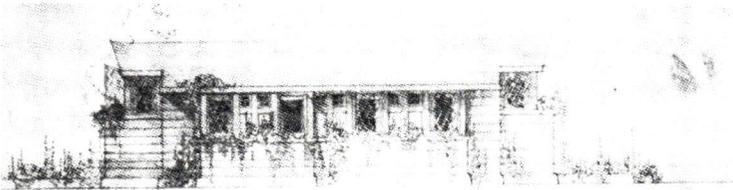
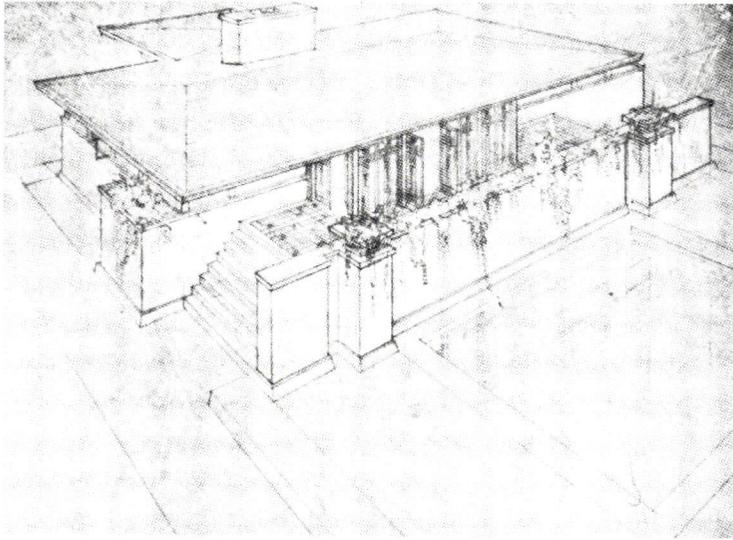
by Robert Kostka

Robert Kostka received his Bachelor of Science in visual design from the Institute of Design at Illinois Institute of Technology and later was awarded a Master of Science in Art Education from the same institution. His background includes several years of serving as Art Director for WTTW, Chicago's educational television station, and as a professor in the Department of Art at the Chicago Circle Campus of the University of Illinois. Mr. Kostka has traveled widely and has been a previous contributor to this as well as a number of other publications.

Bruce Goff is of an old American tradition, that of the "loner" . . . yet his influence and presence has been a force in architecture for over forty years. His roots are firmly in the Oklahoma prairie. Its complex natural forms are scattered in wide and expressive space, still the Indian's image of man in relationship to the forces of the earth itself. Goff is essentially self-taught, his early contacts with the outside world of art having come to him through the mass media. His forms seem at once both geometric and organic, archetypal while still unique to each building. It is an individual architecture, for those with a sense of their *own* individuality.

Goff is often mistakenly thought to have been a student of Wright's. He was not, although they were close friends until Wright's death. Both were born on the same day, Goff near Tulsa on June 8, 1904 and Wright on June 8, 1867. During the years between 1934 and 1941 while Goff was living in Chicago, he frequently received telegrams from Wright inviting him up to Taliesin to celebrate their birthdays. Goff remembers one telegram reading: "Dear Bruce: Come up and we'll celebrate our day in the month of roses."¹

¹ All quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from conversations with the author.



Bruce Goff, Architect.

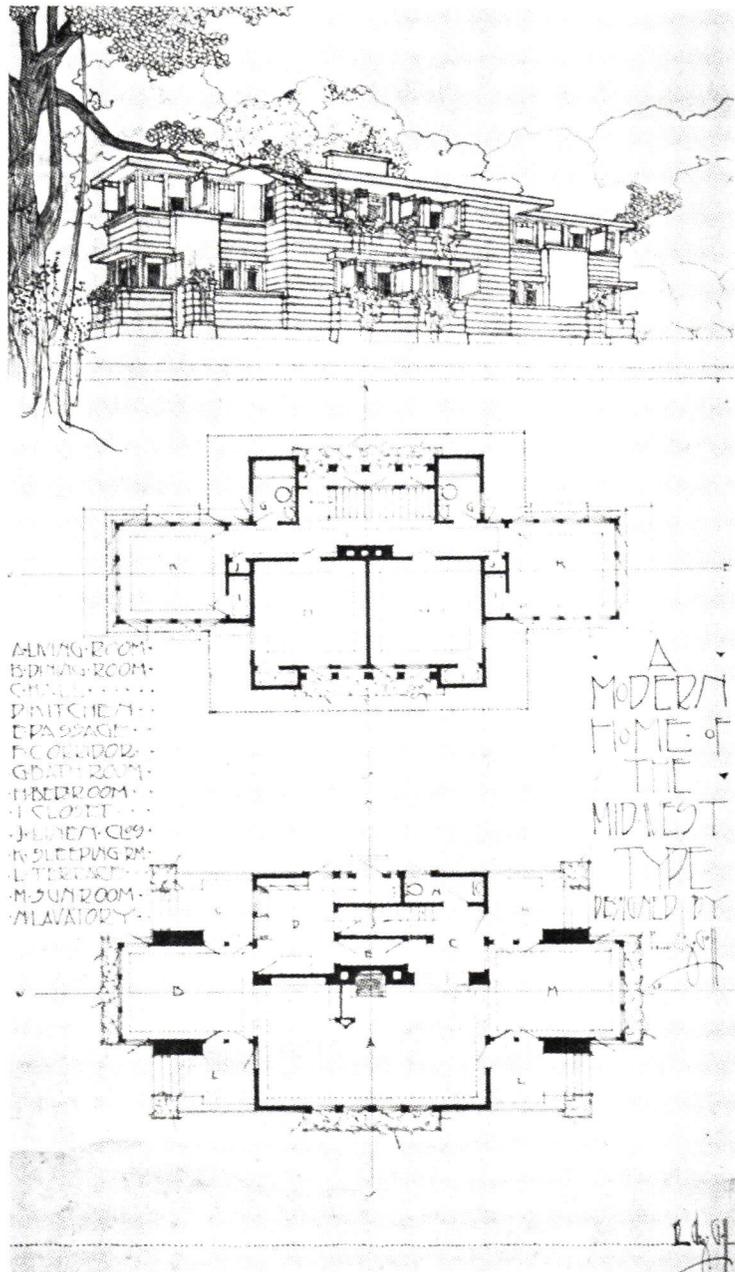
The upper drawing is a study for a stucco house with a reflecting pool. The lower study was to be a frame house with a four way fireplace. Both were done in 1918.

More important was their sharing of subtle attitudes towards architecture, such as both having been apprenticed instead of attending an architectural school. Goff seems to have been born an organic architect.

While in school, Goff started "fooling with color". It had occurred to him that a painting really didn't need a subject just as music didn't need words, and he started doing a series of abstract color exercises. He was unaware of Krupka, Kandinsky, or the great new innovations in painting happening at that time. He remembers that the experiments were very small in size and rather sloppy in technique. But he continued, and soon began to draw buildings as well.

One day his father gathered up an armful of these drawings, and with the twelve year old Bruce in tow, they went downtown. He asked the first person he met on the street which was the best architectural firm in Tulsa. The startled man answered "Rush, Endicott and Rush", and there they went. Goff found himself apprenticed to the firm.

He was told to trace the Greek orders and would not be permitted to enter the drafting room until he had mastered them. Noticing the unhappy apprentice, Mr. Endicott brought him into the drafting room and told him to design a house. Goff remembers that he was surprised to learn that architects designed houses; he thought they just designed buildings.



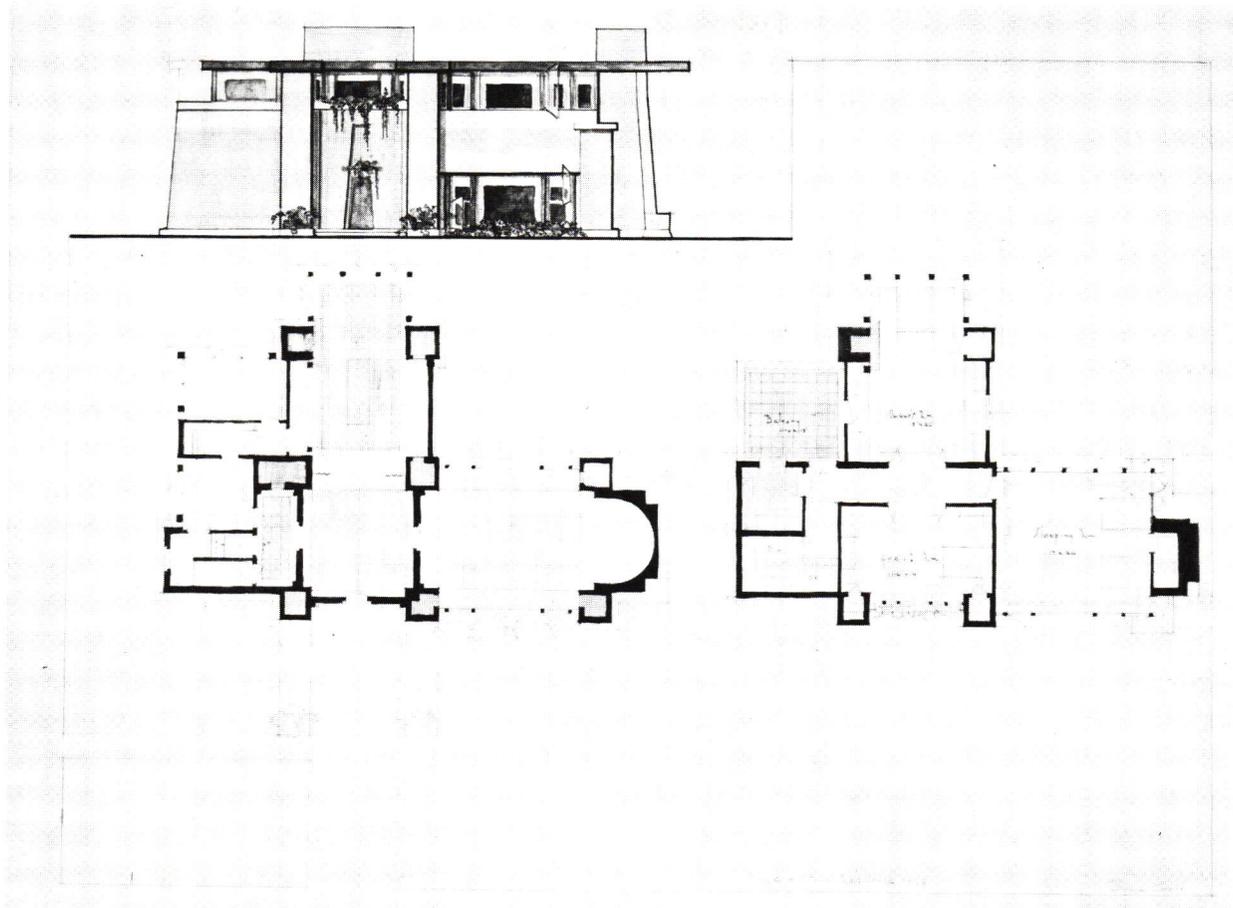
This study for "A Modern Home of the Mid-West Type" done in 1920 shows the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the youthful Bruce Goff.

Told to "make one up", he designed a house with a flat roof, a low eaves and casement windows. The other draftsmen began to call him a "junior Frank Lloyd Wright". Goff had never heard of Wright but he was assured that Wright was "a nut in Chicago", described as "a Bluebeard" or worse, in the attacks by the Hearst newspapers. Alarmed that his own work might appear "nutty", Goff designed a second house totally different in form with a low gabled roof. It apparently looked even more Wrightian and Goff feels now that he probably had been influenced by houses that had in turn been influenced by the Prairie School . . . perhaps contractor houses.

Mr. Rush did not join in the draftsmen's ridicule

of Wright, but rather called Goff over to a large magazine cabinet and showed him the March 1908 issue of the *Architectural Record*. In addition to the complete text of Wright's essay "In the Cause of Architecture", the plans for many of Wright's buildings were shown including the Larkin Building and the Robie house. Mr. Rush said that Wright was probably the "world's greatest architect". Goff studied the plans inside and out, and memorized Wright's essay. It was 1916, and the issue was eight years behind in showing Wright's work. The twelve year old Goff wrote to Wright asking where he might find more recent information about his work.

Soon he received a letter written on Japanese paper with the Taliesin seal embossed upon it.



Wright wrote that "he was glad he had a young friend in Oklahoma and was taking the liberty of sending gratis two portfolios of his work published in 1910 in Germany . . . which would bring him two years up to date". Goff remembers rushing to the dictionary to look up the word "gratis". Two months of the teasing draftsmen passed uncomfortably until one day a large wooden crate arrived containing two Wasmuth portfolios.

For three years Goff worked under the strong influence of Wright's work, although he never copied it consciously. He was aware that he too would have to find his own individual way. To find that way he looked to the outside world through magazines. It would be difficult to gain as much depth or insight from most of today's magazines with their reduced content levels and public relations orientation. Today's mass media assume a lower common denominator than did the publications of that time.

Goff would often skip lunch to buy such glimpses of sophistication as *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Bazaar*, or *Country Life* with their ads showing products used in the Robie House. The Italian magazine *Broom* showed him his first reproductions of paintings by Cezanne, Stella and Giacometti, and

A design exercise done by Bruce Goff in 1922. Materials were to be brick and stone. This residence is very much in the spirit of the Prairie School.

he read articles by both the Steins. In *The Dial* he first saw the work of Eric Mendelsohn and read Paul Rosenfeld's reviews of the new music of Edgar Varese, whom Goff was later to know. In *Asia* magazine he saw examples of the architecture of Africa, the Orient and Polynesia. In the *Western Architect* he saw Wright's Midway Gardens, work by Louis Sullivan, Louis Curtis and Purcell & Elmslie.

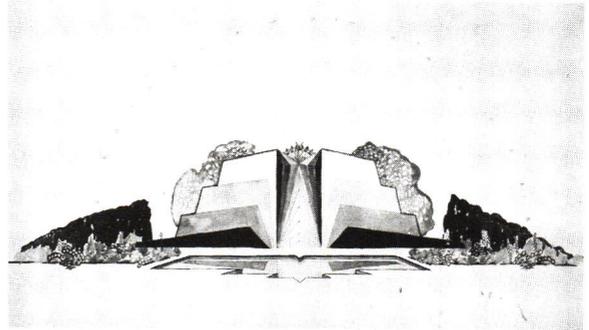
He first discovered his favorite painter, Gustav Klimt, when his "The Kiss" was reproduced in an issue of the *American Magazine*. Wright, too, "had been refreshed" by Klimt's painting, having met him in Vienna in 1908. Wright bought a painting from the Successionist painter and invited him to live and work at Taliesin. Goff found these cosmopolitan magazines to be his main stimulation from the outside world until he met Alfonso Iannelli.

Iannelli was in Tulsa discussing an architectural sculpture commission when their lifelong friendship began. Iannelli talked about Wright and of the wide world beyond Tulsa. Later, two months before the demolition of the Midway Gardens in 1929, Iannelli invited Goff to visit him in Chicago and while there

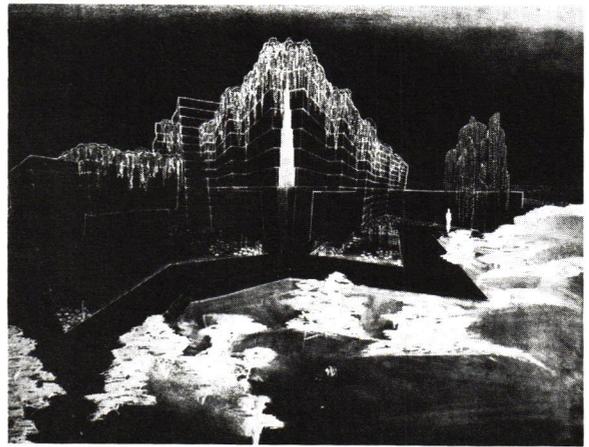
A study for a house in the hills to be constructed of concrete and glass. This work shows the strong influence of Eric Mendelson on Goff in 1922.



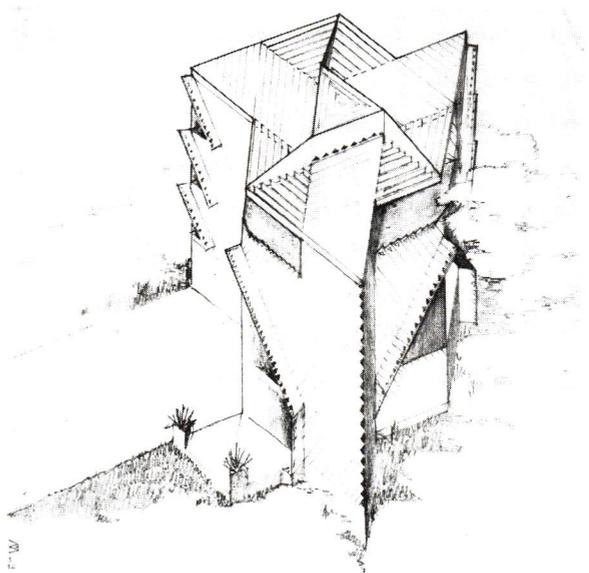
In 1923 Goff did this study for a studio with a reflecting pool to be built in Tulsa. Materials were to be concrete shaded from white to black with shaded tones of glass for the entrance.



This study for a glass house in Tulsa was done in 1929. It was to have had two stories with a roof garden. There were intermediate dining and kitchen level bridges and a swimming pool. The dining room had a glass floor for viewing the water below. The plan was basically triangular with walls of vertical glass. Note the horizontal ventilation strips. All glass was to be mitered at the corners and held in place by an interior light steel frame. There were to be vines around the roof garden hanging down over glass for sun protection.



In 1932 Bruce Goff did this study for a triangular module residence. The module is expressed in the plans, in the fenestration, in the diagonal treatment of the copper sheathing and in the decorative perforations.



took him to Taliesin to meet Frank Lloyd Wright. Goff had corresponded occasionally with Wright during the years since he had become the chief designer for his Tulsa firm, and after he moved to Chicago, Goff was a frequent visitor to Taliesin.

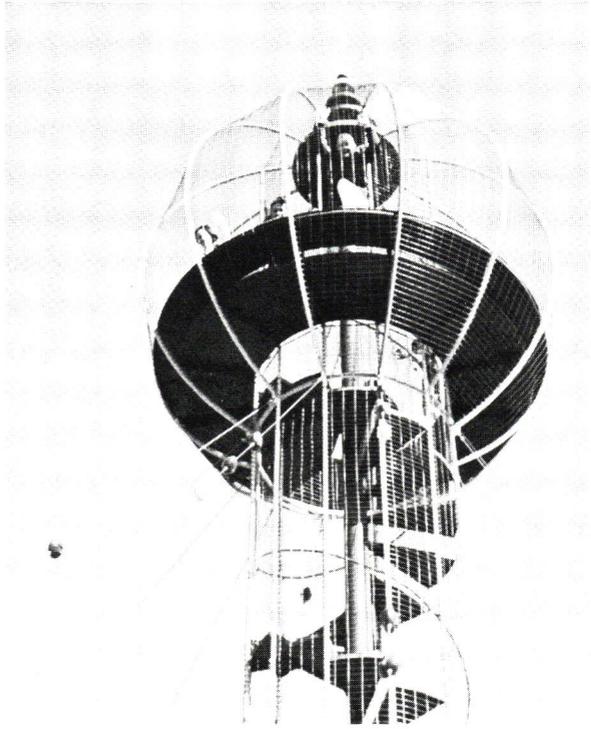
Between 1916 and 1926, Goff's work showed a constant awareness of the experiments in Europe by Eric Mendelsohn, as well as his own individual and intense search for the meanings of forms, spaces and textures. Yet his main direction remained that of the Prairie School, as almost alone he reinterpreted their earlier forms within his new ones. One by one the other Prairie School architects had abandoned the style.

His first major building came in 1926 with the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Tulsa. He was twenty-two years old. Goff remembers that the primary requirement of the forty-four member building committee was that the building be taller than the nearby Catholic church. The tower was capped by a crystalline form in bronze and glass that was to become a familiar form in Goff's later work. It showed his strong sense of complex ornament contrasted by smooth planes, a highly organic concrete dome, and the first automobile entrance used in a religious building. The exterior sculpture was done by Iannelli, and geometric stained glass windows subtly filter in blue and lavender light.

In 1928 Goff became a partner in the firm of Rush, Endicott & Goff, but a year later the Great Depression began, sending building into confusion and then into almost total inactivity.

In 1934 Goff moved to Chicago where he worked on a project with Iannelli for a hotel complex to be built in the Badlands. He taught a class at the newly established Chicago Academy of Fine Arts headed by Mrs. Ford, for whom he was to design one of his greatest houses in 1949. He joined the staff of the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company, heading the design department. He designed a showroom in the Merchandise Mart and various kinds of advertising, but most important was that he studied glass itself. He investigated the manufacture and use of glass, and discovered the then ignored beauty of the discarded glass slag . . . a material he continues to use with masonry or even as masonry in the projected Bartlesville Redeemer Lutheran Church (1959).

One summer he worked for a Tulsa stone company furnishing precisely cut stone to replace those in existing buildings. The pieces required accurate isometric drawings and Goff feels now that the experience sharpened his sense of precision as well as his dislike of classical buildings.



Sooner Park in Bartlesville, Oklahoma is the location of this "Playtower" designed by Goff in 1963. Utilizing the extensive metal fabricating skills of the local oil industry, Goff's Playtower offers children high excitement and complete safety. Fully enclosed by mesh, the tower flexes in tension. Should a child fall while climbing the spiral staircase, the design itself would move him to the center, stopping the fall within the distance of one or two steps.

The Unseth house was designed in 1940 for a city lot in Park Ridge, Illinois. The prismatic form of the house is repeated in the windows, in the skylight surrounding the fireplace, and in other details. The garage doors are in the front left of the house. Photo by Robert Kostka.





This Bachelor's house near Bartlesville, Oklahoma was done in 1957. It has since been extensively expanded since the owner's marriage and the need to accommodate his collection of Japanese Art. Photo by Joe D. Price.

Goff designed many buildings during this depression period, a few of which were built . . . the Cole house (1935) and the Unseth house (1940) both built in Park Ridge, Illinois, the Rant house (1936) Northfield, Illinois and the Colmorgen house (1937) in Glenview, Illinois. The widely published redwood and copper Triaero vacation house (1940) built in Fern Creek, Kentucky, with its triangular plan revealed the originality and inventiveness that had become the mature style of Bruce Goff.

The Unseth house is prismatic in plan, and the windows are trapezoidal in shape. Thick glass ashtrays from the 10¢ store placed in the doors and at various points in walls create prisms of light. There is a corrugated glass window hidden within the eave of the bathroom, and a prismatic window surrounds the fireplace adding daylight as well as firelight to the space.

The use of "found objects" such as ashtrays or boiler bottoms at first seems to provide an amusing touch to Goff's designs, yet it reveals a far more sophisticated interest in prefabricated building elements. This use of consumer and industrial elements was to grow as Goff entered the Navy Seabees in 1941. After designing a group of buildings in the Aleutians, an officer's club, he designed the famous chapel at Camp Park, California. The main part of the chapel utilized a quonset structure to create a highly sensitive and thoughtful space. It was voted one of the best churches of its year, 1941.

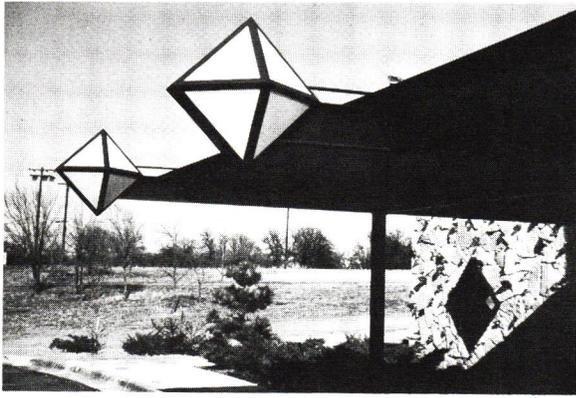
His immediate postwar years were spent in California, and between 1948 and 1957 Goff was Chairman of the School of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma. In 1958 he set up practice in the Price Tower at Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Later he practiced in Kansas City, Missouri, and in late 1970 moved to Tyler, Texas.

Following his move to Kansas City, there came a series of houses that pushed the limits of architecture far beyond the Prairie School itself. New materials, new physical and psychological spaces, new combinations of archetypes, new forms . . . unique in solving regional requirements or a client's highly special needs were used. While these new building forms were emerging, Goff was also influencing a generation of architectural students to find a regional and individual architecture of their own.

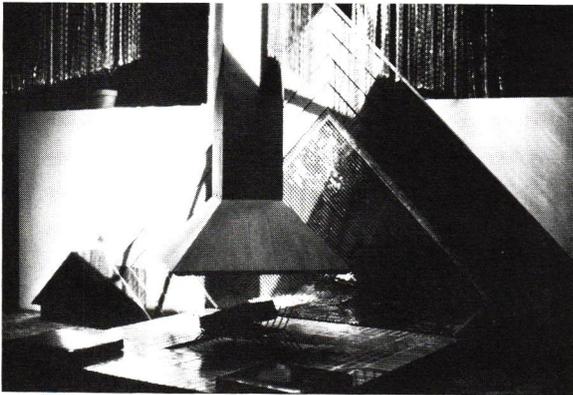
These new forms attracted great attention, and not always favorable attention at that. Goff's first house (1918) had received both praise and criticism. Mr. Endicott urged him to "grow a thick skin". He then asked "Just *who* are you trying to please?" Goff has even become philosophical about criticism . . . "someone once said that the perception of beauty itself is always accompanied by feelings of strangeness . . . it's part of the process of the recognition of beauty."

Owners of Goff houses quickly come to expect large numbers of visitors . . . *LIFE* magazine covered the Ledbetter house by showing people waiting in line for eight hours to see the house. The Bavinger house drew 50,000 visitors in its first five years.

Ironically Goff is most likely to be accused of imposing his own ego upon those very buildings

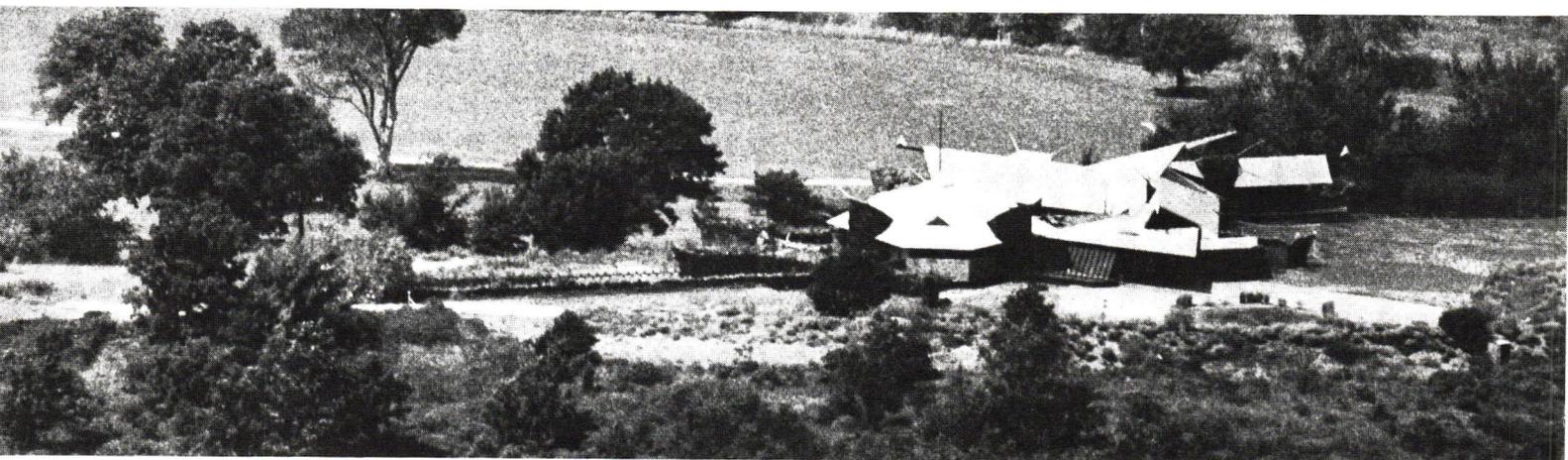


These lights are over the entry canopy of the classroom building of the Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. This diamond shaped form/theme is repeated throughout this basically rectangular building done in 1959.



The fireplace of the Hyde house in Kansas City, Kansas done in 1965. On a raised platform, it rises through a tall central space. The archetypal hearth is part of a complex visual pattern with mosaics scattering light in all directions below, and plastic strips above doing the same. Photo by Robert Kostka.

The home of Joe and Etsuko Price as it appears today. The house and museum were done over the period 1957-70. Robert Bowlby assisted Mr. Goff on parts of this complex.



that are most uniquely designed to meet a client's own special requirements . . . wide windowsills to display an extensive collection of antique glass, or growing orchids in the master bedroom. More frequently people are surprised by his use of Nature and of natural materials such as coal, or by the unexpected yet functional forms that evolve from solving the problems of frequent hurricanes or flooding.

This sense of strangeness may also be part of the experiencing of an art that transcends the particular time in which it was made . . . Goff's houses have never looked like the prevailing fashion, nor do they seem to age. This ability to transcend one's own time has always been the basis of a great architecture, and of all lasting art.

Goff designs each building to be unique; he has no single recognizable style. Each building requires an individualized form. Although he does not evolve a single architectural system to be applied to all his buildings, Goff's buildings are highly evolved systems. It is within this *way of evolving* a system that Goff's personal style is clearly seen.

Each solution calls for its own *system*, or *theme*, and once the theme/form has been determined every detail is developed in those terms. If the theme/form is crystals, all details whether large or small are crystalline . . . if the theme/form is spirals, circles, etc., all are formally related creating an unusual unity rare in most contemporary building. This total unity creates a uniquely individualized environment, and above all Goff is a master of environment.

This use of a theme/form module, unlike most modular systems, has extended the range of both ends of the scale, the largest units as well as the smallest. Included within this range lies the possibility of modular systems as well as ornamentation. Few architects have dared to use ornament in the postwar period, and fewer still understand its use.

Both Wright and Goff continued to use ornament in an unbroken tradition, with a sense of the special function of ornament that is still little understood.

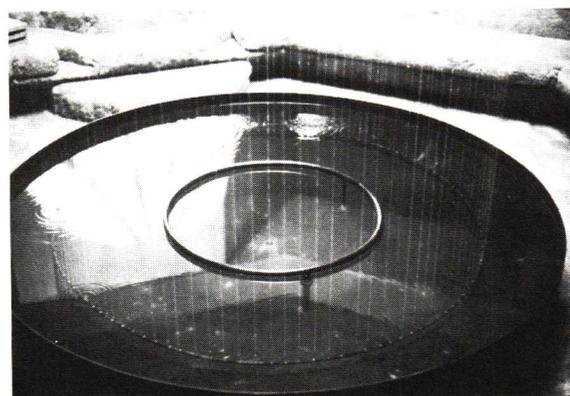
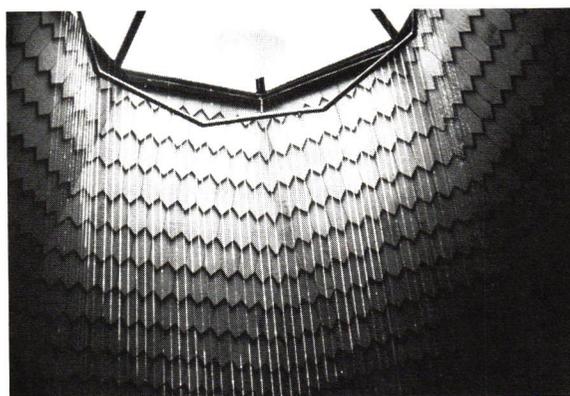
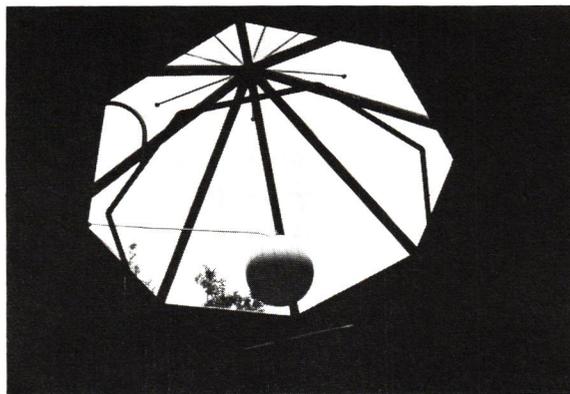
The relationship of Surface to Mass is highly complex, and there is frequent need to redirect or make a mass ambiguous. In his Imperial Hotel, Wright felt the need to optically lighten the heavy interior brick masses by lightening their visual weight. He used gold lacquer in the mortar between the bricks, and as one walked by the angle of light would cause the gold to shimmer . . . the surface became a changing pattern of golden shimmering, making the necessarily heavy brick wall appear to be light weight. Within a theme/form system, Goff frequently changes the visual weight of a wall by making it appear to function differently within its space. In the Hyde house, the light-reflecting mosaics and hanging plastic strips capture the light coming from the fireplace, magnifying the fire itself into a kinetic light display.

In the classroom building of the Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bartlesville, Goff masked the edges of the plywood paneling by covering the seams with mosaic glass pieces in a complex diamond-shaped pattern, echoing the window forms. The wall surfaces take on an unbroken visual continuity, seemingly seamless, while related to the larger forms and to the whole by the ornamentation pattern itself.

The Nicol house (Kansas City, Missouri, 1967) has a tall octagonal tepee-like central living area, surrounded by a ring of smaller octagonal rooms. The tepee itself is topped with a skylight from which are suspended thin copper wires attached below to a large metal dish in the conversation pit. Drops are slowly released down the copper wires and thus act as a natural cooling system within the space. Gas jets on the surface of the water complete the multiple image of "hearth" by a unity of opposites, fire and water. The rooms circling the central living space are painted chromatically from red in the study to purple in a bedroom. The downstairs laundry room easily converts into a puppet theater for the whole family.

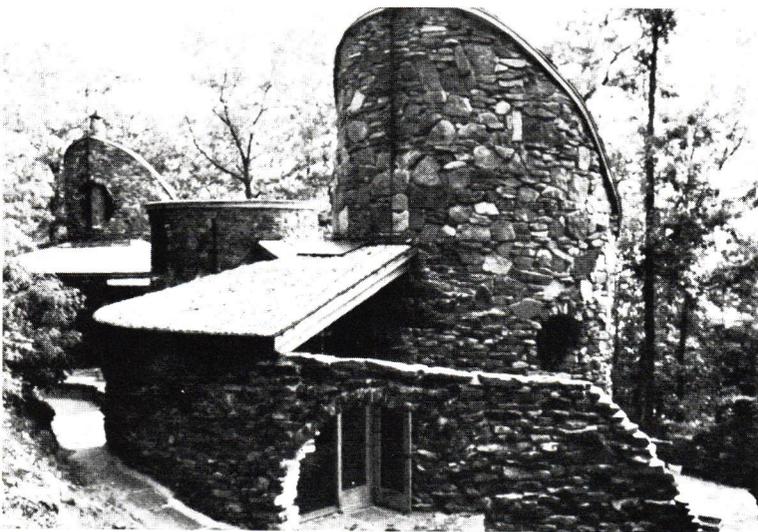
Ornament is essentially a communication media, a carrier of content . . . be that content a decorative surface, a change in human scale, or of the apparent function of elements within a form system. These form/themes are themselves a still more elemental kind of content . . . they are *archetypal*.

Archetypes are original physical or psychological forms, ideas, patterns or myths. They consciously or unconsciously communicate themselves as their main or sole content . . . they are source forms for

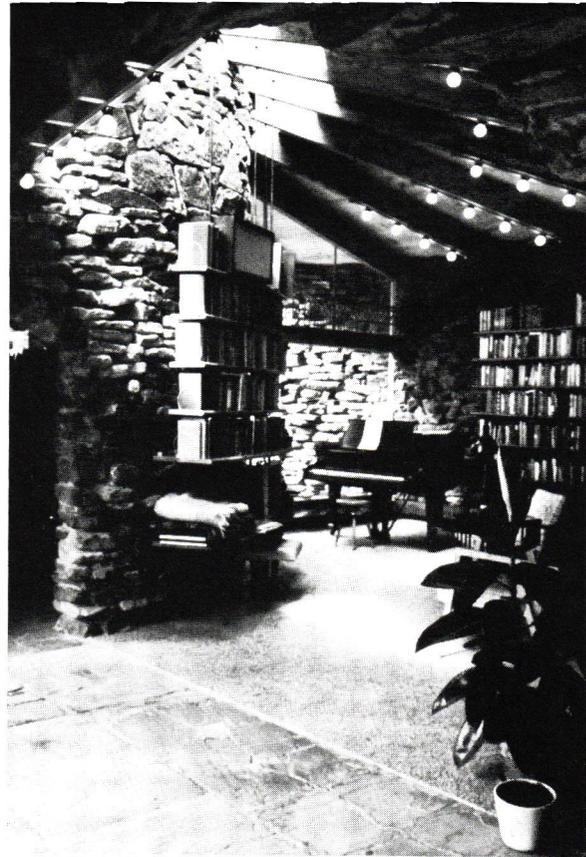


The Nicol house in Kansas City, Missouri built in 1966 has a central skylight, shown in the top photo, which suggests a teepee as archetype of the main common area within the house. The central photo shows thin copper wires which are strung from a pipe that releases drops of water. Moving down the wire at a hypnotically slow speed, they cool the air in the space and add to the control of humidity levels. The bottom photo shows how the wires terminate in a six foot circle around an inner ring of gas jets. The symbol of the meeting of fire and water forms the focal point of the conversation pit, an early Goff innovation. Photos by Robert Kostka.





The Duncan house at Cobden, Illinois was completed in 1969. Both in plan and elevation, the circle is the dominate element. At right is a view of the library of the Duncan house. Both photos by Richard Helstern.



newer ones. The fireplace is an archetypal form communicating the security of hearth, family, creation or contemplation even in climates where the additional heat is undesirable. Wright's image of hands folded in prayer, earlier evoked by Durer, became the form theme for the Unitarian Church in Madison, Wisconsin. Similarly, a chalice form was abstracted from the Greek Orthodox worship services as the archetypal form for the Wauwatosa Greek Orthodox Church.

Goff evokes architecturally unassociated archetypes from newer ways of looking at the world and at ourselves. It is the structural world we find in our expanding awareness of Nature's patterns of growth as seen in crystals, plants or our own bodies. Goff has said that:

Plants, animals, or anatomy, when seen in design, color, texture, all register if you're not trying to remember what a building looks like. You're as likely to be influenced by a flower as by another building.

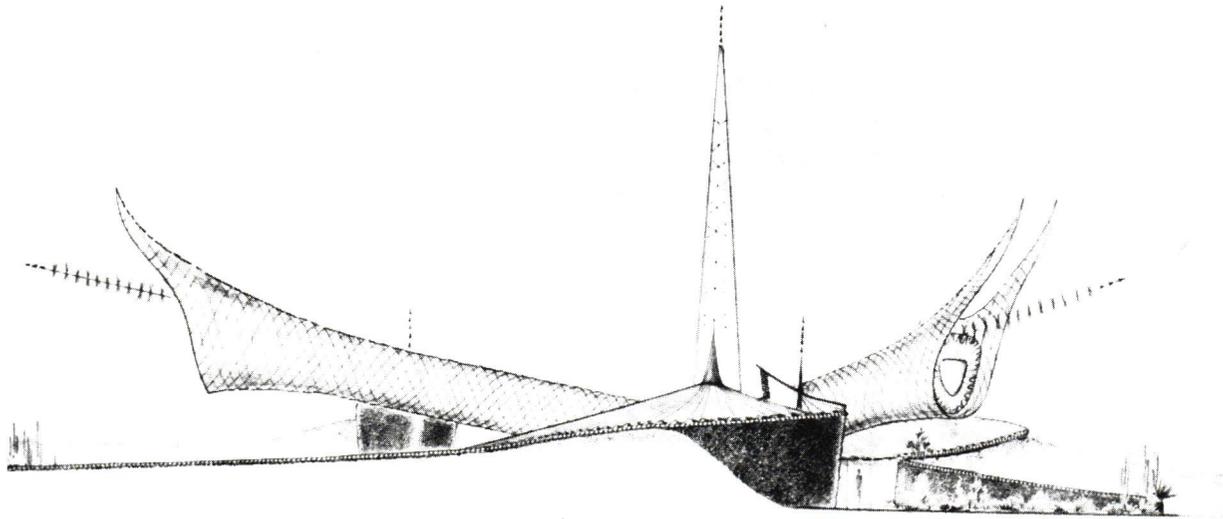
Goff's earliest designs show another archetypal form now in common use, the so-called conversation pit.

Another kind of form/theme dominates the Duncan house (Cobden, Illinois, 1969). In both plan and elevation the house is a series of circular and cylindrical forms. Stone towers of varying heights are unified by a serpentine roof, that seems to rise from the side of the cliff upon which it is set. The client, an eminent sociologist whose book, *Culture and Democracy*, is the key to understanding the

democratic basis of the new building forms, did a great deal of the physical work on the house himself. Stones were gathered from a nearby creekbed, and fragments of ornaments by Sullivan and Purcell were set into the masonry . . . reminders of decades spent in trying to save important Chicago and Prairie School buildings from demolition. Hugh Duncan was one of the first people to crusade against the destruction of an architectural heritage now unfortunately almost totally gone. He had also known both Wright and Jens Jensen. It was inevitable that client and architect should find each other and that the product should be one of the most important houses of the decade.

The new addition to the Price house (Bartlesville, Oklahoma, 1970) has a pool in the center of the living space that adds humidity needed to keep a large collection of Japanese screens from cracking. A pool is located directly under a skylight, and its transparent plastic bottom also functions as a skylight for the Japanese style bath located directly below it. The wall tiles in the bath are patterned abstractions of the crystalline forms of the overhead pool, ignoring floors or ceilings or even up and down. There is a pool above another pool — one forming a filter for the skylight above it. The space is made to appear directionally ambiguous, another instance of ornamentation modulating or apparently changing the space itself.

Perhaps the most important example of Goff's work still remains as a project; the 1957 design for the Dewlen Aparture to have been built near Amarillo, Texas. The name "aparture" was coined by



This elevation drawing of the Dewlen Aparture was done in 1958. It was proposed for Amarillo, Texas but was not built.

the client, a combination of "apartment" and "departure".

Two cantilevered ramps or tubes were to be studios for the owners. They were to be made of welded steel tubing covered with fabric sprayed on the outside with aluminum pellets and they were to be coated on the inside with acoustical insulation as was the covering catenary ceiling suspended above. Plastic skylights were to be placed at the center and at the perimeter of the house, while the tube ends were glazed with plexiglass. Large rotating "feather" windsculptures were to be placed outside the end of each tube, while the masonry portions of the building were to have been coal rhythmically patterned with veins of "fools gold".

As the most complicated and sophisticated blending of archetype in all of Goff's work, the Dewlen Aparture would have been the first example built of a new kind of architecture now emerging in several parts of the world. Another project of this time was the startling concrete Aerospace Institute . . . the building itself is an archetype of the soaring path of motion of an airplane or a bird.

When Bruce Goff first visited Japan in 1969, he was rightly greeted as *the* pioneer of the Metabolic School. Although relatively small as Goff's houses are, their forming principles are still more specifically applicable to the Megastructure. Japan's population pressures are peaking before other industrial countries, and the Megastructure seems to be the only solution to mass housing now possible. Yet being Japanese, they are trying to make this new form seem "natural", to be as organic as was the traditional culture. Goff's form/themes show the way . . . they are big ideas.

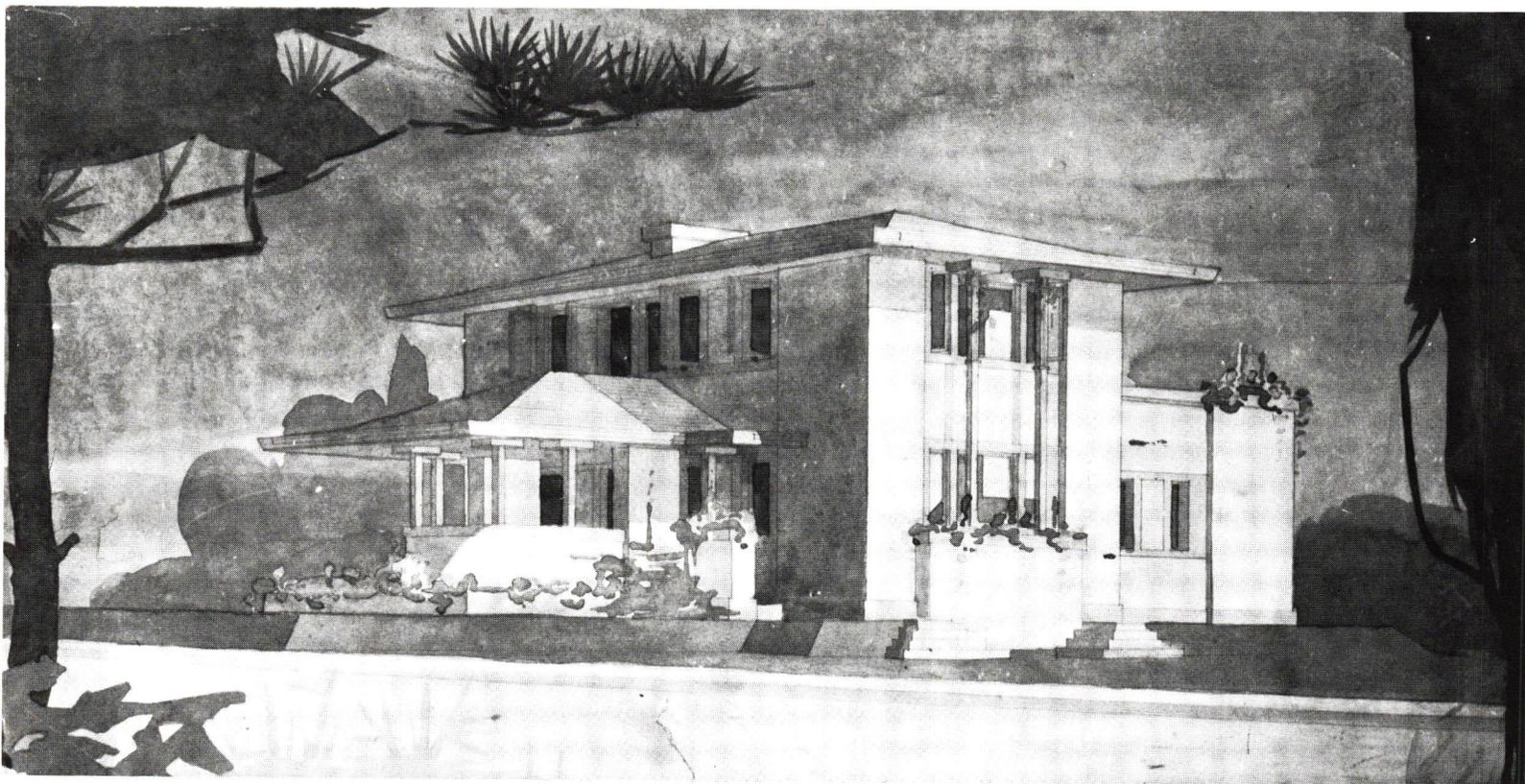
While visiting the orient, Goff sought out music as well as architecture. His deep interest in music with its fusion of structure and image, of shading and tone, explains much in Goff's own architecture and painting. The Governor of the Japanese island of Shikoku took him to a performance of music for taperecorder using as its sound sources (theme/form) sounds from the stones found in and around the island. He admired Goff's work "because it had music in it . . . Architecture has music, music has soul".

Goff found Japan entering a new era, as great as any in her long history, and Japan in turn was fascinated by him. His lectures were mobbed, and in Tokyo he was asked to repeat the lecture for the overflow audience of 3,000. Grounded by fog on neighboring Shikoku, Goff arrived in Osaka five hours late to find an audience of 2,000 quietly waiting for him.

At home, Goff still seems a "loner". His work is known, rarely understood and always out of fashion. It is individual . . . as such it is important to us not because we no longer value individualism, but rather because we are being persuaded that it is an unattainable and undesirable dream.

. . . No matter how free it may seem, we desire to enter into and to inhabit any great and original work of art . . . to possess it and to allow it to possess us, be it literature, painting, music or architecture. This is why architecture is such a powerful art: we can inhabit it physically as well as spiritually in time and space. Someday perhaps it will, like music, become less earth-bound, more flexible and athletic, more everchanging, and free²

² *The Kentiku*, Architecture, monthly journal for architects and designers, #3, March 1969. pp. 26-27.



This is from the original watercolor rendering of the M. J. Wood house prepared in August of 1912 by John Lloyd Wright.

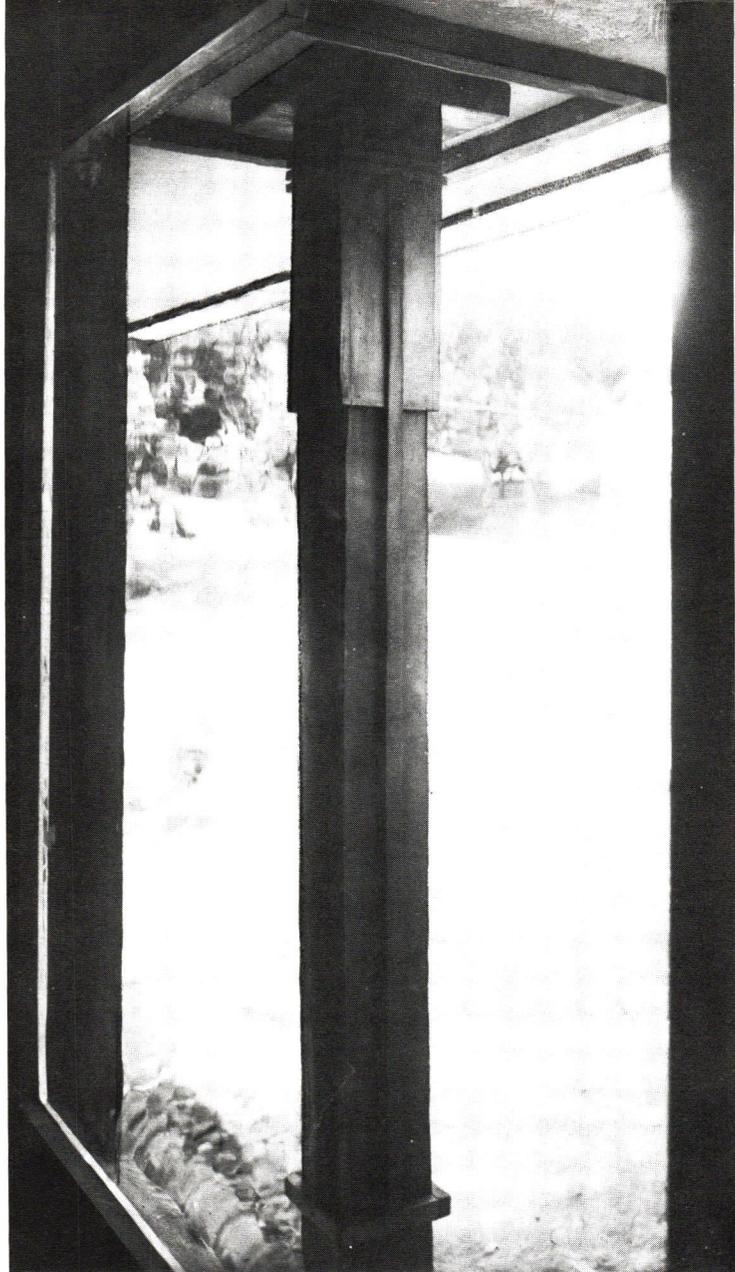
Earliest Work of John Lloyd Wright

The subject of this photo essay is the earliest independent work of architect John Lloyd Wright. The photographs and drawings of the house designed in 1912 for Mrs. M. J. Wood at Escondido, California are from Mr. Wright's personal files. Along with these illustrations came the following "reflections".

At the age of 19 it was an epoch to see my house rise out of the ground. I loved the moonlight nights when I sat on the curb across the street and watched the fantastic forms the shadows made on my first building. It was the closest feeling of worship I had ever known. I would look about to see if I were alone — then walk through the structure, over piles of sand and gravel, planks and pipes. I was happy — in love with it — in love with the mass of concrete, lumber and plaster as it shaped itself into a house — a house in which people would live. I was particularly proud of "the posts".

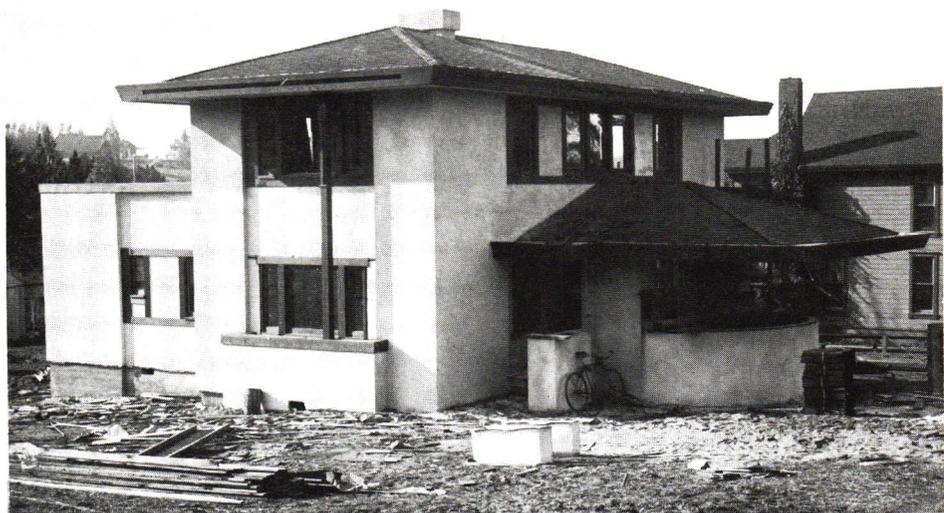


John Lloyd Wright, 1912.



All photographs from the collection of John Lloyd Wright.

*Mr. Wright was particularly proud of "the posts".
They were ornamented in a manner
similar to the Oak Park house by his
father built a few years earlier.*



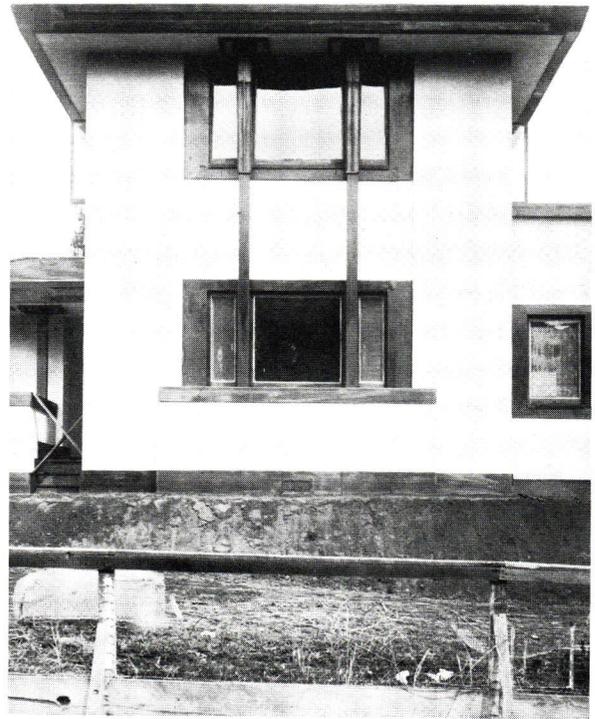
*Construction started on October 5, 1912
and was well along
when this photo was taken in December.*

Mr. and Mrs. Wood sold their ranch and wanted to live in town as Mr. Wood was an invalid. Mrs. Wood came to Harrison Albright, architect in San Diego, to design her house. Mr. Albright handled only large commercial projects. Since I was employed by Mr. Albright, he turned the job over to me to handle outside of office hours (after obtaining Mrs. Wood's permission).

I had had no architectural schooling but with the help of the public library and Mr. Albright's guidance in technical and business matters, I was able to successfully render complete architectural services in accordance with the standard documents of the American Institute of Architects (1912-1913).

It was Contractor W. W. Becker's first contract as well as my first. The house was standard 2" x 4" frame and stucco trimmed in redwood. The cost was \$3,200.00 plus 10% architect's fee and \$20.00 travel expense.

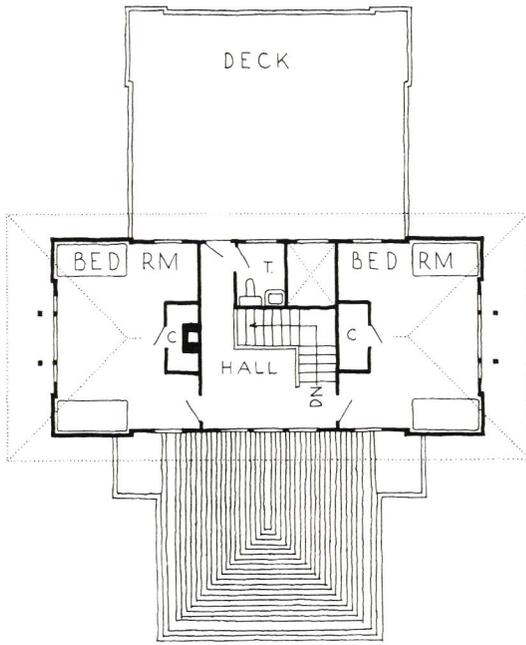
The Wood house still stands in nearly original condition. The curved porch now has windows but the building is otherwise intact. Its 19 year old architect had ample reason to be proud when it was completed in 1913. It was an appropriate beginning to a distinguished career in architecture.



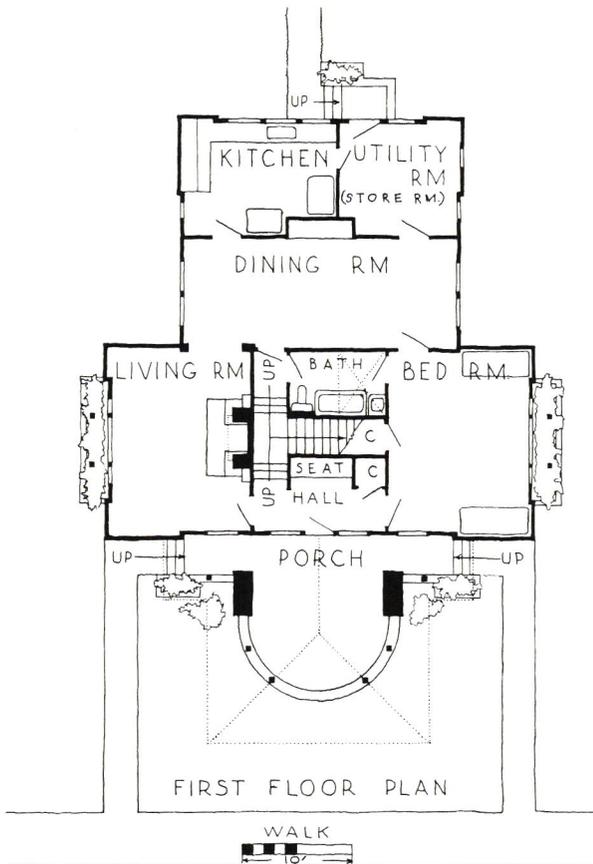
The M. J. Wood house as it appeared in 1913.

This photograph was taken when the Wood house was officially completed, February 5, 1913. The heavy corner piers are reminiscent of the work Walter Burley Griffin was doing during this same period.



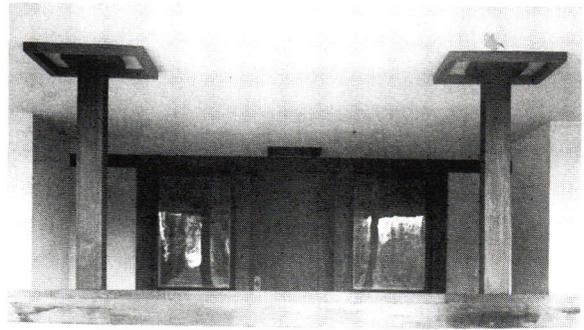


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

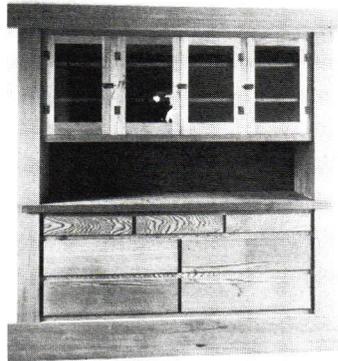


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

These plans of the M. J. Wood house were drawn in the studio of John Lloyd Wright from measurements taken at the building by Herbert Turner in January of 1953. In plan the house bears less resemblance to its midwestern predecessors than the exterior treatment would indicate.

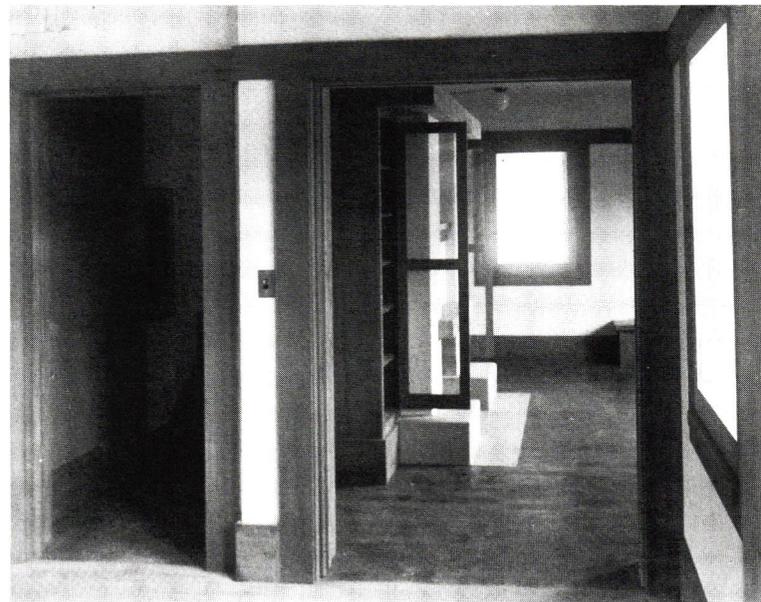


The cantilevered porch roof was supported by "posts" similar to those at each end of the two story portion of the house.



The built-in buffet in the dining room of the Wood house. Note the extreme simplicity of the design.

View from the dining room to the living room of the M. J. Wood house. The interior wood trim was redwood as was the exterior.



Book Reviews

THE RISE OF AN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE, edited by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Praeger, New York, 1970. 441 pp., illus. cloth, \$10.00.

The centenary year of the Metropolitan Museum of Art produced a number of ambitious exhibitions and publications among which are this book of essays and a tandem architecture exhibition covering the years 1815 to 1915. The essays were distributed among four historians who were free to reconsider the American past in light of their intellectual experience and to determine their own respective time spans.

For Americans taught to accept their culture as European-derived, Henry-Russell Hitchcock's essay on American influence abroad provides a modicum of redress. It suggests that transatlantic passage of architectural ideas has been a two-way affair. To prove the point it is necessary to call upon the organizational and technical aspects of American building rather than the theoretical or esthetic ones of architecture. However identifiable with the USA modern architecture may be in the public mind, the seminal ideas have been predominantly European, a thesis well presented by Hitchcock himself in his Pelican volume on architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Hitchcock's assignment here is to state the case for America. It is not a particularly warm defense probably due to the largely pragmatic nature of the American contribution. Hotels and prisons, public garages and supermarkets are innovative building types not exactly amenable to standard architectural criticism and perhaps the indecisive tone of his remarks is an indication of a crossroads in architectural history and criticism. The commercial values which govern American architecture — technological exploitation, the role of the client and his financing, the advertising and competitive roles of buildings themselves — these are factors which were either non-existent or latent in earlier architecture but which developed quickly at the end of the nineteenth century and dominate the twentieth. How to bring them into focus with the traditional values of architecture was the unresolved question of Montgomery Schuyler's own critical viewpoint. Perhaps it is simply this pragmatism, an architectural mentality which values the temporal, the efficient and the technical that constitutes the essential American influence abroad.

Within the more traditional framework of esthetics this essay points out the well-known contribution of Wright through the Wasmuth editions of his

work. Also the influences of Richardson and Sullivan are discussed although they are never as substantial as Wright's. As always in Hitchcock's writings there is the pleasant discovery of nuggets of information, e.g., the first published design of Richardson appeared in a London periodical in 1872; the first use of the steel skeleton outside the USA is London's Ritz Hotel of 1905-06.

The major contribution to the architecture of the nineteenth century was undeniably the skyscraper. This is the subject of Winston Weisman's essay which first reviews some of the past difficulties in constructing a coherent history of this singularly American form. Definition itself has been a vexing problem and everyone is free to coin his own. ("Triumphant payers of dividends" was Henry James'.)

Weisman's contribution here is a seven-stage historical development with supporting examples which he modestly puts forward until a better analysis can be found. Exceptions and difficulties in application are inevitable in any system. Those who admire the Monadnock and the Reliance buildings will not find them mentioned at all and will be puzzled into which category they belong. What is most rewarding are the convenient illustrations of rare and forgotten examples found only in such an unwieldy and out-of-print book as Francesco Mujica's. The springtime of skyscrapers was a permissive one yielding a lot of "wild work" such as Burnham and Root's Rookery. In their first maturity, skyscrapers were tamed to follow the Aristotelian formula of beginning, middle and end or the tripartite theory best used by Sullivan. The end to visual diversity came with the adoption of panel-and-mullion prefabricated curtain walls derived from Mies van der Rohe's early designs.

The history of the skyscraper is a complicated one and certainly could not be compressed within a brief essay. The factors go beyond technology and esthetics mentioned by Weisman. They must include economics. (In 1894 the corner property on Broadway and Pine for the American Surety Building, approximately 85 square feet, cost \$1,500,000 or equivalent of \$8,000,000 per acre!) Client power must be included, too. (Mr. Foshay of Minneapolis requested Leon Arnal, designer of the Foshay Tower, to design it in an obelisk form because he admired George Washington.) And also there is the curious symbolism of commerce of the secular tower to be accounted for. It starts with the guild halls of the Lowlands, Germany and Scandinavia, and persists today in such buildings as the Gillette Building outside London, the Victor factory in Camden and even in blunted form in the Merchan-

dise Mart in Chicago. The last word on skyscrapers is yet to come.

Vincent Scully's contribution is an essay on American houses from Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright. Prejudice against the nineteenth century, as Scully states, has almost entirely disappeared. His own previous books and articles have done much to dispel the horror which once was associated with "Victorian" design.

In his prefatory remarks, Scully seems aware of the relative unimportance of the individual house form as a viable architectural problem today, but he is not apologetic for the satisfactions derived from study of past domestic examples. Albeit for a privileged class, the American house of the nineteenth century evolved in creative ways. Freedom and experimentation with site, plan and spatial volumes, the cottages advocated by Downing, the shingle style vacation houses and the dynamic early works of Wright are all compressed into the essay. Those who have read his earlier, more expanded writings will not find very much that is new. That large and important segment of American architectural achievement in domestic work has been secured by his exploratory scholarship.

Of the four essays, this reviewer was most sympathetic with Albert Fein's on the American city. It encompasses the eighteenth-century beginnings of planning, the pre-Civil War ethic of social responsibility laid down by William Ellery Channing and Ralph Waldo Emerson and others, the accomplishments of Frederick Law Olmsted and Horace W.S. Cleveland and ends with a plea to understand this heritage and to reverse the current decay of our cities. Throughout is a crusading sense of Fein's didactic thrust and personal commitment to his subject. He makes the historical past an identifiable part of the crucial present. In short his words are informative, idealistic, and justifiably alarmist.

Although available in historical societies and government archives, the plans for American cities, parks and parkways, and landscaped cemeteries here assembled are presented in the context of the intellectual, economic and social history of the United States. By sidestepping their merely antiquarian interest, these documents become a visual record of a social and institutional ideal which is "America's most significant contribution to nineteenth-century urban design." Rapid urbanization of the second half of that century produced a constructive response which shaped a humanly scaled urban environment. However, mid-century idealism represented by Channing and Emerson was checked by new technological and commercial demands undermining the social, ecological and es-

thetic needs originally laid down. Fein properly points to the City Beautiful movement of the first two decades of the twentieth century as more monumental than human and representing an abandonment of an earlier idealism. But to contrast our present situation with the City Beautiful movement, Burnham's 1909 Chicago plan, for example, is to admit an even further decline. One appreciates the urgency underlying this heartfelt essay.

H. F. Koepfer
University of Illinois, Chicago

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTS {DECEASED}, by Henry F. and Elsie R. Withey. Facsimile edition. Hennessey & Ingalls, Los Angeles, 1970. 678 pp., cloth, \$22.50.

Architectural historians will greet the reissue of this reference work with mixed feelings. It is the only book of its kind on American architects. Information is given on nearly 2000 men and women who practiced and died between 1740 and 1952. The present edition is a facsimile of the 1956 edition which is virtually unobtainable except in reference rooms of the larger libraries.

Henry F. Withey, FAIA, advised this reviewer in 1966 that he had had 1000 copies of the first edition printed, 500 of which were bound and sold. The others were destroyed when sales seemed too slow to justify the expense of binding and storage. That decision was premature, as proven by the current facsimile edition done following the many requests to the publishers who are primarily dealers in rare books.

Some historians will lament the fact that the new edition is indeed a facsimile, complete with errors as well as much needed facts. These errors are numerous; for example, Joseph Lyman Silsbee's first name is given as James. More annoying, perhaps, are the obvious omissions. Why is George W. Maher not included? The exclusions are most frustrating, even more so than errors of fact which can, and always must be, checked elsewhere. Fortunately, the authors were careful to include their references and source data — the book's most important contribution. This data came largely from the American Institute of Architects, architectural periodicals, and major newspaper obituaries. The various biographical dictionaries available during the period 1940 thru 1952 when the bulk of the research was being done were also consulted. In their forward the authors state "Material thus acquired has been assumed as accurate."

The most frustrating thing about this volume is its cutoff date of 1952. A substantial number of the men who were so instrumental in the modern

movement around the turn of the century are not included since the book is confined to deceased architects. Purcell, Elmslie, and Wright are not included nor are most of their contemporaries. One can, of course, turn to the AIA's *American Architects Directory*, first published in 1956 with later editions in 1962 and 1970. But these are devoted to living practitioners and results in a four year gap between Withey and the first AAD.

It has been suggested that the Society of Architectural Historians consider the compilation of a Directory of American architects as their contribution to the Bicentennial of the United States being celebrated during this decade. This, if done properly, would be an expensive, monumental, time consuming task. Until it is done, however, we have the *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. It should be on the desk of every serious architectural historian.

Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck, AIA
Executive Director of the Chicago Chapter
and Illinois Council, AIA

Letter to the Editors

Sirs:

The offering by Peggy O'Connor concerning rediscovered work of Architect Walter Burley Griffin was surely a fine tribute to the architect, and says much that is promising in pioneering spirit and industry such as found in Prairie School Architecture.

William L. Miller

Note

Nearly all articles appearing in *The Prairie School Review* are contributed without having been requested by the editors. Most often, the material is taken from a previously prepared scholarly paper done by the author.

One of the most time consuming tasks of the editors is revising manuscripts to fit the style of *The Prairie School Review*. Therefore, we have prepared a twelve page pamphlet titled "Notes for Contributors" for use by prospective authors. It is free to anyone who wishes to submit a manuscript for consideration for publication. We suggest also that a brief outline of the proposed article be sent with the initial letter.

The Prairie School Review is open to all authors, professional or amateur. All we ask is that the material submitted be factual, responsible, original and interesting.

Preview

The next issue of *The Prairie School Review* will be devoted to the work of William Le Baron Jenney in the village of Riverside, Illinois. Jenney's fame has been based primarily upon his development of the commercial skyscraper, but Mr. Turak will concentrate on his earlier work in residential design.

There will also be information about the current restoration of Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois.

The following books will be reviewed:

Plan of Chicago

Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett

Walter Burley Griffin, Selected Designs

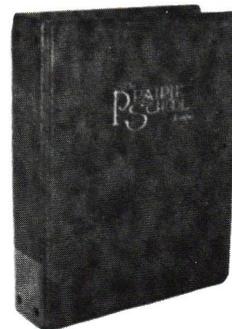
David T. Van Zanten

American Architecture Since 1780

Marcus Whiffin

The editors continue to welcome letters for possible publication. Letters may concern articles published in the *Review* or any other appropriate subject.

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Selected Bibliography

A comprehensive bibliography of the published material by and about Bruce Goff is beyond the scope of this journal. The same can be said for a complete listing of Mr. Goff's buildings and projects. The most complete bibliography and list of works can be found in the book *Bruce Goff in Architecture* and in the March 1969 issue of *The Kentiku, Architecture*, a monthly journal for architects and designers. Each contains nearly identical data with over 100 bibliographic entries and 236 buildings and projects.

Some of the more important and easily obtainable bibliographic items are noted on this page.

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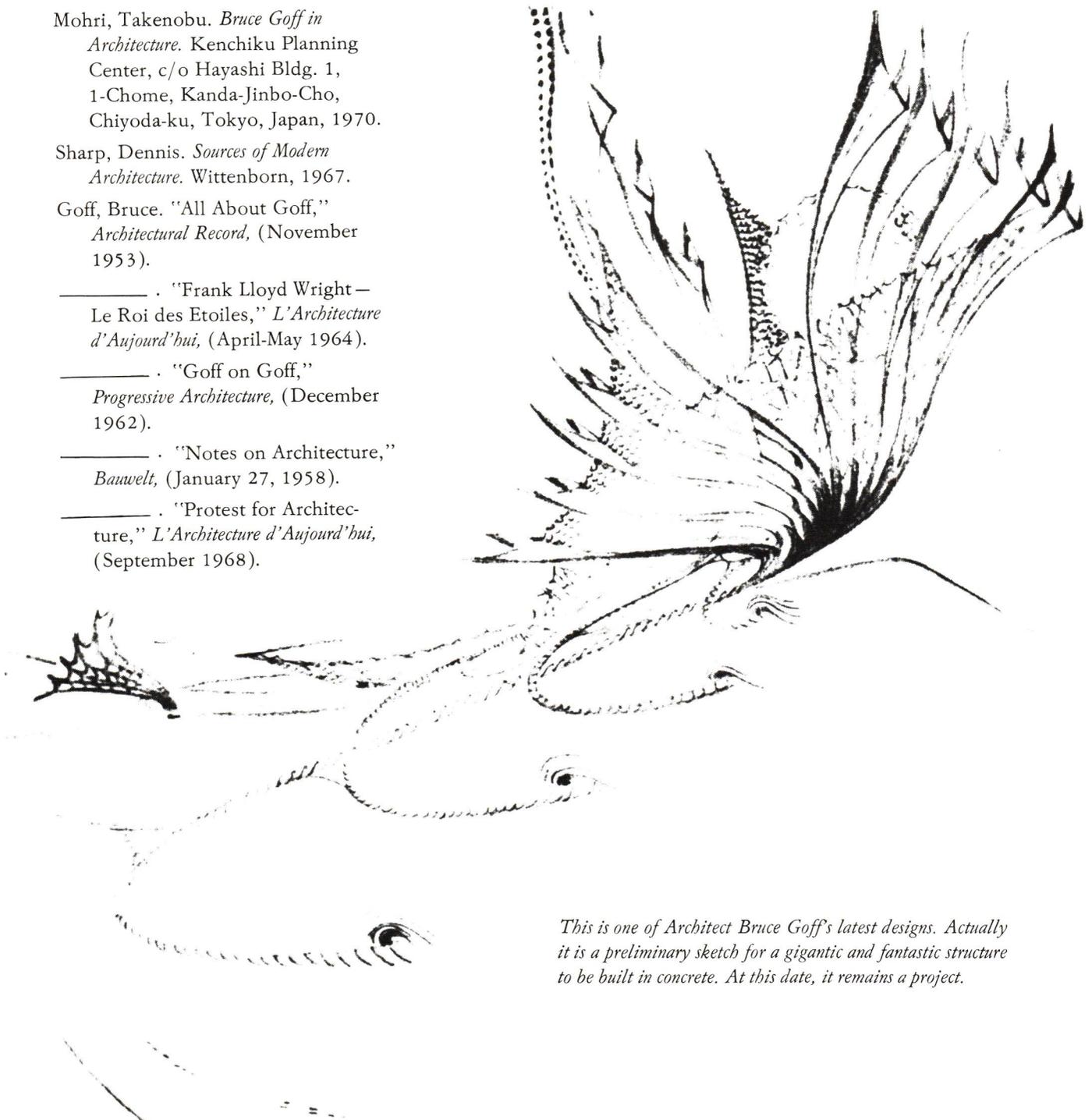
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Waechter, H. H. "Architecture of Bruce Goff," *AIA Journal*, (December 1959).



This is one of Architect Bruce Goff's latest designs. Actually it is a preliminary sketch for a gigantic and fantastic structure to be built in concrete. At this date, it remains a project.

