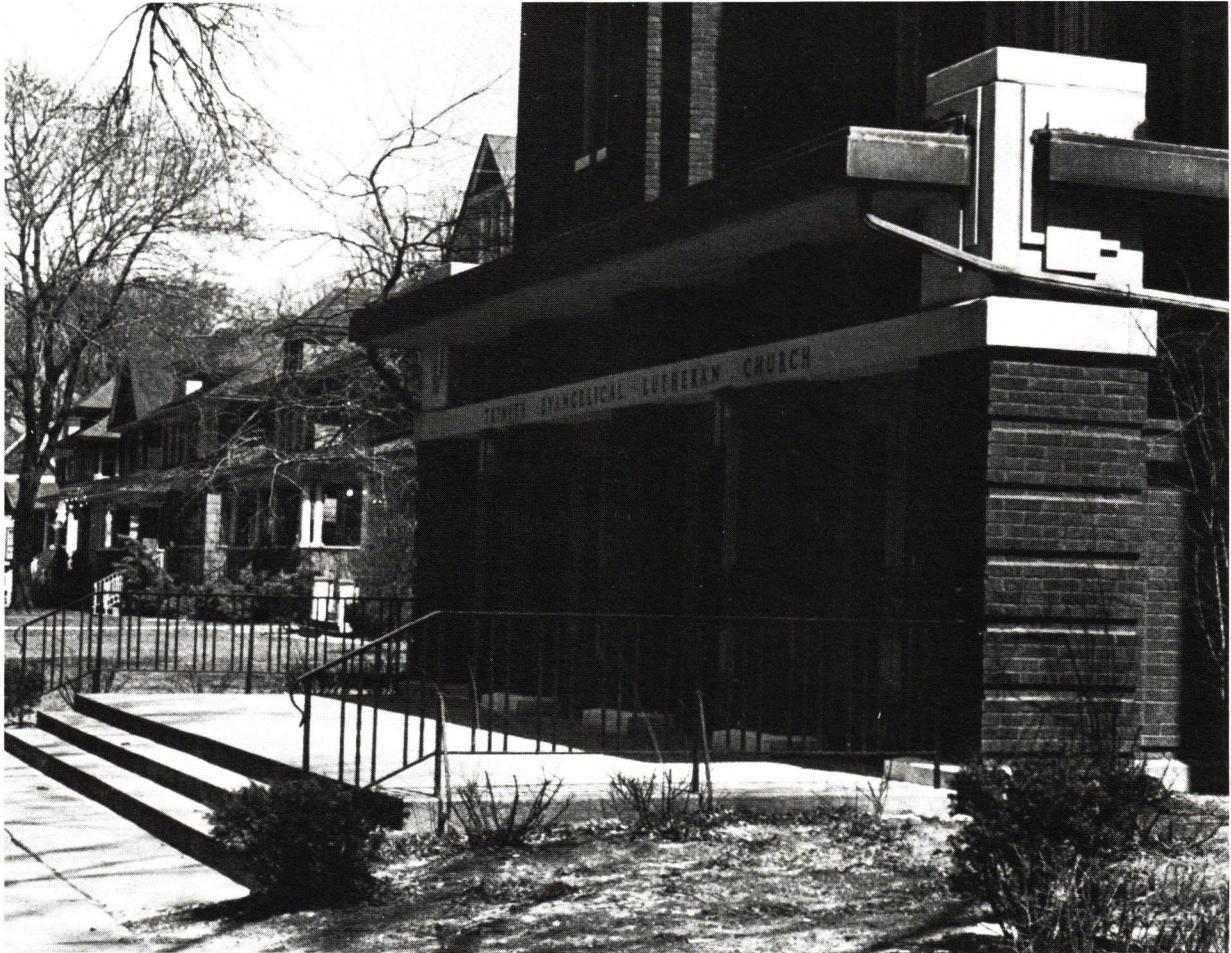


The
Prairie
School
Review

Volume X, Number 2

Second Quarter, 1973

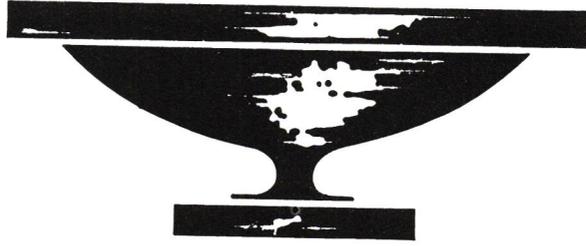


ABOVE: The entrance to the Trinity Lutheran Chapel combines vertical and horizontal elements skillfully; however, the church as a whole retains a massive and traditional quality.

COVER: The exquisite leaded glass in these doors in E. E. Roberts' own home are still as lovely today as when they were installed in 1912.

The photographs in this issue are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

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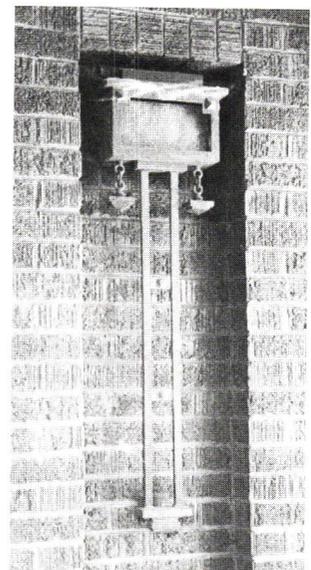
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Lamp at the entrance to the Elks Club.

From the EDITORS

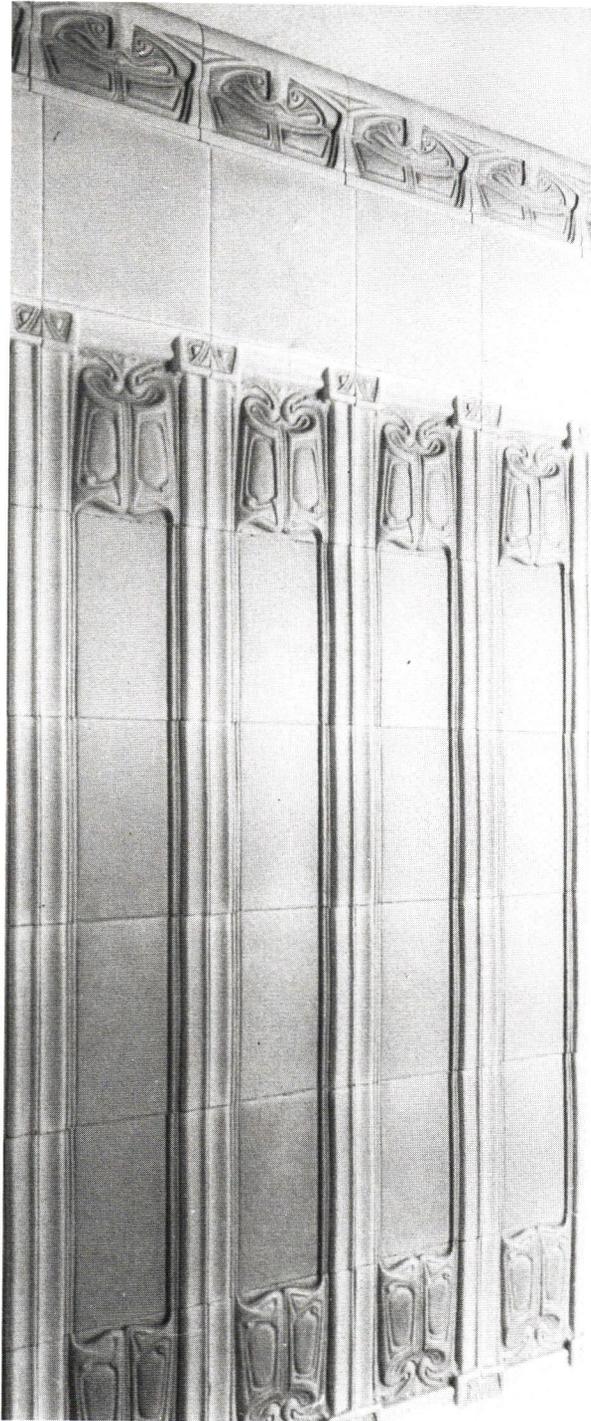
Richard Nickel was the first to know of The Prairie School Review. We were standing in the vast empty hulk of the old University of Illinois Navy Pier building where remnants of the Garrick theatre were stored — pieces which eventually left Chicago and went to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He had promised me the front door of Louis Sullivan's Babson house and we were there to get it. Eventually I built our house around it. With a slow smile he said that perhaps I should have that copy of Froebel's book on Kindergarten blocks he had found. He was concerned that my two sons should be exposed to something similar. Then we rambled on about the Chicago Heritage Committee Newsletter which we were trying to edit sporadically and which usually appeared only to lament the destruction of another important building.

I said the old White Pine Series was an example of what should be happening again with its measured drawings, photographs and history — we had even thought of doing something of our own along the same lines. But my wife interrupted and said something more like a "Harper's or Atlantic of architecture." Dick just smiled again at our naivete. His experience on the Chicago scene with the Garrick and all the rest didn't leave much room to encourage us — however, why not try . . .

But when we got it off the ground, he was subscriber number six. He would drop little notes to us on the back of sailing photographs suggesting a house or an address to be looked at sometime later. Always he would lend photographs with no possibility of payment. He even paid for his subscription faithfully each year when we conveniently left his addressograph plate in the billing list. Later he was more than repaid, he said, when we found and gave him a first edition of Hugh Morrison's Louis Sullivan, Prophet of Modern Architecture. He had been searching for one for years and told us of how many copies he determinedly had not filched from libraries.

About a year ago we were among the group who buried him. He was killed photographing the demolition of the Chicago Stock Exchange Building. The shell of Louis Sullivan's masterpiece, weakened by the wrecker's hammer, collapsed under him and he died along with the building. When he was found several weeks later, Richard was taken to Chicago's Graceland Cemetery where he lies within site of the marker of the man he revered but never met, Louis Henry Sullivan. I had the sad privilege of delivering a brief eulogy.

We are thinking about doing a memorial issue devoted to Dick and his photographs. Maybe. Maybe the whole ten years of The Prairie School Review is a memorial to him.



The influence of the European Art Nouveau movement on Roberts is easily recognizable in this wall panel designed by him for the C. W. Helder house in 1906.

E. E. Roberts:

Popularizing the Prairie School

by Frances Steiner

In the suburb of Oak Park, just west of Chicago, Illinois, a tremendous architectural transformation was in progress between 1890 and 1915. As the home of Frank Lloyd Wright for twenty years, Oak Park became the geographical nucleus of the "Prairie School." The architecture of Oak Park before Wright began to practice there was commonplace and without special distinction. Except for the relatively small number of clients willing to experiment with the less conventional by engaging Wright or other innovators, popular taste remained conservative. Styles current elsewhere reappeared along the elm-lined streets of the village. However, before 1900 popular taste was changing, and Wright's geometric masses and rectilinear ornament were mirrored in the work, not only of his immediate followers, but in that of every architect and contractor working in Oak Park in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The work of Eben Ezra Roberts clearly reflects the impact of the Prairie style upon local architecture. Roberts began his practice in a conventional manner, but was not destined to move smoothly in conservative channels once challenged by the new architectural tendencies in Oak Park. Born in Boston in 1866, the son of a woodcarver, Roberts received his education in the public schools of Boston and later in Meredith, New Hampshire; after completing public education, he studied architecture at Tilton Seminary.

Frances Steiner received her Masters' Degree in 1970 from the University of Chicago. Her Masters' Thesis, written under the direction of Professor Paul Sprague, at the University of Chicago, was the basis for this article. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Northwestern University and teaching in the Northwestern Evening Division.



The E. A. Carr residence of 1897 represents Roberts' earliest Oak Park style. The form is largely dictated by economy.

About 1890 Roberts moved to Chicago. The earliest known design by him was for a small house in Oak Park; the plans are dated 1890.¹ Between 1890 and 1893 Roberts was employed by S. S. Beman as job superintendent on some of the Pullman buildings. His other architectural activities during these years have not come to light so far. His experience with Beman, which gave him the opportunity of participating in all aspects of construction, was much valued by Roberts in later years according to his son Elmer; by being acquainted with the most elemental architectural activities, Roberts felt himself well prepared to strike out on his own.²

In 1893 Roberts moved to Oak Park and opened his own office. He worked there until 1912 when he shifted his office to Chicago, but until his death in 1943 he remained a resident of Oak Park. By 1895 he had built a large practice and during that year he designed at least thirteen private houses and six apartment buildings.³ The volume of his work continued to increase, but his records have been destroyed and a large percentage of his buildings are still not identified.⁴ His residential work seems to have reached its peak around 1910, and after that

1 This plan of the house of Mrs. D. D. Hulbert at 228 South Euclid Avenue is signed and dated July 24, 1890. It appears on microfilm in the Housing Department of the Village of Oak Park and was discovered by Elizabeth Dull.

2 Interview with Elmer Roberts, son of Eben Ezra, March, 1970.

3 *Oak Park Reporter* (Oak Park), January 3, 1896.

4 It has been necessary to depend for the most part upon newspaper references to buildings by Roberts. These are

time he concentrated more and more on commercial architecture.⁵ In 1922 Roberts made his son Elmer a partner, and four years later, in 1926, went into semi-retirement.

During Roberts' first years of activity in Oak Park, he built unpretentious, two-story, clapboard residences of typical late 19th century types varying from simple, vertically-oriented, rectangular buildings to the elegant houses in the Queen Anne and Shingle styles.

The simpler type of house which Roberts designed in the years between 1895 and 1899 represents an influence of the indigenous residential architecture as it was created by the anonymous builders of the Midwest in the 19th century.⁶ These structures usually in the form of rectangular vertical blocks with porches across the front and sometimes with classical or Victorian trim are essentially styleless. The tendency toward an indigenous vernacular was especially strong among builders of inexpensive housing, such as land developers. On several occasions Roberts designed buildings for clients of this kind whose purpose was building for investment purposes only. No doubt, these clients for investment construction as well as the pragmatically-minded clients of limited means asked for a large amount of square feet in relation to the money invested, thus inducing Roberts to use less expensive rectangular forms whenever possible.

Many of Roberts' early houses are simple cubes with steep attics created by the slopes of the roofs and basements which reach two or three feet above the ground: the "soapbox" house against which Frank Lloyd Wright was reacting. The E.A. Carr house of 1897 is a box to which Roberts added a dormer, a bay on the second story, and an off-center entrance.

While many of Roberts' early houses seem somewhat styleless, experimental or amateurish, some of his houses of the 1890's show much greater skill in design. These better houses follow the Queen Anne and Shingle Styles, both of which Roberts would

usually incomplete. Furthermore, building permits could not be checked for those buildings before 1902, since the records previous to that date were destroyed in fire.

5 Interview with Elmer Roberts, April, 1970.

6 John A. Kouwenhoven discusses the conflict between the vernacular tradition in American architecture and the European traditions. He claims that the "influence (of the vernacular) was felt almost exclusively in those areas where the new civilization was least subject to the restraining influence of the older culture" and that "in geographical terms this meant the new industrial centers, particularly in the Midwest and West." See John A. Kouwenhoven, *Made in America* (New York: Anchor, 1962), p. 67.



Robert's Hoover residence of 1896 is a version of the Queen Anne style.

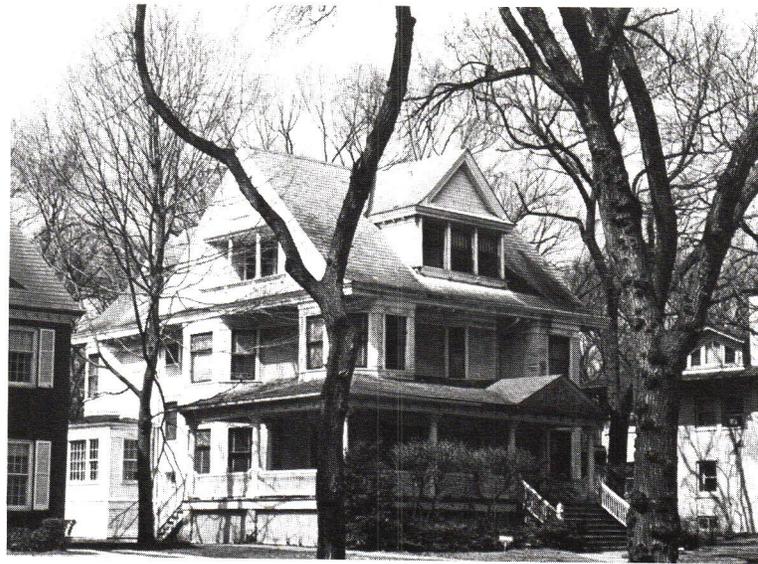
have known from his youth in New England, from local Oak Park examples, and from architectural publications. That he probably depended on existing buildings or published photographs or projects would account for his greater adequacy in dealing with these more complicated styles.

Both the Queen Anne and Shingle Styles are characterized by asymmetrical plans usually combining living room and great hall, by interpenetration of exterior and interior space achieved through the use of bays, porches, numerous windows, overhanging upper stories and dormers, and interlocking vertical and horizontal geometrical shapes.

More of Roberts' better houses from 1895 to 1900 were Queen Anne than Shingle Style. The Hoover house of 1896, for example, has an octagonal tower around which protrudes an octagonal porch, a complicated, awkwardly-shaped roof, bays, dormers, and low relief Queen Anne ornamentation. A less involved version of a Queen Anne house is his School residence in which the total number of geometric elements are reduced and a greater continuity between the first and second stories is maintained that rises the full height of the house, here unobstructed by a porch.

The Shingle Style, which was an adaptation of the Queen Anne, developed in New England between 1878 and 1883.⁷ Houses of this type, completely covered with shingles, were visually well-integrated compositions because the shingles united roof with walls and the many forms with each other.

⁷ Vincent Scully, *The Shingle Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 70 and all of Chapter 5.



Queen Anne and Shingle Style characteristics are apparent in the Sampson Rogers house of 1895.

Although most of the houses built in this style were fully shingled, other materials having the same unifying effect as the shingles were used as well. In Oak Park the Shingle Style buildings were most often surfaced with narrow clapboards.

Among Roberts' most distinguished early houses, the Sampson Rogers house built in 1895 belongs in most of its characteristics to the Shingle Style. Its entrance avoiding axial centrality generates a less formal feeling in what is otherwise a bisymmetrically formal composition. Its plan is essentially a square in front with a rectangular extension of the back. The front section has on each corner an octagonal bay passing through the ground and second stories, with the windows of the bay in the upper story mirroring those on the ground level. The attic extends out over the other stories reaching the plane defined by the extended bays of the lower stories, a treatment derived from Shingle Style New England houses⁸ and appearing as well in some Oak Park dwellings such as Wright's house of 1889.⁹ The overhanging walls and soffets of the attic extension provide greater shading and protection from the weather, a feature that must have been favored by clients both for functional and aesthetic reasons. Exterior and interior space is also broken up by the large dormer on the front, a small porch on the second level, and a porch across the front and on one side of the house.

⁸ This treatment was used in the Mallory House, Port Chester, N. Y. by Arthur Rich, c. 1885; the Hotel Thorndike, Jamestown, R.I., c. 1885; the William Low house, Bristol, R.I., by McKim, Mead and White, 1887; and the W. Chandler house, Tuxedo Park, N. Y. by Bruce Price, 1885-6. *Ibid.*

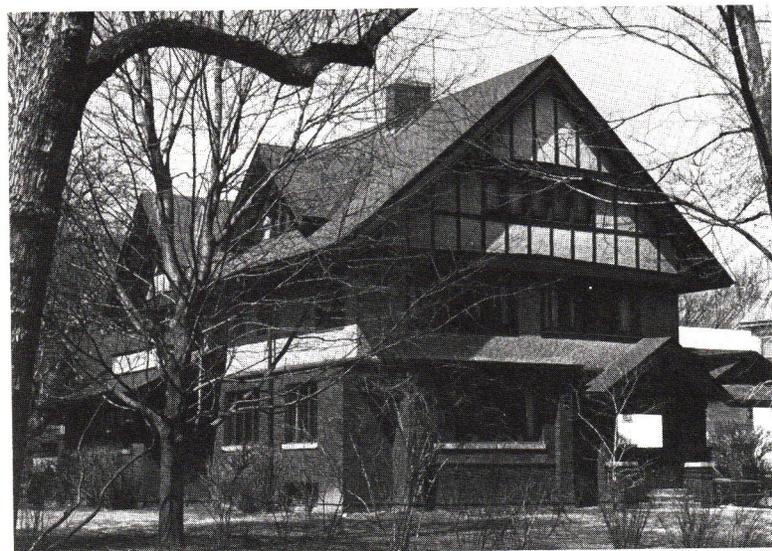
⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.



Roberts built the barn-like Colonial Club in 1903.



Roberts periodically returned to classical motifs, as here in the "Ontario" of 1913.



References to the forms and details of architectural classicism appear in Roberts' work again and again throughout his career. His houses often incorporated colonial detailing, perhaps because the ornament symbolized an elegance of life style which was envied among the upper middle class of a Midwestern suburban village. This "colonial" detailing frequently served as a veneer on indigenous architecture in America as well as on Queen Anne and Shingle Style buildings.

Roberts made much use of an almost archaeological classicism in several of his public buildings in the first years of the 20th century. The Municipal Building of Oak Park, built in 1903, is in the classical revival style, introduced and perfected by McKim, Mead and White. In the same year, Roberts won the competition for the Colonial Clubhouse, appropriately with a classical design based on eighteenth century "colonial" New England styles. The exterior is of barn-like proportions with a gambrel roof with a rectangular volume added at the rear and a relatively pure classical porch attached to the front. Pediments of Georgian type terminate the windows and dormers. The three-story building contained a billiard room and bowling alleys, a ballroom which served also as auditorium, parlors, halls, and other club rooms.

For the next few years, Roberts seems to have avoided classical motifs of a pure kind. Not until 1912 in the Austin Masonic Lodge does he again employ an academic classicism. An apartment building, "The Ontario," of the following year also leaned heavily on a refined classicism. This narrow, three-story building combined Doric columns with plane wall surfaces in a manner aesthetically less successful than that of the Colonial Club.

Besides designs of a classical origin, Roberts used medieval sources for some of his architecture. The half-timbered stucco and brick homes that he occasionally designed between 1905 and 1910 were described in the local press as "English cottage style" homes. As with Roberts' classical work, these medieval exercises were part of a nationwide stylistic trend. Women's magazines, for example, were filled with illustrations not only of early 20th century adaptations of medieval styles, but of actual castles and other medieval monuments. Indeed, the large number of half-timbered cottages built in Oak Park during these years by Roberts, Spencer, White, and others indicated the strength of the public taste for this style.

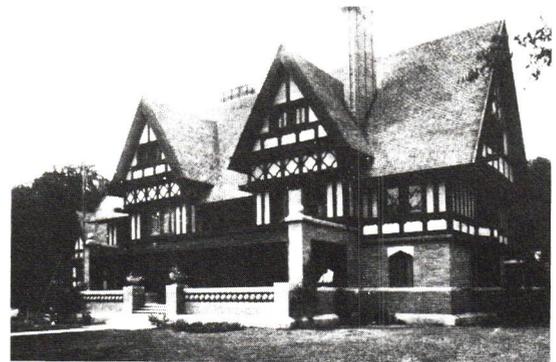
The Elliott house of 1908 is another example of Roberts' "English cottage style."



Roberts considered the C. C. Collins house one of his best.

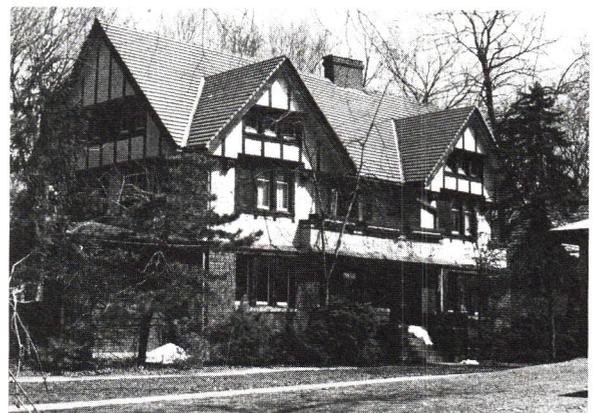
Of the buildings in Oak Park designed in a medieval revival style by other architects, the Nathan Moore house on Forest Avenue built by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1895 was very likely the major prototype for Roberts. As in Wright's work, Roberts used the half-timbering as a veneer on houses which were otherwise progressive in form, that is composed of simple geometric shapes with an emphasis on continuity of surface and edge. The extent of Roberts' dependence on Wright for inspiration when it came to the half-timbered style is apparent when comparing the Moore house, which was next door to Roberts' own home, to Roberts' designs for half-timbered houses. Roberts' Goelitz house resembles the Moore house in having a roof of the same pitch and also two large dormers on the south with an entrance below. Both have attics projecting over the lower stories; the window groupings are alike on the second and third levels, and the ground levels are of brick. The differences between the two houses are minor. Roberts used half-timbering only on the upper level, and there in a simple vertical pattern, whereas Wright chose to use a complicated pattern of wood in the stucco.

The geometric rectilinearity of these medieval houses related them directly to another more progressive manner that Roberts originated about 1896 and developed through about 1912. Roberts' rea-



Wright's Moore house, 1895, was a design attempt not to shock Mr. Moore's neighbors. Inland Architect.

The Goelitz house of 1909 clearly reflects the arrangement of masses in Wright's Moore house.





The Joseph Dunlop residence. By 1896, Roberts' Queen Anne houses were attaining a greater rectangularity than his earlier ones.



The Sampson Dunlop house is another version of the "Rectilinear Queen Anne" style.

sons for the retrograde activity when he produced these outwardly medieval designs are probably the same as those of Frank Lloyd Wright when in 1895 he designed the outwardly medieval Moore house: that of pleasing the client. Wright tells in his *Autobiography* that Nathan Moore wanted a house that would not shock his neighbors.¹⁰ Roberts' apparently ambiguous shifting between the revivals and the more progressive rectilinear style as it was developing in Oak Park, echoes the battle over architectural styles being waged with special vigour at the beginning of the 20th century.

As early as 1896, Roberts began building houses with broad eaves, flattened surfaces and heavy woodwork defining planes and emphasizing corners. Examples of such buildings are the Joseph and Simpson Dunlop houses on Kenilworth Avenue. In each case, the number of elements extending from the core of the house is much reduced as compared with the true Queen Anne, resulting in a much simpler plan and roof shape. Projecting bays are used infrequently, and when used, protrude only slightly. Thus while the bay has been deemphasized, the roof has been given more emphasis. The roofs seem to have gained in size due to the extension of their wide eaves on all sides and to their relatively heavy woodwork. In addition to the simplification of the plan and the broadening of the eaves, the rectilinearity of these houses is emphasized by the use of flat wooden members set into the surfaces that serve to define the corners, windows and roof

and subdivide and organize the surfaces. This clear definition of the wall planes is in distinct contrast to careful isolation of masses in the Queen Anne and the merging of all planes into a common surface in the Shingle Style. The style of the Dunlop houses, which we shall call the Rectilinear Queen Anne Style was also used in several small houses on North Grove Street for the clients Sharpe, Eckart, and Horton.

Whereas Roberts' residences of the 19th century and his medieval revival houses of the 20th century had a vertical emphasis, a great many of his houses beginning about 1900 had a horizontal emphasis or at least were non-directional because of a rectilinear balance of horizontals and verticals. Roberts' first house of the rectilinear style seems to be the A.J. Redmond house at 422 Forest Avenue, two doors south of Frank Lloyd Wright's own house. Although built in 1900, it may have been designed as early as 1897 as it is mentioned in a newspaper notice of that year. If so, changes were probably made in the design just before it was constructed, for the house seems too advanced in style for Roberts in 1897. Although it superficially resembles the Vaughn house of 1899 in its formality and its colonial detailing, it marks as well a fundamental change in Roberts' manner. It is wider in proportion to height than the earlier house, its windows are broader, its eaves are wider and its porch piers more massive. The Redmond house marks the beginning of a succession of massive two-story houses having wide eaves and broad porches. It also marks a change in interior composition. Rooms on the ground floor

¹⁰ Frank Lloyd Wright, *Autobiography* (New York: Longmans Green, 1932), pp. 149-50.



While the Redmond house, 1900, retains its Georgian character, it initiates a trend in Roberts' work toward wide horizontal porches horizontal stringcourses, and wider eaves.

are less compartmentalized; the space tends to flow from one major living area into another through wide doorway openings.

In 1903, Roberts built a house for H.P. Magill in the new rectilinear style. It is without any reference to historical styles; the strip of ornament uniting the first and second stories seems an original geometric design ultimately derived in all probability from Sullivan's ornament. Similiar borders are found on two other houses in the Oak Park area, the one for William Winslow in River Forest built by Wright in 1894 and the other for John Farson in Oak Park built by George Maher in 1897. If Roberts depended more directly on Wright and Maher for his ornamental pattern, it is likely that the massiveness and symmetry of the Winslow and Farson houses were also the immediate sources of the same qualities in Roberts' Magill house.

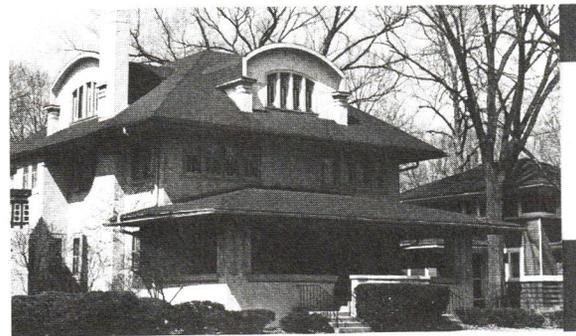
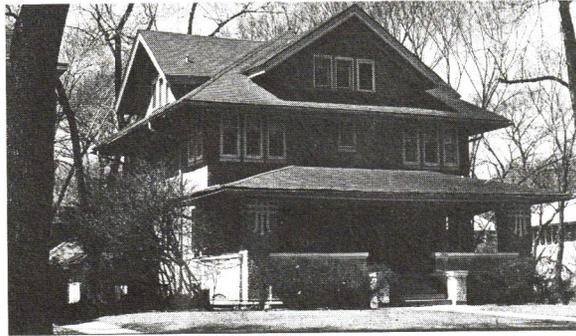
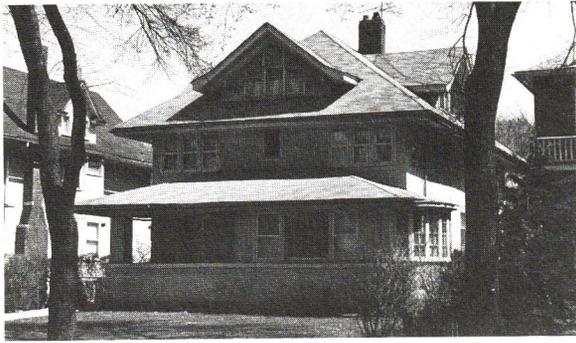
Roberts built many two-story, nearly symmetrical houses in the first few years of the 20th century. Certain elements such as the shapes of the roof, dormers, porch and arrangement of windows are often repeated, and it seems probable that once Roberts worked these for specific commissions, he continued to use them whenever appropriate. His type of hipped roof is seen most frequently; its dormers however, vary considerably in shape. Porches with nearly identical design are encountered with great frequency as are the patterns that Roberts used to group windows. A small central window flanked by a group of large double or triple windows on either side is often seen on his facades and occurs



The emphasis in the Vaughn house, 1899, is not so strongly horizontal as in the Redmond house of a year later.

The H. P. Magill house, 1903, has heavier porch piers and wider eaves than any of Roberts' earlier houses.





in the Brink, Lennox, Sullivan, Simmons, Puchner, Helder, and Keefer houses. Roberts' repetition of these motifs was surely an important factor enabling him to design possibly over one hundred dwellings a year. As these houses are so much like many of the houses built by land developers during these same years, it is likely Roberts was also the designer of their houses.

A few of Roberts' works during this period are more varied and original. In 1904, he built a house for A.B. Melville at the corner of Chicago Avenue and Kenilworth. While related to the houses described above, it is unique in its split-level plan with sunken living room, its free-standing fireplace, its colonnade separating the entrance hall from the living room and the extreme openness of its plan. Roberts continued to retain certain traditional elements such as the arches and the brackets on the columns, modifying these forms to blend with the new rectilinear forms.

Next door to the Melville house on Chicago Avenue is a smaller house, said to have been commissioned by Melville for his daughter.¹¹ It is stylistically very similar to the Chicago Avenue front of the Melville house,¹² but has a greater clarity of design suggesting that Roberts was becoming more confident in this stylistic departure from the Magill type. The woodwork, the brackets, and the entrance are closely related to the Chicago Avenue facade of the larger house. Furthermore, its curved stucco projection extending in front of the chimney matches the curves uniting the first and second stories of the larger Melville house. Both houses have similar stringcourses just below the windows of the second

11 Elmer Roberts claimed that the smaller house was by his father and that it was built for a Mr. Melville. The present owner of the house at 911 Chicago Avenue learned when he purchased the house that it was built by Melville for his daughter.

12 Whereas the north side might be a later addition, it seems unlikely since there is no building permit for an addition and the staircase is part of this north portion.

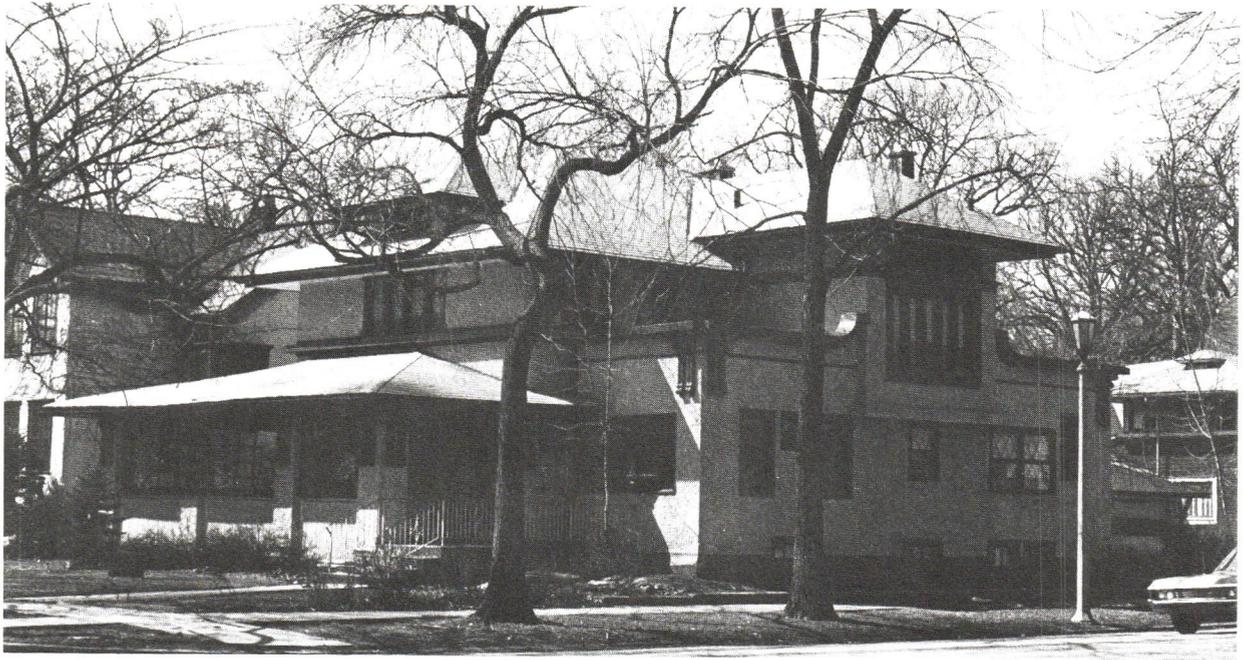
The Lennox house, 1908, is typical of the heavy, box-like house with wide porch across the front that Roberts repeated many times between 1903 and 1912.

Another version of the Lennox house is the A. J. Sullivan house, designed in the same year.

The dormers of this Fair Oaks Avenue house for an unknown client introduce variety.

The unusual dormers of the Louis Brink house, 1909, show an anti-Wrightian tendency in Roberts' work.

The Puchner residence of 1912 is peculiar among Robert's works for its elimination of the wide porch.



The north facade of the Melville house presents an unusual special arrangement.

story. Although no building permit exists for the house at 911 Chicago Avenue, on the basis of its strong stylistic analogies to the Melville house at the corner of Kenilworth Avenue, it seems probable that it was built by Roberts and dates from the same period. This second Melville house relates more closely to the work of the "Prairie School" architects than do any of the Roberts' houses before 1904. Not only in surface treatment, but also in its axial orientation on the long facade, it seems to follow the styles of Sullivan, Wright and Maher.

The house which Melville built for his daughter is visually related to the Chicago Avenue facade of the 1904 Melville residence. The date of this smaller house cannot be confirmed.



The column with brackets separating the living room from the entrance hall in the Melville house are an unusual combination of traditional and non-traditional elements.

The open planning of the Melville house was extremely progressive in 1904.





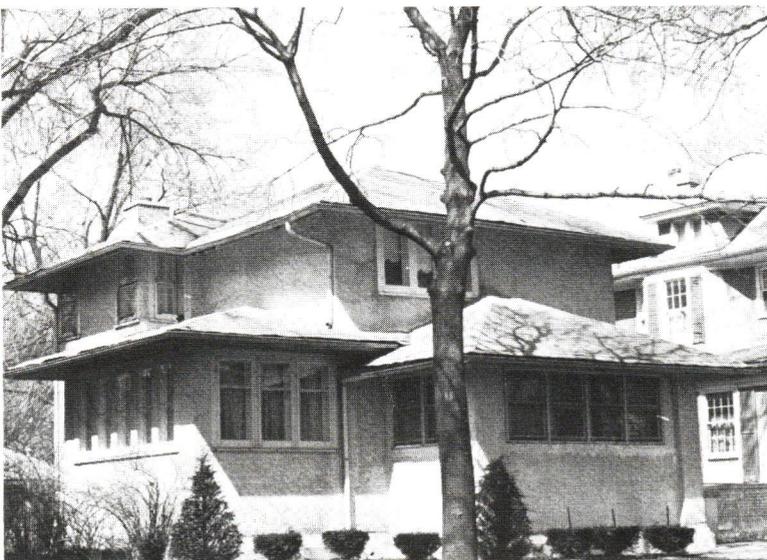
The Helder house, 1906, while essentially a box resembling many other Roberts houses, has tremendous variety in its subtle changes of wall planes, interlocking masses, and geometric ornament.

Another house of the same year was built for Mrs. H.R. Henderson. It too is of stucco, but differs from the Melville or Magill houses in that it has no ornament. Roberts departs from his usual box-like house using a more complicated and interesting plan. The strong emphasis on interlocking parts, the wide eaves of the low lying roof, and the asymmetrical plan relate the Henderson house as well to the "Prairie School" residences.

The asymmetrical arrangement of masses of the Henderson house of 1904 is unusual for Roberts.

During the first decade of the century, Roberts continued to experiment with geometric masses, to emphasize horizontality in his wide porches, to ornament his buildings with rectilinear patterns in the woodwork and lighting fixtures, and to open up the interior living space. In the Helder house of 1906 the living room spans the width of the house and flows into the dining room through a wide doorway. The staircase at one end of the living room balances a large tile fireplace at the other end, and the tall staircase windows unite the living room space vertically with the second story hall. The openness of plan which characterizes the Melville and Helder houses was not surpassed in Roberts' later homes, perhaps because Roberts felt that his clients required enclosures and privacy.

In 1907 Roberts designed a department store called the New Store on South Boulevard in Oak Park. It is especially noteworthy for its wide glass windows, rectangular geometric forms, and its elimination of ornament.



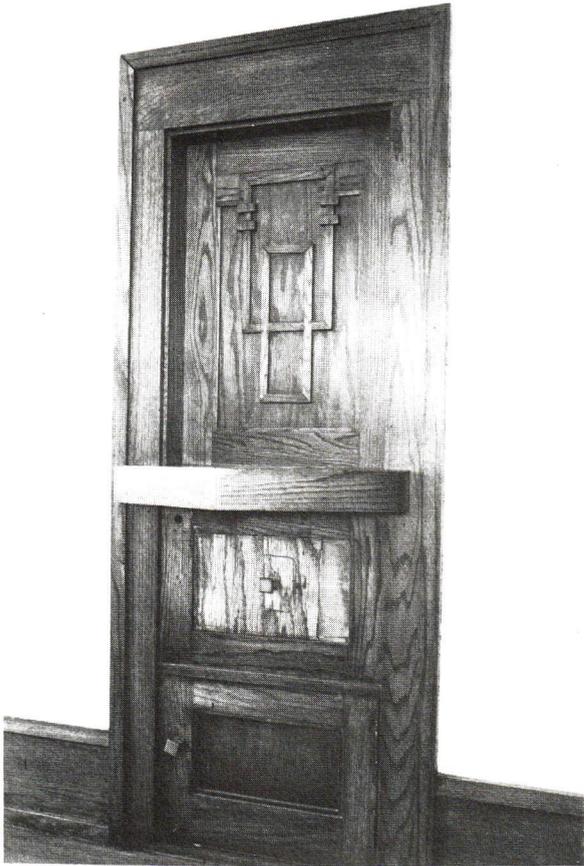


The interior of the Helder residence has a spacious feeling created by the large living room spanning the front of the house and the staircase windows visually uniting the first and second stories.

These leaded glass windows in the Helder house show further evidence of Art Nouveau influence on Roberts in the early twentieth century.

The Helder house fireplace with its softly glazed tile and gentle curved opening is also more in the Art Nouveau tradition than in that of the Prairie School but seem emanantly appropriate here.





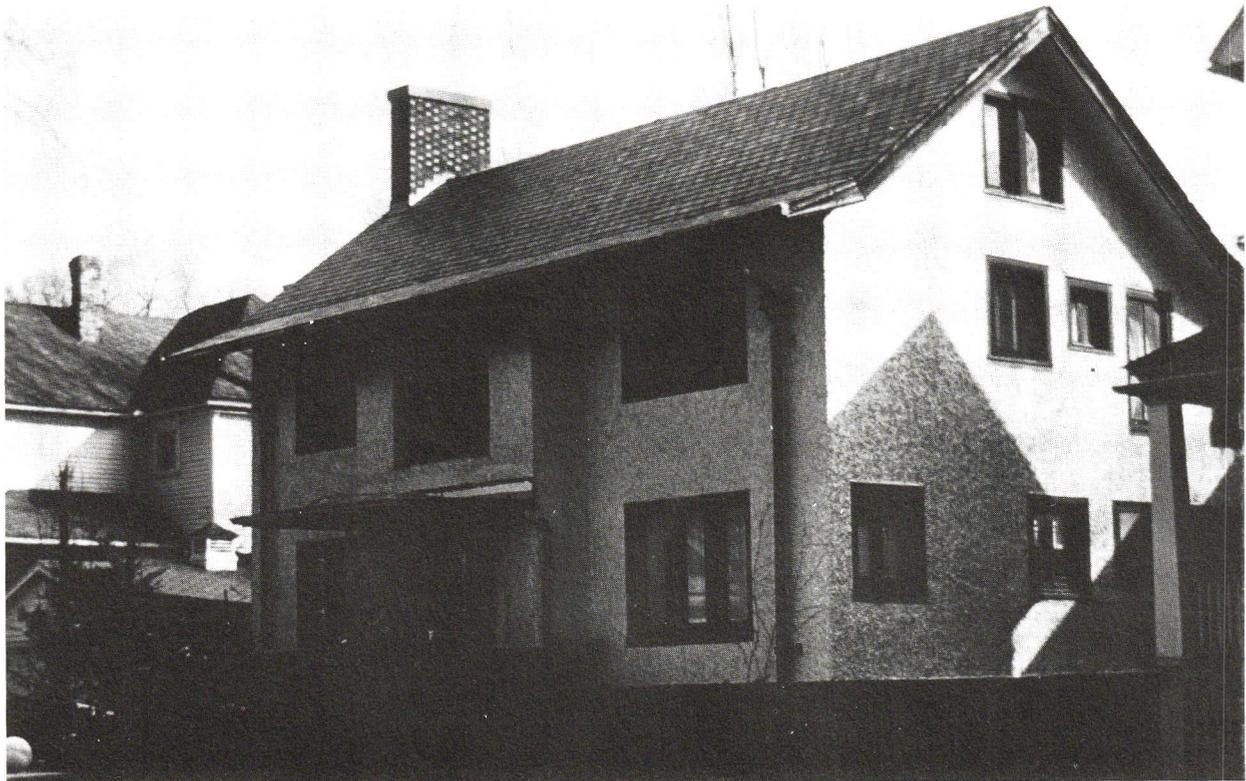
The interior woodwork of Roberts' own home was simple and superbly detailed in contrast to the plain exterior.

By 1911 and 1912, Roberts built several notable houses which showed his increased awareness of non-Wrightian architectural developments. Roberts' own house, extensively remodelled in 1912, has a flatness of surface, verticality and window spacing that bears a close resemblance to such residences by Robert Spencer as Spencer's own house in River Forest or his McCready house in Oak Park.¹³ Probably Roberts would have been aware, as was Spencer, of the English, German, and Austrian developments of the early 20th century.¹⁴ The Gardner house of 1911, while retaining the wide roof and dormers, minimizes the trim on the exterior. The Roberts and Gardner houses, in contrast to their exterior flatness of surface, retain Prairie school characteristics on the interior. The S. S. Vaughn house at 530 Linden Avenue also shows Roberts' emphasis on plane surfaces and deemphasis on woodwork. For example, the windows

13 Robert Spencer, who was one of Wright's closest friends in the 1890's, seems to have parted company with him later. Spencer developed a personal style related to, but quite apart from the other Prairie School architects.

14 Spencer's articles in *House Beautiful* were illustrated with works by Edmund Jankat, Franz Messner, Joseph Hoffman, Anton Possenbacher, Josef Olbrich, Eliel Saarinen, and others.

The simple and elegant exterior of Roberts' own home minimizes woodwork in favor of plane surfaces.





Roberts designed the Grandfather clock in the Prairie School manner.



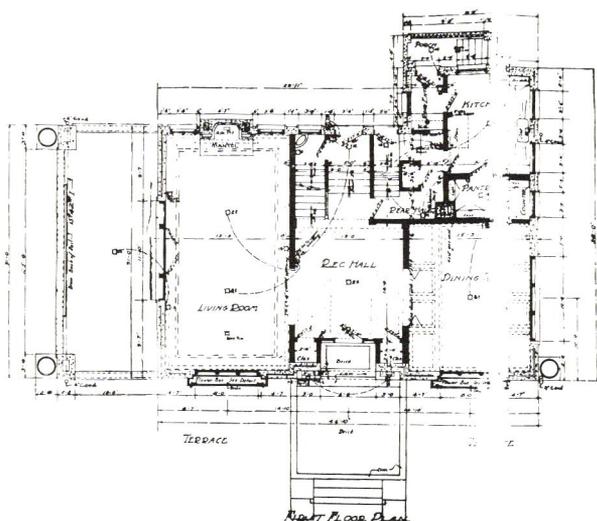
The indented windows of the S. S. Vaughn house of 1912 relate it to the Gardner and Roberts houses, while the broad arch forms and symmetry may indicate an influence from the work of George Maher.

The natural oak trim of the interior of Roberts' home strongly emphasizes verticals and horizontals.





The Gardner house of 1911 minimizes the woodwork. It initiates a trend away from the Prairie School ideals.



While the Gardner house plan is relatively open, it does not surpass those of the Melville and Helder plans.

The Gardner interior retains some of the Prairie School characteristics, such as a unification of the space through a single strip of wood binding the tops of the windows and doors into a whole.



seem indented, with narrow strips of wood scarcely breaking the flat wall surface. In experimenting with this more severe aesthetic, Roberts' ubiquitous front porch also disappeared.

Except for a few designs in the manner of the classical revival, Roberts' commercial work is generally progressive, sometimes original, sometimes Prairie School manner, and in nearly every building there is a rectilinear emphasis. An impressive, and in large degree original building with well-proportioned masses, wide overhanging eaves, and crisply articulated vertical piers between its numerous windows is called the Scoville Block. It was designed by Roberts in 1905 and built in two sections, the first part in 1905 and the second in 1908.¹⁵ The rounded windows of the upper level and the rectangular wall divisions relate the facades to the wall treatment on the new high school building designed the same year by Robert Spencer in association with Norman S. Patton. The emphasis on horizontals and verticals and the wide eaves provide an unmistakable relationship to the works of the progressive Midwest architects who together formed the Prairie School.

Another building binding Roberts to the Prairie School is the Trinity English Lutheran Church. In 1909 Roberts built a small building for this congregation with the intention that a few years later it would be converted into a Sunday school when a new sanctuary would be completed. It bears a

¹⁵ It included a Masonic hall above and shops on the ground level. The Scoville Block is very different in style from the Scoville Building across the street from the Scoville Block, also by Roberts.

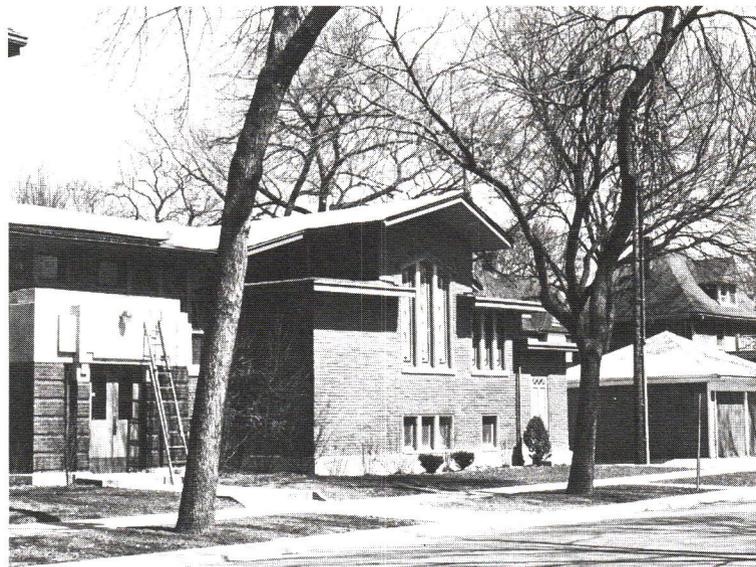


The Scoville Block presents a horizontal effect largely because of the heavy division separating ground floor from upper floors and the wide overhanging cornice.

strong resemblance to the new Prairie School architecture in Oak Park, but it is, at the same time, modulated by Roberts' personal vision. In it there is a clerestory, numerous windows grouped in threes and in some instances corner windows, and a slightly sloping roof contrasted with flat portions of roof. Unfortunately, some of the windows of the original structure were eliminated when the new sanctuary was built. The original design is also defaced by the imitation brick siding now covering the exterior walls. The larger sanctuary which was built seven years later, while still vaguely related to the work of the Prairie School architects, has much more of a historic medieval feeling and seems to suggest that by 1916, Roberts was no longer much interested in progressive architecture.

In 1913 Roberts built the Playhouse Theater which received considerable praise in the local newspapers. Its massive facade is divided into three sections by thin vertical elements. The rows of second-story windows and the geometric ornament emphasize the horizontals. This interplay between verticals and horizontals is again very much akin to the style of Wright, Drummond, and Van Bergen, even though Roberts' verticals and horizontals are less dynamically expressed. The geometric ornamentation, entirely Roberts' own, is quite different from the ornament of the Prairie School architects.

One further building, very much in the Prairie School idiom, more so perhaps than any other by Roberts, deserves special attention. This is the Oak Park Elks Club of 1914. The repeated long horizontals of the roofs and bands of windows clearly refers



Flat side roofs contrast with the slightly sloping central roof of Trinity Lutheran Chapel, 1909.



Different shades of brick create a geometric pattern ornamenting this Playhouse Theater of 1913.

The Elks Club marks the highest point of Roberts relation to the Prairie School. 1914.



to the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. The horizontal cornices and cantilevered timber beams also suggest the work of the West Coast architects Greene and Greene which Roberts probably knew from architectural periodicals. Although Roberts never visited the West Coast, there is no question that members of the Elks Club had, for California had become the most popular vacation area for Oak Parkers, and Pasadena where Greene and Greene did much building was one of the foremost attractions.¹⁶ From their occasional contacts with California architecture as well as their constant acquaintance with the Prairie architecture, Roberts' clients must have grown accustomed to the strong horizontal accents of wide overhanging eaves and long rows of windows.

In order for Roberts to produce so large a number of designs each year, it was necessary for him to maintain a relatively large office with several draftsmen. And as Roberts' office was the largest in Oak Park, it is not surprising that many local architects and draftsmen worked in his office at one time or another. William Gray Purcell was with Roberts in 1902, presumably during his college vacation from Cornell where he was an architectural student.¹⁷ Van Bergen also worked for Roberts, but the dates are not certain.¹⁸ The most reasonable time for his apprenticeship with Roberts was before he went to California in 1905, for it is certain that immediately on his return from California he began working for Wright. Guy Henderson and Roy Hotchkiss were also draftsmen employed during the time that Purcell was in the office.¹⁹ Nothing is known of Henderson, and little is known of Hotchkiss. We do know, however, that Hotchkiss worked as head draftsman for Roberts for several years around 1902 and that later he practiced in the area.²⁰ His major architectural contribution to the Village of Oak Park where Hotchkiss lived all his life, was the Medical Arts Building at Oak Park Avenue and Lake Street.²¹

The role of the draftsman in Roberts' office is a

16 Almost once a week, the *Oak Leaves* reported some Oak Park family who vacationed in California. Many families moved there permanently. By 1916, at least fifty former Oak Parkers were living in Los Angeles or Pasadena. A reunion was held in one of the public parks. The *Oak Leaves* of August 26, 1916 featured a photograph of this Oak Park reunion and listed the names of those present.

17 William Purcell, "Forgotten Builders: the Nation's Voice," *Northwest Architect* (1943), p. 4.

18 Interview with Elmer Roberts, March, 1970.

19 Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

21 *American Architect*, CXXXV (January 5, 1929), p. 14.

matter of debate. It is certainly unlikely that the young Purcell and Van Bergen would have been given much responsibility. Roy Hotchkiss, however, seems to have played a much greater role. Purcell claims that Roberts was a good businessman, and Hotchkiss "was really the architect in that office." Purcell adds that "as early as 1902 when I worked under him Hotchkiss was taking over Wright's forms and patterns as rapidly as he could digest them; at first with his long span porches twenty-five or thirty feet between posts and no intermediate supports, then with wider and wider cornices, flatter roofs, broader doors and windows with less height, long groups of windows all alike, and so on."²²

Unfortunately, we have not been able to discover very many residences by Roberts from the years around 1902, and none of the ones identified have porches with very wide spans. Only the Price house and the Muir house of 1904 have the wide porches without intermediary supports of the type what would fit Purcell's description. Whether Purcell was justified in giving so much credit to Hotchkiss is a question which must await the discovery of more information about Hotchkiss. So far we do not even know when Hotchkiss entered or left the office of E. E. Roberts. If he were working for Roberts in 1915, one would expect that he would have worked on the design of the bungalow for himself which is attributed to the Roberts office in that year. As the small house is of little distinction, one is led to doubt whether Purcell's evaluation of Hotchkiss is accurate. We do know, however, that on the basis of his identified houses, Roberts made a rapid transition from the Shingle Style to the early modern style in the first few years of the century. By 1903 Roberts was able to build the Price and the Magill houses, and in 1904 the Henderson and Melville houses, extremely different in form as well as superior in proportion and window arrangements to his earlier 19th century buildings. But if it was Hotchkiss who effected the transition, we cannot prove it at this time.

Roberts' significance lies in the fact that he was working in the same place at the same time as Frank Lloyd Wright and numerous other progressive architects. Furthermore, he did not copy their styles but slowly altered his own in such a way that it became more acceptable to the local population than was that of the more radical architects. Thus, he contributed to the popularizing of the Prairie School style, and his moderately progressive buildings take the forms that the Prairie School was destined to take as it spread throughout the Midwest and to other sections of America.

22 Purcell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

E. E. Roberts, A Catalog

by Frances Steiner

Entries in the catalog are listed by year. The criteria for inclusion of a reference to a building is that the building is standing or that it is illustrated in one of the periodicals below. Unless otherwise specified, the building has been located and is presently standing.

The following form is used:

- 1) person for whom the commission was executed.
- 2) location of building.
- 3) periodical in which reference occurred.

The following abbreviations indicate the source of the reference:

HB	House Beautiful
IA	Inland Architect
NB	National Builder
OPR	Oak Park Reporter
OPV	Oak Park Vindicator
OL	Oak Leaves

1895

1. SAMPSON ROGERS HOUSE, 537 NORTH EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (January 3, 1896).
2. NEWTON KEENEY HOUSE, 309 NORTH RIDGELAND, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (January 3, 1896).
3. W. P. WINSLOW HOUSE, 118 WESLEY STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (January 3, 1896).
4. C. FALCONER HOUSE, 412 FAIR OAKS, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (January 3, 1896).

1896

5. SIMPSON DUNLOP HOUSE, 417 NORTH KENILWORTH, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (March 27, 1896 and September 18, 1896).
6. F. E. HOOVER HOUSE, 521 NORTH EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (July 24, 1896) and OPV (August 21, 1896).
7. CLIENT UNKNOWN: THREE HOUSES. 639, 643, and 647 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (August 28, 1896, September 11, 1896, and October 2, 1896).
8. JOSEPH DUNLOP HOUSE, 407 NORTH KENILWORTH AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (November 13, 1896).

1897

9. H. B. HORTON HOUSES (2), NORTH GROVE STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (February

26, 1897 and August 20, 1897), OPV (March 5, 1897).

10. MR. SHARP HOUSES (2), NORTH GROVE STREET NEAR ERIE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (April 9, 1897), OPV (April 23, 1897).

11. N. C. CROSBY HOUSE, 416 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (April 16, 1897), OPV (June 25, 1897). Greatly altered.

12. A. J. SCHOLL HOUSE. 644 NORTH ELMWOOD AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (June 18, 1897), OPV (June 25, 1897 and October 22, 1897).

13. CARLETON HOUSE. 245 NORTH KENILWORTH AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPV (June 25, 1897).

14. E. A. CARR HOUSE, 416 HOME AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (September 24, 1897). Demolished, 1970.

15. MCILVAINE HOUSE, 412 NORTH GROVE STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (October 1, 1897).

1898

16. MASONIC HALL. PARK AVENUE BETWEEN OHIO AND ONTARIO STREETS, CHICAGO. OPV (April 29, 1898). Not located. Perspective drawing published.

1899

17. CHARLES H. WILCOX HOUSE, 421 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (April 27, 1899).

18. S. S. VAUGHN HOUSE, 408 HOME AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (March 2, 1899).

1900

19. A. J. REDMOND HOUSE, 422 FOREST AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (November 12, 1897 and January 10, 1901); CN, XI (October 20, 1900).

1902

20. SCOVILLE BLOCK EXTENSION (5 store rooms and apartments), 126 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OPR (May 2, 1901 and June 13, 1901); OL (December 19, 1902);

CN, XII (May 25, 1901).

21. PHOENIX CLUM HOUSE (Now Knights of Columbus Lodge), 641 SOUTH SCOVILLE AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (May 30, 1902 and November 28, 1902).

22. WARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Demolished. OL (October 17, 1902). Perspective drawing.

23. REV. T. G. SOARES HOUSE, 428 SOUTH CLINTON, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (August 1, 1902).

24. E. A. CUMMONGS HOUSE, 545 SOUTH EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (November 7, 1902).

1903

25. LEW WEBB HOUSE, 535 WOODBINE STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (February 6, 1903).

26. OAK PARK MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 655 LAKE STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (May 27, 1911); CN, XVI (July 18, 1903).

27. COLONIAL CLUB, LAKE STREET AND ELMWOOD AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (May 29, 1903) drawings and plans; CN, XVI (October 17, 1903 and October 31, 1903).

28. JOHN T. PRICE HOUSE, 614 NORTH KENILWORTH AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (October, 1903).

29. H. P. MAGILL HOUSE, 164 EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (October, 1903).

1904

30. A. B. MELVILLE HOUSE, 437 NORTH KENILWORTH AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (January, 1904).

31. JOHN HOGGINS HOUSE, 415 FOREST AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Elmer Roberts.

32. MRS. H. R. HENDERSON HOUSE, 715 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (January, 1904).

33. G. W. WOODBURY HOUSES, 235 and 237 SOUTH ELMWOOD AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (February, 1904).

34. GEORGE MUIR HOUSE, 234 SOUTH SCOVILLE AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Papers in possession of owner.

1905

35. MRS. L. A. TODD HOUSE, 630 NORTH EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. IA, XLVI (November, 1905) photo.

36. C. B. SCOVILLE BUSINESS BLOCK, SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LAKE STREET AND OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (August 5, 1905 and February 24, 1906).

37. W. H. GALE HOUSE, 312 NORTH KENILWORTH AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Elmer Roberts.

1906

38. LUTHER CONANT'S "QUADRANGLE APARTMENTS," 108-118 SOUTH EAST AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. IA, XLVI (January, 1906) Photo; and Hermann von Holst, *Modern American Homes*, Pl. 100.

39. C. W. HELDER HOUSE, 635 FAIR OAKS AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Hermann Paudt.

40. C. C. COLLINS HOUSE, 606 KEYSTONE AVENUE, RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS. OL (June 2, 1906); HB, XXXI (December, 1911) Photos.

1907

41. BYRON WILLIAMS HOUSE, GLEN ELLYN, ILLINOIS. Hermann von Holst, *Modern American Homes*, Pl. 21.

42. LONGFELLOW SCHOOL ADDITION (8 rooms), 315 JACKSON, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (April 6, 1907).

43. WHITTIER SCHOOL, 713 NORTH HARVEY, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (April 13, 1907).

44. LINCOLN SCHOOL, 1111 SOUTH GROVE STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (April 29, 1907).

45. C. M. LYNCH HOUSE, 265 HOME AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXIV (November 23, 1907).

46. L. MCKIBBEN HOUSE, 1539 NORTH HOMAN AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXIV (August 24, 1907); NB, LV (May 13, 1907) Photo.

47. A. W. TRUE HOUSE, 231 EAST THIRD STREET, HINSDALE, ILLINOIS. CN, XXIV (November 16, 1907 and September 14, 1907); NB, L (April, 1910) Photo; NB, LV (July, 1913) Photo.

48. CHARLES ANDERSON'S "NEW STORE", 1031 SOUTH BOULEVARD, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (September 22, 1907 and November 24, 1906) Elevation.

1908

49. EDWIN LENNOX HOUSE, 220 NORTH HARVEY, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (February 8, 1908).

50. ELLIOTT HOUSE, 539 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. HB (March, 1911) Photo; NB, LV (June, 1913) Photo.

51. SCHWERIN HOUSE, 639 FAIR OAKS AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Elmer Roberts.

52. ALFRED WASHINGTON HOUSE, 91 BEACH ROAD, GLENCOE, ILLINOIS. CN, XVI

(October 31, 1908 and November 7, 1908); NB, LV (April, 1913) Photo.

53. A. J. SULLIVAN HOUSE, 331 NORTH ELMWOOD AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (February 8, 1908); NB, LV (April, 1913) Photo; CN, XXV (February 15, 1908).

54. EINFELDT REAL ESTATE OFFICE, MARION STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Demolished. OL (February 15, 1908) Drawing.

55. FOREST PARK FAIR GROUNDS AND AMUSEMENT PARK, HARRISON STREET AND DES PLAINES AVENUE, FOREST PARK, ILLINOIS. Demolished. OL (February 1, 1908); OL (March 28, 1908) Drawing; CN, XXV (February 8, 1908); and CN, XXV (February 15, 1908).

56. SCOVILLE BUILDING ENLARGEMENT (MASONIC TEMPLE), 137 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (June 20, 1908) Elevation; CN, XXVI (July 4, 1908 and July 11, 1908).

1909

57. CHAPEL FOR TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, 300 NORTH RIDGELAND AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 20, 1909) Drawing; OL (May 29, 1909); OL (August 14, 1909); OL (January 31, 1914); CN, XXVII (March 13, 1909).

58. LOUIS BRINK HOUSE, 533 NORTH GROVE AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (July 3, 1909).

59. GOELITZ HOUSE, 742 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Signed plans in possession of owners.

60. YMCA GYMNASIUM, 164 NORTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (September 4, 1909); OL (October 29, 1909); OL (November 6, 1909); OL (May 21, 1910) Photo; CN, XXVIII (September 4, 1909); CN, XXIX (February 5, 1910).

61. MRS. J. D. ROOP HOUSE, 1444 BIRCHWOOD AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXVIII (November 20, 1909); CN, XXIX (February 5, 1910).

1910

62. WASHINGTON IRVING SCHOOL, 1125 SOUTH CUYLER AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (May 14, 1910); OL (March 9, 1912) Photos.

63. JOSEPH GUY HOUSE, 401 NORTH CUYLER AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (October 15, 1910); CN, XXX (October 1, 1910); CN, XXX (December 24, 1910).

64. CHARLES W. EILS HOUSE, 625 SOUTH OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS.

CN, XXIX (June 18, 1910); CN, XXX (October 8, 1910).

65. ABRAHAM LINCOLN SCHOOL ADDITION, 1111 SOUTH GROVE AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1910).

66. B. P. HORTON APARTMENT BUILDING, 310 NORTH GROVE AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Hermann von Holst, *Modern American Homes*, Pl. 103.

67. LONGFELLOW SCHOOL ADDITION, 315 JACKSON STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXIX (January 22, 1910).

68. HENRY CRIBBEN HOUSE REMODELING, 330 SOUTH EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXIX (May 28, 1910); CN, XXIX (June 4, 1910).

69. A. E. SWENSON HOUSE, SHERWIN AVENUE AND ASHLAND AVENUE (probably Southwest corner), CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXX (December 3, 1910 and December 31, 1910).

70. HENRY HOGAN HOUSE, 406 NORTH ELMWOOD AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXIX (March 22, 1910 and June 25, 1910).

1911

71. MRS. C. B. DEPUE APARTMENT BUILDING, 1706 FARRAGUT AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXII (December 2, 1911).

72. WILLIAM NELSON APARTMENT BUILDING, 1459 HOLLYWOOD AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXX (December 31, 1910); CN, XXXI (February 4, 1911).

73. WEST SUBURBAN HOSPITAL, 518 NORTH AUSTIN AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXI (June 3, 1911); CN, XXXIV (November 30, 1912); OL (March 31, 1912) Drawing; OL (June 22, 1912).

74. FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ADDITION, ASHLAND AND WASHINGTON, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXII (November 18, 1911); CN, XXXIII (January 6, 1912).

75. WILLIAM H. GARDNER HOUSE, 700 NORTH LINDEN AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXI (February 25, 1911); NB, LVII (February, 1915) photos and plans; NB, LVIII (April, 1916) photos; NB, LVIII (July, 1916). (February, 1915) photos and plans; NB, LVIII (April, 1916) photos; NB, LVIII (July, 1916).

76. JAMES FRED BUTLER STABLE AND FLAT REMODELING, 3 ELIZABETH COURT, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXI (April 22, 1911) and Elmer Roberts.

1912

77. E. E. ROBERTS HOUSE REMODELING,

1019 SUPERIOR STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (July 29, 1911). House was expanded to twice the original size. Building permit was issued in 1912.

78. J. L. SIMMONS HOUSE, 325 NORTH LINDEN AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1912).

79. GEORGE PUCHNER HOUSE, 415 FAIR OAKS AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1912); CN, XXXIII (April 6, 1912); CN, XXXIV (July 6, 1912 and July 27, 1912).

80. EMERSON SCHOOL ADDITION, 900 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXIII (February 10, 1912); CN, XXXIV (July 20, 1912).

81. BERT DAVIS RESIDENCE, 232 NORTH RIDGELAND AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1912); CN, XXXIII (January 20, 1912).

82. S. W. KEMSTER HOUSE, 134 KEYSTONE AVENUE, RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1912); CN, XXXIII (March 2, 1912 and March 16, 1912).

83. MRS. S. S. VAUGHN HOUSE, 530 NORTH LINDEN AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1912); CN, XXXIII (April 6, 1912).

84. E. C. AMLING HOUSE, 708 FOREST AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 31, 1912); CN, XXXIV (December 21, 1912).

85. C. A. BELLER HOUSE, 623 NORTH GROVE AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXIV (December 21, 1912).

86. Dr. PAUL OLIVER HOUSE, 625 NORTH ELMWOOD AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXIV (September 28, 1912).

87. OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL, NORTH ADDITION, 201 NORTH SCOVILLE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (January 18, 1912); OL (May 11, 1912); OL (June 15, 1912) Drawing; CN, XXXIV (July 20, 1912); CN, XXXIV (November 9, 1912); CN, XXXIV (September 14, 1912); CN, XXXVI (August 9, 1913).

88. AUSTIN MASONIC TEMPLE, SOUTHWEST CORNER OF CENTRAL AND FRICK, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. Not located. OL (September 6, 1913); OL (September 20, 1913) Drawing; CN, XXXI (April 22, 1911); CN XXXIV (August 31, 1912); CN, XXXV (February 8, 1913); CN, XXXVI (November 1, 1913) photos, drawings and plans.

89. MASONIC TEMPLE, 120 WEST WESLEY, WHEATON, ILLINOIS. Severly altered. CN, XXXIV (October 26, 1912).

90. STRICKLAND AND HART PUBLIC GARAGE. MARION AND WILLIAM STREET, OAK

PARK, ILLINOIS. Demolished. OL (May 3, 1913) photos; CN, XXXIV (September 28, 1912).

1913

91. PLAYHOUSE THEATER, 1111 SOUTH BOULEVARD, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (June 28, 1913) Drawing. CN, XXXV (April 26, 1913).

92. "THE ONTARIO" APARTMENT BUILDING, 1120 ONTARIO STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (April 27, 1912); OL (January 21, 1914) Photo.

93. WILLIAM BARTHOLDY APARTMENT BUILDING. (6 flats) 1518-20 OLIVE AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXIV (November 30, 1912); CN, XXXV (January 18, 1913).

1914

94. ROY J. HOTCHKISS HOUSE, 516 SOUTH EUCLID AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXVII (May 8, 1914).

95. ELKS CLUB LODGE, 938 LAKE STREET, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (May 9, 1914); OL (May 16, 1914) Drawing; OL (January 29, 1916) Drawing; OL (January 13, 1917); CN, XXXVII (May 23, 1914); CN, XXXVII (June 13, 1914).

96. TELEPHONE BUILDING, LAKE STREET, EAST OF OAK PARK AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Demolished. OL (August 8, 1914) Photo; CN, XXXVII (June 13, 1914).

1915

97. J. E. MURRAY HOUSE, 703 NORTH EAST AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XXXVIII (June 26, 1915 and July 24, 1915).

98. WASHINGTON IRVING SCHOOL ADDITION, 1125 SOUTH CUYLER AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. CN, XL (November 27, 1915).

99. CIRCLE LODGE MASONIC TEMPLE, EUCLID AND HARRISON, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Demolished. OL (June 5, 1915); OL (July 10, 1915) Drawing; CN, XXXVIII (May 22, 1915).

100. OAK PARK COUNTRY CLUB, THATCHER AND ARMITAGE, RIVER GROVE, ILLINOIS. OL (March 6, 1915) Drawing.

1916

101. FREDERICK HASS APARTMENT BUILDING (Two flats), 163 FRANKLIN STREET, RIVER FOREST, ILLINOIS. OL (July 22, 1916).

102. TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, SANCTUARY ADDITION, 300 NORTH RIDGELAND AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. OL (March 18, 1916 and April 8, 1916).

DATE UNKNOWN

103. MELVILLE HOUSE, 911 CHICAGO AVENUE, OAK PARK, ILLINOIS. Elmer Roberts.



Book Review

THE ARCHITECTURE OF FRANK FURNESS.
By James F. O'Gorman, et al, Philadelphia Museum of Art,
Philadelphia, Pa., 1973. 231 pp., illus., paper, \$10.00.

Frank Furness (1839-1912), the son of a noted Unitarian minister of rather liberal leanings, began practice as an architect in 1866 after serving in the Union Army during the Civil War. His principle architectural training was received from 1859 to 1861 in the New York atelier of Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to graduate from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In collaboration with George Hewitt, his partner until 1875, Furness began a series of buildings unique in the history of American architecture. Known more often than not as grotesque, these highly original works attracted the young Louis Sullivan who sought employment and was hired by Furness as a draftsman in 1873. It has been primarily Sullivan's gracious appraisal of Furness in his autobiography that has kept the unique achievements of this man from being completely forgotten.

In connection with an exhibition of the work of Furness at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, held from April 5 to May 27, 1973, James F. O'Gorman in collaboration with George E. Thomas, Hyman Myers, and Gervin Robinson, has prepared this magnificent catalog. Although intended to be only an exhibition catalog, the authors have succeeded in producing one of the finest publications available on the life and works of an American architect. They have also gratefully acknowledged their in-

debtedness to James Massey who is in the process of preparing what will probably be the definitive work on Furness.

The book is divided into roughly three parts: Mr. O'Gorman's essay, "The Architecture of Frank Furness"; a "Catalog of Selected Buildings" consisting of photographs, many in color, of the exteriors and interiors of forty of Furness' most important buildings with reproductions of some original drawings, and a "Checklist of the Architecture and Projects of Frank Furness."

The photographs are all of the highest quality and are colored. The Checklist is quite extensive, although somewhat disappointing because in most cases addresses have not been up-dated and the present disposition of many buildings is not given.

The essay is very thorough and concise. It is also for the most part quite objective. The author is not obsessed with the desire, which many historians seem to have, to elevate the subject of his study through fanciful and unprovable theories as to the individual's effect upon other noted architects and their works. The achievement of Furness would be no less worthy of study had he remained unknown to Sullivan and Richardson.

This is not to say, however, that the author does not indulge in such speculation from time to time. He asserts, for example, that the origin of Sullivan's ornament can be found in that of Furness, itself derived from the Neo Grec and High Victorian Gothic. As proof of this assertion he illustrates one of Sullivan's drawings of ornament from the early 1870's. The flowers and leaves in this ornament still have a resemblance, though somewhat abstracted, to natural forms as does the ornament of Furness which it undeniably resembles. At exactly what time Sullivan stopped producing this naturalistic ornament is difficult to say, but by 1879 he had adopted a style of leaf ornament which has hardly any resemblance to nature or to his earlier work. The origin of this new style has been difficult to determine, but he seems to have learned it from, or developed it with, his friend John Edelmann, both of whom continued to use it until the mid 1880's. It is from this ornament which Hugh Morrison called "Egyptoid" that Sullivan's style evolved. The only thing it has in common with Furness' ornament of the early 1870's, is its picturesque exaggeration. Sullivan's autobiography indicates quite clearly that he worked for Furness, not as a neophyte entering a strange and fascinating new world, but as one who had already acquired a solid interest in the then avant-garde "picturesque" architecture of the post Civil War period, of which the work of Furness was probably the most exaggerated. He maintained this

interest well into the 1880's. Sullivan undoubtedly learned much from Furness, but he seems to have learned an equal amount from Jenney, Edelman, Adler, and others. Furness is not the sole nor primary basis of Sullivan's architecture and ornament.

At the conclusion of his essay, the author asserts that Furness' reputation sank into obscurity because of a re-emergent classicism at the turn of the century, which has been carried on into our own time as part of the International School (most particularly represented in the work of Mies van der Rohe). He further asserts that Furness' memory and message have been rescued from oblivion only through the interests of followers of that noted modern Eastern avant-garde movement known as the New Brutalism. To quote the author, "Furness was rediscovered as the historical precedent for the 'Philadelphia School' branch of brutalist building."

It may surprise the author and some Brutalists to know that this reviewer, as a graduate of the center of Miesian education — the Illinois Institute of Technology — along with many others who went to that institution, long ago found in the work of Furness, the same meticulous attention to detail, proportion, and fine materials that Mies himself was noted for. The Provident Life and Trust Building which this reviewer had the good fortune to see before its demolition in 1959, is in his opinion, as it is in the author's, Furness' finest masterpiece. Lacking any element of classical serenity, the proportions of its dynamic facade are as carefully studied as anything Mies ever conceived.

If Brutalism needs a precedent, Sullivan's early works would seem more appropriate. Compared with the contemporary works of Furness, they are certainly more "picturesque" and like much Brutalist buildings, constructed of inferior materials. It is not at all unusual to see an early Sullivan building with rotting sheet metal cornices and peeling brownstone. Today Furness' Academy of Fine Arts stands with almost all of its original surfaces both exterior and interior visible and intact, but in Adler and Sullivan's great masterpiece, the Auditorium Building, much of Sullivan's beautiful ornament executed in plaster is so heavily coated with paint that its delicate patterns are hardly visible.

For the modern architect, whether he is Miesian Classicist or Venturi Brutalist, there is yet much to learn from the work of Frank Furness.

This book is a must for anyone interested in the history and future of American Architecture.

Charles E. Gregersen
Architect

Preview

The third and fourth issues of Volume X will be a two part article by Robert Warn. The discovery of five Sullivan letters preserved by his client Carl Bennett's daughter for the period 1908 through the teens document his despair and bursts of creativity during the Owatonna Bank construction and several projects for Bennett. Mr. Warn has also included material on Sullivan's personal physician, Dr. Arndt, and his wife, Margaret Sullivan Davies.

Books to be reviewed:

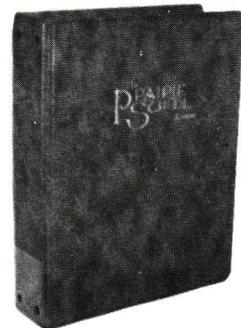
M. H. Baillie Scott

James D. Kornwolf

Contributors are asked to write for our style manual "Notes for Contributors" as noted in Volume VII, Number 2.

We will also continue to publish items of general interest concerning preservation of historic buildings and about the development of the modern movement in architecture. Letters to the editor are invited and will be published when appropriate.

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The awning of cantilevered beams suggests that Roberts may have known the work of some West Coast architects.

