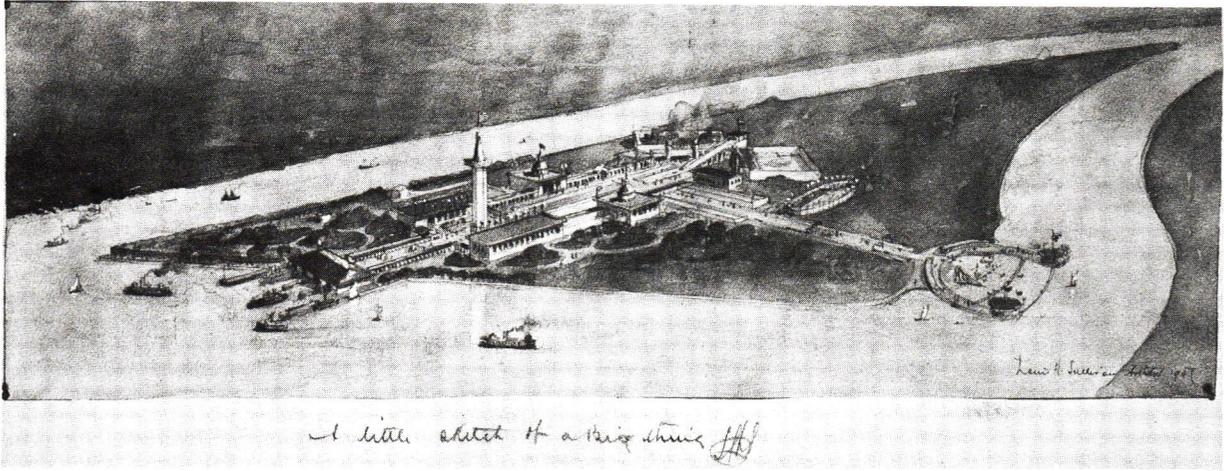


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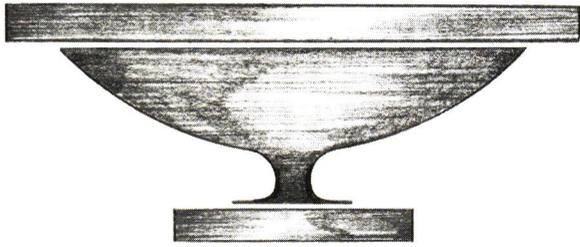
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ABOVE: Louis Sullivan designed his Island City project in 1907-08. He inscribed the drawing "A little sketch of a Big thing LHS". It appears to have been derived in part from Wright's Wolf Lake Amusement Park project of 1895. Wright's Midway Gardens design seems to have been influenced by this work of Sullivan. Drawing from PSP Archive.

COVER: The James Charnley house of 1891, still standing on Astor Street in Chicago, is the building which is almost always credited jointly to Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. PSP Archive photo.

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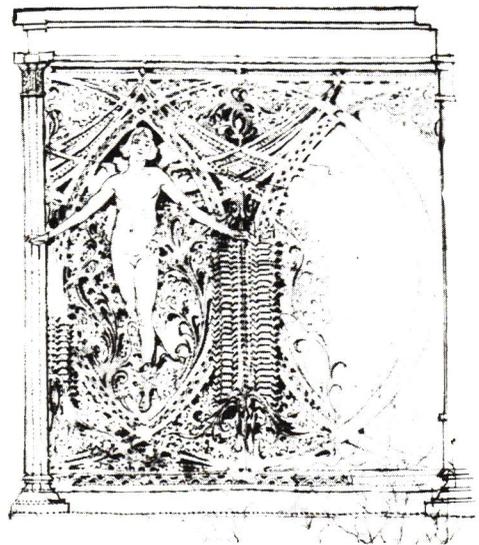
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This drawing of a female figure was executed in plaster by Richard Bock for the Heller house in Chicago. Wright drew heavily from Sullivan in the design of this frieze. The drawing was first published in The Architectural Review in 1900.



From the EDITORS

Something must be done to preserve in its entirety America's first modern house. Threatened with irreversible interior alterations is Chicago's world famous Charnley house, built in 1891 from designs by America's first modern architects — Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Although situated on a prestigious residential street now increasingly defaced by high-rise apartment construction, the Charnley house has survived virtually intact. But it is now proposed to incorporate this magnificent dwelling into a group of town houses planned for a site immediately behind it. The interior of the Charnley house would be vertically divided into thirds; its central stair hall would be converted into an entrance for the new structures. Openings would be cut through its walls to annex its remaining rooms to two of the new residences.

The Charnley house is an official Chicago Landmark standing in a newly-designated Historic District. Yet the Commission on Chicago Historic and Architectural Landmarks has unofficially approved this proposed interior conversion as an appropriate scheme for adaptive preservation. We strongly disagree.

Both its exterior and interior enshrine visible reminders of two great artists at work, and illustrate their aesthetic prowess at the very moment they were leading the world in throwing off the trammels of eclecticism and asserting their individuality in a truly American and determinedly modern architecture. The significance of the Charnley house can hardly be overstressed. Its cubic mass, bounded by flat surfaces and sharp linear edges, was a revelation in its day. No house before it anywhere in the world conveyed so clearly an entirely new, original and modern style.

The commission for the Charnley house came to the architectural firm of Adler and Sullivan in the spring of 1891 from Sullivan's friend, lumber magnate James Charnley. At that time Frank Lloyd Wright, although only twenty-three, was Sullivan's chief assistant. Wright personally made the working drawings, but it is quite obvious that Sullivan guided his hand, as evidenced in the formal symmetry of the design, the sharp-edged geometry of the massing, and the vitality of the floral-geometric ornamentation. Wright seems to have been particularly responsible for the framed entrance and the vertical spaciousness of the central stair—which rises without interruption to a rooftop skylight—as well as the exquisite detailing of the oak used for panelling, stair, stair-screens, mantles and cabinetwork.

The interior layout, intact except for the addition many years ago of a two-story porch to the south, is spread over three floors and basement. On the first floor the stair hall is flanked by the living and dining rooms, plus a modern kitchen and porch. The second floor, in addition to the stair hall, has three bedrooms, two baths, and an enclosed porch. Another bedroom and bath plus a small apartment make up the third floor. The basement contains the original kitchen and pantry, plus laundry, storage and furnace rooms.

To preserve this house in its entirety is a moral and social obligation, not as a monument to the past, but for the edification and instruction of future generations of Americans.

This editorial was adapted from a statement prepared by architect John Vinci and architectural historian Paul Sprague. We thank them for their comments. Ed.



AUSGEFÜHRTE BAUTEN UND ENTWÜRFE VON FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT.

To Meiner Lieber Meister Louis H. Sullivan
Frank Lloyd Wright

Photo by Tom Yanul

The Reunion of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright

by Kenneth W. Severens

Kenneth W. Severens is an associate professor in the Department of Fine Arts at the College of Charleston. He is presently writing a book on the Sullivan bank buildings from the viewpoint of patronage. He has also written an article on Sullivan's preliminary drawings for the Grinnell bank for the AIA Journal.

The heated argument which erupted between Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright in the Chicago Auditorium Tower in the spring of 1893 revolved around a relatively simple matter, the contract of 1889 which permitted Wright to draw advances on his salary from Adler & Sullivan. One of the less important clauses (at least to Wright) was that he had agreed to do no architectural work on his own.¹ When the contract had nearly run its five-year course, Wright requested the deed to his Oak Park house which had been largely financed by the advances. Sullivan unexpectedly revealed that he was aware of the "bootlegged" houses which the

young draftsman had been doing after hours and that they were violations of the contract. Wright would acknowledge his indiscretion later,² but the moment of confrontation was not a time to yield, and he angrily walked out of the office without the deed. The results of the quarrel are well-known. Wright emerged as an independent architect and celebrated the fact that very year by designing the Winslow house in River Forest, which after an unbelievably productive career of sixty-five years still stands as a consummate masterpiece. Sullivan, on the other hand, had experienced the first of a long series of disappointments which would plague

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¹ Grant Carpenter Manson, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910 — The First Golden Age*, Rheinhold, New York, 1958, pp. 33-34.

² Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography*, Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, New York, 1943, pp. 110-111.