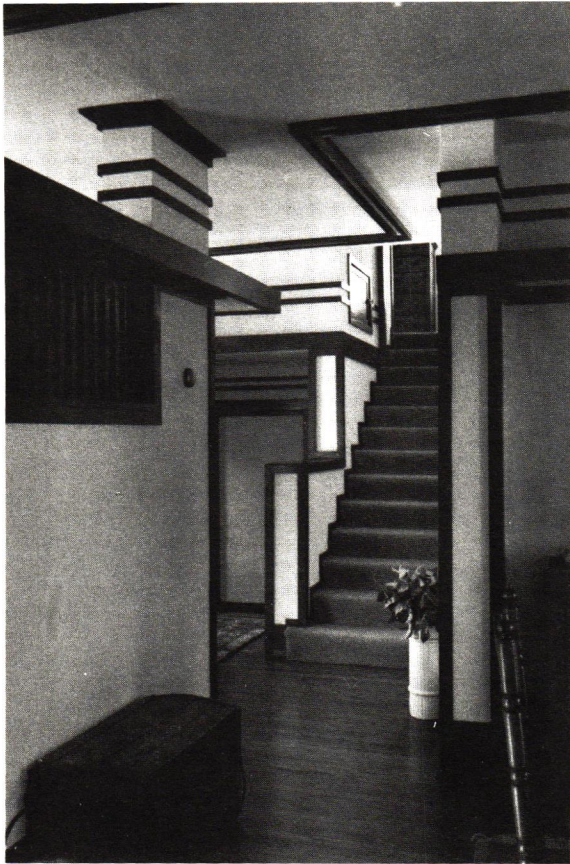


The
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Review

Volume XIII, Number 1 - 4

1976

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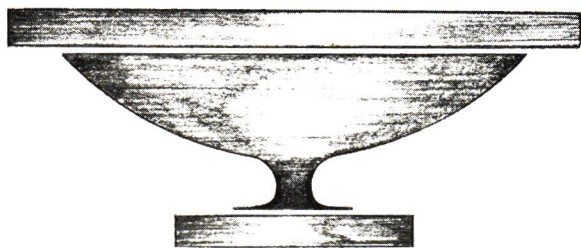


ABOVE: The interior of the Barbara Erwin house shows that Frank Lloyd Wright's influence on Van Bergen was still strong in 1927.

COVER: The southernmost of the three Blondeel houses in Oak Park, Illinois is a classic example of early (1913) Van Bergen architecture. PSP Photo.

Photographs in this issue were all taken by architects Edward Jarolin and Henry Zimoch of Chicago unless otherwise credited.

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The **Prairie School** *Review*

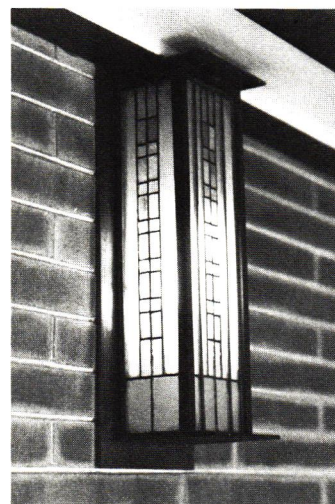
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*This light fixture designed by John Van Bergen is
still operating on the fireplace wall of the Bersbeck
house.*



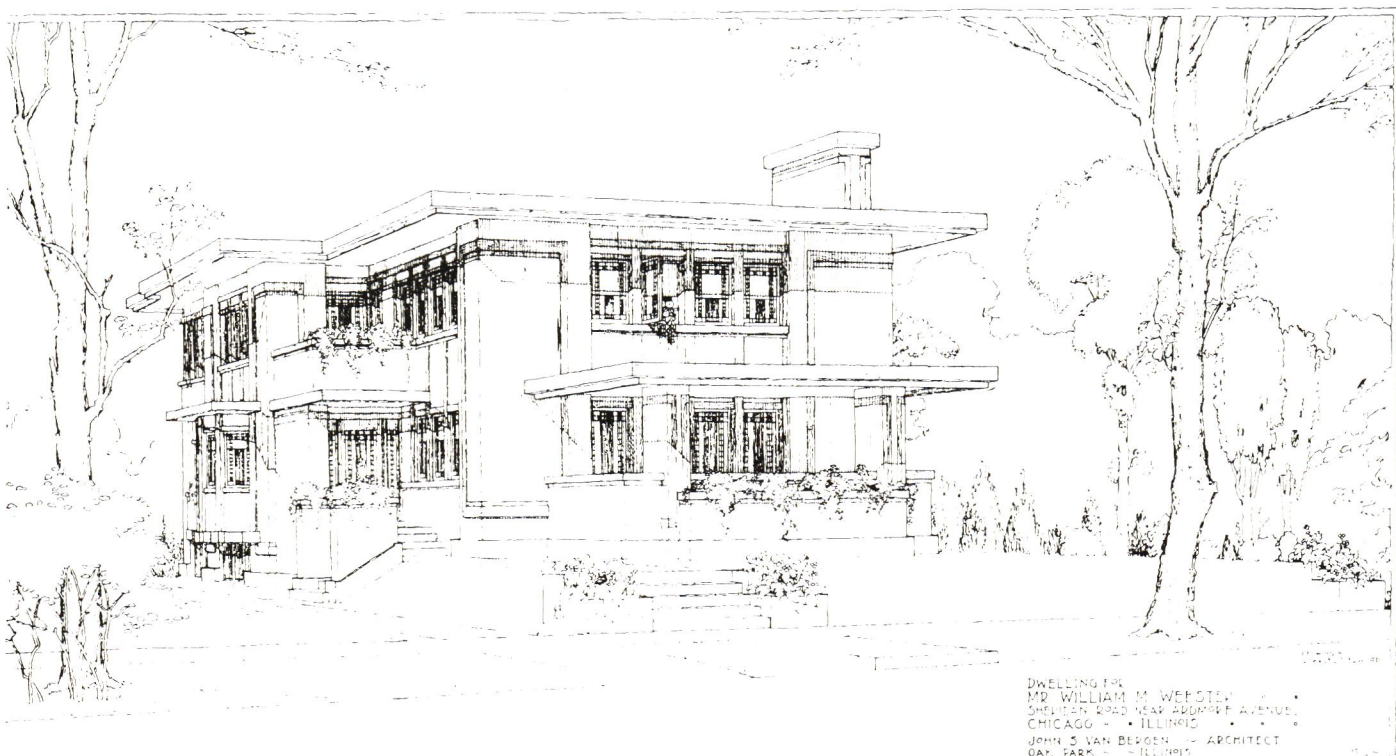
From the EDITORS

This is the first volume of The Prairie School Review to be published as a not for profit organization publication. Most of our readers know that the journal has never been a profit making venture. It is done as a labor of love by your editors now as it has been for the past twelve years. We have decided to find a better way to operate. In the process, we hope we have found a better way to serve our readers.

With this volume, carrying the bicentennial year date of 1976, The Prairie School Society has been founded. The Prairie School Review will be the official journal of the Society. We have organized a not for profit corporation to act as the operating agent for the Society. This will permit us a number of advantages. Foremost is the fact that any "profits" we might receive will not be taxed but can be put aside for future leaner times when costs use up more than subscriptions or over the counter sales bring in. It will also permit us to suggest membership fees on a varying scale from different types of subscribers and/or members. Thus institutions subscribers may pay slightly more than individuals, and certain members of the Society who wish to be named as contributing members, benefactors or other similar categories might be asked to pay still higher rates. Bear in mind that all of these increases will be voluntary on the part of individuals. Finally, we hope to eventually have periodic meetings where we can arrange for seminars, lectures, scholarly presentations and similar events for persons who find the Prairie School of architecture in particular and the modern movement in general to be of more than casual interest.

We expect that by forming the Prairie School Society we will be able to broaden our base of interest and to increase the content of The Prairie School Review. We will be seeking out new authors, book reviewers and commentators. Occasionally, prominent members will be asked to assist as guest editors.

Along with this issue, all subscriber-members are getting their annual renewal notice. Some have already sent their remittance and that is reflected on the notice. Also enclosed is a more complete description of the plans we have for your and our future. Changes in the journal will be subtle, we hope, but definitely there. There will soon be some new names on the masthead. It has been too long since we were able to have help in getting out to you each quarter. We have that help now and a few thick, multiple issues will bring us up to date and then, a major improvement will be "on-time" performance."



John Van Bergen: The Prairie Spirit into the Mid 20th Century

by James Muggenburg

James Muggenburg studied at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and received his Bachelor of Architecture in Architectural History from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. He is currently working as an architect with Loebl Schlossman and Hackl. The American Association of Architectural Bibliographers published a bibliography on Frank Lloyd Wright for 1959-1972 compiled by Mr. Muggenburg. This article is based on his undergraduate thesis on Van Bergen.

It is curious that the career of John Shellette Van Bergen has remained so long neglected considering that he practiced prairie architecture much longer than any of his fellow prairie architects.¹ Critics and historians have often remarked that the years 1911 to 1916 saw the death throes of the prairie movement, for almost without exception, the prairie architects who have received critical attention over the past few years had reverted to historical styles or stopped practicing altogether at that time. Van Bergen carried on virtually alone from his first known design in 1910 until almost 1950 when the style of the modern movement finally became dominant in his architecture.

Evidently Van Bergen has been ignored for several reasons. Because his practice was generally

limited to small scale residential work, he was perhaps overlooked. Yet this was surely the case with the careers of at least a few of his fellow architects in the school. Secondly he may have been ignored because his fellows were somewhat chagrined that he was able to secure commissions which allowed him to continue designing prairie architecture when they were increasingly forced to give in to the historical styles once again in vogue. This perhaps would account for the condescension shown toward his early Wrightian style even though his work along with that of William Drummond has been time and again praised as the most carefully proportioned and professionally executed of the Prairie School.² Finally, the designs Van Bergen produced after 1920 which were far more his own and less dependent on Frank Lloyd Wright have

¹ This article is a condensation taken from an undergraduate thesis paper written by the author at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle in March, 1972.

² H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School, Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries*, Toronto, 1972, pp. 278-9.

been little noticed. These buildings, which H. Allen Brooks called "less interesting because less Wrightian",³ in reality are better architecture than most of Van Bergen's first work and carry the prairie philosophy into new territory. The architecture of Van Bergen's middle years, rustic and natural as influenced by Jens Jensen, and festively detailed, is what Drummond and the others should have been designing and weren't.⁴ When Van Bergen published his work and the essay "A Plea for Americanism in our Architecture" in the April and June 1915 *Western Architect*, most critics would have us believe it was his swan song. Instead, it was his manifesto.

John Shellette⁵ Van Bergen was the eldest of four children born to Mr. and Mrs. William F. Van Bergen.⁶ They came as early settlers before 1887 to Oak Park, Illinois, living first at 825 North Grove Avenue and later on Fair Oaks Avenue. During most of this time Mr. Van Bergen worked in the auditing department of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. John was born on October 2, 1885 and had a brother Frank, as well as two sisters, Mrs. Herbert Small and Mrs. Belle Bemis.⁷

Most of John Van Bergen's childhood was spent at 532 North Fair Oaks in Oak Park⁸ and in the fall of 1905 after his June graduation from Oak Park-River Forest High School, Van Bergen went to Hollywood, California where he stayed with a former Oak Park neighbor and worked for a small electrical contractor. He returned home in the early spring of 1906 (just before the San Francisco earthquake) and began working with his uncle, Frank C. Wood who was a small speculative residential contractor.⁹ It would appear that Van Bergen became interested in architecture through family members and friends connected with the building trades, as well as through his family's ties with

Walter Burley Griffin's family who were Oak Park neighbors during these formative years.

In January 1907 without previous architectural training Van Bergen began working in Griffin's Steinway Hall office in Chicago.¹⁰ From then until October 1908 Van Bergen was an apprentice to Griffin who had left Frank Lloyd Wright's Oak Park studio in the winter of 1905 to begin his own practice. Van Bergen commented that Griffin "was not only a very skillfully trained architect . . . but also a great teacher for me. He had no end of patience with a very poor draftsman and no university teacher could have been better for me." Lack of work in the office forced Van Bergen to leave. Since he was unable to attend a university, Van Bergen had to "get his education the hard way, always reading and studying whatever [he] could find".¹¹ In preparation for his eventual license examination he took special training and tutoring at the Chicago Technical College from October 21, 1908 to January 1909¹² when he began working with Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park and "received training from the fountainhead".¹³

Van Bergen was actually the last employee to be hired before Wright closed his studio in the fall of 1909.¹⁴ William Drummond was then chief draftsman with Marion Mahony, Albert McArthur, Taylor Wooley, and Isabel Roberts also on the staff.¹⁵

When Wright finally went off with Mrs. Cheney, I was the only one, except for Miss Roberts, on the payroll. I don't think I ever received my last few weeks pay (quite the custom with FLW). I completed the work then in the office with much help from Miss Roberts. There were many problems to be settled with various contractors [and] as a youngster I had my troubles.¹⁶

The conditions in the studio at this time were indeed quite confusing.

As an example, during the final weeks Van Bergen recalls Henry Ford visiting Wright in Oak Park regarding the Fairlane commission for Ford's home at Dearborn, Michigan. Van Bergen observed

10 Brooks, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-6.

11 VB letter dated April 16, 1968. Griffin buildings which Van Bergen might have worked on include the projected house of 1906 for Messrs. Jenkins, Lewis, and Dickinson and the 1908 twin houses for Dr. W. S. Orth in Kenilworth, Illinois.

12 Brooks, *op. cit.*, p. 85, footnote 23.

13 VB letter dated April 16, 1968.

14 Brooks, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

15 Brooks, *ibid.*, p. 86.

16 Brooks, *ibid.*, p. 86. A good deal of the correspondence quoted by Brooks from Van Bergen can also be found in the letter to Masterson listed above in note 9.

3 Brooks, *ibid.*, p. 329.

4 It might be noted that both Griffin and Frank Lloyd Wright went on to develop styles that went beyond the initial Prairie School, but both abandoned Chicago and left the diminishing prospects for their contemporaries to develop as best they could.

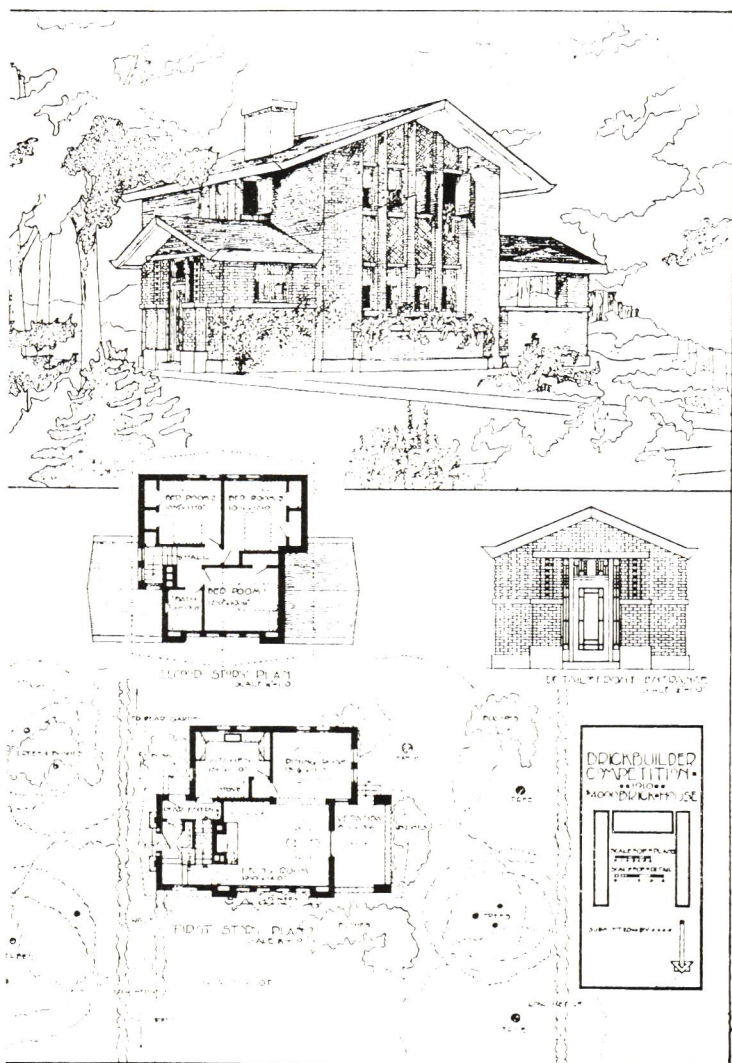
5 Telephone interview by the author with Mrs. John Van Bergen (mentioned below as MVB interview). Shellette was Van Bergen's mother's maiden name.

6 Mr. and Mrs. William Van Bergen were married in 1875 in a Congregational ceremony at Lansing, Michigan.

7 "Van Bergen Parents Golden Wedding Anniversary". *Oak Leaves*, Saturday, February 4, 1925, p. 8.

8 MVB Interview.

9 Letter from John Van Bergen to Charles Masterson, a former employee and close friend. April 16, 1968 (Mentioned below as VB letter dated April 16, 1968), and MVB interview.



DESIGN BY JOHN S. VAN BERGEN
557 Fair Oaks Avenue, Oak Park, Ill.

The earliest known surviving design by John S. Van Bergen is this drawing published in A Brick House. It was done as an entry for The Brickbuilder's 1910 competition for a \$4,000 brick residence. The design shows that Van Bergen's style was already firmly established.

that in the course of this interview Wright was unable to keep his usual calm and self-confidence.¹⁷ At the end of October, shortly before Wright left for New York City he collected final fees on various projects nearing completion, and left Van Bergen and Roberts to complete work. Other projects that were still in design development were turned over to Marion Mahony and Herman V. Von Holst.

Van Bergen specifically remembers supervising the working drawings for the Frederick Robie

¹⁷ Grant C. Manson, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910, The First Golden Age*, New York, Reinhold, 1958, p. 213.

House and was also charged with construction supervision of the Peter Stohr arcade and the Mrs. Thomas Gale house. In the confusion owners and contractors claimed that Wright had given different instructions to them than those indicated on the plan. Being left in charge Van Bergen insisted: "no written change orders . . . no changes . . . I won out!"¹⁸

As the studio work was finished Van Bergen began working with William Drummond starting in about June of 1910 and staying until June of 1911. During this year he also helped E. E. Roberts with his Oak Park practice, and once again began preparing for his license examination.

When I took the architectural examination at Urbana (three days of torture) 'classical design' was a must if one wanted to pass. With little or no interest in said classical for our age in America, I somehow passed the examination and received my Illinois license in 1911.¹⁹

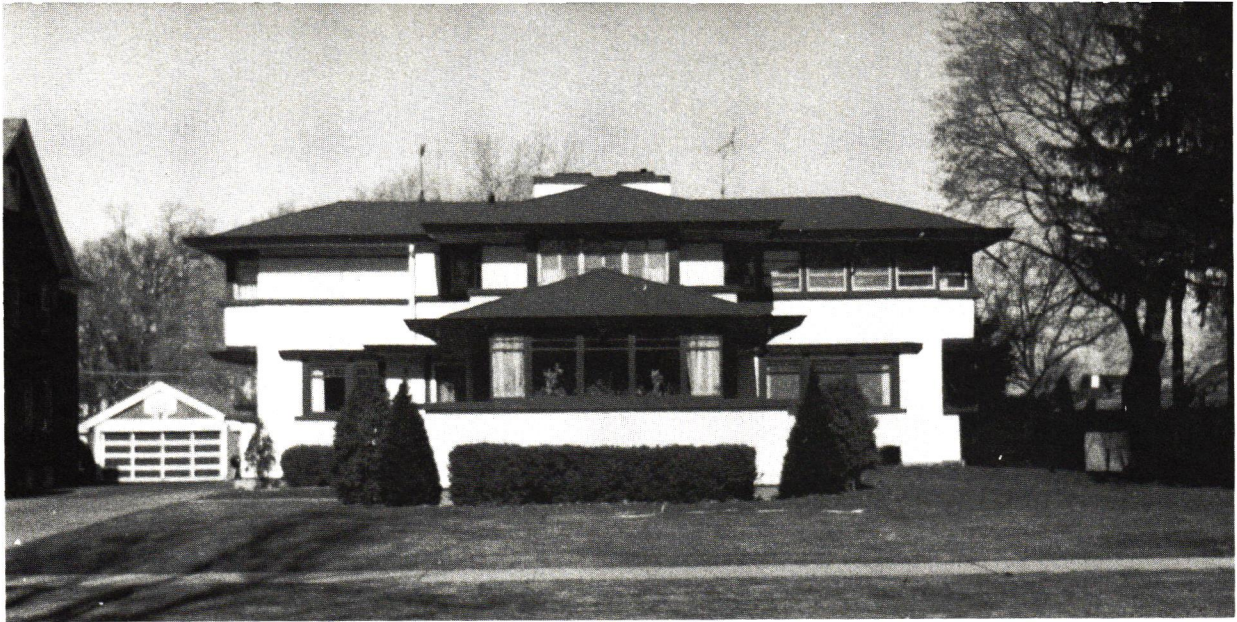
Van Bergen opened his first office in the Caldwell building at 801 South Boulevard in Oak Park, Illinois and in 1915 opened another office in Evanston which he kept for only one year.²⁰ The Oak Park office however was in operation until 1918 when he and his brother enlisted in the armed forces. In 1915 he exhibited in the Chicago Architectural Club's Annual Exhibition, and joined the AIA in 1916. While Van Bergen was one of the youngest of the Chicago group, he made many fine friends there but "got very little architecturally through that source."²¹

¹⁸ VB letter dated April 16, 1968. Construction photographs of the Stohr arcade are in the collection of the Chicago Historical Society Photography Department.

¹⁹ VB letter dated April 16, 1968. While with Drummond finishing studio work, Van Bergen could have been involved in the 1909 Drummond residence, and the 1910 project for the William M. Grower apartments for Chicago. In addition Drummond and Mahony were sporadically finishing up Wright's Como Orchard Summer Colony. Perhaps Van Bergen was familiar enough with this resort project to suggest to Mrs. Van Bergen that Van Bergen as well had a separate project of the same sort in 1915 for Colorado. While he was with E. E. Roberts, Van Bergen could have contributed to the Horton Flats, Brink residence, and Goelity residence all of c.1909.

²⁰ *Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogs, 1915-1920*, and H. Allen Brooks, "The Prairie School: The American Spirit in Midwest Residential Architecture", an unpublished doctoral paper, Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University, 1957.

²¹ VB letter dated April 16, 1968. As Van Bergen needed them he also got architectural licenses in California, Minnesota, and Indiana. When he moved to Santa Barbara, California in 1955, he did not join the AIA for he "thought it too much of a clique and too expensive for the value received." During the depression he dropped away from the Chicago AIA Chapter and never rejoined.



The C. Percy Skillin house was one of Van Bergen's earliest independent commissions. This view is of the front facade.

Van Bergen's duty in the armed forces at age 33 brought a temporary interruption to his practice. He was sent to Washington, D. C. where he worked in the Construction Corps and was then transferred to Fort Sheridan, Illinois where he was involved with the conversion of existing buildings into hospital facilities.²² After his 1919 discharge Van Bergen moved to the north shore suburbs and resumed his practice in Ravinia, Illinois. He hired a secretary whom he had met while stationed at Fort Sheridan. Ruth and John Van Bergen were married in 1919 in a Methodist ceremony, and she helped with filing, specifications, and secretarial work. The Van Bergen's had two daughters who grew up in Ravinia,²³

22 MVB interview.

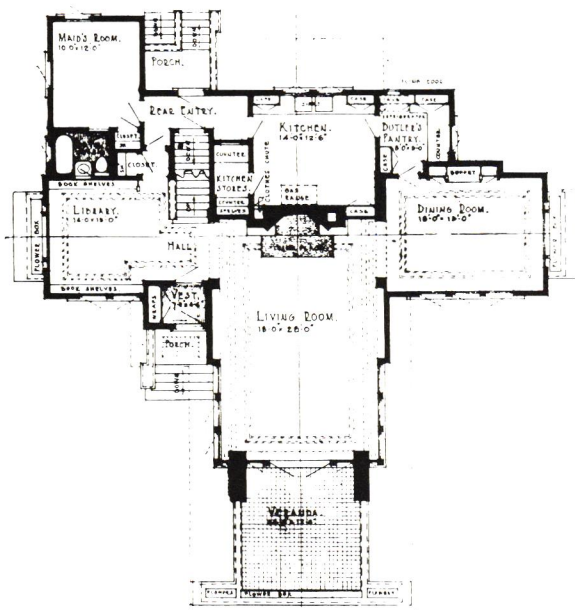
23 MVB interview. Ravinia was originally the southern portion of what is now part of Highland Park, Illinois.

Joan (Mrs. Edwin O. Kopplin of Litchfield, Minnesota) and Nancy (Mrs. V. B. Brigham of Santa Barbara, California).²⁴

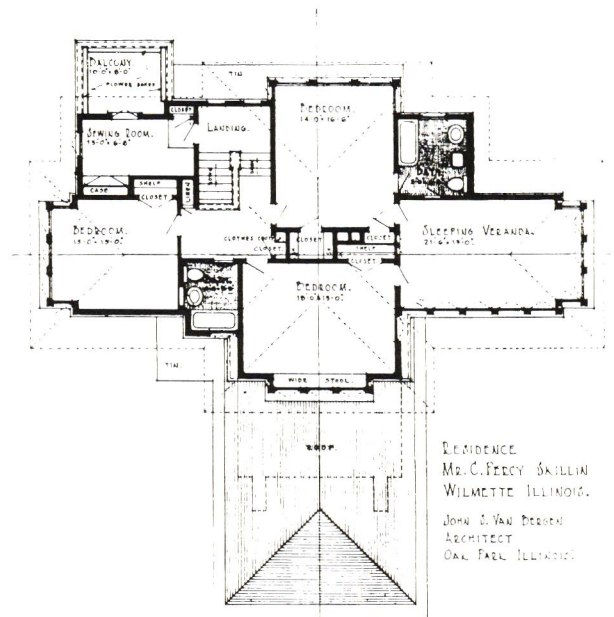
John Van Bergen's architecture during the first decade was residential and is a thorough product of the Prairie School. It has often been said that his work comes closer than that of any of his contemporaries to faithfully executing the Wrightian proportions of residential design. While William Drummond imitated the cubic and severe aspects of Wright's work, Van Bergen more often produced designs that either by material selection, roof type, or detailing expressed the casual side of prairie architecture as would befit a residential structure. Wright generally reserved the severe vocabulary for his public and commercial buildings.

The years 1910 to 1920 produced thirty two buildings and projects of which seventeen are from

24 Letter to the author from the Carleton College Archives, Northfield, Minnesota, February 11, 1972.



FIRST STORY PLAN
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"



SECOND STORY PLAN

RESIDENCE
MR. C. PERCY SKILLIN
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS.
JOHN J. VAN BERGEN
ARCHITECT
OAK PARK, ILLINOIS



The Richard Cluever house plan is a mirror image of the earlier Skillin house. The view above is from the west looking towards the library. PSR photograph.

1914.²⁵ The first known design by Van Bergen was an entry for *The Brickbuilder's* 1910 competition for a design for a \$4000 brick residence.²⁶ Executed while still working with Drummond, the exterior resembles the early residential work of Griffin, especially the Frederick Carter Jr. House, although a smaller and stunted version. However the floor plan (with the exception of the placement of the fire-place) derives from Drummond's own home in River Forest which in turn is taken from Wright's Fireproof House designs.

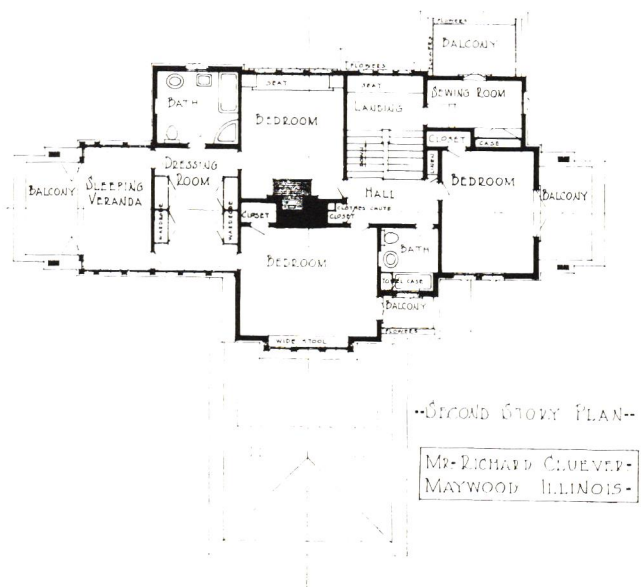
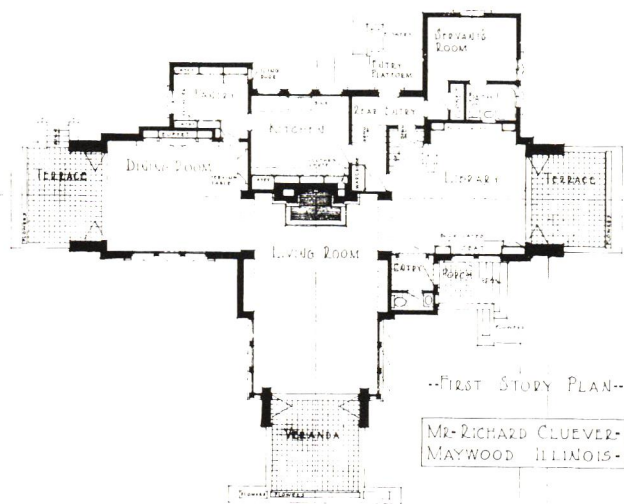
The first design known to be built was either the C. Percy Skillin or the A. O. Anderson residence.

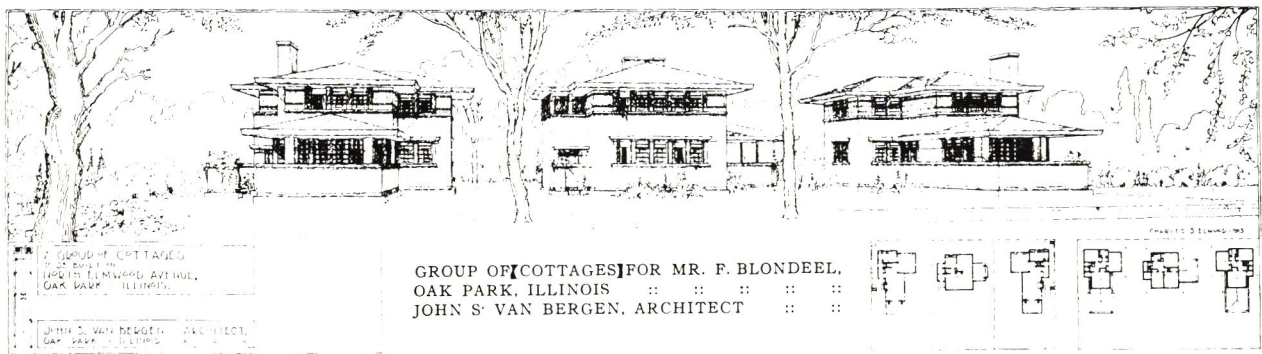
²⁵ A chronological catalog of John Van Bergen's work follows.

²⁶ *A Brick House*, Boston, Building Brick Association of America, 1910, p. 71.

They are identical in concept although the Anderson house employs buff face brick and a terra cotta tile roof instead of the stucco exterior and shingle roof of the Skillin house. As in all of Van Bergen's larger homes from this first decade, both follow the massing and plan of Wright's Ward Willets house and the first *Ladies Home Journal* design. Since they lack the horizontal extension of plan and elevation of the Wright designs, they consequently lack the same repose.

The design for the Skillin house, done in 1912, was revived a year later in the E. A. Cluever residence. The plans for the two houses were basically identical but reversed. Both were somewhat larger than the majority of his later work. Most of the houses Van Bergen designed during his career fell into two basic types. They were heavily Wrightian in detail although he did not actually copy any of Wright's executed work. The two plans he generally utilized were revised and/or refined for various





clients but the *parti* remained the same. The first type is a smaller version of the Skillin or Cluever house while the second is much more compact and cubic. It is essentially the house Wright designed for *The Ladies Home Journal* in 1907. Van Bergen used this second type over and over during the first two decades of his career.

Both of Van Bergen's basic houses can be found in the houses designed and built for F. Blondeel in Oak Park during 1914. The north and south cottages are identical but reversed plans with low pitched roofs and front and rear projections the center house is a straightforward cube with a side entrance. All three are finished in stucco with wood trim and are skillful adaptations of the Wrightian idiom.

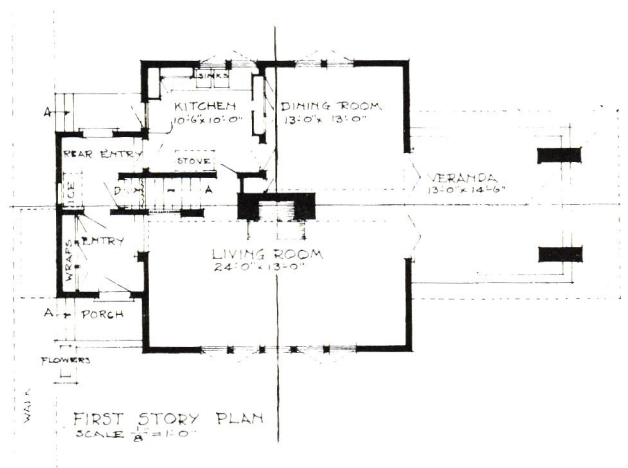
The 1912 Mrs. Charles Yerkes residence is the first of Van Bergen's many small houses and like the others to follow is based on the tight, cubic massing and plan of Wright's third *Ladies Home Journal* design. These houses generally have stucco exteriors, low hip or flat roofs, and contrasting wood banding as trim. Two examples from 1913 are the Robert N. Erskine house similar to Wright's Hoyt house in Geneva, Illinois, and the A. L. Munson house which is cousin to Wright's other variation of the *Ladies Home Journal* design, the Hunt house in LaGrange, Illinois. Van Bergen dropped the elaborate trellis entry and terrace of Wright's prototype design, as Wright also did later. On the opposite side or at the front Van Bergen added a veranda to provide useful living space which functionally enlarges and breaks the confines of the cube.

In the Yerkes house one can see the appearance of two design concepts which preoccupied Van Bergen throughout his career. There is an artist's studio off the intermediate stair landing, and the exterior has wide horizontal board and batten siding up to the second floor sill line. The stairs in Van Bergen houses were always more than just vertical connections between floors. They became

Design perspective of the Flori Blondeel residences, Oak Park. This rendering from the April, 1915 Western Architect was done by Charles Ellwood who produced most of the presentation drawings from the Oak Park years.



The Charles Yerkes house has aged nicely and is now surrounded by foliage. It's plan, shown below, shows the strong influence Frank Lloyd Wright had on John Van Bergen. PSR Photo.





The White house, on Sheridan Road in Evanston, Illinois, still shows Wright's influence on Van Bergen, particularly on the interior as seen in the photograph at right above. Exterior view by Muggenberg.

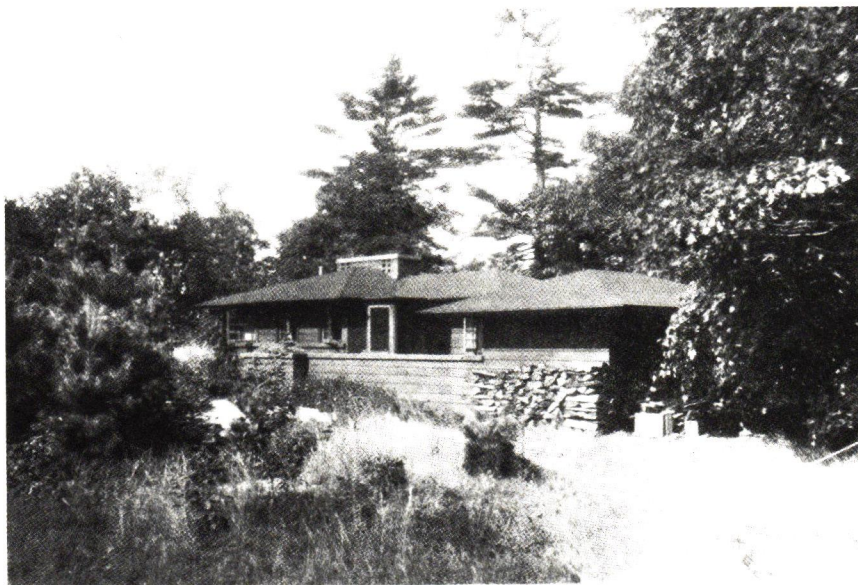
of his prairie period, quite fittingly a summer cottage for Mr. C. A. Richardson. The design is executed in horizontal board and batten siding with low and protective hipped roofs that cover generous windows and open porches. The plan is composed of two small buildings grouped tightly around a small service yard at the rear. Low wing walls and planter boxes reach out from the two pavilions to tie them together and unite it with the surrounding wilderness site. The main building is a cruciform plan with a large central fireplace, a generous living area and veranda, and bedrooms on either side in the arms of the cross. At the rear dining, bath, kitchen, and kitchen porch open to the yard separated from the front of the cottage by the fireplace mass. Casement windows and french doors are grouped at the ends of the wings. All of this is tied



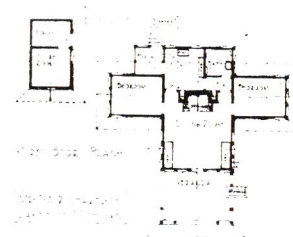
down by the strong statement of the chimney and wide roofs. Much like Wright's Gerts cottage, the Richardson design in its simple clarity and natural repose is an excellent solution.

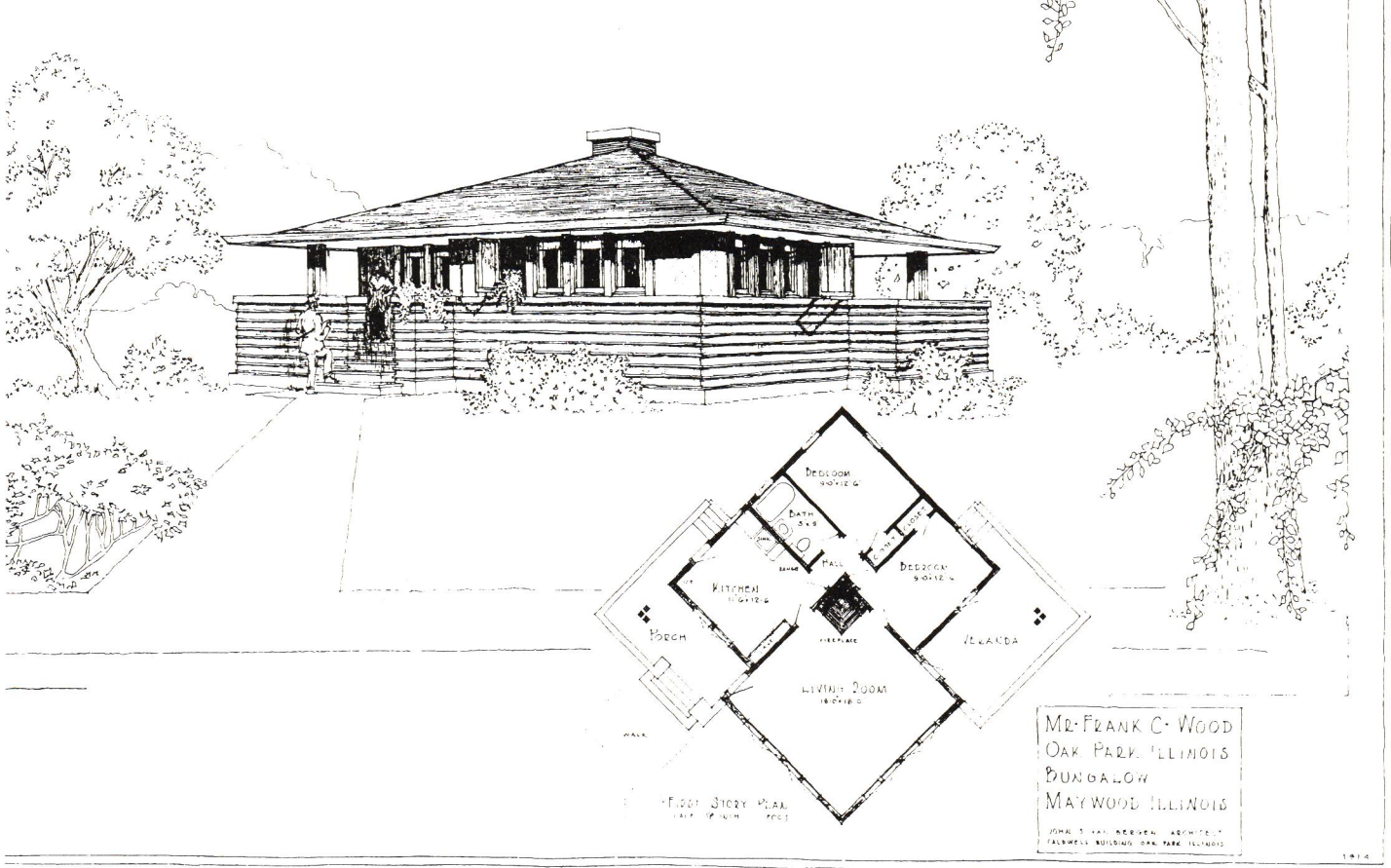
Three sophisticated projects from 1914 and 1915 are the most significant of Van Bergen's first decade. The 1914 Bungalow residence for Frank C. Wood²⁷ is an avant-garde design without precedent in the Prairie School. The plan is composed by the diagonal interpenetration of four square elements which define at once the interior and exterior spaces. This complexity is covered by a single square hip roof over both the interior and the open verandas on either side formed by the broad horizontal board and batten base. The large fireplace at the center of the plan and in the interior corner of the living room firmly orients the entire composition.

27 In the MVB interview Mrs. Van Bergen stated that Wood was Van Bergen's uncle and that this design may have been built. Wood was a speculative residential contractor.



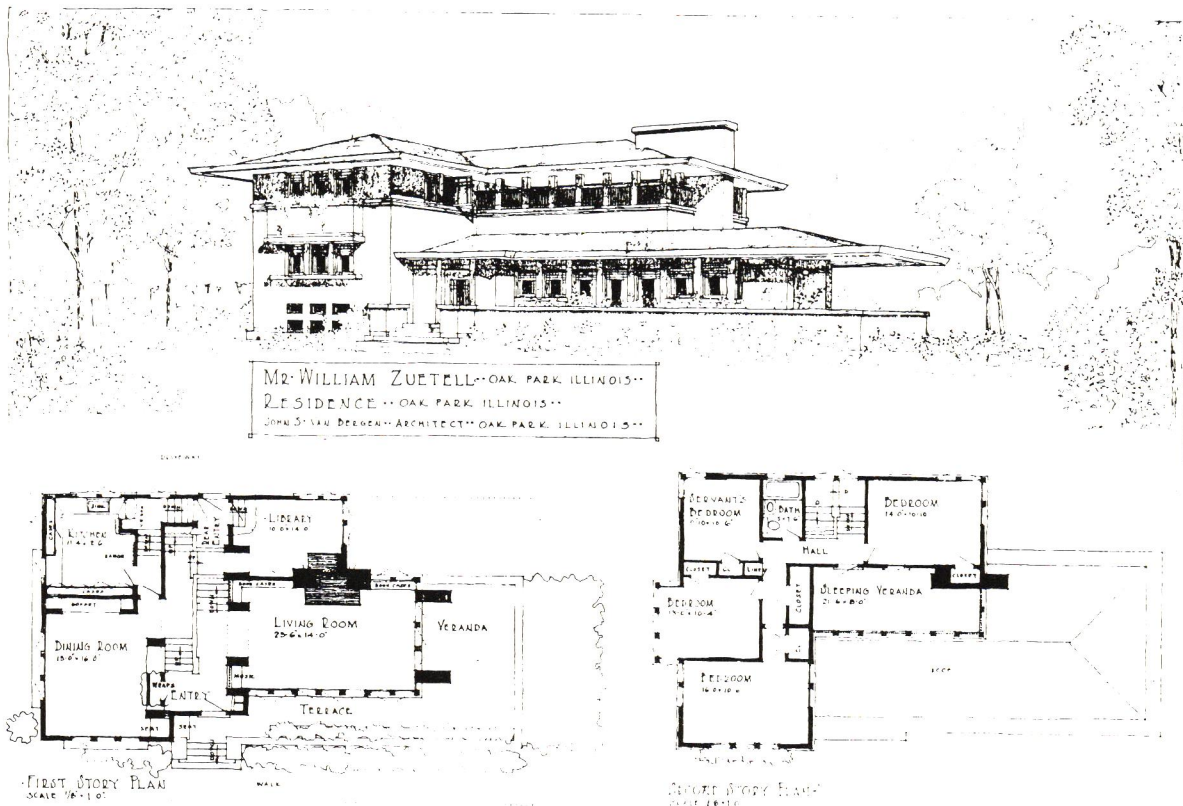
The C. A. Richardson summer cottage shown at left, plan below, was built in Lakeside, Michigan. Western Architect photo.

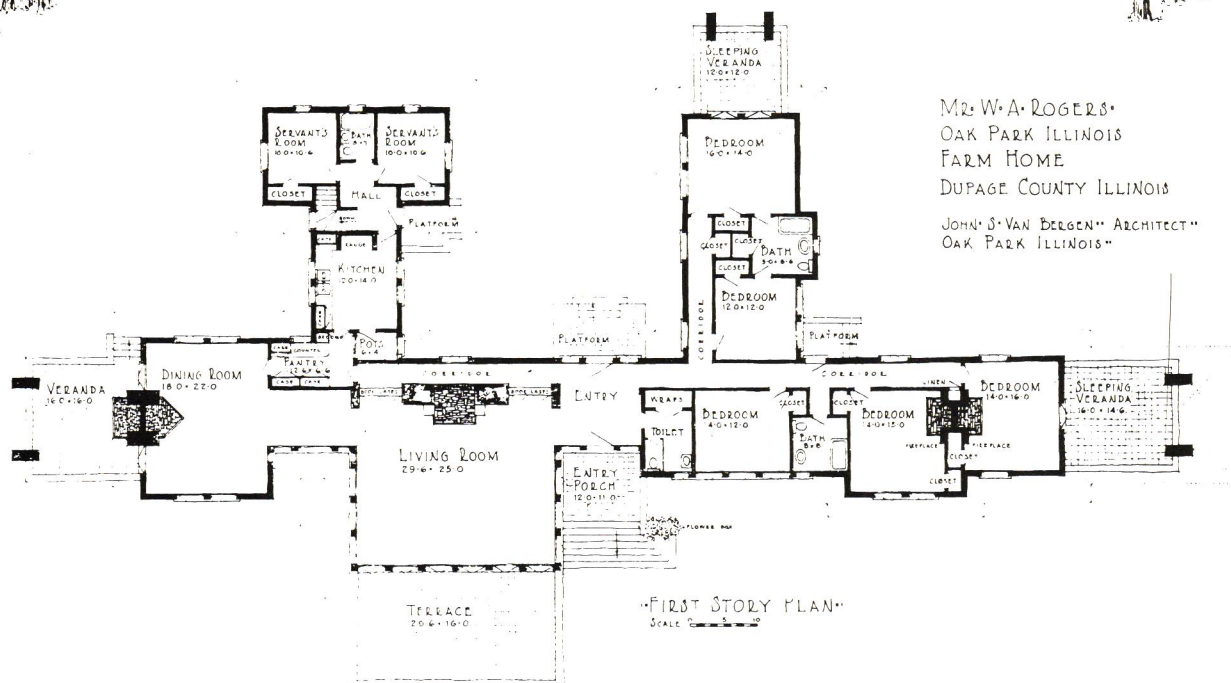
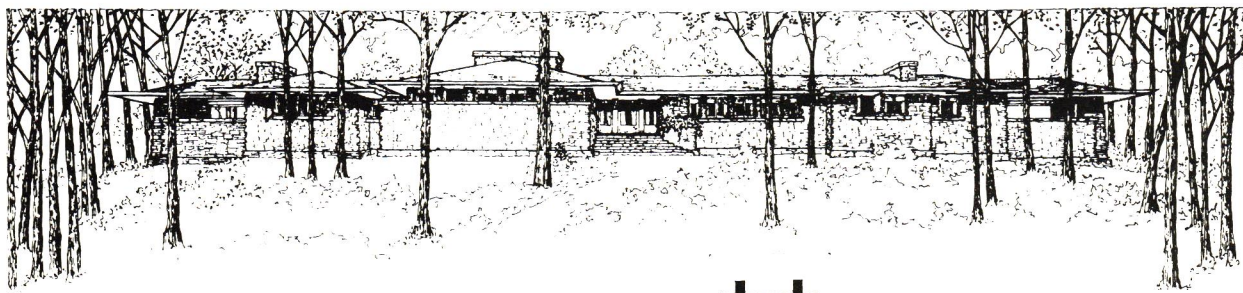




Van Bergen's Robie house experience resurfaces in the 1914 project for the William Zuetell residence. While the stucco exterior, details, and terrace windows are only reminiscent of the Robie house, the overall elevation is almost identical to Wright's Harry S. Adams residence in Oak Park. The plan is

organized around a central circulation spine and stair which rambles up across the width of the building from grade, eventually to the second floor. Along the way various rooms open off from it in different pinwheel directions and at different elevations. Since the rooms of the main floor are only





partially closed-off from this stair-spine by low screens, built-in bookcases and the like, the effect is to throw open an entire multi-leveled interior in a complex and active manner not at all evident from the composed and quiet exterior massing of the building.

While Mrs. Van Bergen maintains that the 1915 W. A. Rogers farm residence was constructed in a northwestern suburb of Chicago, it as yet has not been located. This is unfortunate since the *Western Architect* presentation shows a fully matured style with a carefully worked-out and inventive plan and elevation. Based on the upper floor of Wright's Avery Coonley house the generous and expanded plan is strung-out across the crest of a small hill, a series of three pavilions, two rear wings, and connecting links. The up-slope or rear side of the building snuggles into the site, but on the down-slope front elevation the main floor is raised above the ground line and appears to rest on a generous podium. This base is not clad in board and batten as in previous designs, but instead is built from rough-cut stratified limestone and rises with a slight batter from the exposed concrete watertable right up to the eaves. Evidently Van Bergen had

become familiar with Wright's work at Taliesin and Hillside and incorporated this masonry feature here for the first time. The effect is superlative: a totally natural structure at rest in its rural setting. While Van Bergen did not return to this design feature until five years later, he then used it consistently.

By 1920 Van Bergen had firmly reestablished his practice in Ravinia and in 1927 built his own home and studio on Cedar Avenue across a deep ravine from Jens Jensen's studio and the homes of his friends art critic Dudley Crafts Watson and architect Lawrence Buck.²⁸ The neighborhood became filled with his buildings. From 1920 until 1947, when the family left what had by then become Highland Park, Van Bergen produced forty projects and designs.

Through acquired competence and expertise he synthesized the philosophy of Jens Jensen with that of the Prairie School. Jens Jensen and John Van Bergen became close friends when Jensen moved his office from the Steinway Hall building to Ravinia

28 Leonard K. Eaton, *Landscape Artist in America, The Life and Work of Jens Jensen*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p. 92, and interviews by the author with Mr. Norman Schlossman. Buck's own home at 328 Marshman designed by him before 1913 is listed in the Highland Park Survey of the Illinois Historic Building Survey.



in 1920. They often worked together in each other's studios and in 1920 associated on two projects. Perhaps there were other projects as well in the following years before Jensen unofficially abandoned his career and retreated to Ellison Bay, Wisconsin in 1935. There can be no doubt that Jensen's aesthetic concerns strongly influenced Van Bergen, for "naturalism" became dominant in Van Bergen's architecture and landscape and the site more important. Often it has been suggested that Jensen was indifferent to the architecture around which he designed his prairie landscaping. If Van Bergen's work is any indication, this just was not so.

When Van Bergen's daughters enrolled at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota in 1938, Van Bergen offered his architectural services in partial payment for their tuition. He remodeled the top floor of Burton Men's Dormitory and in 1939 was appointed Superintendent of Buildings. He built the President's Residence, and in addition provided designs for a gymnasium which President Cowling was attempting to fund. When this project failed a smaller version, actually only a dance studio, was proposed, but this too never went beyond the

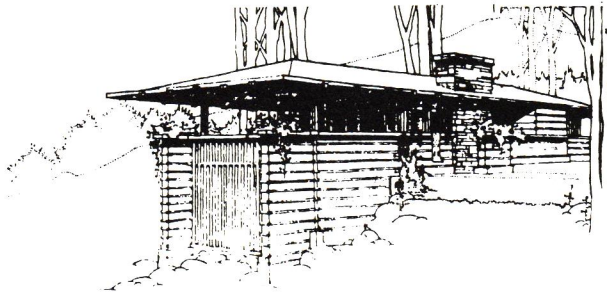
Van Bergen's Ravinia home of 1927.
design stage.²⁹

In 1940 as the United States became more embroiled in World War II, Van Bergen volunteered under the impression that he would be sent to Canada to help plan the towns and housing that were to be established along the Alaskan Highway. Instead he was sent to Sydney, Nebraska where he designed workers' dormitories for a munitions complex under construction there. Disillusioned, he resigned and returned with Mrs. Van Bergen to Northfield³⁰ where he was again taken on the administrative and academic staffs.³¹ In 1945 the family returned to Highland Park where Van Bergen once again resumed his practice.

29 See the Catalog for a list of other Van Bergen staff appointments while at Carleton College. In addition Van Bergen may have designed some residences in Northfield, Minnesota during his Carleton years. Burton Men's Dormitory was built in 1915 by Patton, Holmes, and Flinn, Architects, and the President's residence was remodeled in 1963 by Sovik-Mathre-Madson. The residence was "not to exceed \$14,000" but actually cost slightly over \$15,000. Carleton College Archives letter.

30 MVB interview.

31 Carleton College Archives letter and MVB interview.



STUDIES AND EXECUTED BUILDINGS BY FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

The drawings and text in *STUDIES AND EXECUTED BUILDINGS* by Frank Lloyd Wright constitute the single most important collection of work published by Wright. It was first issued in 1910 by Ernst Wasmuth in Berlin in two portfolios. Our edition contains the original 100 drawings in book form (14½ x 8½") plus the German & English text. Cloth \$40.00 + 5% tax.

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In 1947 the Van Bergens moved to the township of Hawthorn Woods north of Lake Zurich, Illinois³² and built a new studio-home on a large tract of land overlooking the lowlands of Echo Lake. This new home was given the name Hawthorn Hill.

The family was living in Barrington Hills when John Van Bergen became seriously ill in 1955. His brother Frank, who was living in California convinced them to relocate to Santa Barbara.³³ Although slowed by his health Van Bergen immediately obtained his California architectural license and resumed a limited practice.³⁴ The family settled in the township of Montecito and built a home which they named Wide Horizons. In 1964 construction was just finished on a second hillside Wide Horizons.³⁵ As they were moving in a forest fire swept through destroying the building, and along with it, all the records and drawings of John Van Bergen's career.³⁶

On August 9, 1968 Mr. Van Bergen suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. On December 20, 1969 at the age of eighty-four he died in Santa Barbara.³⁷

What little discussion there has been of John Van Bergen's architecture has concentrated on the work of his first decade. Yet the work by Van Bergen in the thirty years after 1920 is that of a more mature architect. The first decade derived from Wrightian models, but after 1920 Van Bergen became less an imitator.

Perhaps it was Van Bergen's youthful age when compared to the other members of the prairie school that provided him with the resiliency to tighten his belt and resist the temptation to make money by forsaking the prairie principles in which he believed. For instance, he was only twenty-one when he went to work for Walter Burley Griffin who had already established his own independent

32 MVB interview and interview by the author with Mr. Charles Masterson. During Van Bergen's last years he became a modest real estate developer buying large tracts of land on which he built his own homes and then subdivided and sold the remaining lots. He often provided architectural services for the buyers as well.

33 MVB interview, Masterson interview, and interview by the author with Mara Arbeen of River Forest, Illinois.

34 VB letter dated April 16, 1968.

35 Verne Linderman, "Home Tour", Santa Barbara, California, *Santa Barbara News-Press*, Sunday, November 13, 1966, pp. 8-5, and MVB interview, Masterson interview.

36 MVB interview and Arbeen interview.

37 Eaton, *op. cit.*, and MVB and Masterson interviews. Van Bergen was a member of Jensen's Friends of our Native Landscape which was instrumental in the formation of Illinois' State Park System.

practice and was well on the way to making a name for himself despite the shadow of Frank Lloyd Wright. In a sense, a parallel may be drawn between the lives of Wright and Van Bergen. Both men entered into the field of architecture at about the same age and without any formal architectural training, and both men were drawn to the work of an already practicing giant in the field . . . Wright to Sullivan and Van Bergen to Wright himself. Van Bergen lived only seven years less than did Wright and their architectural careers may both be broken abstractly into three general periods. Wright's early years were spent in the social and architectural circles of Oak Park where he first developed prairie architecture from the Sullivan philosophy which he had learned. So too Van Bergen's early career, although less original by any means, was spent in the Oak Park-prairie school environment. Once Wright had re-established himself at Taliesin in Wisconsin, his architecture underwent a change, and just so once Van Bergen had relocated in Ravinia his architecture underwent a change after having met Jens Jensen.

Van Bergen's new style was consistently more natural in character and more carefully designed than any of his previous work. Rustic materials were employed such as wood shake shingles, horizontal redwood board and batten siding, rough-hewn stratified Wisconsin limestone, exposed concrete, buff-colored stucco, and natural wood trims that were stained and left to weather. On the interior woodwork was left natural, exterior materials were brought inside for continuity, and the general character was lighter and more open to the exterior.

The new style could not, however, completely erase the old. In 1924, Van Bergen designed one

of his last and largest of the cubic houses. It was the L. R. Netzel residence in La Grange, Illinois. The house was surfaced in brick, which was carried into the interior, and the second floor exterior has a strange striped detail made up of 2" boards laid on edge in a manner so as to create a strong horizontal line. The entrance tower is between an attached garage and the basic cube of the house. An arch over the front door is reflected in a similar arch over the fireplace.

Twenty-eight of the forty-three designs from 1920 to 1950 were executed by Van Bergen in his new prairie naturalism. However some designs such as the J. Barlow, Herman Pomper, and Dr. Roberts residences revert to the Wrightian idiom of the first decade. Two such designs are of particular interest, the Oak Park Playground Competition of 1926-1930 and the James Irving residence of 1928, both indicating Van Bergen's mastery of a strict prairie style.

In 1926 Van Bergen, with the rendering assistance of Lawrence Buck, entered a competition sponsored by the Oak Park Playground Board for the construction of five playground fieldhouses. Frank Lloyd Wright entered the competition as well and Van Bergen later observed that "Wright was designing an expensive monument to himself. I not knowing at the time that I was in competition with Wright, designed a building to be built within a budget and one that could be maintained where children were concerned," John Van Bergen won the competition and the commission.³⁸

38 VB letter dated April 16, 1968.

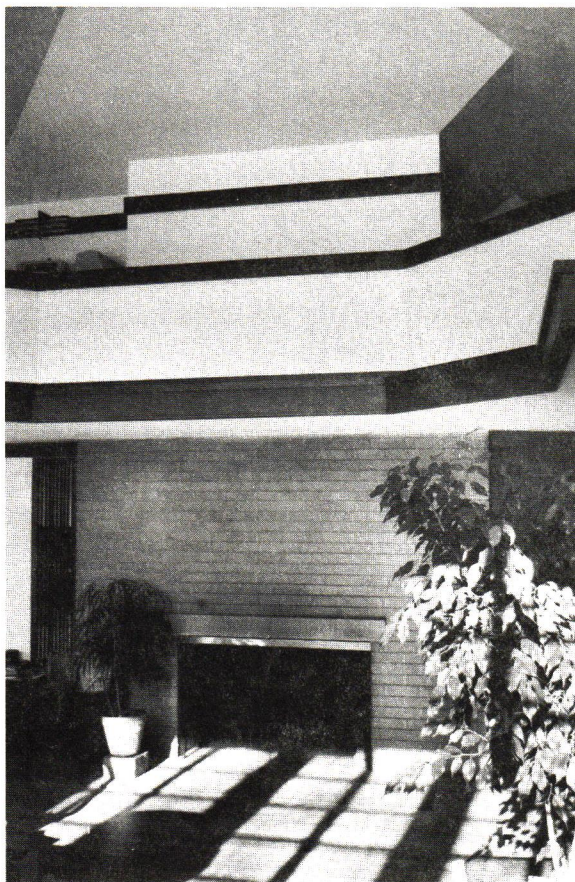
The Louis R. Netzel residence, LaGrange, Illinois. The horizontal wood siding used on this home is extremely decorative.





The James B. Irving residence, Wilmette, Illinois. A late Wrightian design in buff-colored stucco and based on the original design of the Isabel Roberts residence.

An interior view of the Irving house.



While four of the original buildings are still standing, they have been refurbished beyond recognition over the past few years. The Stevenson playground shelter was the largest and most fully landscaped of the five designs, but it was unfortunately demolished to make way for a more modern recreation facility.

All of these buildings were one story, buff stucco designs accented with colorful glazed tile decorations. Low hip roofs sheltered the windows and french doors which opened the interior playrooms to the exterior play areas. The landscaping particularly at the Stevenson shelter included (as one would expect from a Jensen disciple), window boxes and planters, rock gardens, and prairie pools and paths of stratified limestone.

The James Irving house is similar to Wright's original design for the Isabel Roberts house in River Forest, and while it's lateral extensions are stubbier, it fortunately retains the two-story living room and full height glass front of the Wright design.

Over the length of his career Van Bergen broke with the prairie style altogether on only three occasions. The 1926 Ravinia School, the 1928 Albert Kurtzon residence, and the 1933 Warren Spahr residence are based on a historical style which might be termed tudor or medieval in character. To a certain extent even some of the natural prairie designs such as the 1926 Laura Stoddard residence project a slightly medieval feeling as well, overshadowed to be sure by the more dominant Van Bergen style.



The John Shaver residence is a rare example of Van Bergen's International style work.

The 1925 unidentified residence in Winnetka³⁹ and the 1926 John Shaver residence indicate Van Bergen's interest in concrete not just as a construction material but also as a finish design material. The Shaver house in particular, makes bold use of concrete. It is a simple two story cube with punched openings where the concrete has been left raw and exposed on the interior and exterior. In addition the interior walls and ceilings are almost totally paneled in fir plywood.

Van Bergen's natural prairie style began in 1920 with three designs. The Chicago, Aurora, and Elgin

³⁹ G. Owen Yost, "Architecture of the North Shore". Number three in a series. Winnetka, Illinois, *Winnetka Talk*, September 5, 1968, p. 64.

The Albert Kutzon residence, Highland Park, Illinois. This home is one of three defections by Van Bergen from the prairie style, and yet its character is definitely more natural than historical. The rear elevation opens onto a steep and rugged ravine.

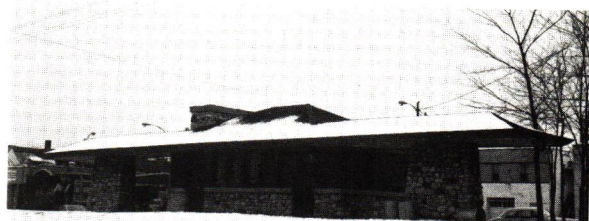


suburban station in Villa Park, Illinois is a small rustic pavilion. Instead of the usual rough-cut limestone, battered walls are built from creek boulders inside and out. With a large fireplace and cozy air, it is a great improvement over other small stations of the period.

To complement Jen Jensen's landscape planning for Chicago's Columbus Park, Van Bergen designed a pavilion and boathouse for the edge of the newly created lagoon. The rendering of this project, abandoned because of inadequate funding, indicates two other small park buildings perhaps also proposed by Van Bergen.⁴⁰ The central element of the design occurs as an interruption to the shoreline and rises above the lower wings which reach out on one side into the park and on the other into the lagoon as an open arcade and boat landing. These wings contrast to the solid battered and buttressed walls of the larger shoreline unit which is only relieved by its shake shingle hip roof and large clerestory windows.

⁴⁰ VB letter dated April 16, 1968.

Suburban station for the Chicago, Aurora, and Elgin Railroad, Villa Park, Illinois. The walls of this small building are constructed of creek bed boulders.

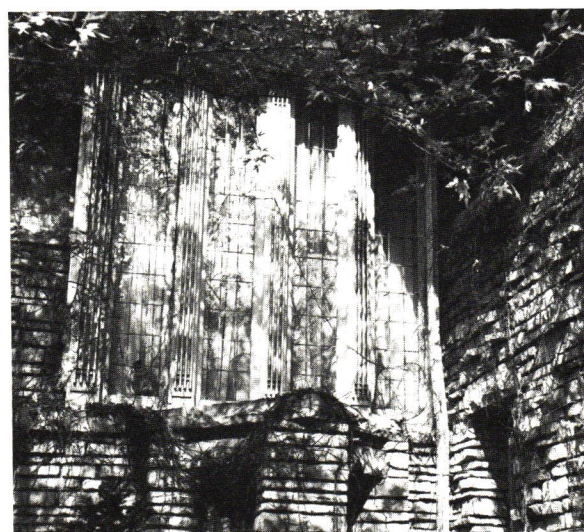




Spencer Ewing residence, Bloomington, Illinois.

In Bloomington, Illinois Jen Jensen introduced Van Bergen to the Spencer Ewings who had commissioned Jensen to landscape their new and as yet undesigned house. They subsequently retained Van Bergen to design a complementary residence, and while the first design was rejected as too elaborate, the second design was built in 1920.⁴¹ The lower floor of this home, similar in plan to the large Van Bergen houses of the first decade, is clad up to the second floor sill line in rough-cut limestone. Rather than stucco above the stonework, Van Bergen used glazed mosaic ceramic tiles of random size and pattern. The cornice and concealed gutters are decorated with a continuous carved pattern, a sort of prairie egg and dart device. The natural tones blend quietly into Jensen's meadow and vista to the prairie pool at the rear of the deep site.

Van Bergen began three school complexes towards the end of his second decade of practice. Two of them are alike and both bear a loose resemblance to the 1915 Rogers farm residence project. In 1927 Van Bergen began construction of the Braeside School just a few blocks from his Ravinia home on the edge of a steep and twisting ravine. The front elevation of the building is low, two story, and symmetrical. In the rear, however, the grade drops away and the facade becomes asymmetric and four stories in height. The workshops, auditorium, and gymnasium located on the rear elevation open directly onto the ravine through unusually tall and wide windows. The front of the school has the by now typical buff stucco above the limestone base



Detail of entry, Spencer Ewing residence. The batter of the walls, the mosaic tile band at the second floor, and the continuous decorative pattern on the cornice-gutter are visible.

while the rear is composed entirely of limestone. It is dominated by a chimney mass which rises from the ravine floor to above the top ridge line without interruption. Complementary additions were made to the building by Van Bergen in 1930 and again in 1934.

The year after the Braeside school was under way, planning for the Chicago Junior School was begun for a sixty acre site near Elgin, Illinois. Loosely affiliated with the Christian Science Church as a boarding school for underprivileged city children, it involved Van Bergen until 1950 and eventually provided facilities for one hundred students. All of the buildings were designed by Van Bergen with the help of Lawrence Buck and remain faithful to the prairie naturalism. To a certain extent different parts of this complex remind one alternately of Wright's designs at Spring Green and the Griffin work at Rock Crest/ Rock Glen. A superintendent's residence office and a classroom building were the first completed in 1929 and the fieldhouse was occupied in 1937. Over the following years a dining hall and kitchen, classroom and administration building, and four dormitory buildings were added. On this project Van Bergen states that he paid particular attention to the site plan and landscaping of the gently rolling and wooded grounds, but Jens Jensen has also been credited with the grounds of the Chicago Junior School.⁴²

A few of the many residential designs of these

42 MVB and Masterson interviews and Chicago Junior School Publications. Jensen may also have been involved with the Barbara and C. R. Erwin residences in Kenilworth and the Richard Cluever residence of 1915 in Maywood, Illinois.

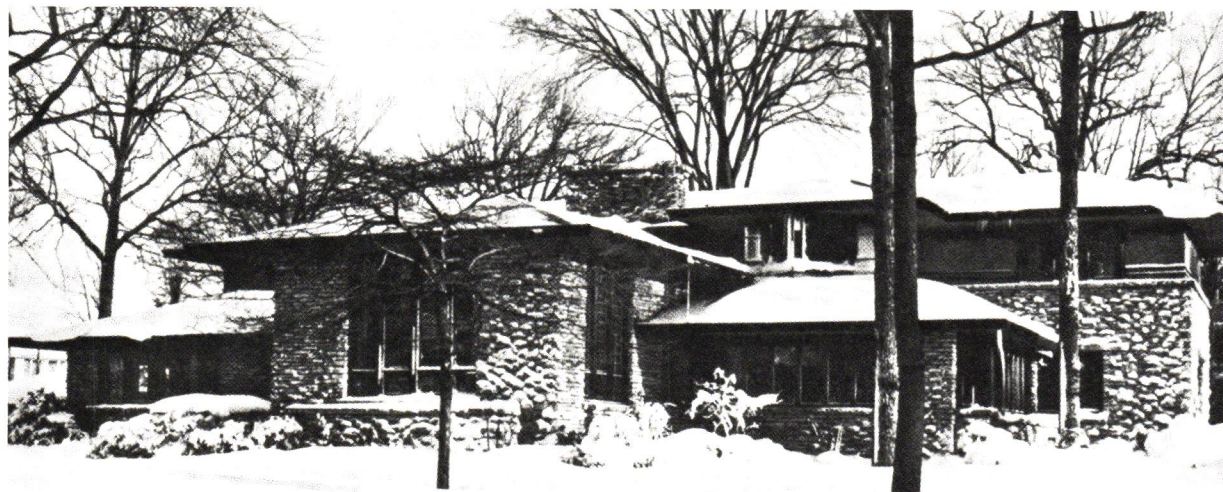
41 Interview by the author with the current owners of the Ewing residence. MVB interview.



The Braeside School, Highland Park, Illinois. The symmetrical front elevation gives no indication that the rear facade drops into the ravine behind and becomes four-stories in height.

years should be noted in passing. Not many are as lavish in materials or finishing as the 1926 C. R. Erwin residence. The feeling is totally different in the home Erwin built for his daughter adjoining his own home in 1927. Van Bergen used white horizontal board and battens on a design which otherwise

The C. R. Erwin residence, Kenilworth, Illinois. This home is quite formal on the interior and Van Bergen considered it one of his most lavish designs. Jens Jensen may have had some hand in the landscaping of this home as well as that of Erwin's daughter's home next door.





The Harold Klock residence, Hinsdale, Illinois. Here Van Bergen has used stratified limestone exclusively and while it is somewhat more naturalistic than the Prairie School, it is excellently detailed.

would have complemented the father's house. More typical are the designs of the 1925 Wilson Kline residence, Van Bergen's own home and studio of 1927, the 1925 E. A. Rummler residence, and the 1940 Harold Klock residence.⁴³ The last is perhaps the most satisfying of the homes of the middle period.

A tour through Van Bergen homes indicates his careful attention to all the small details which make

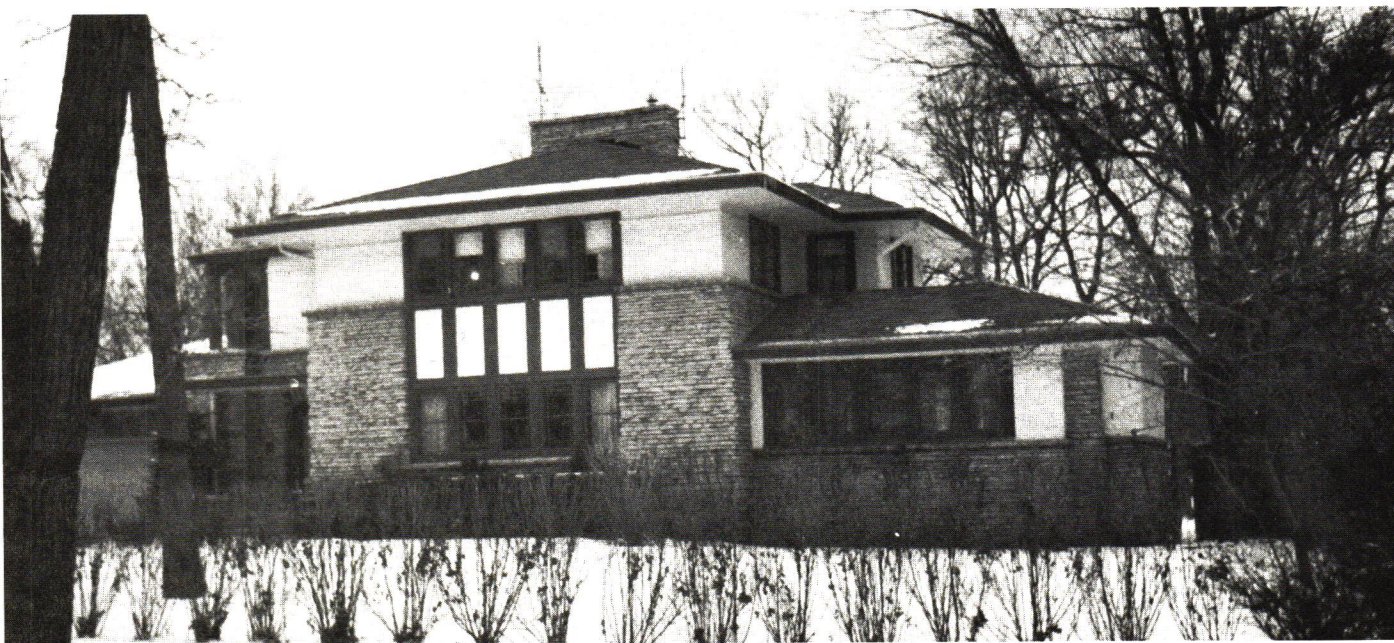
⁴³ Van Bergen has suggested a date of c.1950 for this building.

a building exceptional. He was mindful of upkeep and often used only exterior wood stains that required little care and no painting. He invented helpful gimmicks such as through the wall 'window box waterers', special builtin furniture such as a dresser opening into both the bedroom and the adjacent bathroom,⁴⁴ and an interior casement

⁴⁴ Masterson and MVB interviews. The window box waterer may be found at the Ewing residence and the dresser at Van Bergen's Barrington Hills residence.

The front facade of the Wilson Kline house, built in 1925, is symmetrical and formal. It has a basic similarity to Wright's Winslow house of 1893.





E. A. Rummler residence, Winnetka, Illinois. A typical residential design from Van Bergen's middle years.

screen lock for which he lost the patent to a large window manufacturer.⁴⁵ Van Bergen often designed furniture for his residences and especially did so for his own studio-residences throughout the years.⁴⁶

As Van Bergen's practice was always small, he never had a large staff helping him. During busy times he would have at the most two part time draftsmen.⁴⁷ He often found the same resistance to his designs as did Wright, for the Highland Park banks in several instances would not advance the full loan amount on his designs. To help offset this situation, Van Bergen occasionally and unethically served as his own general contractor, charging a flat ten-percent fee for the entire design-build package.⁴⁸

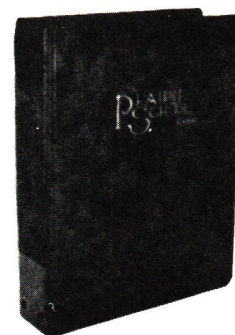
Van Bergen lost several good commissions during his career. Among these were the Com-
45 Van Bergen's invention of this lock enabled one to open, close, lock, or unlock an exterior casement window from the interior without removing the window screen.

46 Masterson interview.

47 Charles Ellwood worked for Van Bergen until the Oak Park office was closed in 1918. He rendered many of the early designed illustrated in *The Western Architect*. Ellwood eventually moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota where he built a residence that Van Bergen designed during his first decade. Lawrence Buck, a friend and architect from Ravinia worked for Van Bergen during 1925 to 1930. Charles Masterson, who remained in contact with the Van Bergens, worked off and on with Van Bergen from 1922 to 1955. In addition E. E. Roberts helped out in the office during the Oak Park years and John's brother Frank was often recruited to help in the drafting room.

48 Masterson interview.

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Van Bergen's own house in California where he lived until his death in 1969. Photo by Van Bergen.

monwealth Edison substations, the Crow Island School in Highland Park, and St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Barrington.⁴⁹

Van Bergen's architecture radically changed after 1950 once he had relocated first to Hawthorn Woods, later to Barrington Hills, and finally in 1955 to Santa Barbara, California. No longer limited by the relatively small lots of the north suburbs, his house plans were free to spread out across the flatlands as rambling, one story designs with flat roofs and concrete floors with radiant heating.⁵⁰ In effect he forsook the stylistic devices of his prairie naturalism and substituted (at this late date) the details and forms of the International Style. While

49 Interviews by the author with Mrs. Van Bergen, Charles Masterson, and Mr. Edward Dart.

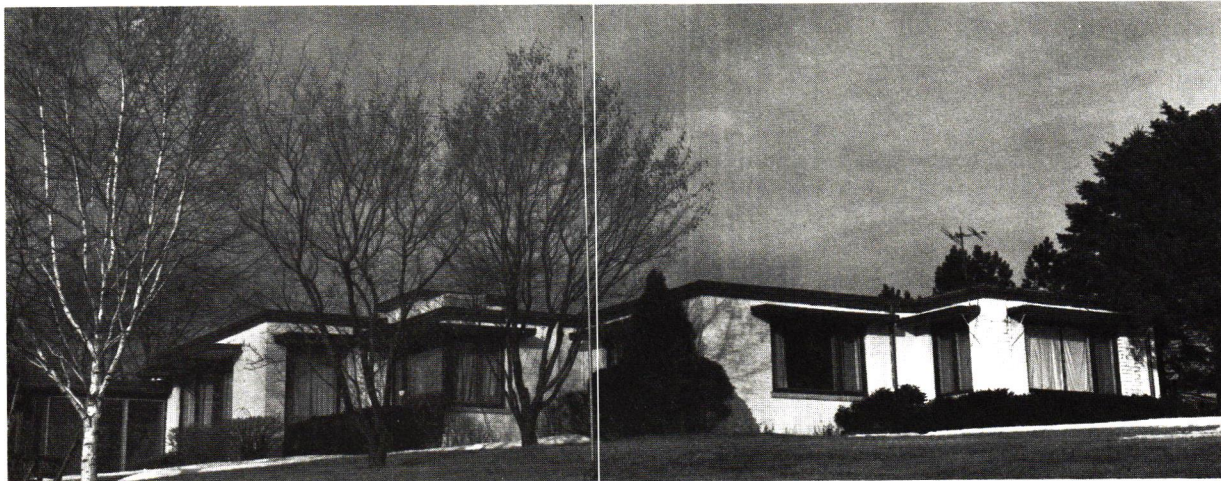
50 Van Bergen also used ponded roofs to eliminate downspout problems and to achieve the crisp uncluttered look required by his chaste new style.

he continued to use stratified limestone he more often employed white stucco or common brick exclusively on his exteriors with punched openings and unadorned surfaces.

With his health weakened during the last two decades of his career, Van Bergen's output slowed. From 1950 to 1969 he produced only fifteen designs, done after he had relocated to California.

Hopefully this study will bring the work of John Van Bergen into better focus. Since he was almost alone in working in the prairie style in the Chicago area from 1910 to 1950, his work has been isolated and consequently overlooked. While the early years have received some attention, it is the unrecognized prolific middle years that are of great credit to this loner.

William Mohan residence, Barrington Hills, Illinois. This design is typical of the late work of John Van Bergen. The house in a series of interconnected cubes strings out along the crest of the hill and overlooks the flatlands to the west. The opposite elevation turns in upon itself and forms an entry courtyard.



John Van Bergen: A Catalog, 1910-1969

Abbreviations and symbols used throughout are:

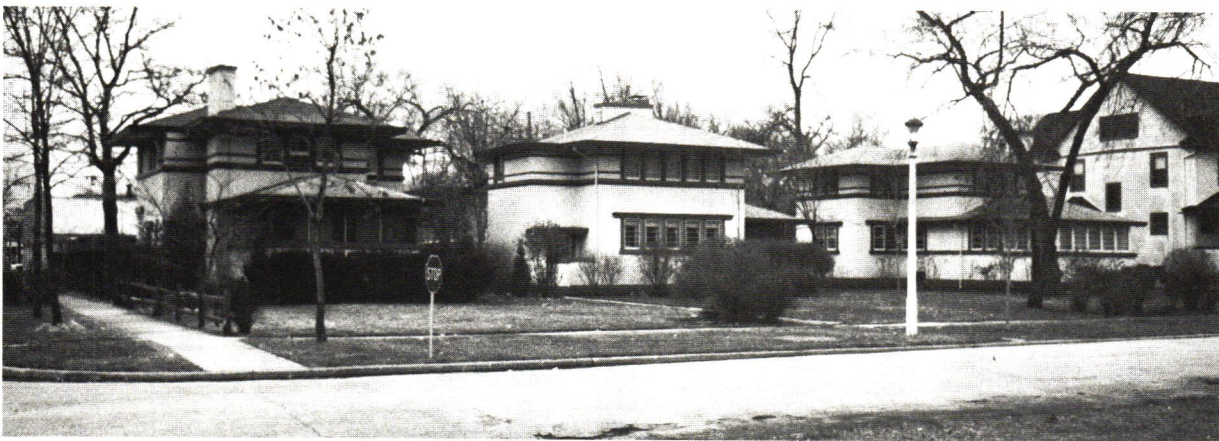
BP	Blueprints or design drawings
BPt	Building Permit
CM	Charles Masterson
IHS	Illinois Historic Building Survey
JRM	Author's records
MVB	Mrs. Van Bergen
O	Owner or present occupant
OHS	Oak Park Historic Survey
VB	Van Bergen

If the catalog entry has been described or illustrated in a publication, the following abbreviations will be used:

AR	<i>Architectural Record</i> , October 1915
CAC	<i>Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogs of 1915, 1916, and 1920.</i>
CSA	<i>Chicago School of Architecture</i> , by Carl Condit
GY	"Architecture of the North Shore", by G. Owen Yost
OL	<i>Oak Leaves</i> , Oak Park, Illinois, newspaper
PS	<i>Prairie School . . . Contemporaries</i> , by H. Allen Brooks
SBNP	<i>Santa Barbara News-Press</i>
VH	<i>Modern American Homes</i> , by Herman Von Holst
WA	<i>Western Architect</i> , April and June 1915.

This catalog of buildings and projects is arranged chronologically. Each building is listed along with the address, location, date of design and/or construction. Pertinent descriptions and facts as well as sources, publication listings, and the status of the structure are also given. If the date of construction is known to be different from that of design, the construction date will be listed in parentheses.

3. *C. PERCY SKILLIN RESIDENCE.* 1912. 714 Ashland Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois. CAC 1915 and 1920, WA April 1915, AR October 1915, PS, VB. This house was the most publicised of Van Bergen's buildings and bears a striking resemblance to Wright's Ward Willets residence. A major fire in April of 1973 severely damaged the front elevation.
4. *MRS. CHARLES A. YERKES RESIDENCE.* 1912. 450 Iowa Street, Oak Park, Illinois. CAC 1915, WA April 1915, OHS, PS, VB. The first illustration of the compact cubic floor plan and massing used by Van Bergen in his smaller houses. Frame with stucco and wide horizontal boarding up to the second story sill line. Artist's studio off of the stairwell.



The three Blondeel houses as they appear today. PSR photo.

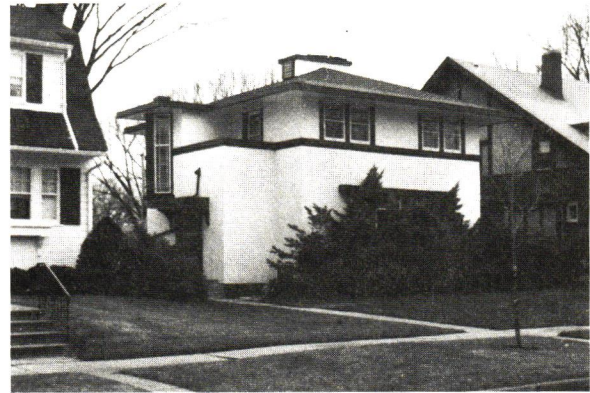
1. *PROJECT: A STUDY FOR A BRICK HOUSE.* 1910. Entry in the *Brickbuilder's* 1910 competition for a \$4000 brick residence. Illustrated in *A Brick House*. Bears the marks of Van Bergen's early work with Walter Burley Griffin.
2. *A. O. ANDERSON RESIDENCE.* 1912?. 233 Augusta Avenue, DeKalb, Illinois. CAC 1920. Much like the Skillin residence but with buff face brick and a terra cotta tile roof.

5. *THREE RESIDENCES FOR MR. FLORI BLONDEEL.* 1913, (1914). 426, 434, and 436 North Elmwood Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. WA April 1915, CAC 1915, PS, OHS, OL, VB. The two outer buildings of this frame and stucco triplet have common floor plans except opposite hand. The house at 436 was the first completed and was purchased in 1915 for \$3500. Contractor: G. O. Duchien. Garage at 436 added in 1916. Blueprints dated 1914. Blondeel was an Oak Park florist. Sprague's *Guide* has a detailed account of this design.

6. *RICHARD CLUEVER RESIDENCE*. 1913. 601 North First Avenue, Maywood, Illinois. WA June 1915, CAC 1915, VB. Much like the Skillin residence this house was originally built on a five acre site overlooking the Des Plaines River. Jens Jensen may have been associated with the landscaping.
7. *ROBERT N. ERSKINE RESIDENCE*. 1913. 714 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. CAC 1915, WA April 1915, BP (?), OHS, VB. Frame, stucco, low hipped shingled roof with interesting veranda and entry.
8. *W. H. GRIFFITH RESIDENCE*. 1913. 418 South Harvey Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. CAC 1915, OHS. Based on the initial Flori Blondeel design.
9. *W. H. WATT RESIDENCE*. 1913. 806 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS.
10. *WILLIAM M. WEBSTER RESIDENCE*. 1913. 5730 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois. WA April 1915, CAC 1915, CSA, PS, VB. Demolished 1960. A carefully detailed frame and stucco building with severe lines and flat roofs. Charles Ellwood provided this and all of the *Western Architect* design drawings.
11. *TWO RESIDENCES FOR MRS. ELIZABETH MANSON & ALBERT MANSON*. No. 1: 1911; No. 2: 1911. No. 1: 615 and No. 2: 619 North Euclid Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, VB. The house at 615 has a low hip roof, while the house at 619 has a flat roof.
12. *HARRY L. ALFORD RESIDENCE*. 1914. 730 North Clinton Place, River Forest, Illinois. OHS. Original stucco facade altered c1950.
13. *GEORGE BALLARD RESIDENCE*. 1914. 1026 Michigan Avenue, Evanston, Illinois. VB. A residence which Van Bergen called "designed for city living" with a third floor den and balcony.
14. *ALFRED BERSBACH RESIDENCE*. 1914. 1120 Michigan Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois. CAC 1915, WA June 1915, CAS, GY, PS, VB. Perhaps the most inventive, colorful, and cleverly detailed of Van Bergen's early work. Built with fine views overlooking Lake Michigan which the plan of the house parallels.
15. *CHARLES FLITCRAFT RESIDENCE*. 1914. 845 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, VB. The house has an interior garage and rear garden views.



Erskine



Watt



Alford



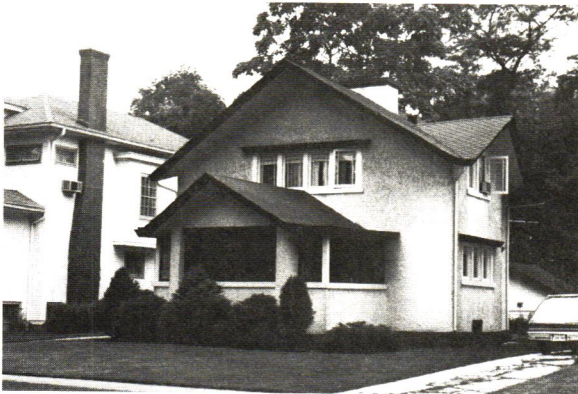
Ballard



Griess



Hamilton

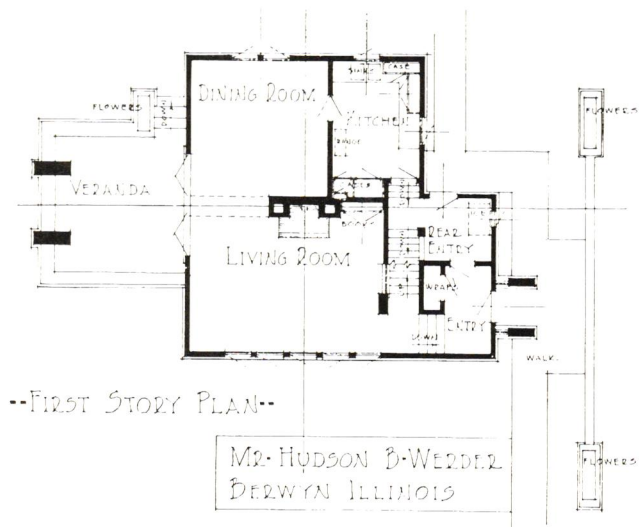


Horder

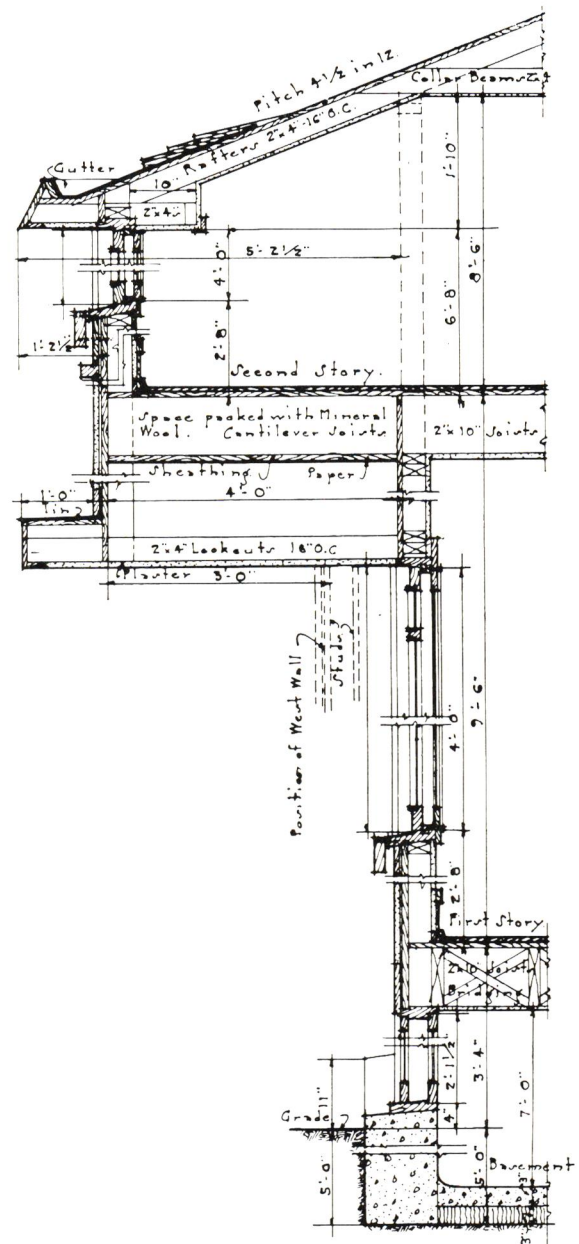


Smith

16. *PHILLIP GRIESS RESIDENCE*. 1914. 716 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. WA April 1915, CAC 1915, OHS.
17. *H. RAYMOND HAMILTON RESIDENCE*. 1914?. 714 North Linden Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, CAC 1915, VB. Basically like the Phillip Griess Residence except with an awkward third story attic set ontop which was added by Tallmadge and Watson in 1924.
18. *GEORGE R. HEMINGWAY RESIDENCE*. 1914. 106 South Grove Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, VB. A house with an interesting veranda and entry and built for the real estate agent who handled the sales of the Blondeel Residences and an uncle of Ernest Hemingway.
19. *HENRY G. HORDER RESIDENCE*. 1914. 823 Fair Oaks Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, CAC 1915, VH 1918, plate 16. Altered.
20. *ALLEN MILLER RESIDENCE*. 1914-1915?. 7121 South Paxton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. IHS, MVB, VB, CAC 1915 and 1920. It is not known definitely that the Van Bergen house at this address is the Miller Residence; it might be another structure altogether.
21. *C. A. RICHARDSON COTTAGE*. 1914?. Lakeside, Michigan. WA April 1915, CAC 1915, VB. This is the most rustic of the early work with two buildings grouped around a yard, with low lines, low hipped roofs, and wide horizontal board and batten siding.
22. *G. L. SMITH RESIDENCE*. 1914. 743 North Columbian Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS.
23. *HUDSON B. WERDER RESIDENCE*. 1914?. Berwyn, Illinois. WA April 1915, CAC 1915 and 1920, MVB, VB. Mrs. Van Bergen suggests that Mr. Werder's father was connected with the Colorado resort project (see no. 27).



24. *HAROLD R. WHITE RESIDENCE*. 1914. 741 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois. GY, VB. Built to take full advantage of the Lake Michigan shore along the rear elevation.
25. *PROJECT?: FRANK C. WOOD BUNGALOW RESIDENCE*. 1914. Maywood, Illinois. WA April 1915, MVB, VB. Wood was Van Bergen's speculator-housebuilder-uncle. This is a most interesting design, low lying and composed of four interlocking squares diagonally connected as living space and exterior porches.
26. *PROJECT?: WILLIAM ZUETELL RESIDENCE*. 1914. Oak Park, Illinois. WA June 1915, CAC 1915. This design is the most sophisticated and carefully detailed of the early work: a brick building with steel channels employed to carry the roof, and an interesting atypical tri-level plan with the rooms ranged along the extended stair. Much like the Robie and Harry S. Adams houses by Wright. *The Western Architect* building details do not indicate the tri-level plan.
27. *PROJECT?: COLORADO RESORT DEVELOPMENT*. c1915?. Colorado. CM, MVB. A project that Mrs. Van Bergen suggests was designed as early as 1912 and which never came to fruition although an inn, school, and community center were planned. The town was abandoned incomplete. Perhaps this project has been confused with Drummond's involvement with Wright's Como Orchard Resort in Montana during 1908-10. Van Bergen was working with Drummond for the year immediately after the closing of Wright's Oak Park Studio in 1909.
28. *SALEM E. MUNYER LINDEN AVENUE APARTMENTS*. 1914-1916. 643 to 645 North Linden Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, Sprague: *A Guide*, OL, VB. An interesting buff brick and tile roofed building that was a considerable improvement over standard apartment plans. It includes three six-room apartments each with two baths, six five-room apartments, and six four-room apartments. Six corner apartments on each floor. All apartments have enclosed front porches and rear sleeping verandas. All apartments except those with four rooms have fireplaces. Rear stairwells are enclosed.
29. *PROJECT?: W. A. ROGERS FARM RESIDENCE*. 1915. Designed for Dupage County but listed on the drawings for Mr. Rogers of Oak Park. Mrs. Van Bergen recalls that this low and rambling building was built in a northwestern Chicago suburb.



TYPICAL SECTION THRU
NORTH & SOUTH WALL-

DETAILS OF
RESIDENCE FOR
MR. WILLIAM ZUETELL
OAK PARK, ILLINOIS
JOHN S. VAN BERGEN
ARCHITECT



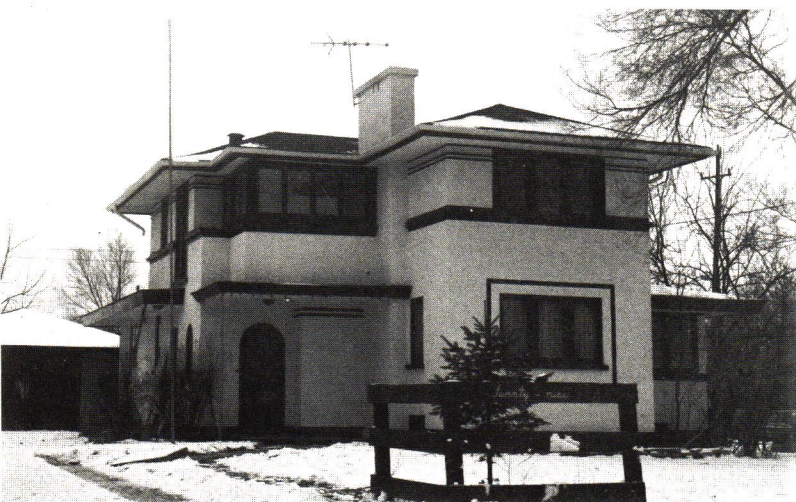
The Salem E. Munyer Linden Avenue Apartments

- 30. *JOHN S. AND FRANK VAN BERGEN COTTAGE.* c1915. Long Lake, Wisconsin. MVB. Built by hand with Van Bergen's brother, this structure still stands but has been extensively remodeled.
- 31. *SETH A. RHODES RESIDENCE AND GARAGE.* 1916. 719 North Clinton, Avenue, River Forest, Illinois. BP, OHS, OL, VB.
- 32. *THOMAS E. HEALD RESIDENCE.* 1917. 734 Bonnie Brae Avenue, River Forest, Illinois. OHS, VB.

The Thomas E. Heald house.



- 33. *CHICAGO, AURORA, AND ELGIN SUBURBAN RAILROAD STATION.* c1920. Ardmore and Highland Avenues, Villa Park, Illinois. VB. A charming small pavilion with fireplace, field-stone landscaping, creek bed boulders in the walls, and concrete window sills and chimney cap.
- 34. *PROJECT: COLUMBUS PARK PAVILION AND BOATHOUSE.* 1920. Columbus Park, Central Avenue and Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois. CSA, VB. A design intended to be sympathetic with Jens Jensen's landscaping in 1920 of Columbus Park. Van Bergen credits the lack of funds for preventing its construction.
- 35. *PROJECT: SPENCER EWING RESIDENCE.* 1920. 1706 East Washington Avenue, Bloomington, Illinois. O, JRM. This first design was too large and was revised as indicated below.
- 36. *SPENCER EWING RESIDENCE.* February 21, 1920. 1706 East Washington Avenue, Bloomington, Illinois. O, BP, VB, CAC 1920, MVB. The first large scale exposition of Van Bergen as influenced by Jensen using stratified limestone base, stucco, shake hipped roof, glazed tile, and weathering wood trim for accents. A smaller version of the scheme first proposed. Landscaped by Jensen, with a prairie pool in the rear garden.



Unidentified residence at 29 Ash Street, Lombard, Illinois. A design which Van Bergen almost overlooked when he was recalling his work after his records were destroyed.



The Barlow house.

37. *HERMAN LANZL RESIDENCE*. 1921. 1635 Linden Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois. VB.

38. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCE*. c1921?. 29 Ash Street, Lombard, Illinois. CM, VB.

39. *DR. ROBERTS RESIDENCE*. 1922. 344 Elm Street, Highland Park, Illinois. VB. Garage adjacent has living quarters above.

40. *J. BARLOW RESIDENCE*. 1923. 717 North East Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. BPt, OHS. This design would appear to date from about 1915.

41. *WILSON KLINE RESIDENCE*. 1925. 1570 Hawthorne Drive, Highland Park, Illinois. VB.

42. *HERMAN POMPER RESIDENCE*. 1925. 318 Maple Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois. VB, IHS. Floor plan focuses living areas towards the rear of the house. The site has been subsequently sub-divided.

43. *E. A. RUMMLER RESIDENCE*. 1925. 1015 Starr Road, Winnetka, Illinois. VB. Rear addition 1969 and side veranda has been enclosed. Fireplace inglenook and unusual wood detailing.



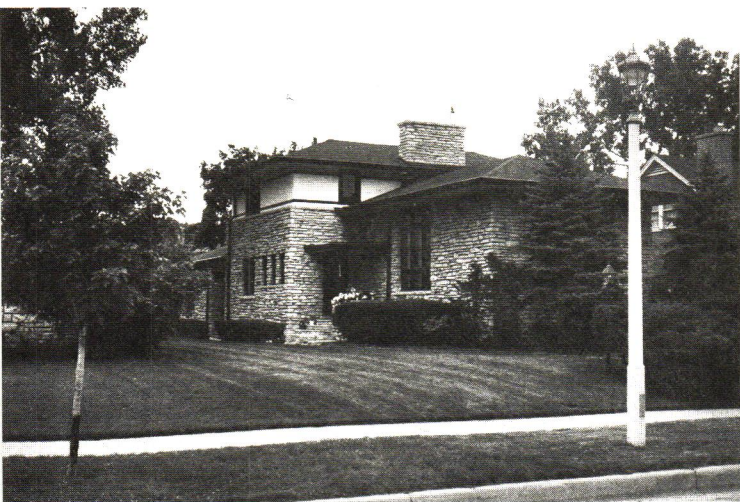
The Rhoads house.

44. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCE*. c1925. 865 Auburn Road, Winnetka, Illinois. GY. An early use by Van Bergen of concrete as a design material.

45. *BELLE BEMIS DUPLEX RESIDENCE*. 1924-1925. 295 Cedar Avenue at Linden, Highland Park, Illinois. VB, MVB. A small one story and basement building with wide redwood boarding and having duplex apartments with a common entry. Built across the street from Van Bergen's own home for his mother and sister.



The Belle Bemis cottage.



Residence for the Chicago Title and Trust Company, Oak Park. A natural prairie house on a narrow lot with the fieldstone landscaping Van Bergen often included.

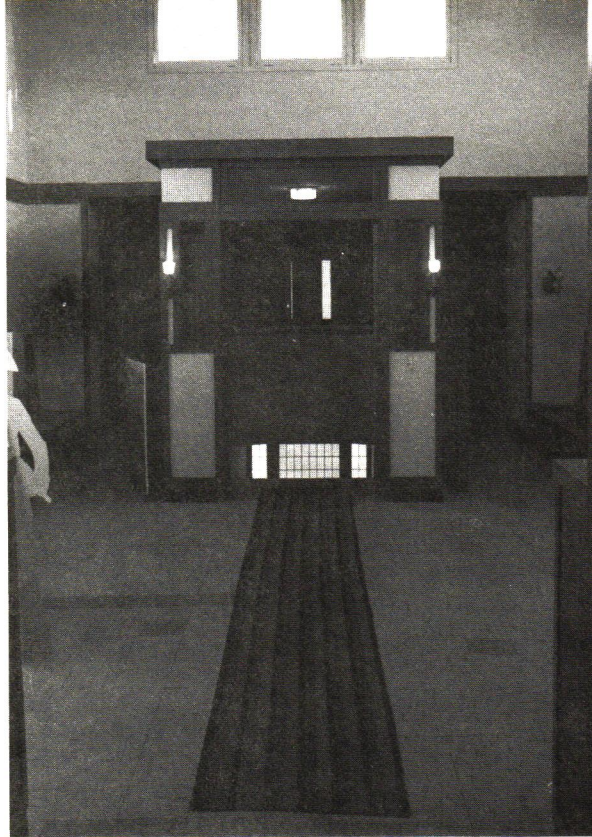
46. *RESIDENCE FOR CHICAGO TITLE AND TRUST COMPANY.* 1926. 1036 North Fair Oaks Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. BPT, OHS, VB.

47. *C. R. ERWIN RESIDENCE.* 1926. 615 Warwick Road, Kenilworth, Illinois. GY, PS, VB. The most lavish house from these middle years with shake roofs, stratified limestone walls, and a very formal fully paneled living area with a balcony and an organ loft over the fireplace. Jens Jensen may have provided the landscaping for this and the adjacent Barbara Erwin residence to the south, no. 54 below.

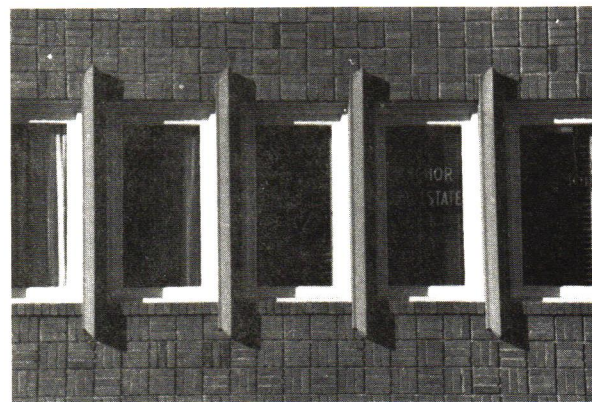
48. *MOLDENER & HUMER, FURRIERS, STORES, AND OFFICE BUILDING.* c1926?. Northwest corner of Central Avenue and Sheridan Road, Highland Park, Illinois. VB. A brick building with alternating 8-inch squares of brick on the elevation. There are two ground floor shops with second floor offices reached by a stair which opens to an interior sky-lighted atrium lobby.

49. *LOUIS R. NETZEL RESIDENCE.* 1926. 141 South Blackstone Avenue, LaGrange, Illinois. BP, VB. Blueprints exist for this frame, stucco, and shingled residence. Netzel was the manager of the Western Shade and Cloth Company of LaGrange.

50. *RAVINIA SCHOOL.* c1926. 763 Dean Street, Highland Park, Illinois. IHS, VB, GY. This brick structure is the most historically derived of all of Van Bergen's work and as such is the least interesting. It bears a strong relationship in tudor style to the Unidentified Residence at 100 Old Green Bay Road in Glenco listed below.



Interior of the Humer store.



Detail of the Humer windows.



The Humer building.

51. *OAK PARK PLAYGROUND BOARD FIELD-HOUSES*. 1926-1930. Five locations: Barry Playground at Lombard and Garfield, Carroll Playground at Fillmore and Kenilworth, Anderson Playground at Hayes and Division, Field Playground at Woodbine and Division, all altered. Stevenson Playground and Shelter at Taylor and Lake, demolished. Oak Park, Illinois. OHS, OL, VB. A competition was held for these light, buff-colored stucco designs with low lines, open planning, glazed tile, and colorful, playful details. Van Bergen won the competition and commission over a more costly entry submitted by Frank Lloyd Wright. Lawrence Buck prepared the design drawings.

52. *JOHN SHAVER RESIDENCE*. 1926. 326 Delta Lane at Dell, Highland Park, Illinois. VB. A severe and simple natural concrete cube with a two story living room with a round fireplace. The entire interior walls and ceilings are paneled in fir plywood.

53. *LAURA STODDARD RESIDENCE*. 1926. 260 Cedar Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois. GY, VB. Artist's studio off the stairway and over the attached garage.

54. *BARBARA ERWIN RESIDENCE*. 1927. 621 Warwick Road, Kenilworth, Illinois. GY, PS, VB. Horizontal board and batten exterior with wood shingled roof. Barbara was the daughter of C. R. Erwin (no. 47).

55. *BRAESIDE (DISTRICT 108) SCHOOL*. 1927, Additions: 1930 and 1934. 150 Pierce Road, Highland Park, Illinois. GY, IHS, VB. The gymnasium and shop rooms of this typical Jensen-influenced design open from the lower level directly onto the ravine at the rear of the rambling site.

56. *PROJECT: COUNTRY CLUBHOUSE FOR NORTH CHICAGO SUBURB*. c1927. Northbrook?, Illinois. MVB. Mrs. Van Bergen recalls that a mission-style structure was eventually built by others.

57. *JOHN S. VAN BERGEN RESIDENCE AND STUDIO (NO. 1)*. 1927. 234 Cedar Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois. GY, VB, MVB. Built with solid stratified Wisconsin limestone walls and shake roof. The studio wing, small ravine pavilion, and garage were later additions. The living room is typical of the period to a degree, and is two stories with a balcony overlooking it on three sides and a solid stone fireplace.



The Irving residence.

58. *JAMES B. IRVING RESIDENCE*. 1928. 1318 West Isabella Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois. GY, BPt, VB. Garage added 1940. A very late appearance of a Wrightian styled design much like the Isabel Roberts residence, but with the feeling and coloration of the Oak Park Playground buildings.

59. *CHICAGO JUNIOR SCHOOL, SITE PLAN, BUILDINGS, AND LANDSCAPING*. 1928-1950. 1600 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois. VB. 1929: Superintendent's residence and office, classroom building; 1937: Bates field-house; as well as the kitchen and dining hall, classroom and administration building, and four dormitory buildings. This group of structures is patterned after the Braeside School structure, and while Van Bergen took special pains with the site and landscaping, Jensen may have been involved as well. Van Bergen designed the mural in the main lobby. Lawrence Buck produced the design and working drawings.

60. *ALBERT KURTZON RESIDENCE*. 1928. 266 Delta Lane, Highland Park, Illinois. VB. This stone and shingle home built with steeply pitched roofs on the edge of a ravine is quite medieval in character.

61. *TWO RESIDENCES FOR MRS. FRANK GEYSO*. 1930. 378 and 376 Woodland Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois. BPt, O, JRM. The residence at 376 is low and tight, much like the Richardson cottage. The contractor for 378 was W. J. Brown and the initial cost was \$12,000.

62. *CHICAGO MONROE STREET YACHT CLUB*. c1930-1940. Foot of Monroe Street at Lake Michigan, Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois. VB, MVB. The original building has now been totally remodeled and obscured.
63. *WARREN SPAHR RESIDENCE*. 1933. 534 High Road, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. VB. A stucco design with very modest and stylistic pretensions.
64. *CARLETON COLLEGE BUILDINGS AND STAFF APPOINTMENTS*. 1938-1945. Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota. VB, MVB, and Carleton Archives. October 1938: Remodeled fourth floor of Burton Men's Dormitory. 1939: President's (Gould) residence, project: design for gymnasium, project: design for dance studio, reviewed remodeling of Laird Hall of Science. October 1, 1939 to October 1, 1940: Superintendent of Buildings. August 1943 to June 1944 taught mechanical drawing and was Supervising Architect. August 1944 to June 1945: Supervising Architect. These designs and staff positions were in partial payment for his daughters' tuition, both of whom attended Carleton College. The President's residence was remodeled in 1963. Patton Homes and Flinn were the original architects of Burton Dormitory.
65. *PROJECT: COMPETITION DESIGN FOR AN ELECTRIC HOME*. c1940. General Electric Competition. MVB.
66. *HAROLD KLOCK RESIDENCE*. c1940. 306 South County Line Road, Hinsdale, Illinois. VB. Van Bergen dated this building in 1950 while Mrs. Van Bergen more logically suggests 1940. Solid limestone walls with shake gable roof and a large south-elevation greenhouse. Finely detailed.
67. *FRANK FERRY RESIDENCE*. 1944. Near Deerfield, Illinois. VB, MVB. A large country house designed for an extensive site. This building was perhaps part of a real estate development known as Ferry Farms and located on the southwest side of Deerfield.
68. *GEORGE GRAHAM RESIDENCE*. 1945. Park Ridge, Illinois. VB.
69. *BUD GOETSCH RESIDENCE*. 1946. Ogden Avenue and Oswego Road, Naperville, Illinois. VB. A low flat roofed building of stratified limestone on the rim of a flooded quarry is the first of the more modern structures of Van Bergen's last years.



The Griffith house.

70. *JOHN S. VAN BERGEN RESIDENCE AND STUDIO (NO. 2), HAWTHORN HILL*. 1947-1948. Miller Road and Ridge Road east of Route 12, Lake Zurich, Hawthorn Woods, Illinois. VB. White stucco over concrete block with flat roof. Overlooking the lowlands of Echo Lake.
71. *WILLIAM SCHWAEFFER RESIDENCE*. 1948. Miller Road and Ridge Road east of Route 12, Lake Zurich, Hawthorn Woods, Illinois. VB. A large country home with stratified limestone which adjoins the land of the Van Bergen residence above.
72. *NORTH BARRINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADDITION*. 1951. 310 North Highway 59, North Barrington, Illinois. O, VB. A 55-foot long classroom wing added to an original and quite small 1946 school by Perkins and Will.
73. *PROJECT: ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH*. 1951-1952. Dundee Avenue, Barrington, Illinois. VB and Edward Dart. Edward D. Dart built the design that was accepted.
74. *JOHN S. VAN BERGEN RESIDENCE AND STUDIO (NO. 3), HAWTHORN HILL*. 1951. 334 South Old Sutton Road, Barrington Hills, Illinois. VB, CM. A flat-roofed house with common brick walls, concrete radiant floors, greenhouse, and curved living room overlooking a large lowland to the west. The house was leveled and burnt in the wake of a tornado in c1969.
75. *WILLIAM MOHAN RESIDENCE*. 1951. 336 South Old Sutton Road, Barrington Hills, Illinois. VB. A residence built on the adjoining lot to Van Bergen's home above. Stucco over

concrete block with large garage, flat roofs, and greenhouse. A series of interlocking cubic units ranged along the crest of the hill.

76. *LUCILLE HANSEN RESIDENCE*. 1952. Signal Hill Road at Mohawk Drive, North Barrington, Illinois. A quite large and spread-out plan with flat roofs and lowland views.
77. *JOHN DEBLOIS WACK RESIDENCE AND STUDIO*. 1954, (1959-1960). 1530 East Mountain Drive, Santa Barbara (Montecito), California. VB, *Masonry Industry*, *Montecito Realty*. A very large, lavish, and rambling mountain home.
78. *PROJECT FOR A RESIDENCE*. c1955. Santa Barbara, California. VB.
79. *JOHN S. VAN BERGEN RESIDENCE (NO. 4), WIDE HORIZONS*. 1955. 1508 Mountain Drive at San Ysidro, Santa Barbara (Montecito), California. VB, SBNP. Now extensively remodeled.
80. *PROJECT FOR TERMINAL AND GROUNDS OF SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT*. 1957. 601 Norman Firestone Road, Santa Barbara (Goleta), California. VB, SBNP, *Airport Brochure*. A design somewhat akin to the original buildings at Chicago's Midway Airport.
81. *JACOBSON FURNITURE STORE*. 1962. 3917 State Street, Santa Barbara, California. VB. A large loft selling space with a balcony across the rear portion and an elevation composed of textured concrete blocks much like the Moldener & Humer Building (No. 48).
82. *JOHN S. VAN BERGEN RESIDENCE AND STUDIO (NOS. 5 & 6), WIDE HORIZONS*. 1963 and October 1964. 2336 Bella Vista Drive, Santa Barbara, California. VB, SBNP. The house had just been occupied when it was destroyed by a major forest fire, and along with it, all of Van Bergen's drawings, records, and files. After the fire, construction was begun immediately on another residence almost identical to the first.
83. *PROJECT: PROTOTYPE DESIGN OF HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING FOR HONG KONG, CHINA*. 1965-1967. CM, VB, MVB. This design sponsored by the Church in the Home Foundation of Los Angeles, California was to have been the first of eight such structures each accommodating 1000 students. Drawings still exist.
84. *PROJECT: PARK AND RECREATION CENTER*. 1968-1969. Santa Barbara, California. VB, MVB. Plans and models still exist.

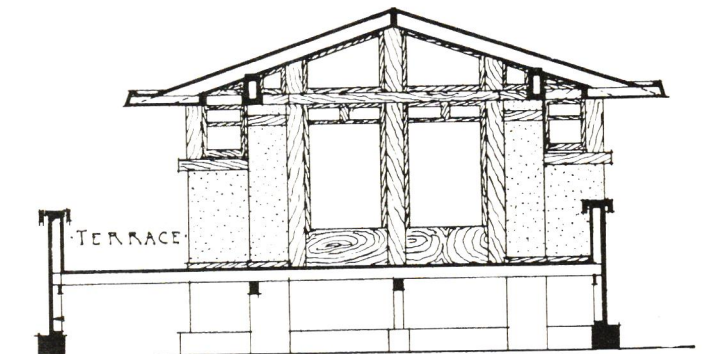
Buildings Perhaps by Van Bergen:

85. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCE*. c1926?. 100 Old Green Bay Road, Glencoe, Illinois. GY, IHS.
86. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCE*. date?. 2515 Deere Park Road, Highland Park, Illinois. 1910 *Chicago Blue Book*.



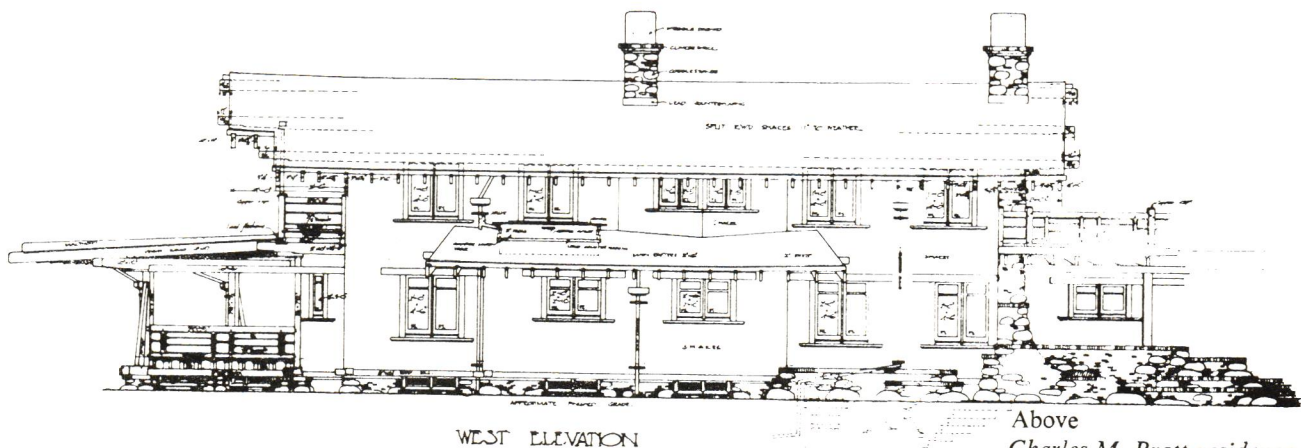
The Watts house.

87. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCE*. c1923?. 62 Warwick Road, Kenilworth, Illinois. JRM, IHS.
88. *RESIDENCE IN WISCONSIN*. c1918?. MVB.
89. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCES*. C1915?. 423 and 1018 South Madison Avenue, LaGrange, Illinois. GM, IHS, JRM.
90. *UNIDENTIFIED RESIDENCE*. c1915?. 7224 Quick Avenue, River Forest, Illinois. OHS.



-ELEVATION OF VERANDA -
DETAILS OF *
RESIDENCE FOR *
MR. WILLIAM ZUETELL *

Book Reviews



A GUIDE TO THE WORK OF GREENE AND GREENE, by Randell L. Makinson. Peregrine Smith, Salt Lake City and Santa Barbara, 1974, 65 pp., illus., \$4.95.

GREENE & GREENE: ARCHITECTS IN THE RESIDENTIAL STYLE, by William R. Current and Karen Current. Amon Carter Museum of Art, Fort Worth, 1974, 128 pp., illus., \$15.00.

Those interested in the architecture of Wright and the Prairie School quite naturally are drawn to the work of the Greene brothers of Pasadena, California because of the similar expression and quality of their work. It is fortunate that attention is being increasingly directed to the work of the Greene brothers for as Makinson points out, of the 547 total commissions they handled, and of their 137 major buildings, only 78 remain.

Having made the reference to Wright, however, it should be hastily added that other than a similarity of sources and the coincidence of time, there seems to be no connection between the architects.

As both Makinson and the Currents point out, the origin of the Greenes' work is to be found in the California bungalow, a combination of many vernacular timber traditions including Indian (whence the name), Swiss, and American. This was achieved through the agency of pattern books such as those of A. J. Downing, but more especially Gervase Wheeler and Eugene C. Gardner whose books appeared through the 1860's and 70's. The Greenes were indebted to the English Arts and Crafts Movement more than Wright, and they became, by 1907-08, the major and most representative American example of the Movement west of the Hudson — far closer to William Morris in their insistence on handcraftsmanship than Wright. In part this interest in hand work and the exploitation of the nature of

material grew out of the education of both brothers in Woodward's Manual Training High School in St. Louis during the 1880's. The combination of all this, as can be seen in the views of the Blacker house and the Gamble house, both in Pasadena, 1907-08, is a thorough extension of a single design impulse which controls all parts of the building — landscape, building frame, shingled skin, woodwork, lighting, glass, hardware, furniture, and in the case of the Gamble house even the piano. Still, this is softened figuratively and literally by rounded edges and curved lines, which may be why C. R. Ashbee observed in 1912 that Wright's houses were better abstract architecture but the Greenes' houses were more comfortable.

The Greenes, like Wright, drew heavily on Japanese sources which can be easily seen in the views of the Blacker and Gamble houses, the Greenes' most complete works. (The Gamble house, now open to the public, has all of its original Greene & Greene furniture, the only house which still does.) This more literal, even if more loving, adaptation of sources may help explain why the Greene brothers never were able to reassert themselves after about 1920, for as Makinson notes they practiced individually until the early 1950's. Unlike Wright, who adapted his more abstract idealized principles to a rapidly changing twentieth century, the Greenes were forgotten and ignored when wholesale replication of their bungalows by West Coast speculators drove that style out of popularity soon after the First World War. The Greenes used a kind of Spanish vernacular for their marvelously wrought Daniel L. James house at Carmel, 1918, in the wake of Goodhue's Spanish Baroque fair buildings in San Diego in 1915, but they never regained the power they manifested in their consummate work of 1907-08.

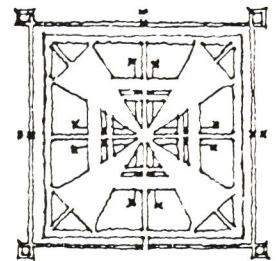
The fact remains, however, that when we direct our attention to the Arts and Crafts in America, our gaze will quickly fix on the work of Charles Sumner and Henry Mather Greene, for as these two books reveal their work is the best of that type.

For a proper historical and visual knowledge of the Greenes' work both these short studies are necessary, and they will serve well until Makinson's more extensive monograph appears. Makinson, who is curator of the Gamble house and has devoted a lifetime of work to the Greenes, presents here a short essay and an extended illustrated list of their major works with addresses and indication of demolition. Anyone anticipating making a pilgrimage to Southern California will need this book in his camera bag. The Currents' book, a catalog of a photograph exhibition, is well-printed by Morgan & Morgan who specialize in publications in photography. The major strength of their book is the

collection of photographs by William R. Current which have been augmented by reproductions of drawings and extensive captions and essays by Karen Current. As good as these reproductions are, they cry out for selected views in color so that readers may understand, however imperfectly, the masterful melding of woods, leather, stained-glass, and bronze by the Greenes. Both books unfortunately lack bibliographies.

In any case, until Makinson's more comprehensive study appears these two small works together should go far in establishing the Greenes not simply as the Frank Lloyd Wright of California, a demeaning subordinate position, but as among the most sensitive architects and designers of their generation to bring American Arts and Crafts perhaps to its finest flower.

Reviewed by
Leland Roth
Northwestern University



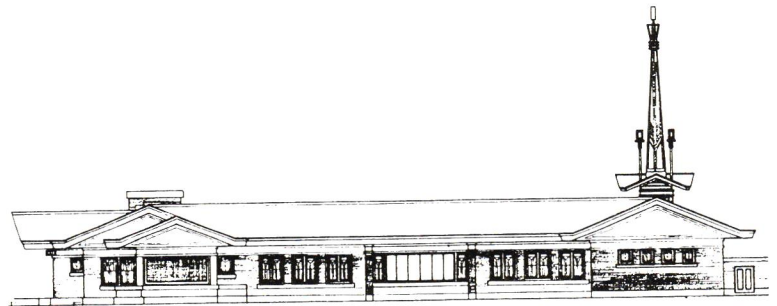
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From Mrs. John S. Van Bergen to Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Norma Masterson: November 25, 1968.

From John S. Van Bergen to Mr. Wilbert Hasbrouck: April 21, 1965; and March 22, 1966.

Interviews by the author with Mrs. John Van Bergen and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Masterson, February, 1972.

Additional correspondence to the author from: Santa Barbara Airport, Carleton College Archives, Mr. A. W. Tompkins, Mr. James W. Owen, and Mr. Charles L. Trick.

Photographs and plans:

Louis R. Netzel residence, reproducible blueprints.

Van Bergen residence No. 4: Hillside and entry photographs.

Van Bergen residence No. 6: Aerial and entry photographs.

Santa Barbara Airport Terminal Project: model photographs.

