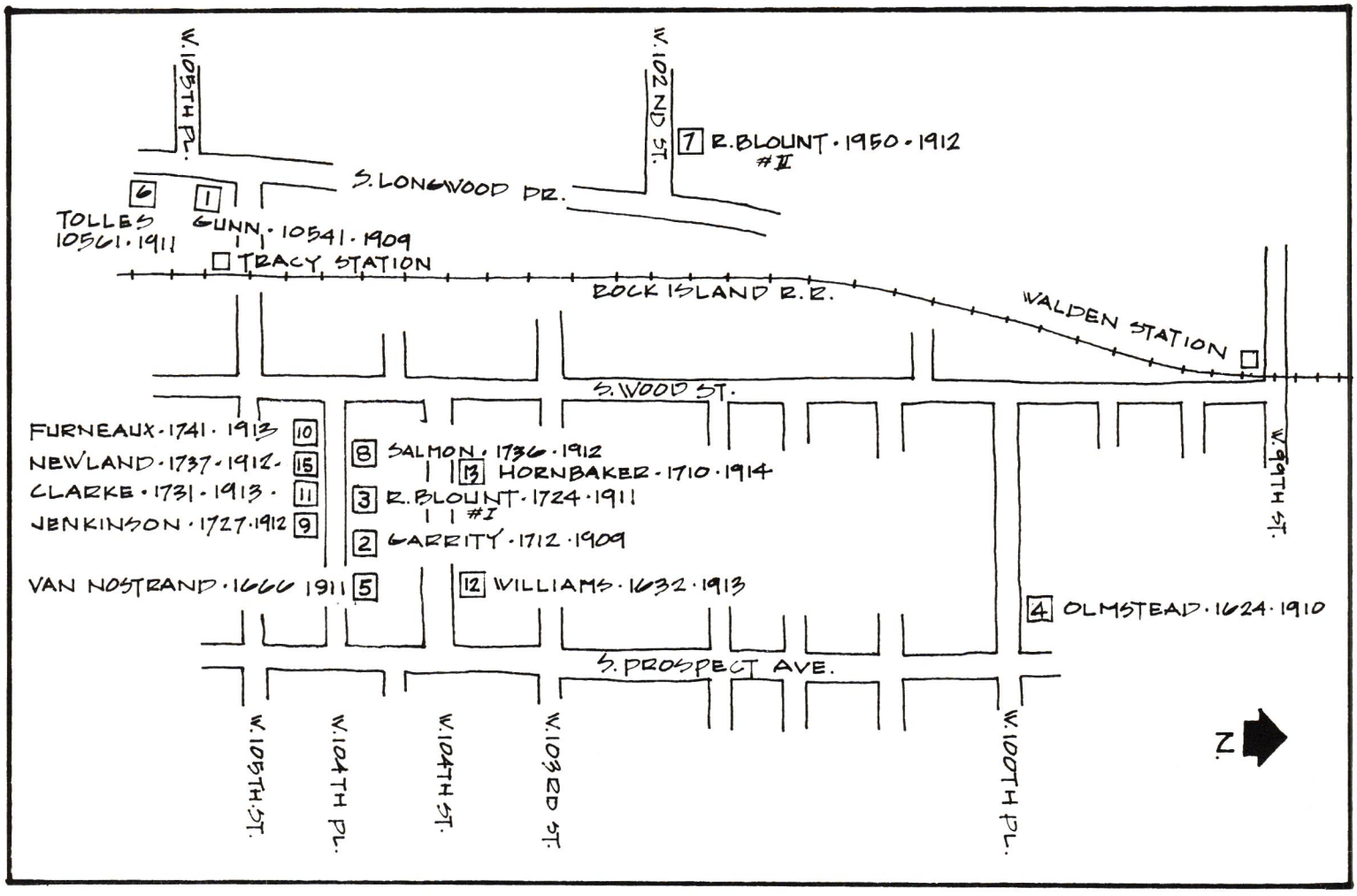
The Prairie School Review

Volume X, Number 1 First Quarter, 1973



ABOVE: This is a map of the Beverly area in southwest Chicago. The houses are keyed on the map to the bracketed numbers in the text, captions, and the catalog which follows the main article.

The map above and the plans in this issue were drawn by Jon Pohl unless otherwise indicated, and the photographs are by Thomas Yanul, Paul Sprague and Susan Sorrell unless otherwise indicated.

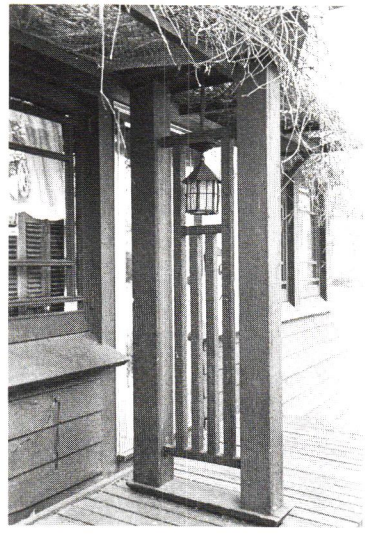
COVER: The house at 1724 West 104th Place in Beverly built by R. L. Blount for himself is as near to a typical Griffin house as one can find. All of the houses by Griffin in this area of Chicago during this period are distinctive and this one is especially well done.

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL REVIEW is published four times a year by The Prairie School Press, 12509 South 89th Avenue, Palos Park, Illinois 60464. W.R. Hasbrouck, FAIA, Editor and Publisher, Marilyn Whittlesey Hasbrouck, Assistant Editor. Manuscripts concerning the Prairie School of Architecture and related arts are solicited. Reasonable care will be used in handling manuscripts and such material will be returned if return postage is enclosed. Single copy price $2.50, subscription $10.00 per year in U.S. and Canada, $12.00 elsewhere. Issues are mailed flat in envelopes. Address all change of address notices, subscription or back issue inquiries to the Editor at the above address.

The Prairie School Review

Volume X, Number 1 First Quarter, 1973

CONTENTS



Blount I [3] house.

From the EDITORS

At various times we have commented on this page about the teaching of architectural history. We often use the results of classwork as major articles as we have done in this issue. A recent letter from a subscriber who is also an architect/historian stated ". . . For some time I have been worried about the split between art historians and architecturally (trained) historians." He gave various reasons for his concern, most of which we agreed to. Many of his thoughts have been published here in one form or another.

There are two basic groups who teach and study architectural history. The situation sometimes becomes almost a contest between the architect/interpreter and the artist/interpreter. Art oriented historians tend to look at architecture from a far different point of view than does the architecturally trained, or architecturally sympathetic historian. There are those who would argue that this is of no consequence. We disagree.

Recently we followed a brief published exchange following an article by an art historian on the subject of architectural drawing. The dissident in this case was an architect with a solid background in history. The initial article revealed, almost subliminally, that the author was viewing architectural rendering as an end rather than a means. The drawing was the final product, the building an afterthought. This is not the purpose or intent of studying a building. Each structure represents the solution to a problem, and it is the problem and its solution to which the historian should address himself.

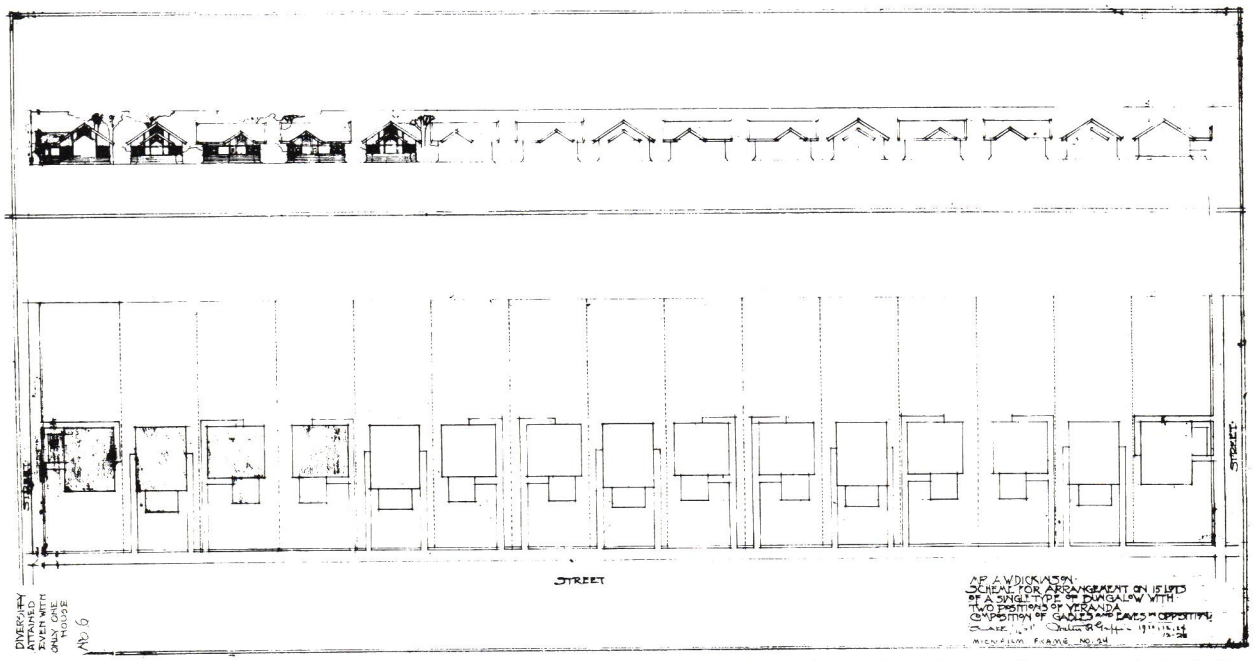
We must guard against studying buildings as if they were two dimensional as are paintings, or three dimensional in the same sense as is sculpture. Architecture is almost four dimensional. That is, we can and must move in, out and around it to appreciate its effect on our lives. Before a building becomes architecture, it must have an emotional impact, it must work, it must succeed in solving the problem its creator was presented by his client.

Many fine teachers have backgrounds entirely in art and still recognize the differences in conveying architectural history versus art history. Many architects do not understand the need for knowing, really knowing, their heritage. We are terribly concerned when we find established historical organizations taking less interest in preserving our great buildings (and knowing why) than they are in preserving pieces and discussing drafting techniques.

Today, when it becomes more and more evident that we must preserve buildings for many reasons, including but not limited to historic significance, it is essential that architects and potential architects be taught all of what we know their predecessors knew and why.

A Prologue

This project for A. W. Dickinson done by Griffin in 1910 uses several variations of the Van Nostrand [5] house and another similar house to demonstrate a planning project akin to that he was already at work on in Beverly. Plan courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago.



For years scholars and buffs have known that the Tolles House on Longwood Drive in Beverly had been resigned by Walter Burley Griffin. That other residences by Griffin existed in that part of Chicago was not even suspected until Wilbert Hasbrouck, editor of the **Prairie School Review** *and inveterate visitor to used book stores, found a copy of Hermann von Holst's* **Modern American Homes.** *In it was pictured Griffin's house for Harry Gunn which von Holst reported had been built at Tracy, Illinois. As Hasbrouck was aware that the Gunn House originally stood on Longwood Drive in Beverly not far from the Tolles House, he surmised that another Griffin residence also built at Tracy for R. L. Blount and illustrated in von Holst's book must be somewhere in the area. Hasbrouck also had a hunch that Walden, Illinois, the site of yet another Griffin house illustrated by von Holst would, like Tracy, turn out to be a place that had lost its identity after being absorbed by Chicago.*

Not long after that Hasbrouck brought his findings to the attention of Paul Sprague. A visit by Sprague to the map room of the University of Chicago quickly established that Walden and Tracy had been stops on the Rock Island railroad at 99th and 103rd Streets in Beverly. With two previously unknown Griffin houses now firmly traced to Beverly, Sprague asked Thomas Yanul, who lived in that neighborhood, to have a look in the vicinity of the Tracy and Walden stations. To everyone's surprise, Yanul not only found the two houses being sought but ten others as well all built in the Griffin idiom. Yanul, caught up in the excitement, soon established from those building permits which gave the architect that a large percentage of the newly found houses were indeed the work of Griffin. Meanwhile, one day while driving home from work, Hasbrouck decided to stop at a real estate office he often passed in Palos Park to inquire if the realtor, Lauren T. Blount, might be related to the R. L. Blount whose house von Holst had illustrated. Not only did Hasbrouck find that Blount was related; he found that Blount was the son of R. L. Blount!

With the evidence thus piling up, Sprague decided to take his Prairie School seminar and class from the University of Chicago to Beverly in the spring of 1971 to survey the Griffin houses. Out of all these cooperative efforts has come the following article. Sprague hopes to use the appended catalogue as a part of and model for an oeuvre catalogue of Prairie School architecture for which he has been collecting material during the past five years. In addition to the persons whose names appear above, the following students contributed to this project: Melissa Gloyd, Joan Kalk, Alan Minskoff, Martha Poulter and Richard Springwater.

Those involved in producing this article want to thank the following persons who graciously opened their homes for the project: Mrs. Wendell Barclay, Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Cortese, Mr. & Mrs. Francis Fahrenwald, Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Hartrich, Mr. & Mrs. John Holcomb, Mr. & Mrs. Martin Holloran, Mr. & Mrs. Macnamara, Mr. & Mrs. John Mulliner, Mr. & Mrs. Gerry Rolph, Mr. & Mrs. Emil Saviano Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Vlasak, Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Ward, Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Werner, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Whitsell, and Mr. Thomas Yanul.

Special thanks go to Lauren T. Blount for submitting to several lengthy interviews and for providing so much information about his father and the houses at Beverly.

Griffin Rediscovered in Beverly

by Paul E. Sprague

The Clarke, Newland and Furneaux houses line the south side of West 104th Place in Beverly. These houses, built in 1913, 1912, and 1911 respectively, stand as testimony to the foresight of R. L. Blount and Walter Burley Griffin over 60 years ago.

Beverly Hills straddles an old lake shore in the southwestern corner of Chicago. The escarpment looks east across a plain toward Lake Michigan some seven miles distant. At the foot of the Beverly ridge, Longwood Drive follows a sinuous course as directed by nature. Beyond it, slightly farther east, runs the Rock Island railroad.

By the 1880's, and well before the area was annexed to Chicago, small communities began to spring up along the passenger stations established by the railroad: Beverly is now 91st Street; Longwood, now 95th; Walden, 99th; Tracy, 103rd; Belmont, 107th; and Morgan Park, 111th. Eventually as these settlements expanded and finally coalesced into urban neighborhoods, the original names disappeared and were replaced by Beverly north of 107th Street, and Morgan Park south of it.

Frank Lloyd Wright was called to Beverly in 1900 to design a house for Mrs. Jessie M. Adams at 9326 S. Pleasant Ave. Although its interior has a distinctly Wrightian flavor, its exterior hardly stands out among its neighbors and could not have made much of an impression on local residents. In fact, if judged from the outside, it is unlikely that many persons would suppose Wright was the architect.[1]

Not until 1908, when Wright designed for Robert W. Evans a large and imposing Prairie house (if this is not a contradiction in terms) half way up the Beverly ridge at 9914 S. Longwood Dr., did early Modern architecture at last emphatically arrive in Beverly. No one driving on the main north-south thoroughfare could have failed to notice the unusual dwelling rising on the hillside.

We may assume that one such person was Harry Gunn, who in August, 1909 bought two lots on the east side of Longwood near 105th Street. Presum-

1 Hitchcock calls this the William Adams house, *In the Nature of Materials*, 1942, p. 110. The property records, however, are quite clear that it was erected by a Mrs. Jessie M. Adams, see document no. 3067782, dated Nov. 6, 1900, Recorders Office, Cook County. *Construction News*, XI (Nov. 24, 1900), 411, also confirms the name as do the working drawings at Talesin West dated November, 1900.

ably Gunn was taken with the new style because in the autumn of 1909 he engaged Wright's former chief draftsman, Walter Burley Griffin, to design a residence for his property. It may be that Gunn had first gone to Wright with the commission, but if he did he would have found the conditions in Wright's office somewhat less than perfect. It is easy to suppose that William Drummond, or perhaps even Wright himself before his well-publicized October departure for Europe with Mrs. Cheney, had recommended Griffin as a person who could design for Gunn a humble dwelling in the new style.[2]

The residence that Griffin designed for Harry Gunn[1]* was not unlike the center part of the Evans House in its cube-like massing, low hip roof and window arrangement. In its planning, however, there is only a tenuous connection. The geneology of the Gunn House has an impressive Wrightian lineage but its descent is not through the Evans House. As Allen Brooks has pointed out,[3] the

2 That Griffin had received commissions originally intended for Wright is confirmed by two documented cases in Indiana.

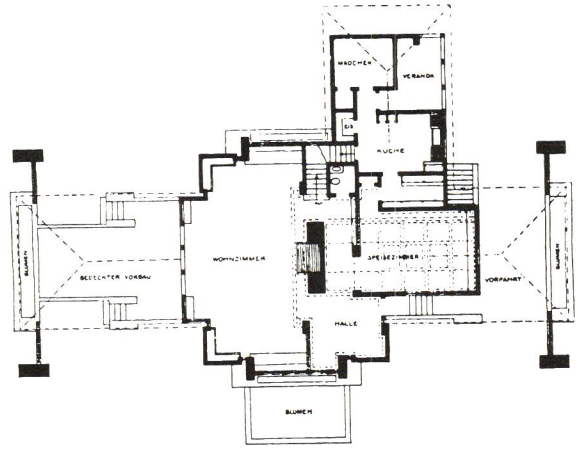
According to Mrs. Fred Purnell of Attica, Indiana, her aunt and uncle of Veedersburg near Attica wanted a house by Wright and visited him in Chicago to discuss the commission. After they explained their somewhat limited aims, Wright referred them to Griffin. When Griffin visited Veedersburg and the Purnells saw his work, they decided to have him design a house for them. Unfortunately, after the house had gone through working drawings, the Purnells decided to buy rather than build.

The daughter of John B. Franke of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, reports that in 1912 her father, impressed with Wright's work at Oak Park, commissioned the architect to design a residence for him. Franke was, however, soon disenchanted with Wright who failed to show up for several appointments and he turned to Griffin for a residence in the new style. Griffin provided a superb design that unfortunately was not built because just as Franke was ready to begin construction Griffin went to Australia. The commission then passed to Barry Byrne who completely redesigned the house.

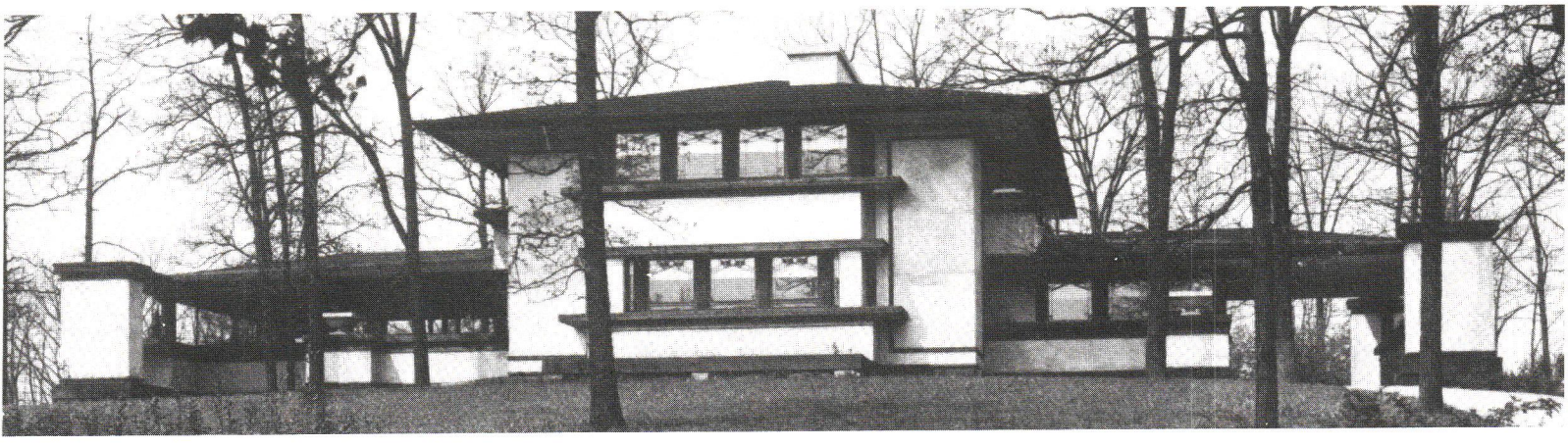
3 Brooks, *The Prairie School*, 1972, p. 249.

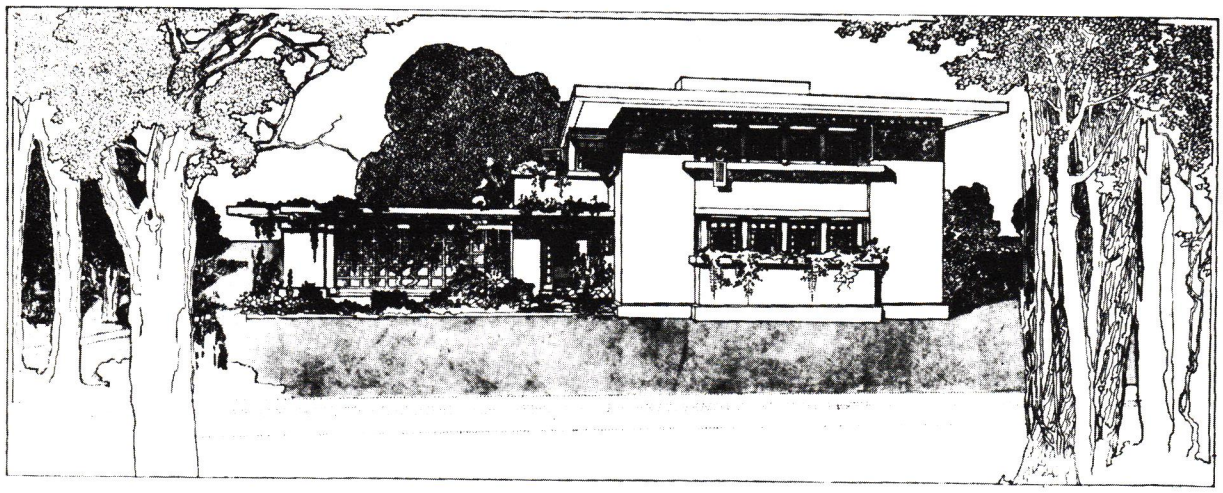
*The bracketted numbers refer both to the location on the map and its description in the catalogue.

Frank Lloyd Wright's house for Jessie M. Adams in Beverly is not unlike his later development of the "Fireproof House for $5,000" which he was probably working on at the same time. Photo by W. R. Hasbrouck.



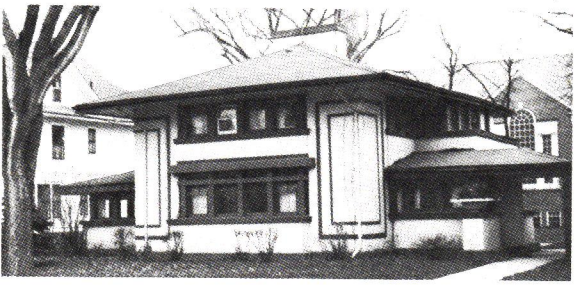
The Evans plan above shows it to be basically an expansion of Wright's "Fireproof House for $5,000" with a rear wing and a covered porch and driveway at each end. In elevation, however, it closely resembled the Willets house of several years earlier. Fuerman photo.



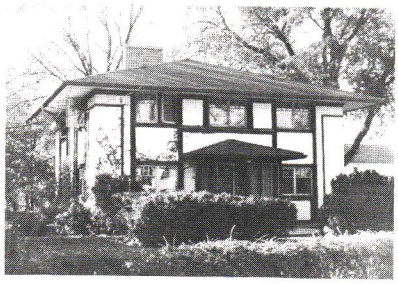


Wright's "Fireproof House for $5,000."

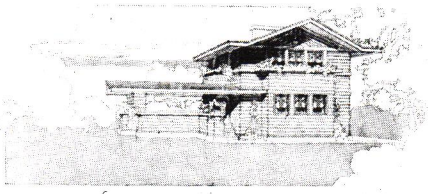
Stockman house, Mason City.

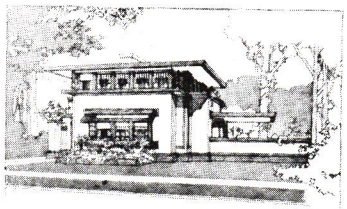


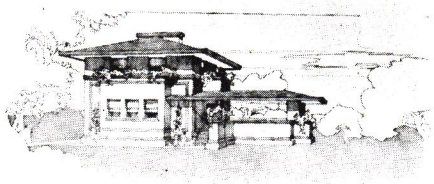
Hoyt house, Geneva.



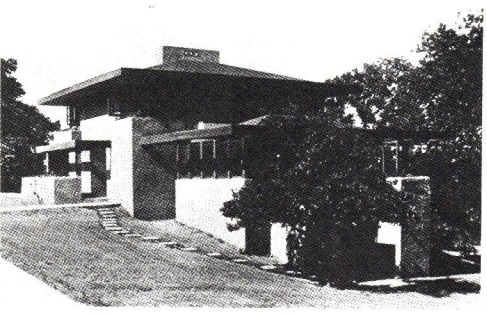
Hunt house, La Grange.





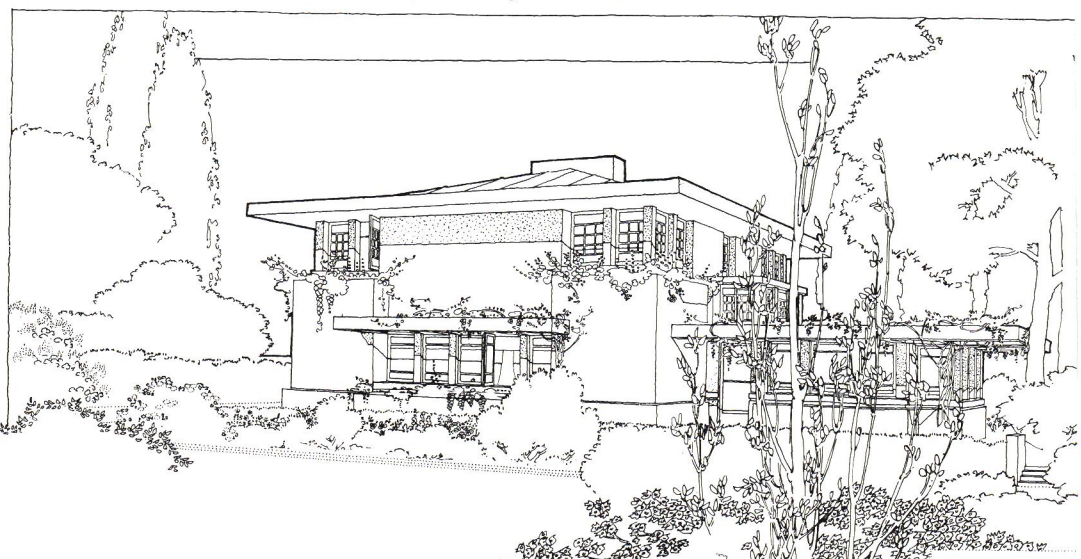


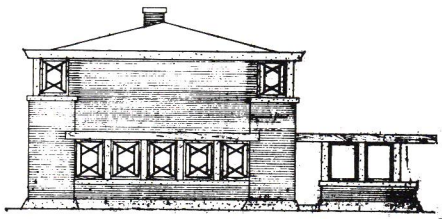
These sketches are the unbuilt houses designed for E. C. Waller. The houses above are all by Frank Lloyd Wright while those to the left and below are by Walter Burley Griffin. The progression of design is apparent.



Rule house, Mason City.

Rendering of the Harry Gunn house.





Purnell house project, Attica, Indiana.

earliest ancester was Wright's "Fireproof House for $5,000," published in the April, 1907, *Ladies' Home Journal*.[4] It was followed by the Hunt House at La Grange, the Hoyt House at Geneva, the Stockman House at Mason City and three projected houses for E. C. Waller. Griffin's later house for Author Rule at Mason City, Iowa, built 1912-13, belongs to the group[5] and is nearly identical to the Gunn House except for the porch having been made to open into the living room and the stairs being led behind the fireplace. Griffin's unexecuted design for Fred Purnell to have been built at Attica, Indiana,[6] although rectangular and intended to be brick construction, also belongs to the same tradition.

Despite Wright's emphasis on the fire resistent qualities of his concrete house for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Wright never built any of his few small square houses in that material. By contrast, Griffin's Gunn house, its wall entirely of hollow tile covered with stucco and plaster, was genuinely fireproof. Griffin had previously used hollow tile in 1908 for the Bovee two-flat at Evanston.[7] As Griffin's visual sense gradually led him in the direction of the substantial-looking sculptural expressionism that concrete and hollow tile could provide, he began to use these materials whenever possible and not merely because of their fireproof characteristics. Of the many houses Griffin would design to be built in Beverly, however, only the Gunn House was constructed of hollow tile.

Harry Tolles was also a man of independent thought apparently, for he too engaged Griffin to prepare plans for a residence [6] several lots south of Gunn's in 1910[8]. In this case the narrowness of Tolles' single lot did not permit axial development of the house parallel to Longwood Drive as Griffin had done with the Gunn residence. Griffin's solution was to position the dwelling with its axis ninety degrees to the street, then a commonplace practice in Chicago for adjusting detached residences to the constraints of the fifty-foot lot. The entrance, in the

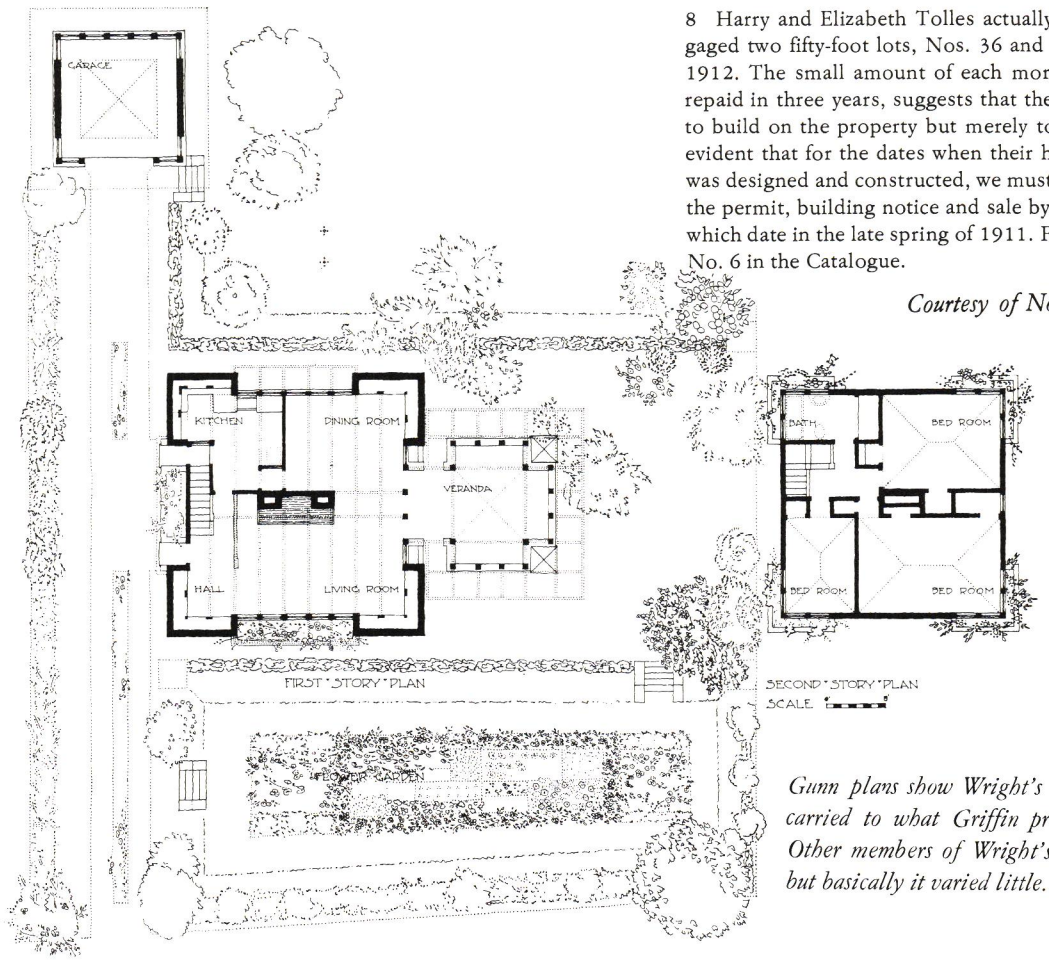
4 *Ladies' Home Journal*, (April, 1907)

5 Also noted by Brooks, p. 249.

6 The working drawings are dated May and June, 1911. The plans and a perspective were published in the *Brickbuilder*, XX (Oct. 1911), 209.

7 As noted in *Construction News*, XXV (Jan. 25, 1908), 17, and on the building permit. To be sure, Griffin's hollow tile residences were fireproof only as regarded their exterior walls while Wright's proposal of 1907 in the *Ladies' Home Journal* called for a thoroughly fireproof house with reinforced concrete walls, floors and roof.

8 Harry and Elizabeth Tolles actually purchased and mortgaged two fifty-foot lots, Nos. 36 and 37, on September 12, 1912. The small amount of each mortgage, $750.00, to be repaid in three years, suggests that the money was used, not to build on the property but merely to acquire it. Thus it is evident that for the dates when their house, built on Lot 37, was designed and constructed, we must accept the evidence of the permit, building notice and sale by them of Lot 36, all of which date in the late spring of 1911. For documentation, see No. 6 in the Catalogue.



Courtesy of Northwestern University.

Gunn plans show Wright's "Fireproof House for $5,000" carried to what Griffin probably considered it's ultimate. Other members of Wright's former staff also used this plan but basically it varied little.

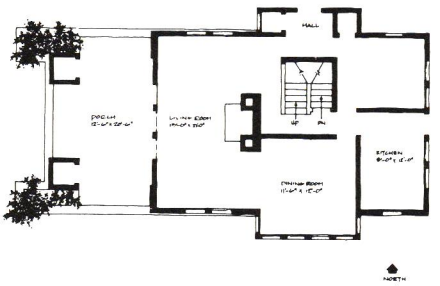
[6] *The Tolles house*

center of the north side, was not there, however, merely because of the axial orientation. The Gunn House [1], for example, also had a side entrance even though its axis was parallel to Longwood Drive. Even where Griffin designed front entrances, he most often brought the walk leading to them in along the property line. His presumed object was to avoid formalism. Indeed, except for his elevations, Griffin like Wright avoided regularity in planning, massing, spatial development and the effects of texture and color.

In the same way that Griffin transferred his Gunn house from the Beverly prairie to the Rock Glen Ravine at Mason City, he also revived the Tolles house when, in 1912, he needed a second residence for a modest planning scheme in Evanston. The two houses commissioned by developer Hurd Comstock were to share a garden between them thus permitting more flexible siting and planning than the rigidities of their sixty-five foot lot would have allowed. The one house, entered from Church street, was ideally designed to utilize the common garden. But the other, which reproduces the Tolles house almost line for line on a reversed plan, seems barely related to the garden. Only in the larger number of windows in its dining room which looks out over the garden does there seem to be any special recognition in the Evanston house of Griffin's novel site planning.

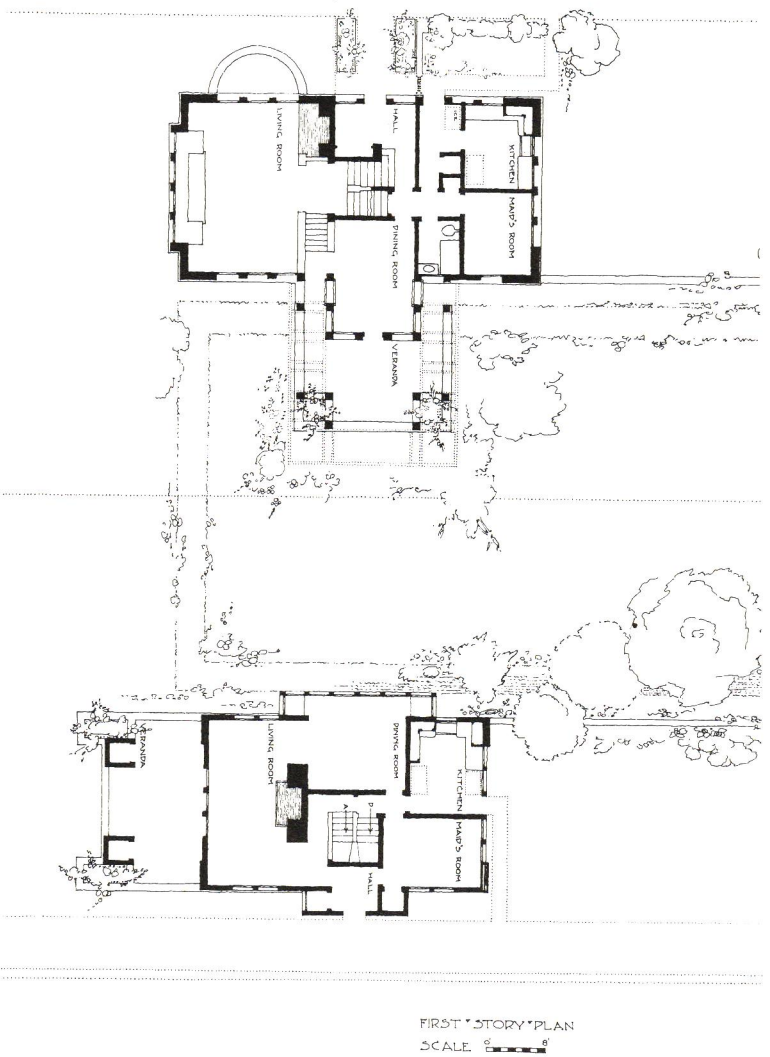
What ever Griffin's reasons for rebuilding the Tolles House instead of designing a new house on a more suitable plan, it appears that neither he nor the developers who retained him looked upon such reuse of plans as being either immoral or unethical. Certainly Griffin didn't for he exhibited both the Tolles and Comstock Houses practically side by side at the 1912 exhibition of the Chicago Architectural Club.[9]

9 Nos. 78 and 85.



The Tolles house plan is shown above. Below is the plan of both first and second Comstock houses built in Evanston from plans by Griffin. The obvious similarity of the second Comstock house at the bottom of the page is very apparent.

Courtesy of Northwestern University.



Marion Mahony did this perspective of the two Comstock houses. Compare the rendering on the right with the photo of the Tolles house.

Courtesy of Northwestern University.

If Harry Gunn had been inspired by Wright's Evans House on Longwood Drive to build his own residence in the new style, it is equally likely that Russell L. Blount (1872-1933)[10] found his way to early modern architecture via the same route. And that Blount ended up, like Gunn, with Griffin instead of Wright might also be attributed to the probable chaos in Wright's office during the autumn of 1909.

Blount's engagement in 1909 to Helen Wells, whose home was in Beverly, brought him to that community in search of a residence for himself and his bride-to-be. His decision to build rather than buy a house was colored by several factors other than a visual appreciation of the new style. His prospective father-in-law, Thomas J. Wells, owned the western half of a large block between 104th Street and 104th Place in Beverly and wanted the land, formerly part of a farm, to be developed with housing. Thus a lot was available. Furthermore, Blount, who worked for the Continental Bank in the real estate end of the business, harbored an unfulfilled ambition to build and sell homes. Thus when Blount went to Griffin for a design, he did so both as client and contractor.

As it turned out, the house that Griffin designed for Blount so appealed to William C. Garrity, the owner of a wholesale plumbing business and a person who may have supplied Blount with materials, that he made Blount a substantial offer for the property. As the price was right, Blount decided to sell and Garrity acquired the wedding house [2].[11]

No doubt bouyed by the unplanned ease with which his first house was sold, and still in need of a residence for himself and his bride, Blount decided to follow his latent interest by becoming a part-time developer. From Griffin he secured two more plans. The first he built for himself at 1724 W. 104th Place [3] and the second, which he later sold to Harry G. Van Nostrand, he built for sale or rent at

10 In addition to his work for Gunn, Tolles, and Blount, Griffin also designed a house to be built in Beverly on Belmont (now Seeley) near 107th Street for a Leslie W. Shirley. The house, which was never erected, was to be constructed of brick and sited on a large lot. The description in *Construction News* XXXII (Nov. 4, 1911), 19, may not, however, be entirely accurate. Its description of the house as being 31 x 36 feet, and having a wing of the same size, conjures up a somewhat contorted design for which it is impossible to recall a parallel in Griffin's American work.

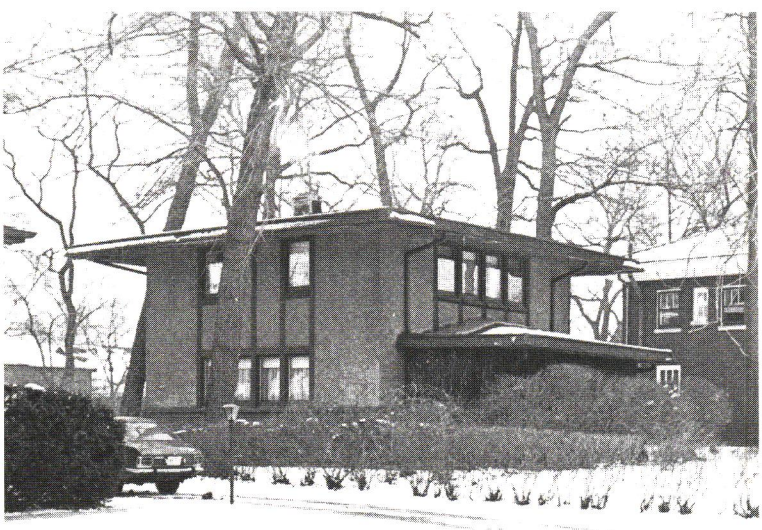
11 The story of Garrity buying the wedding house comes from Blount's son Lauren who heard it first hand from both his mother and father. It is, therefore, very likely a correct account of Russell Blount's first experience as contractor and developer. Yet the sequence of events as described by Lauren Blount — which is supported by certain facts: his parents were married Jan. 10, 1910; the house was reported in the trade press in the same month; and a mortgage and permit acquired in Apr. 1910 — is not confirmed by city directories or property records. The former show Garrity first living in the house between July, 1911, and May, 1912, while the latter indicate that he did not purchase the property until Mar. 1912. As these various dates in 1910 and 1912 are roughly two years apart, the only plausible explanation is that for some unknown reason construction on the Garrity House continued for an inordinate period of time. Lauren Blount recalls hearing of one house, perhaps the Garrity, whose construction was much held up by frozen plumbing and other troubles. That such a long delay may have occurred in the construction of the Garrity House does not necessarily affect the sequence of events as described in the text. If Garrity had made his offer in 1910 well before the presumed delays in construction began, and followed it up with earnest money, one can easily understand how Blount would have been encouraged to start building additional houses from new plans by Griffin. For documentation see No. 2 in the Catalogue.

[2] *The Garrity house*

1666 W. 104th Place [5]. Both were under construction during the winter and spring of 1911. At the same time Blount also built for Frank N. Olmsted, an electrical contractor whom Blount may have employed on the Garrity House [2], a less expensive version of his own house at 1624 W. 100th Place [4]. In building Olmsted's house, Blount reversed the plan of his own residence, eliminated the corner windows of its ground floor, and left out its fireplace and interior stained-wood trim.[12]

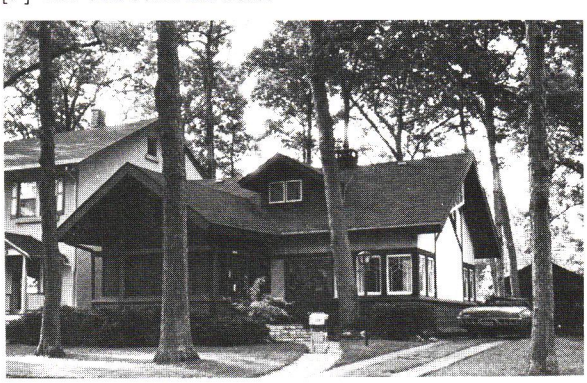
Blount was not destined to reside for long in his new home. In 1912, with a prospective client in

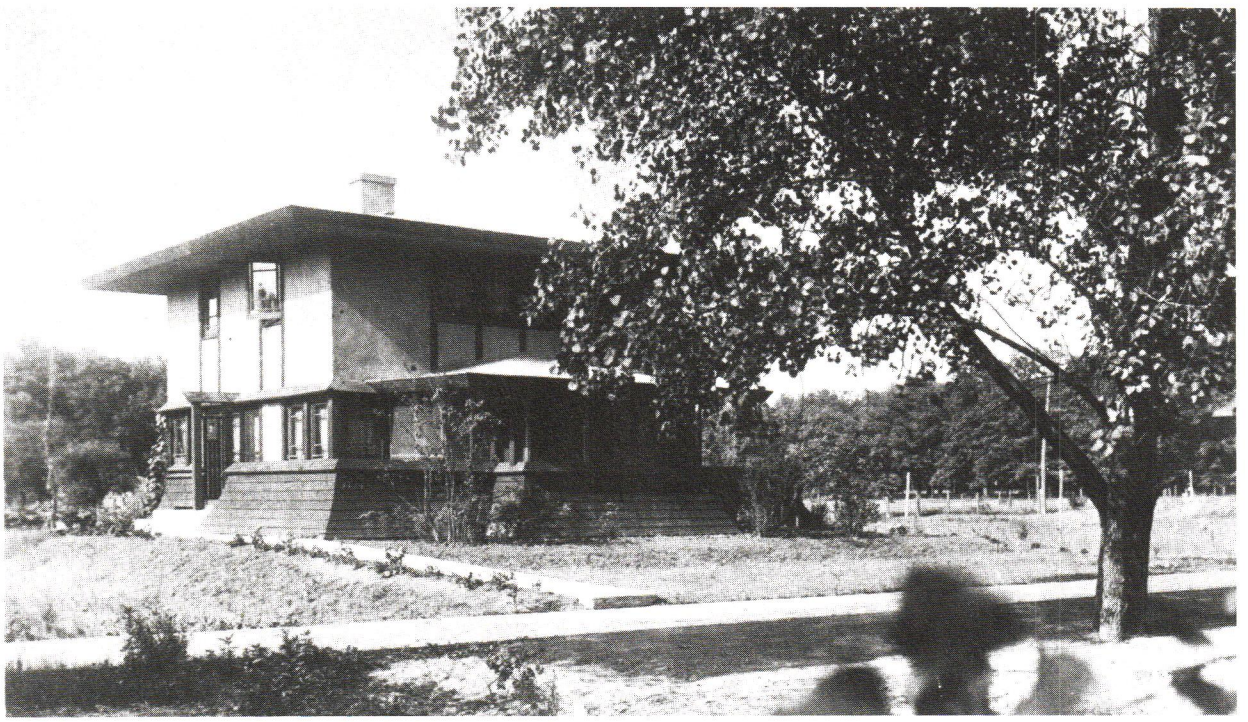
12 All of these houses, the Olmsted (3), Van Nostrand (4), and Blount I (5), were probably under construction at the same time. If it took about six months on the average to build one of these houses, as seems indicated by the available documentation, then construction must have commenced on the Olmsted and Blount I Houses in about November, 1910, because both men were living in their new houses in May or June, 1911, when the city directory for that year was compiled. Although Van Nostrand doesn't appear at his new address until 1912, the documents confirm without any doubt that his house was being built at the same time as the other two. In the case of Blount's own house, the March dates in 1911 when he acquired his property and made his mortgage would seem to argue against a November, 1910, date for the beginning of construction. But when it is recalled that his father-in-law owned the property and that Blount acted as his own contractor, it is evident that Blount could have begun the construction of his own house without needing either a mortgage or title to the land. In any case, whether the Olmsted was begun first, or both houses were started at the same time, there can be little doubt that the Olmsted House was derived from the Blount 1 and not the reverse. For documentation see Nos. 3 and 5 in the Catalogue.



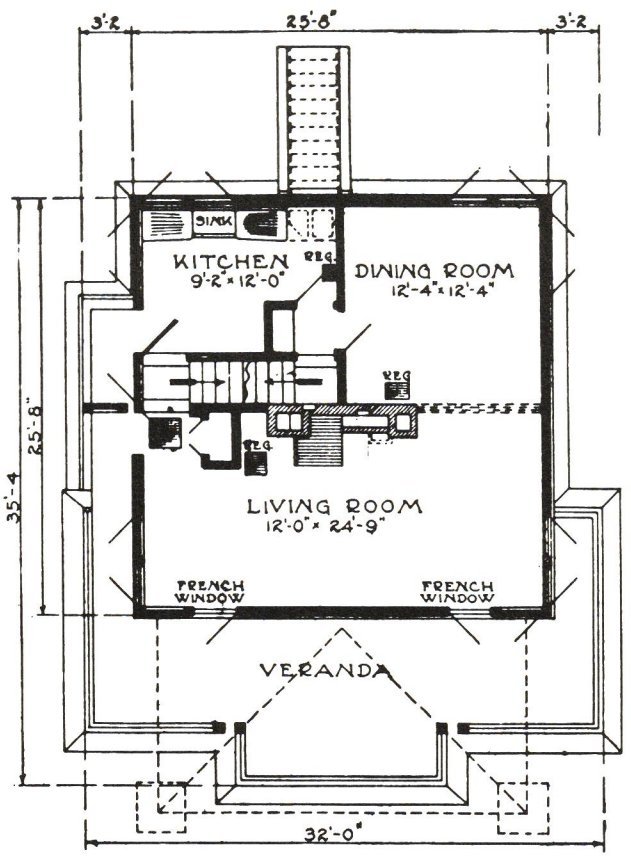
[4] *The Olmstead house*

[5] *The Van Nostrand house*

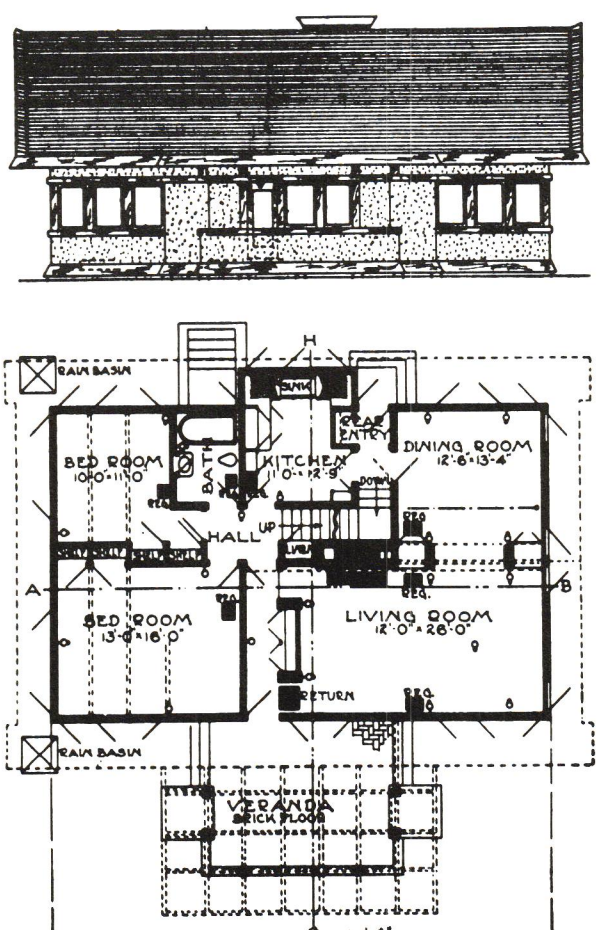




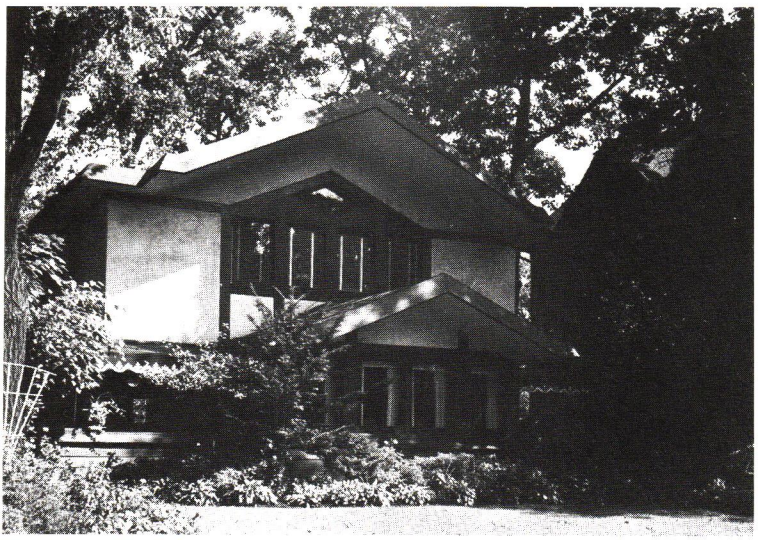
[3] *The Blount I house*



Above is the ground plan for the Blount I [3] *house. The same plan without a fireplace or corner windows and reversed was used by Griffin in designing the house for Frank N. Olmstead.* **Modern American Homes.**



This is the plan and elevation of the W. C. Garrity [2] *house. Griffin also used this plan, in reverse, in constructing a house in Winnetka, Illinois.* **Modern American Homes.**



[7] *The Blount II house*

[8] *The Salmon house*

[9] *The Jenkinson house*

hand, he went to Griffin for another design which he soon had underway at the crest of the Beverly ridge on 102nd Street [7]. The deal fell through while the house was in construction and Blount, with mortgages on two houses, decided for reasons of his own to move into the one on 102nd Street and rent the other to his sister-in-law, Florence Wells.

The year 1913 must have been a good one for Blount as he built two other residences from Griffin designs during the spring of that year. One of them, constructed at 1736 W. 104th Place and eventually sold to Walter D. Salmon [8], was the last house by Griffin that Blount built on Wells' property. The other, built on the south side of 104th Place directly across the street from the Salmon House, was sold to Arthur Jenkinson [9].

During the period that Blount was working with Griffin, the architect was occupied with numerous other matters. In June of 1911 he married Marion Mahony, Frank Lloyd Wright's former design assistant. For the next several months he planned several houses for other clients and was also deeply involved in the international competition for the design of Canberra, Australia. Griffin was announced the winner in May, 1912, and in July, 1913 he went to Australia as a guest of the Australian government. In November, 1913 he returned to the United States for three months in order to arrange his personal and business affairs before returning to Australia — for good as it turned out — in February, 1914. At that time he turned over his practice to Barry Byrne whom he had known in Wright's office.

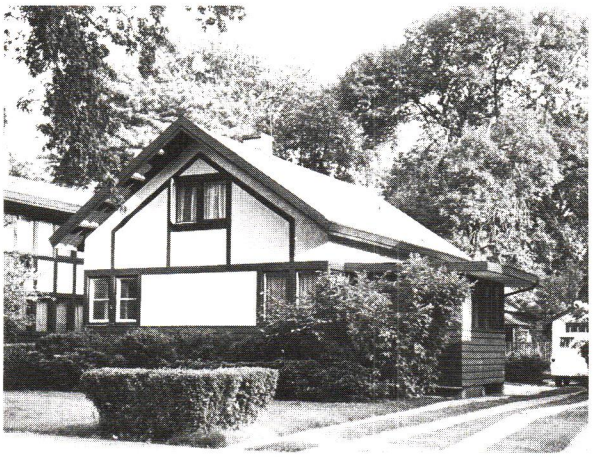
Even though for all practical purposes Griffin had thus given up his American practice by the summer of 1913, Blount, nevertheless, constructed four more Griffin-like residences during the year from about June 1913 to September 1914. Two of them, were eventually sold to Ida Williams [12] and William Hornbaker [13], and the others, became the residences of William N. Clarke [11] and Harry C. Furneaux [10]. As all four houses were derived in their essentials from the earlier Griffin houses built by Blount, it is probable that Blount or someone retained by him modified Griffin's original design to produce the plans from which Blount built these houses.

There is also some evidence to suggest that Blount tampered with a number of Griffin's other designs. Of the first seven houses that Blount constructed, the second, built for Frank Olmstead [4], and the seventh, bought by Arthur Jenkinson [9] differ from the others in various ways.

The ground floor fenestration of the Olmsted House with windows grouped in the center of each

[12] *The Williams house*

[13] *The Hornbaker house*



[11] *The Clarke house*

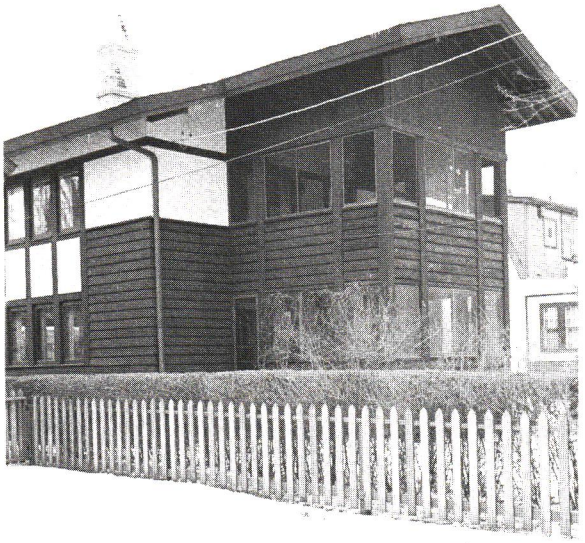
wall departs markedly from what was surely Griffin's original intention of having them at the corners. Griffin's first Blount House [3] built on a reversed but otherwise identical plan, has the corner windows. So do the plans for the first Blount House which Griffin later furnished von Holst for publication in 1912 in his *Modern American Homes*. The interior of the Olmsted House also differs from the model in not having Griffin's usual detailing — exposed beams and rectilinear moldings in stained wood — or even Griffin's ubiquitous fireplace. That changes of this magnitude were permitted suggests that Griffin did not supervise the construction. A mention of the commission in *Construction News*[13] with the remark "plans only" seems also to imply that the architect was furnishing the working drawings without actually supervising the construction. Presumably Griffin acquiesed to a "plans only" design in the expectation, soon to be fulfilled, of obtaining other, more desirable commissions from Blount.

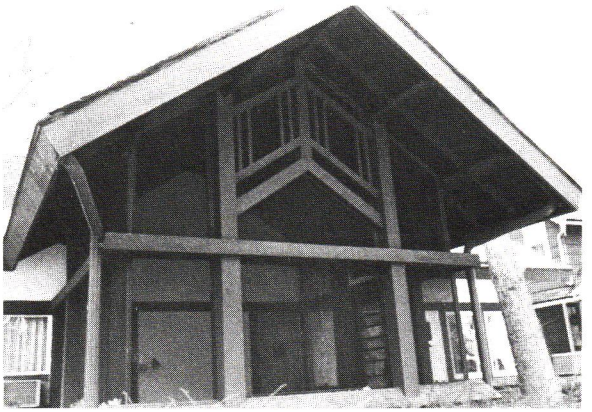
The only other mention in *Construction News*[14] of a "plans only" residence for Blount refers to the Jenkinson House [9] designed about November, 1912. It differs from Griffin's other documented work of the period in a number of ways. The stained-wood clapboard base is carried at the corners to the level of the second story window sills instead of being kept low and serving merely to provide a visual transition between ground and wall. Also there is an aesthetic defect in the way the open soffits of the roof overhangs are handled. In the earlier Van Nostrand House [5] where the soffits are also uncovered, the exposed structural members emerge from rafters and beams that, in being carried

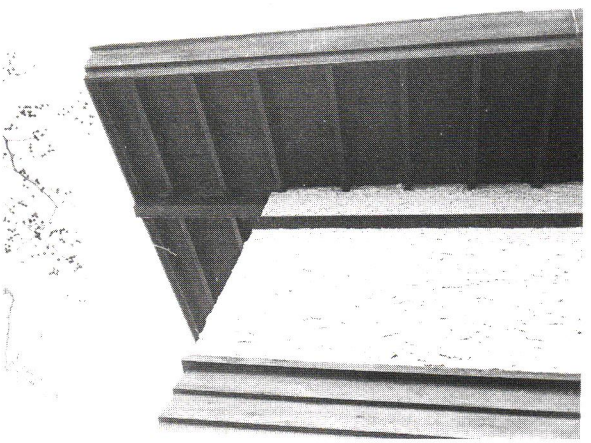
[10] *The Furneaux house*

13 XXXI, 19.

14 XXXIV, 20.







The Arthur Jenkinson house [9], above and to the right, is similar in many ways to the Griffin designs in the Beverly area, but is clearly inferior in detailing as demonstrated by the roof construction of the much finer Van Nostrand house [5] at the upper right.

along the junction between roof and wall, soften the transition between wall and beam. At the Jenkinson House this transitional element is missing and the rafters emerge abruptly from the stucco. They are also small in size compared with those of the Van Nostrand House and as a result the Jenkinson House windows do not have a good proportional relationship to other details.

The kind of stairs that in the Jenkinson House rise to a landing and reverse direction are not found in any of the other Beverly houses built to this general plan. The resulting spatial openness of the second floor is quite pleasing even though it also wastes space and is highly atypical of Griffin's work. Another consequence of this unusual staircase is felt in the kitchen which, because of the relatively large amount of space consumed by the stairs, extends out beyond the rear wall of the house in a very non-Griffin way.

It is highly possible that, in this case, the "plans only" design came about because Griffin either was too busy at that time or else was already trying to reduce his practice in preparation for his journey to Australia. That something like this lay behind the deviations in the Jenkinson House from the Griffin norm is suggested by an entry on the building permit of Blount's next house which he later sold to Harry Newland [15]. The architect of that house was not Griffin at all but the firm of Spencer & Powers, whose principals — friends of Griffin at Steinway Hall where they and Griffin had their offices — worked in their own version of an early modern style. That Blount should suddenly have turned from Griffin to them seems very unlikely unless we imagine that in having to refuse the commission Griffin recommended them to Blount. Although the documents indicate that the Jenkinson House [9] was designed about a month before the Newland House, they also imply that the two houses were built at the same time.[15] It is possible, therefore, that the non-Griffin details of the Jenkinson exterior were suggested to Blount by the Spencer & Powers design which has similar open soffits and dark clapboards carried up to the sills of the second floor windows.

As these same details reappear in the four other Griffin-like houses built by Blount in 1913-14, it is equally probable that in each case it was Blount, or someone employed by him, who modified Griffin's original design. In fact, given the generally close relationship between the four post-Jenkinson Houses and the two earlier Griffin residences from which they were surely derived, it would seem that

15 See Nos. 9 and 15 in the Catalogue.

after the Jenkinson House Blount did not go again to Griffin for a plan. Thus it is likely that Blount built the four post-Jenkinson houses from earlier Griffin plans changing them only to the degree necessary to provide each with a sense of individuality and to adapt each to the special circumstances of its site. For the house sold to Harry Furneaux [10], he used Griffin's plans of the 1912 Salmon House [8]. The other three houses built for Clarke [11], Ida Williams [12] and Hornbaker [13] were derived from the plans for Griffin's Van Nostrand House [5] of 1911 at 1666 W. 104th Place.

Thus, of the ten residences that Blount built either for himself, or for sale or rent, only five can be considered as entirely representative of Griffin's art. These five, the Garrity [2], Van Nostrand [5], Salmon [8] and the first [3] and second [7] Blount Houses, are not only of high aesthetic quality but are also consistent in plan and elevation with other documented work by Griffin during these same years. That Griffin considered them more important than the others is suggested by the following statistics: he permitted Hermann von Holst to publish two of them in his *Modern American Homes,*[16] he exhibited several of them at architectural club exhibitions,[17] and he supplied *Construction News*[18] with notices about two of them. The Jenkinson House [9], like the other five is a handsome design that might well be classed with the others were it not for deviations noted in form and detail from the Griffin norm. The four houses purchased by Furneaux [10], Clarke [11], Williams [12] and Hornbaker [13] are watered-down versions of the Salmon [8] and Van Nostrand [5] designs having little intrinsic merit. Needless to say, none of them were ever published or exhibited by Griffin[19] and none ever appeared in *Construction News.*

The designs that Griffin supplied Blount, although apparently made during a three-year period, are stylistically very much the same and seem to reflect only one aspect of Griffin's visual manner of the years 1908-10. As a group the Blount houses belong to a rustic and somewhat primitive phase of Griffin's artistic evolution. They seem, with their

16 Garrity, pls. 68-69 and Blount II, pl. 19.

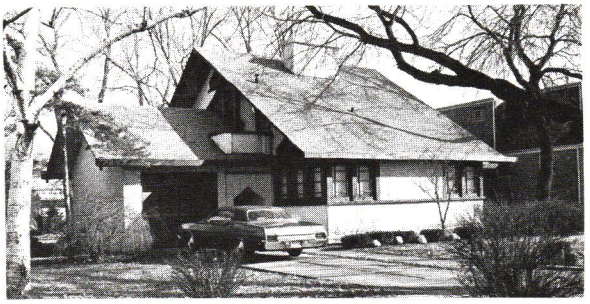
17 Garrity: *Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogue*, 1912, No. 91, and probably the Garrity, Blount II, Van Nostrand and Salmon Houses: "Cottages for R. L. Blount," *Pittsburgh Architectural Exhibition Catalogue*, March, 1913, No. 173.

18 Garrity and Van Nostrand, see Nos. 2 and 4 in the Catalogue.

19 Nor could any of them have been included in the "Cottages for R. L. Blount," No. 173, at the Pittsburgh Architectural Club Exhibition, held in March, 1913, before these houses has been built.

Above is an early photograph of the Blount house II [7]. The careful attention to landscape and relation to site is evident even at this early date.

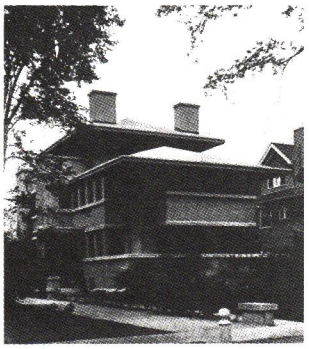
Below is the Harry Newland house [15], one of the last of those built by R. L. Blount. It has certain characteristics of Griffin's work, but the architects of record were Spencer & Powers.



Iverson house.

Jenkins-Lewis-Dickinson bungalow project.

This architectural geneology demonstrates Griffin's development from about 1906 with the Ivreson house through 1911 when he designed the Solid Rock house in Winnetka.

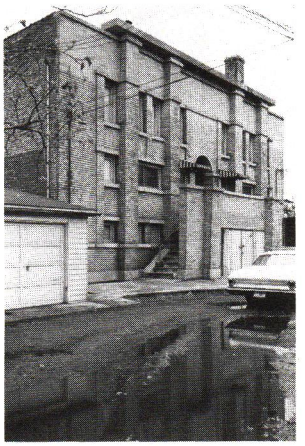


Bovee flats.

Gauler houses.

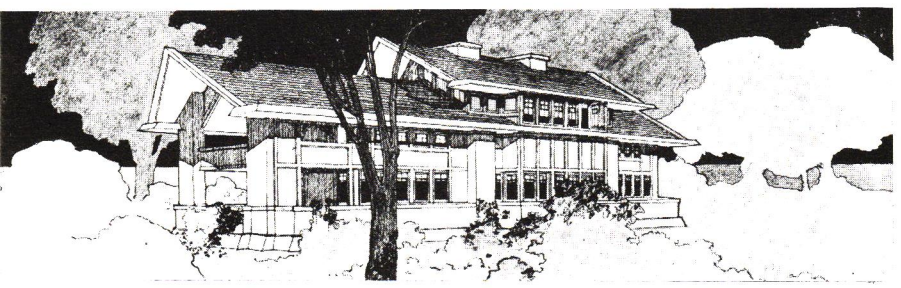
Orth houses.

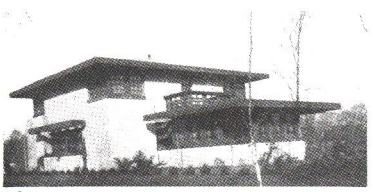
Cooley house.



Cornell store.

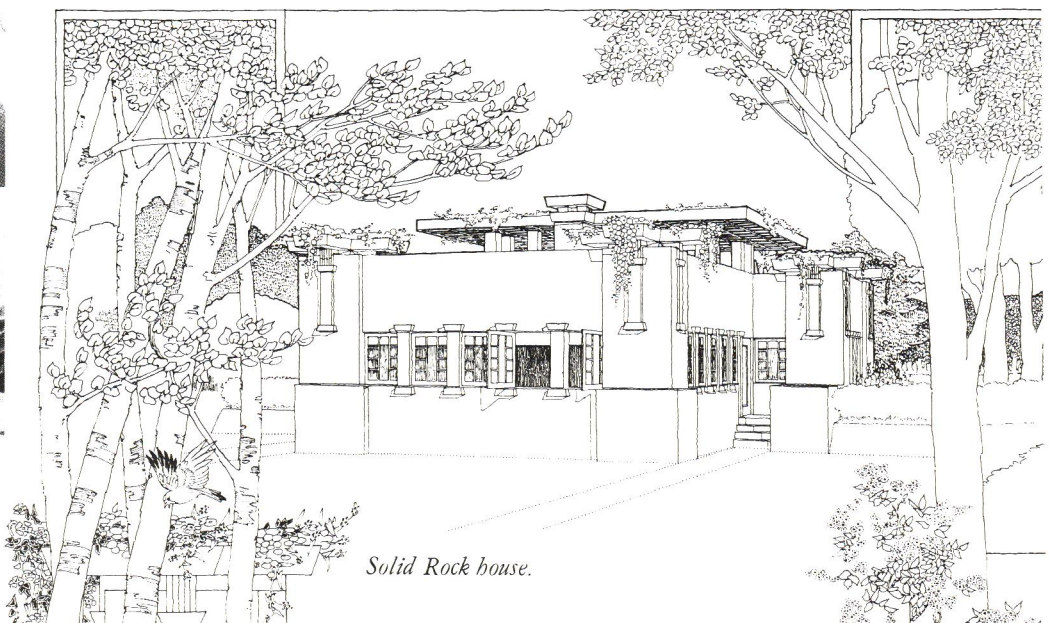
Ralph Griffin house.





Gunn house.

Tolles house.



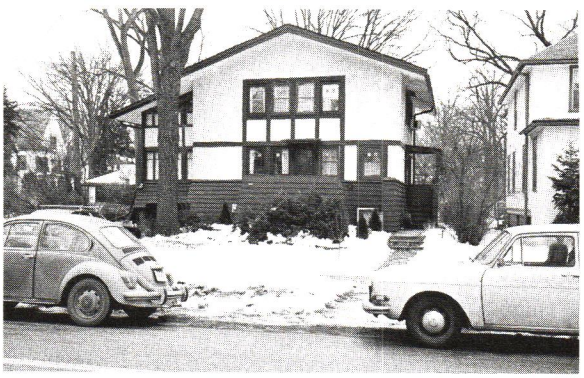
Solid Rock house.

unplaned brown wooden trim, their gray (sandy yellow in two cases) moderately rough stucco walls and silver gray shingles to be most perfectly at home in such slightly overgrown well-forested environments as surrounds the Olmsted House [4]. This is a theme in Griffin's work that was overwhelmed after 1910 by the architect's increasing infatuation with a more expressive, if not expressionistic, mode of design that he introduced early in 1911 with his Solid Rock House at Winnetka. The lineage of this house with its bold geometric masses covered with textured stucco and having concrete details of an almost pre-Columbian kind goes back to the Ivreson House of 1906[20] in Chicago. Its descent is through the Jenkins-Lewis-Dickinson Bungalow, Bovee Flats, Gauler and Orth Houses, Cornell Store, Cooley House, Ralph Griffin House and the Gunn [1] and Tolles [6] Houses in Beverly.

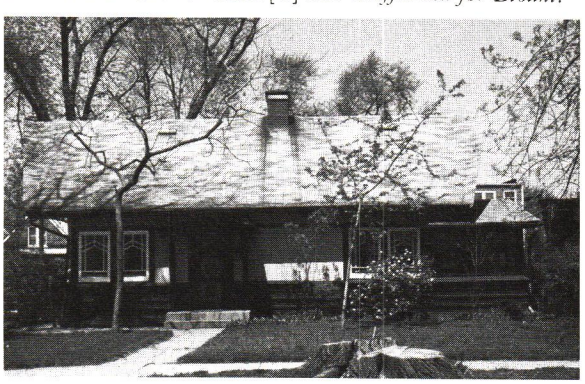
Griffin's multiple use of residential designs was not confined to the Gunn and Tolles Houses in Beverly. His first design for Blount, which became the Garrity House[2], was reproduced line for line on a reversed plan at 358 Winnetka Avenue in Winnetka, Illinois. The Walter Salmon House [8] also has its counterpart at 645 Abbotsford Road in Winnetka. Both Winnetka houses are in an area platted and developed in the southeastern part of that community by a local real estate broker, William F. Temple. Also in this subdivision are Griffin's Orth Houses and Solid Rock House. Immediately to the north was to be Griffin's unrealized New Trier Center in which Temple was also involved. Although it is clear from the property records that it was Temple who built the houses at 358 Winnetka Avenue and 645 Abbotsford Road, the documentation so far uncovered does not provide a firm date for either of them. Thus it cannot be determined whether these designs follow or precede their counterparts in Beverly. In both Winnetka houses the rough bricks of standard dimensions that are used for the fireplaces suggest that the architect was not completely in control. In those Beverly houses where Griffin's presence is unmistakable, the fireplaces all consist of relatively smooth, mottled Roman bricks. The house at 645 Abbotsford Road has the same plan as the Salmon House [8] but is turned around so that the living room is at the rear and the kitchen is in front. As such an arrangement does not occur in any other Griffin house of this period and tends to confuse visitors by the unresolved and conflicting attraction of the two entrances, it seems evident that someone other than the architect revised the plans before construction. While these observations cannot establish the precedence of the Beverly houses over those in Winnetka, the more perfect correspondence of the Beverly houses to Griffin's usual emphasis in design suggests, at least, that they and not the Winnetka houses reflect most closely the architect's intentions.

20 The building permit (No. 2649) is dated Nov. 7, 1906.

This house in Winnetka is exactly like the Garrity house in Beverly except it is reversed line for line.



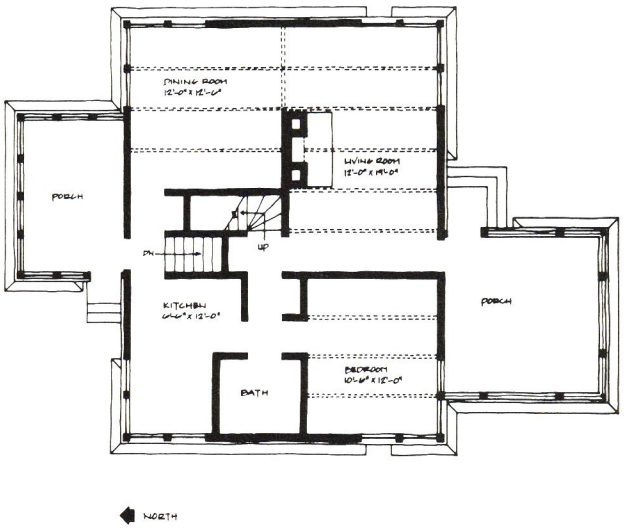
This house on Abbotsford Road in Winnetka is very similar to the Walter Salmon house [8] that Griffin did for Blount.



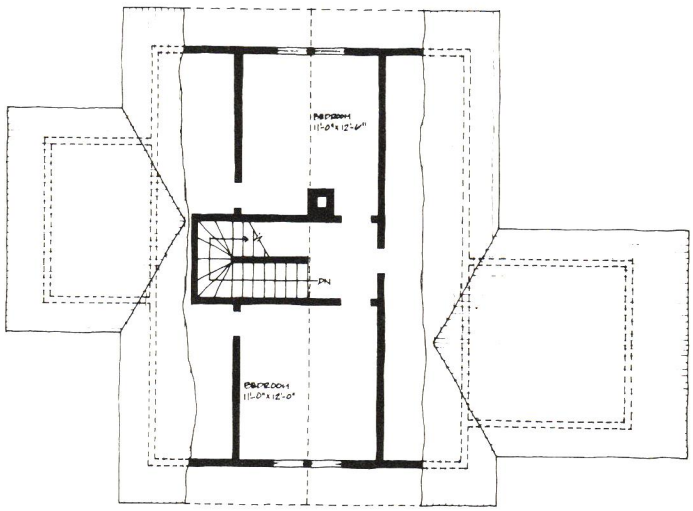
Griffin used this house built on West Pensacola as a prototype for a land planning proposal in 1910.

Apparently Griffin selected the Van Nostrand [5] and another residential design that he had built at 4840 W. Pensacola in the summer of 1910 for a Dr. Karl Stecher to illustrate for a client, A. W. Dickinson, a "Scheme for [the] arrangement on 15 lots of a single type of Bungalow with two positions of Veranda."[21] As the drawings for the Stecher bun-

21 The Dickinson scheme and the Stecher plans are at Northwestern University.



First floor of the Van Nostrand house [5].

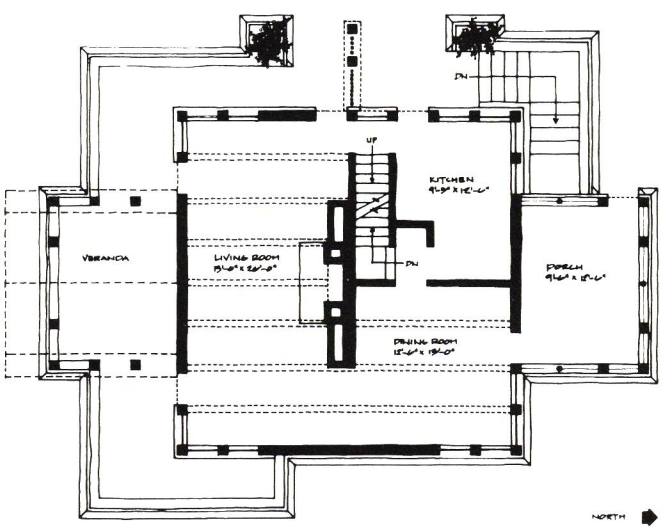


Second floor of the Van Nostrand house.

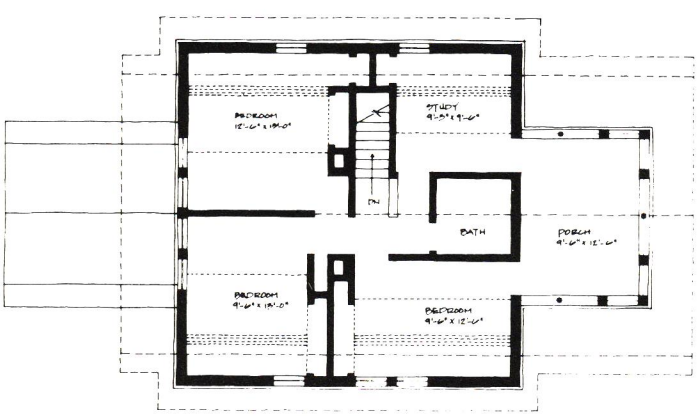
galow were made in April, 1910, it is evident that Griffin chose for the Dickson scheme two houses that had already been worked out in detail. But if this is what Griffin did then the Van Nostrand House must have been designed several months earlier than the January, 1911 date suggested by documents as the Dickinson scheme is dated December, 1910. Dickinson was possibly the same person whose name figures in the Jenkins, Lewis, Dickinson House of 1906. He may also have been related to the Harriet E. Dickinson whose name appears in the property records of the Orth Houses[22] located in Winnetka across Abbotsford Road from the Griffin house at 645.

All of Blount's Griffin-designed houses have ground floors with open plans based on Wright's fireproof house of 1907. In each, the living and dining rooms are united spatially around a central fireplace and only the kitchen is enclosed. Even when the plan is rectangular as in the Garrity House [2], where the ground floor also includes two bedrooms and bath, the living and dining rooms open into each other in the same way. All of the houses shaped like a cube are thus quite similar and some are even identical in plan. However much Blount's first and second houses for himself and others may differ externally, they are virtually identical inside, the only difference being the way in which the second floor ceilings of Blount's second house are carried up tent-like into the attic. Griffin had already used this spatial device in the Bovee Flats and Gunn House for visually enlarging second floor rooms that otherwise might seem overly tight because of relatively low ceilings. Griffin's method of gaining additional height at little extra expense on the ground floor was to provide exposed joists of ample dimensions on widely spaced centers.

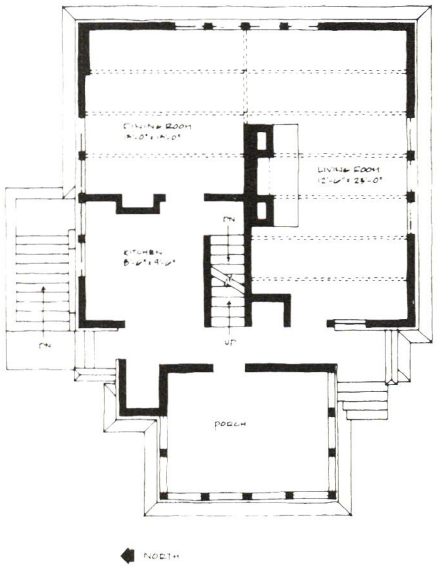
22 Document No. 4233495, Recorders Office, Cook Co.



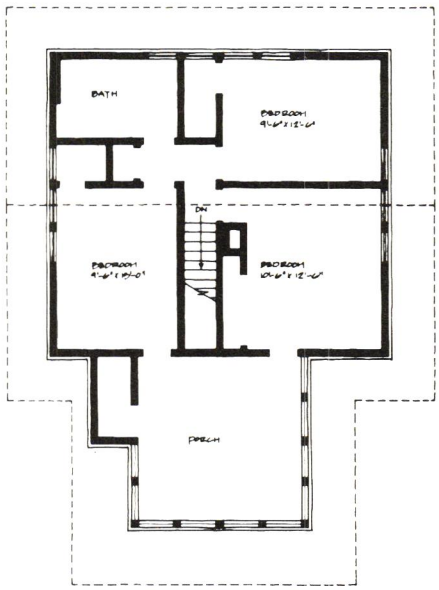
First floor of Blount house II [7].



Second Floor of Blount house II.



First floor of the Salmon house [8].

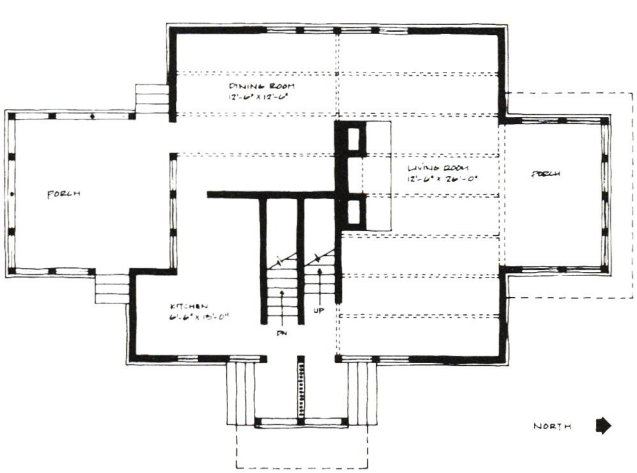


Second floor of the Salmon house.

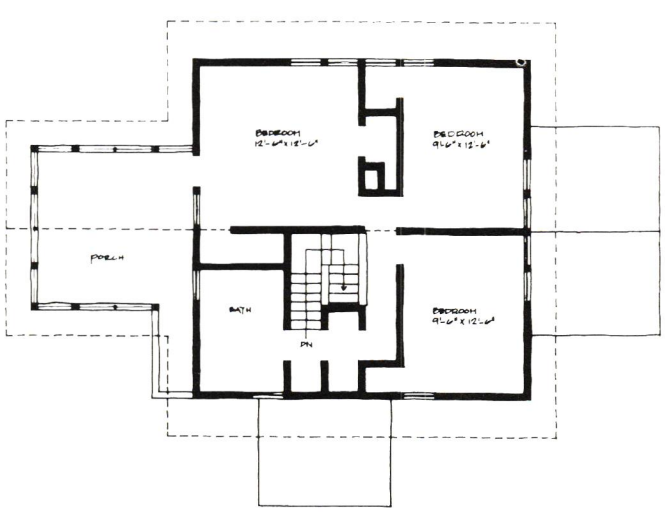
In spite of the similarity of their open plans and three-dimensional shapes, Griffin managed to endow each of these relatively inexpensive residences with a personality of its own. Of the various means Griffin employed to achieve individuality, the way in which he used rough-sawn, dark-stained boards to articulate somewhat differently the surfaces of each house was probably the most decisive. By means of the boards he established for each house a somewhat different geometric grid that served rigidly to control the placement of door and window openings. Along their front walls Griffin generally punctured the grid according to a formal system of perfect symmetry. At the sides and rear, however, he inserted windows and doors only where needed. The resulting unbalanced pattern of solid and void while plainly evident to the observer is, nonetheless, pulled together into at least a tenuous balance by the grid overlaying the entire wall.

Next in importance was the way Griffin treated the bases of his houses. Each is firmly anchored by its poured concrete basement walls. Above them, as a minimum, there is a board laid diagonally to unite the basement wall visually with the physically thinner stucco wall of the ground floor. For the first Blount House [3], and its counterpart, the Olmsted House [4], Griffin provided a curved skirt of lapped boards. They are secured to wooden ribs that at ground level project about a foot from the foundation wall. From there they curve gradually upward until they meet the walls about four feet above the ground. The other houses have dark-stained siding carried from the foundations up to the sills of the ground floor windows.

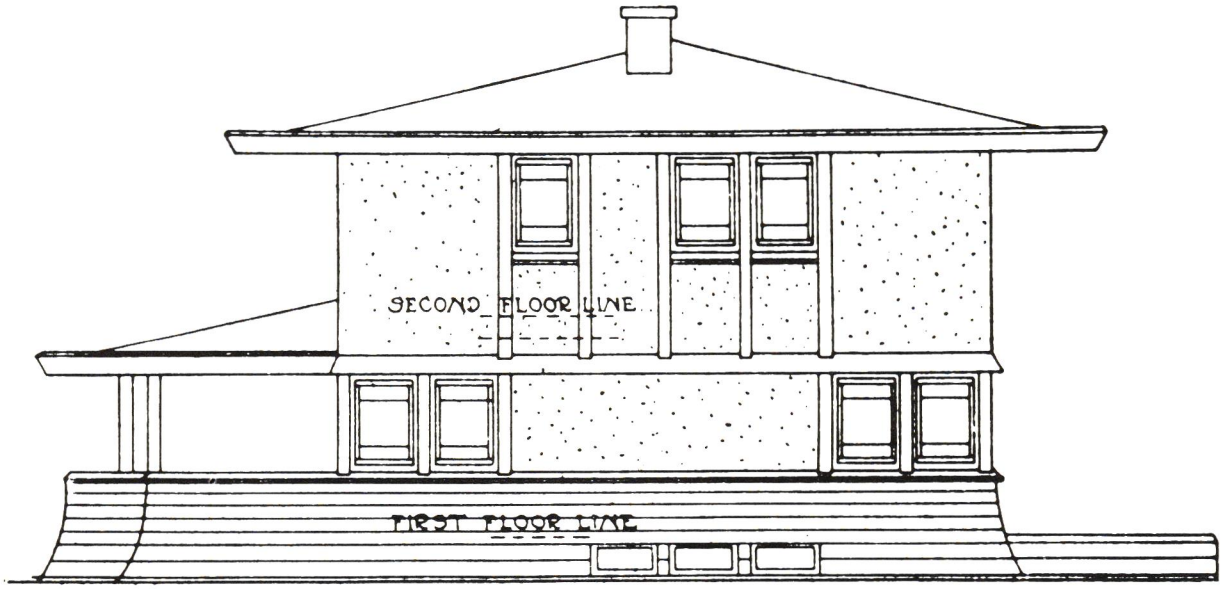
Another mark of distinction is the kind of porch used and its placement. Unless the house has several porches, each is oriented so that one of its three open sides faces south. Since the houses



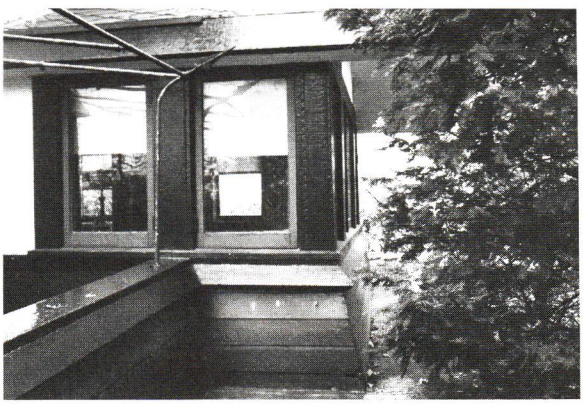
First floor of the Jenkinson house [9].



Second floor of the Jenkinson house.



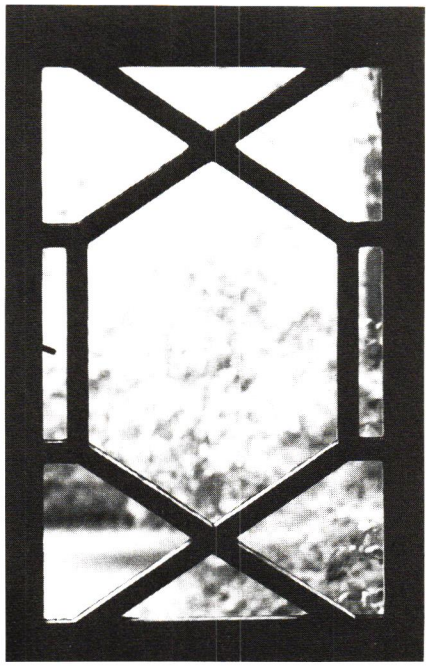
The Blount I house [3] has a curved skirt of lapped boards secured to wooden ribs which project about a foot from the foundation. Note that the Blount II house [7] below has a skirt with the opposite curvature. ***Modern American Homes.***



themselves are sited according to the exigencies of the individual lot, the requirement of a southern exposure for the porch is itself a source of compositional variety. In a number of cases Griffin introduced a two-story porch. Such a porch, when combined with the architect's desire for a proper compass orientation, becomes the source of variety and individuality in these otherwise simple and restrained dwellings. The best example of this among the Blount houses is the Salmon House [8] whose two-story porch attached to its western front provides it with a personality that mitigates somewhat the severity of its basic cube-like shape.

The various possibilities in the form and details of roofs were also exploited by Griffin in his attempts to give each of these modest homes a separate identity. On the rectangular houses he used open gables with wide overhangs which served to suggest shelter and reinforce the other geometric aspects of the new style. The wide overhangs that terminate the hipped and open gable roofs of Griffin's cubical houses serve the same purpose. In order to avoid diluting the visual and psychological effects inherent in these linear extensions of the roof, Griffin proscribed downspouts, and elected to let the water fall freely into cisterns. His treatment of the soffits of the overhangs varies somewhat from house to house but basically there are two types, one stuccoed and the other with rafters exposed.

The 2 story porch on the Salmon house [8] forms an integral part of the design.



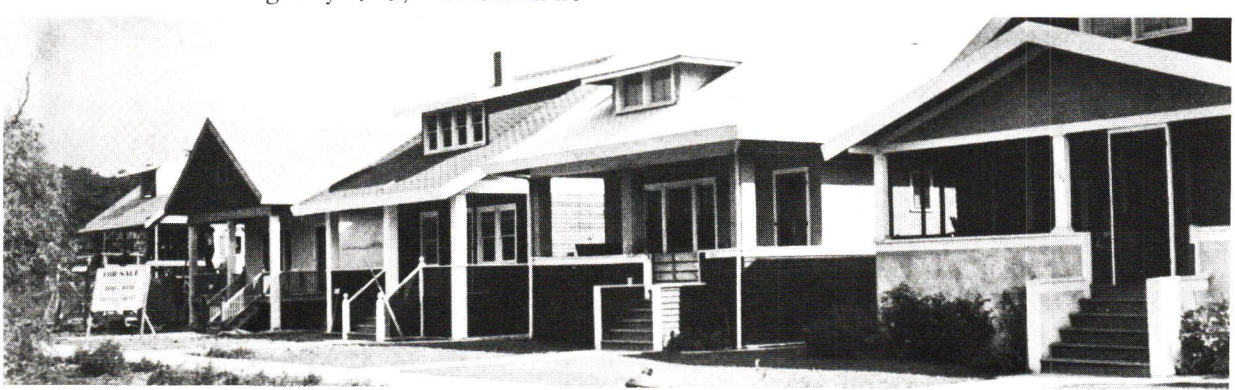
The Garrity house [2] windows emphasize triangular patterns for variety in a rectilinear house.

Individuality was also achieved by the patterns into which Griffin subdivided his casement windows. His preference was for geometric designs that reflected the general shape and details of the building in question. Thus the windows in his cube-like residences are rectilinear while the ones in his rectilinear houses with their gable roofs tend to emphasize diagonal and triangular patterns. For these designs Griffin employed wooden mullions and clear glass; rarely if ever did he use stained glass with metal subdivisions. Although the mullioned windows were obviously less expensive than art glass, and these were low cost houses, one suspects that he also judged the delicate visual qualities of leaded glass windows as out of character with his otherwise rather earthy and somewhat masculine architecture.

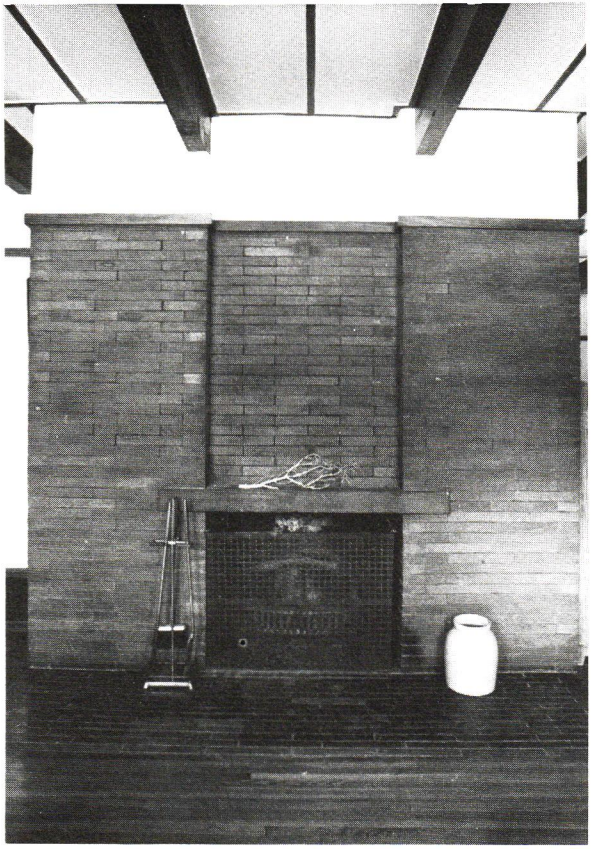
Despite Griffin's ingenuity for endowing each of the Blount commissions with a personality of its own and his ability for providing designs of so high a quality for such relatively humble residences, Blount did not find it as easy as he had expected to sell these avant-garde houses to a public educated in the tradition of historic styles. After his early unplanned success in selling his wedding house to Edmund Garrity [2], Blount found it increasingly difficult to interest potential home-buyers in these residences of novel design. By 1915, with Griffin no longer around to provide either designs or stimulation, Blount turned away from early modern architecture and began building the most ordinary kind of mass housing which, one hardly needs add, sold very well. Thus Blount, like the architects of the Prairie School, was finally forced by the increasing resistance to a modern style to abandon his ideals and return to the security of traditional architecture.

This is not to imply, however, that Blount's work was by any means a failure. Had it not been for the courage and vision of men like Blount, Tolles, Gunn and Evans, early modern architecture would never have come at all to this country. Blount was, in fact, highly successful. His monuments and legacy are the five houses cast in a pure Griffin idiom that stand today in Beverly and form so visible and tangible a part of America's cultural heritage. Given the hostile climate of Blount's age, could we ask more?

Despite the fact that Griffin and Blount tried to make good design available at a moderate cost when compared to the great prairie houses like Robie or Coonley, Blount was forced to return to these more traditional buildings after Griffin left America.



Griffin's Beverly Buildings,



The fireplace in the Salmon house [8] is still in nearly original condition.

A Catalog

by Paul E. Sprague

The commissions are listed chronologically by the estimated date of design. One commission that was never built and another designed for Blount by Spencer & Powers will be found at the end. The following abbreviations have been used:

AB H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School,* 1972
AL Avery Architectural Library, Columbia University
AR *Architectural Record*
CAC Chicago Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogue
CD Lakeside City Directory, Chicago
CN *Construction News*, Chicago
JB James Birrell, *Walter Burley Griffin,* 1964.
MC Robert McCoy, "Rock Crest/Rock Glen, Prairie Planning in Iowa," *Prairie School Review*, V (3rd quarter, 1968), 5-39
NW Northwestern University
PAC Pittsburgh Architectural Club Exhibition Catalogue
PER Building Permit number, Chicago Building Department
PR Document number, Recorders Office, Cook County
VH Hermann von Holst, *Modern American Homes*, 1912.
VZ David Van Zanten, ed., *Walter Burley Griffin, Selected Designs,* 1970
WA *Western Architect*

1. HARRY E. GUNN HOUSE

Built for Harry E. Gunn

10541-3 South Longwood Drive, Chicago, Illinois

Contractors: Joseph Pressendo and Wisdom & Tooker

Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundation, tile walls, 32 x 32 feet, lot 100 x 166 feet.

Cost: $6,000.

Designed about October, 1909.

No longer standing

Description

The house is described by Hermann von Holst in his *Modern American Homes*, 1912, pl. 2: "The house, the residence of Mr. Harry E. Gunn, Tracy, Illinois, was built in 1911. The exterior walls are of hollow terra cotta block plastered outside and inside directly on the tile. The outside plaster is grey; the wood trim a ruddy brown; the sash, an orange color. The roofs are covered with canvas deck. The interior is finished in white color, the beams shown on the plan being exposed structural beams. Cost $6,000."

Comparisons

The house is derived in both plan and elevation from Wright's fireproof house published in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, XXIV (April, 1907), 24. It was 32 feet square which is exactly the dimensions of Wright's design. By eliminating the projection containing the entrance and staircase, Griffin lost some interior space but undoubtedly saved on construction costs. But whatever was lost there was more than compensated for by the enclosed veranda. It represented an unusual but practical change from the open porches and verandas that Griffin so often used. Presumably it was converted in summer to an open porch by replacing the windows with screens. The solid corners on the ground floor follow Wright's model but the corner windows in the second floor are a mannerism peculiar to

Griffin which, as Brooks points out, goes back to Griffin's Emery House at Elmhurst (about 1903).

Griffin built a similar house in 1912 for James Blythe in his Rock Glen development at Mason City, Iowa. It is generally known by the name of its first owner, Arthur Rule. In that house, perhaps because of exigencies of the sloping site and shape of the lot, Griffin made the veranda open off of the living room and, possibly in order to gain a fourth bedroom, changed the position of the stairs.

Chronology

Property acquired by Gunn, Aug. 26, 1909; PR 4448432.
Mortgage obtained by Gunn, Oct. 22, 1909; PR 4457516
Taking bids, Jan. 29, 1910; CN XXIX, 99.
Permit granted to Gunn, Sept. 8, 1910; PER S23962, File 79541.
Excavating, Sept. 24, 1910; CN XXX, 227.
Lathing, Jan. 14, 1911, CN XXXI, 16.
House occupied by Gunn, Bef. June, 1911, CD. 1911.
Exhibited, Apr. 9, 1912, CAC nos. 78, 83.
Published, October, 1912; AR XXXII, 380-82.
Published, 1912; VH, pl. 2.
Exhibited, March, 1913; PAC, no. 174.

Other sources

Original drawings: NWU and AL; AR, XXII (Oct. 1912), 380, 382; JB, p. 65; RMC, pp. 22-24; VZ, p. 35; HAB, pp. 249-250, 252.

2. *EDMUND C. GARRITY HOUSE*

Built for Russell L. Blount
1712 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois
Contractor: Russell L. Blount
Description: 1½ stories and basement, concrete foundation, frame and stucco, 44 x 28 feet, lot 66 x 132 feet
Cost: $4,000.
Designed about December, 1909

History

Russell L. Blount built this house in anticipation of his marriage to Helen Wells. Before the building was finished Edmund Garrity, president of the National Plumbing and Heating Company, made Blount a substantial offer for the house and Blount decided to sell. The land was originally owned by Mrs. Blount's father, Samuel Wells.

Description

Hermann von Holst's *Modern American Homes*, 1912, pls. 68-69, contains the following description of the house: "This house, the residence of Mr. R. L. Blount, Tracy, Illinois, is set close to the ground, the wood base and the horizontal lines helping this effect. The exterior stucco work is a natural grey cement color; the woodwork is stained an olive green. The shingles are without stain and are left to weather naturally. The plan is simple in outline, in order to reduce the cost as much as possible. Casement windows have been used throughout. The groupings of the windows at the corners is noticeable, giving the maximum of light and air. The usual downspouts have been dispensed with, the water dropping into rain-basins placed underneath openings in the gutters. The interior trim is oak in the main rooms and pine in the service portion. The ceiling beams are left exposed thus giving greater height to the rooms. The house was built in 1909 and cost $4,000."

Alterations

A dormer has been added to the roof at the front and rear to introduce a bath and a third bedroom on the second floor. The veranda has been enclosed. In these alterations the window patterns of the original design were reproduced. The closet in the living room is gone and the entrance moved further east. The cabinets partially dividing the living and dining rooms are now fully enclosed and converted into closets. None of the original fixtures remain in the house.

Comparisons

Griffin designed a nearly identical house at 358 Winnetka Avenue in Winnetka for William F. Temple, a real estate broker and developer. The only significant differences between the two houses are the reversed plans, the introduction in the Winnetka house of a bath on the second floor with a consequent reduction in the size of one of the bedrooms, and the use of a standard size brick in the Winnetka fireplace instead of the Roman brick used at Beverly. Although Griffin exhibited several houses designed for Temple in 1909 (Cleveland Architectural Club, no. 288, "Bungalow for Temple") and 1910 (CAC, no. 213, 219, "William F. Temple residence, Winnetka), neither were illustrated making it impossible to tell if either mention refers to this house. That either does is unlikely, however, as transactions on the Winnetka property do not begin until April, 1910. It would seem therefore, that the Garrity House was the first built. The house in Winnetka was published in the *Architectural Record*, XXXII (July, 1912), 39-40.

Griffin designed another similar residence for Blount at 1666 W. 104th Place [4] about January,

1911. It differs especially in having a porch offset to one side and, in being physically smaller, has only one bedroom on the ground floor.

Chronology

Property acquired by H. Well & hus., Nov. 3, 1909; PR 4467742

Plans in progress, Jan. 22, 1910; CN XXIX, 58

Permit granted to R. L. Blount, April 2, 1910; PER Set 1, 27-31.

Mortgage obtained by H. Wells & hus, Apr. 7, 1910; PR 4541606.

Property sold to Garrity, Mar. 18, 1912; PR 5617787.

Exhibited, Apr. 9, 1912; CAC, no. 91.

Occupied by Garrity, Bef. June, 1912; CD, 1912.

Published, 1912; VH, pls. 68-69.

3. RUSSELL L. BLOUNT HOUSE I

Built for Russell L. Blount

1724 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois

Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 26 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet.

Cost: $3,000.

Designed about October, 1910

History

Russell Blount built this house for his own use after selling to Edmund Garrity the residence that Blount had originally built for himself and his bride at 1712 W. 104th Place [2]. Blount lived at 1724 for about three years before moving into a newly finished Griffin house at 1950 W. 102nd Street [7]. The house at 1724 was then rented to Blount's sister-in-law, Florence Wells, and when she married in 1917, she and her husband, Wilfred S. Young, bought it.

Description

The house is described by Hermann von Holst in his *Modern American Homes*: "The usual square type of house is very monotonous, but in this design the square effect has been done away with by wide overhanging eaves, by a terrace forming a broad base, and by the groupings of the windows and a few well disposed wood members. The roof shingles are left unstained, the walls are a grey plaster, and the woodwork is stained a red brown. Built for Mr. Frank N. Olmsted (*sic*), Walden, Illinois. The living and dining room are combined, the generous fireplace forming a kind of screen between. The windows are all casement, those in the first story grouped at the corners while in the second story they are arranged in the center of the four walls. The inside trim is yellow pine and the second story joists are left exposed in the first story. The house was built in 1910 at a cost of $3,000."

Alterations

The second floor has been extensively altered following a fire. Its fireplace and open interior remain but otherwise little is left of the original design.

Comparisons

The house is built on the same plan as the one Blount erected for Frank Olmsted at 1624 W. 100th Place [4]. The Olmsted House differs from the Blount House in having a reversed plan, no corner windows on the ground floor, and no fireplace or stained-wood trim inside. Although the documentary evidence would seem to indicate that the Olmsted House was begun earlier than the Blount House, it is the Blount that in all of its details is more consistently in the Griffin idiom. When Hermann von Holst published the Olmsted House in his *Modern American Homes*, 1912, he included a photograph of the Olmsted House and a description and plans of the Blount House. No doubt Griffin supplied von Holst with the Blount instead of the Olmsted plans because they conformed more closely to his concept. But perhaps because the Blount House was not yet ready to be photographed, when in 1911 von Holst would have been preparing his book, Griffin was forced to send von Holst a photograph of the similar but not identical Olmsted House.

Because Griffin's plans for the Blount house are so obviously the source of the Olmsted House, it is evident that the Blount House must have been designed before the Olmsted. But the documents, which show Olmsted acquiring a permit and a mortgage in Nov. 1910, and Blount negotiating a mortgage and acquiring his property only in Mar. 1911, suggest otherwise. Yet if Blount's house could not have been started until he acquired the property and a mortgage, how could he have been living in his new house in May or June, 1911, when the city directory for that year was compiled. If it took about six months on the average for Blount to construct one of his houses, as the available documentation implies, and Blount was living in his house in May or June, 1911, then he would have had to begin its construction by about December, 1910, at the latest. That this is also the approximate time when the documents show Olmsted beginning his house is thus probably no mere coincidence. The answer must be that because Blount acted as his own contractor and because his father-in-law owned the land, he was able to secure a plan and begin construction in the autumn of 1910 without first having to acquire the property or even to negotiate a mortgage. It

is for these reasons that, despite the evidence of the property records, that the Blount House has been listed before the Olmsted House and assigned a probable date of design of October, 1910.

Chronology

Property acquired by Helen Blount & hus., Mar. 9, 1911; PR 4720019.
Mortgage obtained by Helen Blount & hus., Mar. 23, 1911; PR 4727743.
Occupied by Blount, Bef. June, 1911; CD, 1911.
Published, 1912; VH, pls. 18-19.
Sold to Wilfred Young & wife, May 1, 1917; PR 6217004.

4. FRANK N. OLMSTED HOUSE

Built for Frank N. Olmsted
1624 West 100th Place, Chicago, Illinois
Contractor: Russell L. Blount
Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 26 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet.
Cost: $3,000.
Designed about October, 1910.

History

Olmsted was an electrician whom Blount may have met when he built the Garrity House [2] at 1712 E. 104th Place. But whatever the case, it is certain that Blount knew Olmsted as the building permit lists Blount as contractor for the house.

Description

The house is a two-story frame dwelling on concrete foundations. It is surfaced with stucco impregnated with a sandy yellow pigment and decorated with strips of unplaned and dark-stained wood. For a general description, see the entry for the Blount I House, No. 3.

Alterations

The wooden base around the front of the house and porch has been removed.

Comparisons

The house was built to the same plan as Blount's own residence at 1724 W. 104th Place [3]. It differs in having a reversed plan, no corner windows on the ground floor, and no fireplace or stained-wood trim inside.

Chronology

Property acquired by Olmsted, Oct. 24, 1910; PR 4649390.
Permit granted to Olmsted, Nov. 9, 1910; PER 83293.
Mortgage obtained by Olmsted, Nov. 19, 1910; PR 4665253.
Building notice, Dec. 31, 1910; CN XXX, 15.
Finishing; plans only, Jan. 14, 1911; CN XXXI, 19.
Occupied by Olmsted, Bef. June, 1911; CD, 1911.
Published, 1912; VH, pl. 18.

5. HARRY G. VAN NOSTRAND HOUSE

Built for Russell L. Blount
1666 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois
Contractor: Longwood Hills Construction Company
Description: 1½ story and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 33 x 26 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet
Cost: $3,000.
Designed about January, 1911.

History

The house was built by Russell Blount for rent or sale. It was rented to Harry Van Nostrand, a salesman, between July, 1911, and June, 1912. Van Nostrand finally purchased the house in 1916. Blount's son Lauren later bought the house — about 1940 — and modernized it.

Description

The house is a one and one-half story frame dwelling on concrete foundations. Its surfaces are stucco decorated with planks of unplaned wood that originally were stained. It has casement windows geometrically subdivided by wooden mullions. The floors are oak and the trim birch. Originally there were brass-and-wood lighting fixtures of a type that is often encountered in Prairie School houses.

Alterations

A dormer has been added in the front of the house to accommodate a bathroom on the second floor. The rear, including kitchen and dining room, has been much changed by the addition of a room extending into the back yard.

Comparisons

The house seems to be a smaller version of the Garrity House [2] at 1712 W. 104th Place designed by Griffin in 1909 for a lot sixty-six feet in width. The Van Nostrand House, eleven feet shorter than the Garrity, is sited on a fifty-foot lot.

The house is identical to one of two bungalow types that Griffin employed in a scheme of land development for an A. W. Dickinson. By reversing plans and shifting the position of a veranda, Griffin sought to provide each of the houses, to be built on contiguous lots of about fifty feet in width, with a sense of individuality. Of the two

types, the first, nearly square in plan, is the Van Nostrand design and the second, more rectangular, repeats Griffin's design of April, 1910, for a bungalow commissioned by Dr. Karl Stecher and built at 4840 W. Pensacola in Chicago. That Griffin would select examples from his past work instead of making new designs for a scheme that was probably quite tentative seems reasonable enough. But if this is what he did, then he must have made the Van Nostrand design several months earlier than the January, 1911, date indicated by the documentary sources.

Blount built three other houses on the Van Nostrand plan in 1913-14 at 1731 W. 104th Place [11], 1632 W. 104th Street [12] and 1710 W. 104th Street [13].

Chronology

Property acquired by Helen Blount & hus., Jan. 6, 1911; PR 4709602.

Permit granted to Helen Blount & hus., Jan. 12, 1911; PER Set. 1, 32-35.

Building notice, Jan. 28, 1911; CN XXXI, 15.

Foundation work, Feb. 11, 1911; CN XXXI, 14.

Mortgage obtained by Helen Blount & hus., Feb. 23, 1911; PR 4718530.

Excavating, Feb. 28, 1911; CN XXXI, 18.

Occupied by Van Nostrand, Bef. June, 1912; CD, 1912.

Property sold to Van Nostrand, Feb. 2, 1916; PR 5836369.

6. *HARRY N. TOLLES HOUSE*

Built for Harry N. Tolles

10561 South Longwood Drive, Chicago, Illinois

Contractor: Longwood Hills Construction Co.

Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 29 x 36 feet, lot 50 x 140 feet

Cost: $4,000.

Designed about April, 1911

History

Although the documents may seem to indicate that this house was designed about September, 1910, it is not very likely that it was. The mortgages that Harry and Elizabeth Tolles negotiated on Sept. 12, 1910, when they purchased two lots on Longwood Drive were for three years and only $750.00. Such small amounts of money were probably used to assist in purchasing the properties and not for constructing buildings on them. It is much more likely that the Tolles House was designed and construction begun when, in the late spring of 1911, the Tolles sold one of their lots and took out a permit for a house by Griffin on the other. That their proposed house was mentioned in the trade press on May 13 of that year provides additional evidence in support of this conclusion.

Description

Griffin designed a house in Evanston for developer Hurd Comstock which, except for its reversed plan, is nearly identical to the Tolles House. *Construction News*, XXV (Apr. 5, 1913), 6-7, describes the Comstock House as "concrete to the level of the window sills, and frame above; the walls are rough plaster waxed and stained; the roof is shingles; the interior trim is red gum."

Alterations

The ground floor is extensively altered: the original entrance is now converted into a closet and bathroom; the porch has been enclosed and the north corner of it serves as the main entrance; and the kitchen has been enlarged by removing a maid's room. The garage originally had doors in front and back permitting the driver to enter from the street and exit into an alley behind the house without having to back up. The second floor has a spacious bedroom at the front of the house with its ceiling carried up tent-fashion into the area of the roof framing.

Comparisons

If Russell Blount was involved with this residence, as his son Lauren believes, it was probably through the contractor, Longwood Hills Construction Company, in which Blount had an interest. The Tolles House was physically related to the Harry Gunn House which, before its demolition, was located north of it across three vacant lots.

Griffin revived his Tolles House to serve as one of two residences sharing a common garden that he was designing in 1911 for Evanston developer Hurd Comstock. The one that closely resembles the Tolles House, except for its reversed plan, two extra windows in the dining room, and porch off the master bedroom, is entered from Ashland Avenue; the other from Church Street. Excavating was under way on the Comstock Houses in November 1911, according to *Construction News*, XXXII (Nov. 11, 1911), 14, and the permit was acquired Nov. 23, 1911 (No. 4667), all of which indicates that they were built about six months after the Tolles House. The three houses appeared in the 1912 exhibition of the Chicago Architectural Club, nos. 78 and 85.

Chronology

Lots 36-37 acquired by Eliz. Tolles & hus.; Sept. 12, 1910; PR 4628119.

Mortgage on lots 36-37 obtained by Eliz. Tolles & hus.; Sept. 12, 1910; PR 4628147.

Lot 36 sold; Apr. 20, 1911; PR 4800603.
Permit granted to Tolles; May 2, 1911; PER Set 14, 7-10.
Plans only; May 13, 1911; CN XXXI, 18.
Exhibited; Apr. 9, 1912; CAC, no. 78.
Occupied by Tolles; Bef. June, 1912; CD, 1912.

7. *RUSSELL L. BLOUNT HOUSE II*

Built for Russell L. Blount
1950 W. 102nd Street, Chicago, Illinois
Contractor: Longwood Hills Construction Company
Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 27 x 27 feet, lot 50 x 140 feet
Designed about April, 1912

History

Russell Blount built this house for a client but the agreement was cancelled before the house was finished. In 1914, with the house neither rented nor sold and with the Blounts expecting a child (Lauren T. Blount), it was decided to move from 1724 W. 104th Place [3] to the new house. In 1916 the Blounts moved again and the property passed to Harry Furneaux for whom, in 1913, Blount had built the house at 1741 W. 104th Place [10].

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other Griffin houses. The house differs somewhat from its prototypes, the Blount I [3] and Olsted [4] Houses, in having its bedroom ceilings pitched in the manner of a tent. Of the other Griffin houses at Beverly, only the Gunn House [1], in which Blount played no part, had similar bedroom ceilings. In the Blount House II [7] the tent ceilings are reflected in the decorative trim on the street front. The house has a two-story porch, formerly open, at the rear. The original brass-and-wood living room lighting fixtures are still in place.

Alterations

The two-story rear porch and the front veranda have been enclosed and are now integral parts of the adjoining interior spaces. The kitchen and bathroom are remodeled. The two bedrooms that originally faced the street have been combined into one large room by removing the wall between them.

Comparisons

The plan is virtually identical to the first Blount House at 1724 W. 104th Place [3]. The major differences between them are the two-story porch at the rear of the 102nd Street House, the shape of its roof with double slope and open gable, and the design of its originally-open front veranda.

Chronology

Property acquired by Blount; Apr. 12, 1912; PR 4966113.
Permit granted to Blount; June 14, 1912; PER Sets 5, 30F.
Mortgage obtained by Blount; Nov. 14, 1912; PR 5083453.
Occupied by Blount; Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.
Property sold to Furneaux; Feb. 1, 1916; PR 5797958.
Occupied by Furneaux; Bef. June, 1916; CD, 1916.

8. *WALTER D. SALMON HOUSE*

Built for Samuel J. Wells
1736 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois
Contractor: Longwood Hills Construction Company
Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 27 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet
Designed about October, 1912

History

The house was built for sale or rent by Russell L. Blount in the name of his father-in-law, Samuel J. Wells. It was rented to Walter D. Salmon between July, 1913, and June, 1914. Salmon purchased the house in 1917.

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other Griffin houses. Its colored stucco has a sandy yellow pigment impregnated in it. Several original brass-and-wood lighting fixtures remain in the living room. There is a built-in china cabinet with leaded glass doors in the dining room.

Alterations

The house is virtually unaltered except for its modernized kitchen.

Comparisons

The house belongs to the group of Blount houses built on the square plan with a spatially open ground floor. It differs from the others in having an open two-story porch on the entrance side; solid corners with the windows grouped in the center of each wall; surfaces subdivided by stained-wood strips into a very rigid rectilinear system; a stucco finish having a rough surface with its color impregnated in it; and a hallway running from the front to the rear door that passes through the porch rather than through the cube of the house.

There is a house in Winnetka, Illinois, at 645 Abbotsford Road that was built on the same plan by Griffin's client, the developer William F. Temple. It does not, however, follow the Salmon House in every detail. Its living room faces the back yard and its two-story porch, now enclosed, opens into the living and dining rooms. Its front entrance is at the side opposite the porch and opens into a passageway similar to the one in the Salmon House that runs from front to rear within the porch. But in the Winnetka house the hall is inside the house with the result that, in accommodating it, the Winnetka House is three feet wider than the Salmon House. The rear entrance is shifted at Winnetka to the center of the kitchen-dining room wall which, because that wall faces Abbotsford Road, makes the kitchen door seem to be the front entrance. As the land on which the Winnetka house is located slopes away from the street, the rear of the house is elevated well above the yard and because of this, it has been possible for a later owner to introduce a garage under the two-level porch. Finally the fireplace bricks are of ordinary size, not the Roman type used in the Beverly houses, and its windows are glazed with leaded glass, not the plain glass used in the Salmon House or the decorative wooden mullions and glass employed in some of the other Beverly houses. These differences, when combined, strongly indicate that the Salmon House, on a level site and having a normal orientation, follows more closely the architect's intentions and is, therefore, probably the earlier of the two.

Chronology

Permit granted to S. J. Wells, Oct. 17, 1912; PER Set 1, 21, 24.

Mortgage obtained by S. J. Wells, Dec. 6, 1912; PR 5095368.

Occupied by Salmon, Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.

Property sold to Salmon, Dec. 24, 1917; PR 6253316.

9. *ARTHUR G. JENKINSON HOUSE*

Built for Russell L. Blount

1727 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois

Contractor: Tracy Ridge Construction Company

Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 27 x 27 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet

Cost: $3,000.

Designed about November, 1912

History

The house was built by Russell Blount for sale or rent. In 1913, presumably before the house was finished, Arthur Jenkinson bought the property.

This is the first dwelling built for Blount by the Tracy Ridge Construction Co. All of Blount's later Griffin houses were constructed by this firm in which Blount's son reports his father had an interest. Except for the Garrity [2] and Olmsted [4] Houses (and possibly the Blount I [3] as well), for which Blount acted as his own contractor, the houses that Blount built before the Jenkinson House were constructed by the Longwood Hills Construction Co. in which Blount also was involved.

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other houses designed by Griffin. Beginning with this house and continuing in several of those that follow it, siding is carried up the walls well above the foundations. The effect is to change what originally provided a visual transition between the ground and the wall from a minor feature to a major decorative device. As this effect is so unlike Griffin's other work and because a nearby house built at the same time by Blount from designs by Spencer & Powers has similar siding, it is possible that Blount, liking the effect, may have had the high siding added to Griffin's design.

Alterations

This is the least altered and best cared for of Griffin's houses at Beverly. The exterior trim has never been painted; the present owners continue to have it stained periodically. The kitchen has been modernized somewhat and a sideboard, originally built into the dining room, is gone. The house still has a few of its original brass-and-wood lighting fixtures.

Comparisons

The plan is similar to all of the square houses built by Blount. Like the second Blount House on 102nd Street [7], it has a two-story porch at the rear. The greatest difference between it and the others is the staircase which, by being built in two flights, has a degree of openness in the second floor not found in Griffin's other Beverly houses.

Chronology

Permit granted to Chic. Title & Trust, Nov. 26, 1912; PER Set 1, 25.

Under construction; plans only, Dec. 7, 1912; CN XXXIV, 20.

Property sold to Jenkinson, Jan. 30, 1913; PR 5127973.

Occupied by Jenkinson, Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.

10. HARRY C. FURNEAUX HOUSE

Built for Russell L. Blount

1741 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois

Contractor: Tracy Ridge Construction Company

Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 27 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet

Designed about March, 1913

History

This house, built by Blount in 1913, was sold to Harry Furneaux in 1914. In 1916 Furneaux bought the second Blount House on 102nd Street [7] and Blount, in turn, repurchased the Furneaux House.

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other houses designed by Griffin. The triangular brackets supporting the overhang of the roof do not occur in any of the other Griffin-designed houses at Beverly. They are, however, very much like the ones on the house next to the Furneaux House at 1741 built by Blount in 1912 from plans by Spencer & Powers [15]. It may be that Blount liked the brackets and included them when, as seems likely, he or someone retained by him modified the plans of the Salmon House [8] to serve for the Furneaux House. The non-symmetrical grid of stained wood on the rear and west sides of that house is probably also to be explained in the same way.

Alterations

None except for a remodeled kitchen.

Comparisons

Except for reversed plans and different details, the Salmon [8] and Furneaux Houses are the same. The one-story enclosed veranda of the Furneaux House replaces the Salmon House's two-story open porch. The fenestration and stained-wood details in each of the houses are quite different.

Chronology

Permit granted to Chic. Title & Trust, Mar. 20, 1913; PER Set 1, 18-19.

Property acquired by Blount, June 2, 1913; PR 5208527.

Mortgage obtained by Blount, June 5, 1913; PR 5208528.

Property sold to Furneaux, Mar. 19, 1914; PR 5400395.

Occupied by Furneaux, Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.

Property acquired by Blount, Feb. 5, 1916; PR 5806023.

11. WILLIAM N. CLARKE HOUSE

Built for Russell L. Blount

1731 West 104th Place

Contractor: Tracy Ridge Construction Company

Description: 1½ stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 33 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet

Designed about October, 1913

History

The house was built in 1913 for sale or rent by Russell Blount and was sold the same year to William Clarke. It was occupied after 1917 by Blount's attorney, Roy Chowen.

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other Griffin-designed houses.

Alterations

A dormer providing a third bedroom on the second floor projects from the east side of the floor. The kitchen is modernized.

Comparisons

The Clarke House is built on the same plan as the Van Nostrand House [5] erected in 1911 at 1666 W. 104th Place. The axis, however, is at right angles to the street because of the narrowness of its lot and the porch has been shifted to the side opposite the entrance. In 1914 Blount built on 104th Street two additional houses derived from the Van Nostrand plans. Because Griffin was out of the country during the summer and autumn of 1913, it is probable that the revisions to the Van Nostrand plans that resulted in the Clarke House were made by Blount or his agent.

Chronology

Permit granted to Tracy Ridge Con. Co., Oct. 15, 1913; PER Set 1, 22.

Property acquired by Clarke, Dec. 3, 1913; PR 5322245.

Mortgage, Dec. 3, 1913; PR 5322246.

Occupied by Clarke, Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.

12. IDA E. WILLIAMS HOUSE

Built for Russell L. Blount

1632 West 104th Street, Chicago, Illinois

Description: 1½ stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 34 feet, lot 100 x 135 feet

Designed about December, 1913

History

The house was built by Blount in 1913 and

sold the same year to Ida Williams.

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other houses designed by Griffin. There is a small enclosed back porch.

Alterations

There are no obvious changes on the exterior. Although permission to enter could not be obtained, the present owner provided a sketch plan of the first floor.

Comparisons

The house is derived from the Van Nostrand House [5] built in 1911 at 1666 W. 104th Place. The dimensions are approximately the same; the plan appears to be identical. The window details are simplified versions of those at 1666. It is probable that the differences between the Williams and Van Nostrand Houses result from Blount or someone employed by him having reworked Griffin's plans. Blount built two other versions of the Van Nostrand House at 1731 W. 104th Place [11] and 1710 W. 104th Street [13].

Chronology

Property acquired by Blount, Nov. 24, 1913; PR 5321266.

Property sold to Williams, Dec. 1, 1913; PR 5321267.

Occupied by Williams, Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.

13. WILLIAM R. HORNBAKER HOUSE

Built for the estate of Thomas E. Wells by Russell Blount

1710 W. 104th Street, Chicago, Illinois

Contractor: Tracy Ridge Construction Company

Description: 1½ stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 26 x 34 feet, lot 50 x 136 feet

Designed about May, 1914

History

The house, built in 1914, was probably rented until it was sold in 1919 to William Hornbaker. Griffin is not mentioned in the building permit.

Description

The materials and type of construction are the same used by Blount in his other houses designed by Griffin.

Alterations

Two dormers have been added. A large one containing a bedroom extends over a porch on the west side. A smaller one on the east side was added to provide space for a bathroom. An additional ground floor room extends from the house at the rear. Any Griffin characteristics that there may have been inside the house have disappeared. Where there should be a fireplace, there is only a free-standing pier carrying the chimney.

Comparisons

The house is derived from the Van Nostrand House [5] of 1911 at 1666 W. 104th Place. It comes, however, more directly from the Clarke House [11] at 1731 W. 104th Place which it most closely resembles. More than likely it was Blount or someone employed by him, not Griffin, who made those changes in the Van Nostrand plans necessary to construct first the Clarke House and then this one.

Chronology

Permit granted to Blount, May 26, 1914; PER Set 1, 12-15.

Property sold to Hornbaker, Apr. 7, 1919; PR 6496127.

14. LESLIE W. SHIRLEY HOUSE

Designed for Leslie W. Shirley

Belmont (now Seeley) near 107th Street

Designed about October, 1911

Never built

Chronology

Building notice, Nov. 4, 1911; CN XXXII, 19.

Description

"Brick, 2 stories, 31 x 36 feet with wing 31 x 36 feet, approximate grounds, 80 x 190 feet, tile roof, combination heating, furnace and hot water;" from CN

15. HARRY F. NEWLAND HOUSE

Built for Russell L. Blount

1737 West 104th Place, Chicago, Illinois

Contractor: Tracy Ridge Construction Company

Description: 2 stories and basement, concrete foundations, frame and stucco, 25 x 30 feet, lot 50 x 132 feet

Spencer & Powers, architects

Designed about November, 1912

Chronology

Permit granted to Chicago Title & Trust, Nov. 25, 1912; PER

Property acquired by Blount from Ch. Title & Trust, Jan. 27, 1913; PR 5123667.

Mortgage obtained by Blount, Jan. 28, 1913, PR 5123668.

Lathing, plans only, Mar. 15, 1913; CN XXXV, 18.

Property sold to Newland, Dec. 3, 1913; PR 6583927.

Occupied by Newland, Bef. June, 1914; CD, 1914.

Book Reviews

SULLIVAN'S OWATONNA BANK AND SMALL BANKS IN SMALL TOWNS, by Gerald Mansheim. N.I. Associates, Inc., Iowa City, Iowa, 1973, 80 slides plus 17 pp. text. $150.00 set.

This is the second set of a slides by Mr. Mansheim, the first being mostly residential in nature. The present set consists of small banks designed between 1908 when Sullivan's Owatonna National Farmers Bank was built and 1923 when Elmslie's Old Second National Bank of Aurora was built. Other buildings included are three by Wright, two by George Maher, one by Parker Berry, four by Purcell and Elmslie, and several more by Sullivan.

Each slide is accompanied by a paragraph of explanation. The 17 page text can be used as is by the untrained lecturer or adapted to classroom use by the professional historian. There is actually more than an hour of text so that one can be selective in its use. The 2 x 2 slides come in a standard carousel and are in roughly chronological order.

The major emphasis (35 slides) is on the Owatonna Bank showing the delicate coloring of the stencils by Sullivan and Millet, the stained glass windows, the mural by Oskor Gross, and the terra cotta detailing. Just as black and white photographs do not prepare one for the browns and reds of Sullivan's Russian church, one is surprised by the golden lightness of his commercial structures.

The photography is generally excellent. Occasionally one could quarrel with the angle of the photo since trained historians look for characteristics not readily apparent to the eye trained to see the building as a photographer. He rarely uses a strict elevation which is often invaluable in establishing proportion. Sometimes the building is not related to its surroundings, and while the details that he so meticulously photographs are interesting and valuable, it is seen as a photo rather than a building. But this is minor.

The slides are well worth the cost, and architectural departments interested in building slide collections would add balance with this study in the early modern movement.

THE ART OF OFFICE BUILDINGS, Sullivan's Wainwright & The St. Louis Real Estate Boom, by John D. Randall. Springfield, Il., Randall, 1972. Available from the author, 2001 Schoolhouse Lane, Springfield, Il., 62704. 132 pp., illus., $18.00 plus $1.00 handling.

This is a strange potpourri of a book. Crammed with information on the buildings of St. Louis it is, nevertheless, primarily devoted to the Wainwright Building. John Randall has a single-minded devotion to this premier example of the American Skyscraper by America's premier architect.

The first twenty percent or so of the book is text covering a brief history of the skyscraper, not necessarily confined to St. Louis but also discussing some of the preceding and parallel Chicago accomplishments. Randall covers the early skyscraper from every point of view — history, economics, aesthetics, etc. Always he returns to the Wainwright and Sullivan. Even his history of the building boom in St. Louis ends with a quotation concerning the Wainwright, and all maps — there are several — show it colored red, the only color in the book.

More than a third of the book is devoted to a "Descriptive List: Office Buildings, Downtown St. Louis." This list will prove extremely useful to visitors to the city. Randall has taken strips of downtown St. Louis averaging about eight blocks each and identified nearly every structure of architectural merit, about 225 in all on some 71 blocks. Each structure is coded with bibliographic material and pages facing the "Descriptive List . . ." are used to discuss important buildings, influences, demolitions, etc. Several pages are devoted to Adler and Sullivan buildings and projects, of which there were 10 in all. Again, the Wainwright gets the lion's share of space.

An important part of the book is the bibliographic material noted above. Randall not only includes references for the list but devotes several pages to books and other works on the history of the office building and material of contemporary interest. Furthermore, he has apparently studied all these thoroughly himself for he has compiled a useful "Chronological Listing of Buildings — By Decades" for the last 100 years in St. Louis, which also includes advancements in the related arts during the same period. Along with this is a bar chart showing principle architectural firms at work in St. Louis between 1887 and 1897 as well as several other charts, maps and descriptive data relating to the development of the modern office building in St. Louis during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The book contains much more than we can list here. So much more that we can only wish that the author had had sufficient time to correlate the material in somewhat more logical fashion and to dwell even more than he did on his principle point, the preservation of the Wainwright building designed by Adler and Sullivan in association with the St. Louis firm of Charles K. Ramsey.

The Wainwright is in grave danger of joining the Garrick and The Chicago Stock Exchange buildings as a building of the past. As this is written, it stands in St. Louis, nearly vacant, with a potential parking lot owner eager to acquire and demolish it.

The most significant standing landmark structure in the United States today is the Wainwright. There is no other way to describe it. The fact that the property on which it stands is not presently used to its "highest and best use" is completely irrelavant. It was a masterpiece when it was built, it is a masterpiece today. Every skyscraper of note of the past 85 years owes a debt to it.

Some way must be found to preserve this building. If necessary, it should be purchased and sealed up until funds are found to renovate it. The National Trust has been examining the problem but at this writing have not taken any steps we know of to save it. Very likely it is simply beyond their means, but it is one of the few buildings that should be saved at all cost, including possible acquisition by the city, state or federal government.

Randall's strange, fact packed book might have been put together better by a commerical publishing house. He chose the expedient method instead and published it himself. He saved at least a year in time getting it on the shelves of bookshops. If he also reaches the right people, he might just save the Wainwright, too.

Reviewed by W. R. Hasbrouck, FAIA

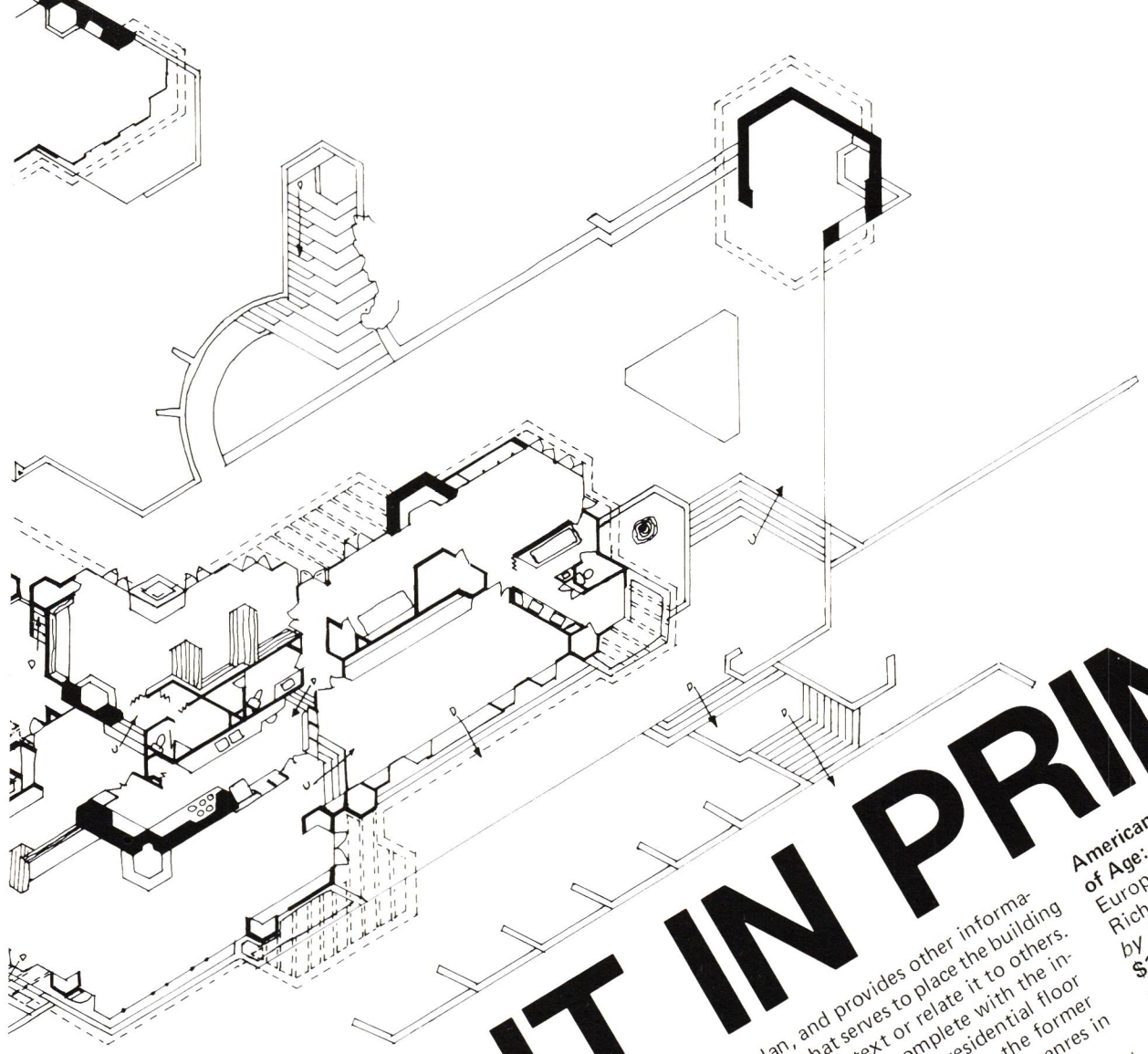
Preview

The second issue of Volume X of *The Prairie School Review* will be Francis Steiner's documentation of E. E. Roberts' career, an Oak Park architect between 1895 and 1920. The Prairie School influence slowly changes a traditional practice with even west coast detailing emerging in some of his work. Although there is a gradual falling away to traditionalism, Oak Park remains filled with these legacies from the early popularizing of the modern movement.

Books to be reviewed:

The Architecture of Frank Furness
James F. O'Gorman, *et al*

Our readers are invited to suggest or submit articles for possible publication in *The Prairie School Review*. Often the editors are able to assist in the preparation of articles or illustrations. Furthermore, we maintain files on all phases of the Prairie School and its practitioners. We appreciate receiving obscure bits of information and will return any material submitted if so desired.



WRIGHT IN PRINT

The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright:
A Complete Catalog
by William Allin Storrer
Foreword by Henry-Russell Hitchcock

This work is, first of all, the only publication that documents *all* of the buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright that were actually constructed. Taken simply as a chronological listing, it is definitive and complete and includes a significant number of authentic buildings not found in previous listings. But beyond this, the book also offers a short commentary on each building and a picture of each extant structure. Most of the illustrations are photographs taken by Dr. Storrer himself while inspecting the sites, although a few are drawings that serve to illustrate structures since demolished or otherwise not accessible to the photographer. Over a hundred of the buildings have never before appeared in a publication.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, in his foreword to the book, states that it is "...what has long been most needed. Here, for the first time, everything is included from the earliest houses for whose design the young Wright was responsible while in the employ of Sullivan to the semiposthumous buildings carried to completion by the Taliesin Associated Architects from Wright's extant designs since his death in 1959. With indefatigable assiduity Dr. Storrer has tracked down and photographed every structure there is good reason to believe was designed by Wright, even visiting the sites of demolished buildings...." For each building, a unique name (usually the name of the original client) and catalog number are assigned, and the date of conception and location are given. The text describes methods and materials of construction, identifies the basic plan, and provides other information that serves to place the building in its context or relate it to others. The book is complete with the inclusion of eleven residential floor plans and seven maps, the former representative of various genres in Wright's work as he advanced through the stages of architectural design growth represented by these genres.

$9.95 hardcover

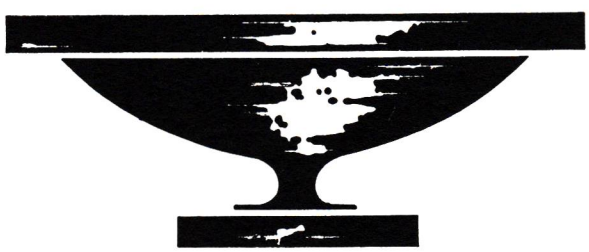
also available:

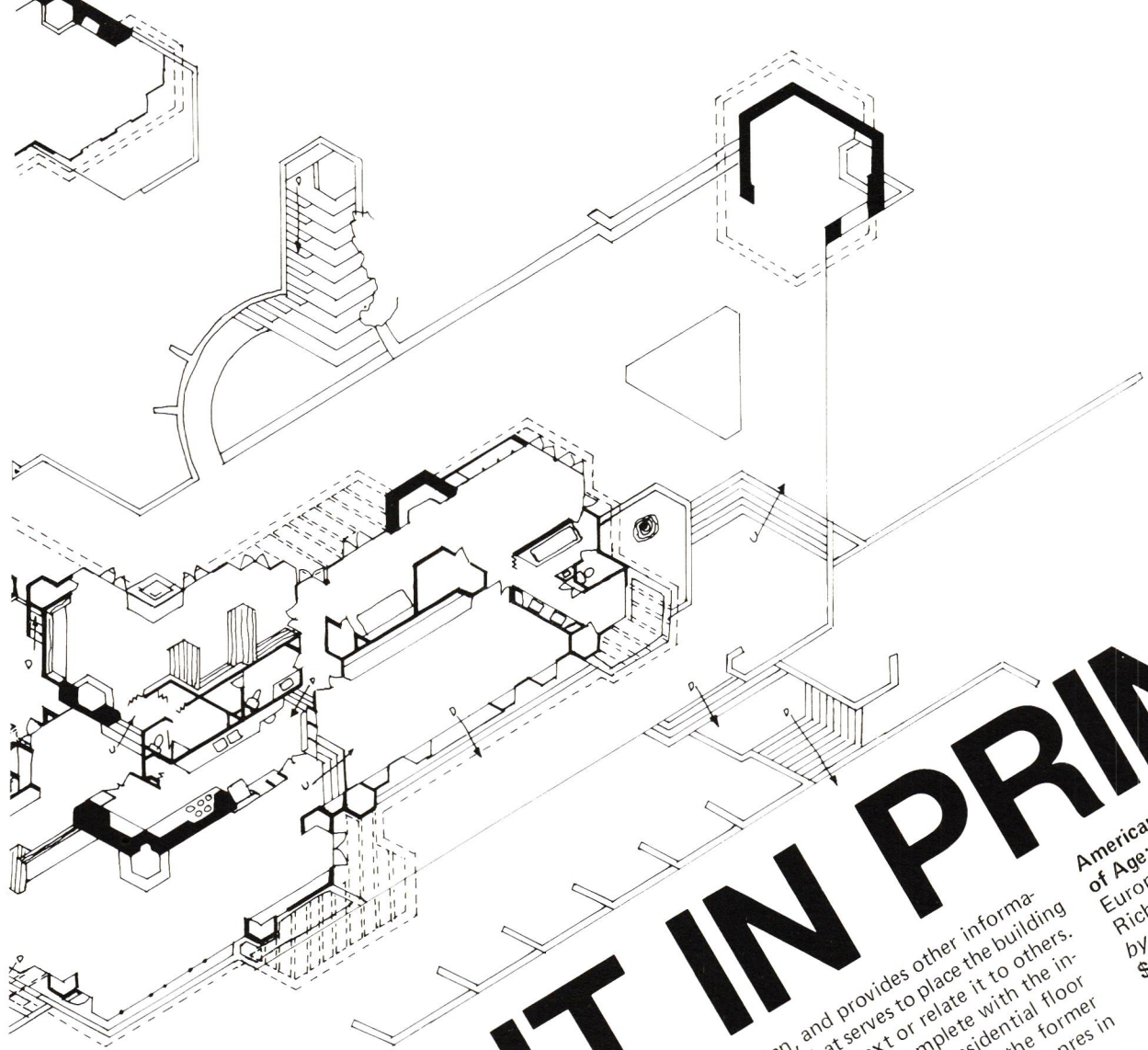
An Organic Architecture:
The Architecture of Democracy
by Frank Lloyd Wright
$6.95 hardcover

Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients:
Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw
by Leonard K. Eaton
with an appendix by Elizabeth M. Douvan
$10.00 hardcover; **$3.95** paperback

American Architecture Comes of Age:
European Reaction to H. H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan
by Leonard K. Eaton
$14.95 hardcover

The MIT Press
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142





WRIGHT IN PRINT

The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright:
A Complete Catalog
by William Allin Storrer
Foreword by Henry-Russell Hitchcock

This work is, first of all, the only publication that documents *all* of the buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright that were actually constructed. Taken simply as a chronological listing, it is definitive and complete and includes a significant number of authentic buildings not found in previous listings. But beyond this, the book also offers a short commentary on each building and a picture of each extant structure. Most of the illustrations are photographs taken by Dr. Storrer himself while inspecting the sites, although a few are drawings that serve to illustrate structures since demolished or otherwise not accessible to the photographer. Over a hundred of the buildings have never before appeared in a publication.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, in his foreword to the book, states that it is "...what has long been most needed. Here, for the first time, everything is included from the earliest houses for whose design the young Wright was responsible while in the employ of Sullivan to the semiposthumous buildings carried to completion by the Taliesin Associated Architects from Wright's extant designs since his death in 1959. With indefatigable assiduity Dr. Storrer has tracked down and photographed every structure there is good reason to believe was designed by Wright, even visiting the sites of demolished buildings...." For each building, a unique name (usually the name of the original client) and catalog number are assigned, and the date of conception and location are given. The text describes methods and materials of construction, identifies the basic plan, and provides other information that serves to place the building in its context or relate it to others. The book is complete with the inclusion of eleven residential floor plans and seven maps, the former representative of various genres in Wright's work as he advanced through the stages of architectural design growth represented by these genres.

$9.95 hardcover

also available:

An Organic Architecture:
The Architecture of Democracy
by Frank Lloyd Wright
$6.95 hardcover

Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients:
Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw
by Leonard K. Eaton
with an appendix by Elizabeth M. Douvan
$10.00 hardcover; **$3.95** paperback

American Architecture Comes of Age:
European Reaction to H. H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan
by Leonard K. Eaton
$14.95 hardcover

The MIT Press
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142