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Looking back over a year of Chapter activities, we feel our public image generally has been elevated, even though, on occasion, our status may publicly have been challenged.

We are concerned primarily with the overall attitude of the public, as well as with our own attitudes toward a more effective professional organization. Our pursuits should be directed toward a more closely knit association with common goals for the promotion of good architecture, a good Chapter organization, and good service to individual clients.

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Joseph B. Shaughnessy, Jr., Associate member of the Kansas City Chapter, is teaching this year as an associate professor in the Department of Architecture, University of Illinois, at Champaign, Illinois.
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Too many registered architects do not belong to the AIA.

The reasons for this situation must be that there are many architects who do not realize the many important functions the AIA can perform; that they believe the AIA is not satisfactorily performing its functions; or that they are sitting back and letting others carry their professional responsibilities.

If non-members are asked why they do not belong to the AIA they most frequently answer that the AIA is hypocritical in that it proclaims high standards which certain of its most highly-respected members do not live up to; membership costs too much; or what can the AIA do for me?

But if an architects believes that certain members of the AIA are not performing ethically, the best way he can remedy the situation is to join the AIA and bring proof of his contention.

If he has sufficient proof, the AIA will discipline the offenders.

The fees of membership in the AIA are slight, especially in proportion to the advantages. An architectural education costs anywhere from $5,000 to $15,000, while membership in the AIA, the most effective continuation of his professional education, costs only about one per cent of an average annual income.

What, in fact, can the AIA do for an architect?

- It can offer a set of standard documents, such as owner-architect contracts and owner-contractor contracts that can save the architect from pitfalls and from expense.
- In public relations an organized group can be much more effective than a single individual. Even large firms cannot bear the burden of carrying out effective public relations by themselves.
- The AIA stimulates communication between architects of varying experience. Professional magazines are not enough by themselves. Communication between architects is absolutely necessary for continuing one's professional education.
- The organization is necessary for leadership in the building industry, the traditional and proper role of architects. As the building industry becomes increasingly complex, individual architects without organization cannot possibly command this leadership.
- The AIA can be an instrument for waging an unceasing battle for civic beauty. Architects are dedicated to improving the man-made environment, and need to act collectively when public or private threats to a beautiful community appear.
- Ethical standards to protect both the architect and the owner must be maintained through an organization. Many architects can benefit from the use of standards to avoid being run over by the client. On the other hand, the unethical actions of one architect can bring discredit to the profession in general, and the organization's standards and discipline must be in constant force to diminish the likelihood of this sort of incident.
- Legislation affecting the profession can be much more effectively evaluated and acted upon by the organization.

The AIA is not a closed organization to work for the benefit of a select group of architects. It is dedicated to assist the greatest number of architects.

The initials AIA should not be viewed merely as a distinctive addition to an architect's signature, gaining them easy prestige. The AIA is an active, working organization, with the goal of constantly striving to improve the standards of the profession.
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Aidan Matthew, a young British architect, visited here over the Christmas holidays in continuing his 10-month study of productivity. He was the guest of John C. Morley.

A luncheon attended by the Executive Committee of the Kansas City chapter, AIA, was given in his honor December 30 at the Plaza III restaurant.

"We're looking for all sorts of solutions to this productivity problem," Matthew said, explaining that Britain is having difficulties meeting its immediate needs for new buildings.

"In certain fields, particularly in office buildings, American offices have higher speed production. This is due to a number of factors—efficiencies in architects' offices, efficiencies in contractors' offices, newer methods."

Matthew is a member of Robert Matthew, Johnson Marshall & partners, of London and Edinburgh. Sir Robert Matthew, his father, is professor of architecture at Edinburgh University, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, president of the International Union of Architects, and an honorary fellow of the AIA. He was knighthed in 1962.

The firm's latest building is the New Zealand house in London. Sir Robert is known particularly for his design, with J.L. Martin, of the Royal Festival hall on the south bank of the Thames, the only permanent building of the 1951 Festival of Britain. It seats 3,000 persons in an auditorium protected from the many noises of its setting by two 10-inch walls with a 12-inch air space between them, The The hall is adorned with promenades, bars and restaurants, and in 1961 G.E. Kidder Smith wrote that it had "finer acoustics than any other concert hall of our time."

Asked whether he agreed with critics who believe that London has been defaced by the new skyscraper building boom, the younger Matthew said skyscrapers were justified in some cases.

"Obviously, we would not want them at abandon throughout the city," he said. "Originally, London was a very low, small-scale city, three or four stories. Then Wren built a number of churches with spires sticking up in the sky, which didn't bother anybody.

"As the city grew, these lower buildings were forced up to the 100-foot mark, the maximum a fire engine could handle. After the war we got advanced techniques of fire-fighting. At the same time, it was recognized that you could build the same amount of floor area in a tall building, get something of a view, and have some space around it."

High-rise buildings in Great Britain are very carefully controlled by planning, Matthew said. There is also a fine arts commission to act as an advisory board. Planning laws are much more stringent than in America, he emphasized.

"The important thing is to have a plan. Every city in the United Kingdom has a plan by national law, and it has to be reviewed every five years.

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Two non-conforming artists, Frank Lloyd Wright and Thomas Hart Benton, broke bread together in Kansas City one day in 1941, shortly after the culmination of a controversy between the painter and the Art Institute. Wright sympathized with Benton, whom he had met in 1928.
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What Wright Wrought

"I'm not for going back to nature," said the shaggy man when he arrived in Kansas City. "I'm for catching up with it, co-operating with it."

It was odd that Frank Lloyd Wright was 70 years old before he got a commission in Kansas City. He had built hundreds of structures, spotted here and there from New York to Florida to California to Canada and Japan. But all his life he had belonged to the Midwest. His work had been concentrated in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan. Kansas saw a fine example when the Allen home was built in Wichita during World War I. But Missouri had nothing of Wright's.

When he did come here, Wright was flattered with two commissions at once, one of them major in that it was for a large church. Artistically, Wright was in what critics have called his third and last period, a good period that began after his lean years between 1910 and 1935. So the three Wright buildings here today are all what might be called late Wright.

Dr. Clarence Sondern, a chemist, commissioned Wright to design a home at 3600 Belleview avenue. One November day in 1939 Dr. Sondern and his wife were in their apartment at 3600 Roanoke parkway, dreaming of their new home, when Wright visited them. He seated himself rather stiffly on a divan (man was not made to sit. Wright always said) and began to proclaim his gospel.

"Certainly men are restless and confused," he said. "They know the old patterns don't make sense with the new knowledge man has gained. They don't realize, or are unwilling to admit, that this new knowledge smashes the old culture, the old ideas of what was beautiful, of what was utilitarian. They are only vaguely beginning to understand that this new knowledge undermines the old idea of what a city should be. They don't yet see that decentralization is bound to come, that in the future the whole countryside will be a city.

"Factories are going to the country. Skyscrapers are the last defiant gesture upholding the outmoded idea that men and business under modern transportation should be cooped together like flies in traps.

"The skyscraper was a grand gesture, but it exploited the city to the point where it exploded it. Now men with modern machines want a simpler life. They want less exaggeration and more integration; the congested city, for all its concentration, never achieved integration, but only piled confusion on confusion."

Fortunately, the Sondern house was to be on a site of about five acres overlooking a park; it was an anomaly of a rural setting only a few minutes from downtown Kansas City. So Wright was in his element. He had space, a vista, trees and grass, and quiet.

continued on page 17
the new dimension in creating with masonry

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What Wright Wrought

But the site for the Community church (now Community Christian Church) at Forty-sixth and Main streets was nearly impossible. It sloped steeply, to no advantage. It was near a busy intersection and abutting a major north-south traffic artery. It was small. It was immediately south of a tall apartment building that defied any church designer to seek emotional impact with a tall steeple.

The old Community church on Linwood boulevard had burned. After Wright left the Sondem apartment he addressed 400 members of the congregation, describing somewhat vaguely what he had in mind for them. He spoke from the pulpit at the old Temple B'nai Jehudah, and one observer commented that the only thing not modern about Wright that night was his haircut, "considerably on the Buffalo Bill side." There was difficulty in hearing the old architect.

"A church," he said, "cannot afford to evade the great American art, the art that is coming. We must realize this modern concept as the integrity of life. Look at you sitting there. You are regimented. Only a few of you can sit in any comfort. Probably few of you can hear."

"Louder!" called a voice from the audience. The architect, surprisingly enough, obliged.

"We have built some buildings that show a trust in life," he continued. "The majority of them in this country have not been built that way. Life is boxed up. Why not set it free? We no longer live in a feudal system. We don't use the materials we have usefully, the stone, the steel, the bricks, the concrete. If we use the material we paint or varnish it and it is dead."

"I could talk for hours about this church, but words don't always mean what they seem. Poets can talk for hours, but architects can't."

"I'll build you a church you won't walk in; you'll ride in. Nobody walks anymore, unless it's for pleasure. There'll be no radiators, no inlet for the heat, no basement. We'll heat the floors by a mat on broken stones. We'll heat by gravity."

"Water comes down, heat goes up. I applied that principle to the Imperial hotel in Tokyo, but only after I ran across it in a Japanese home. The Romans once heated their floors. The Imperial was so far along I could put the heat only in the bathrooms by the floor principle."

A man in the audience called out, "Say, Mr. Wright, where are you going to put these motor cars that drive in?"

"That," Wright said, "is a secret."

Wright returned in June, 1940, with plans for the building committee to see. In succeeding months he battled with city officials, who refused to issue a building permit on account of his plans for a floating foundation. Conventional foundations eventually were agreed upon. Meanwhile, the Sondem house was built north of the home of Thomas Hart Benton. Benton had met Wright in 1928 at Brown university.

In 1941, Benton had his own battle, with the board of governors of the Kansas City continued on page 19
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A view close-in of the Sondern house indicates its feeling of oriental grace and calm. To the left is the kitchen and to the right the living and dining area.

Art Institute, where he had been chairman of the department of painting and drawing since 1935. The fight began one April night when Benton was in New York for a 1-man show at the galleries of the Associated American Artists. Cornered in a back room by members of the press who had come prepared with booze, Benton spoke his mind.

"If it was left to me, I wouldn't have any museums," Benton declared. "Nobody looks at pictures in museums. I'd like to sell mine to saloons, bawdy houses, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs and chambers of commerce, even women's clubs."

Benton continued that typically a museum was "a graveyard run by a pretty boy with delicate wrists and a swing in his gait. The pretty boys run the museums because it's a field most living men wouldn't take on. It's a field where you take care of the dead, and nobody wants that."

Angry letters were circulating in Kansas City when Benton returned. The press for days published the pros and cons. The board of governors, on May 5, voted not to renew Benton's contract on the ground that no man with a position at the Art Institute could

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A lost opportunity, Wright's largest project here, the Community Christian church, stands bleakly in the winter sun. The structure was only about half completed according to the architect's plans, and later was defiled by additions. The loss is the city's, for in Wright's 89 years he designed only six or seven churches.

19
THIRTY YEARS

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expect to be allowed to speak merely as an individual. Two days later, Wright and his wife and their daughter, Iovanna, arrived to inspect construction of the Community church. Wright promptly rapped on Benton's door and consulted with the painter.

"Whatever I say Tom is going to say, 'Me, too,'" Wright said later. "If a creative artist can't have the privilege of free speech and still be a teacher, we already are Hitler-ized in some kind of Fascist society, whatever its name."

Benton and Wright had lunch at the Bellerive hotel, continuing their conversation. Wright eyed the martini at Benton's place and warned him that he would have to give that kind of thing up in another 15 years. Benton merely nodded. Wright had a fruit cocktail at his place; despite his love affairs there was a puritanical streak in his character.

"I have built some 300-odd buildings," Wright said, ambiguously, "and never yet have seen an American businessman, given a chance to choose between the poorer and the better thing, who wouldn't instinctively choose the better. But their wives, ah; they have been abroad and picked up a little culture and inject their ideas."

"That's right," Benton said. Wright said art flowered in times of peace and great prosperity, but Benton said it was done in times of great stress, wars, famine and pestilence. Benton suggested Wright was thinking of architecture, not painting.

"No," said Wright, "as a matter of fact art is best done by children."

"Architecture, maybe." Benton responded. "But painting is a vulgar, where architecture is a gentle art." Wright changed the subject.

Wright stayed in Benton's home on occasions, and Benton said recently, "Actually, I sort of liked him. We disagreed on everything, but we remained good friends."

"Nobody could get along with him very well, but you remained friends. He was a great actor; a ham."

As construction of the church progressed it became apparent to the community that something radical, indeed, was being built. It had a steel frame, welded in some 20,000 places. The walls were of sprayed concrete only four inches thick. The final spray was rose-tinted and for a short time the church was rose-colored, until the congregation made a volunteer project out of painting it a more sterile white.

continued on page 23

The chancel of the Community Christian church is a simple statement in walls of sprayed concrete enhanced with lighting from above and foliage. Note the choir loft behind the patterned concrete screen.
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KANSAS CITY
CHICAGO ○ FT. SMITH
What Wright Wrought

The Community church was to become a series of disappointments. From the beginning it was a low-cost structure and the fact that at the dedication January 4, 1942, it was announced that it had cost only $156,000 (with seating for 1,350 persons) is nothing short of amazing.

Because it was an urban church on a bad site Wright did the only logical thing to do; he introverted it, to shield the sanctuary from the outdoors. Because of the parking needs, Wright had planned three levels for parking on the south side, integrated with the church frame. These never were built.

Wright's perspectives of the church were published in Hitchcock’s “In the Nature of Materials”, and when one sees there the soaring horizontal sweep he achieved with the parking levels and nearly windowless church walls there can be no disagreeing with the critic who said the church today is but a pale shadow of Wright's plans.

The inspirational motif on the exterior was to have come from powerful lights beamed through the diamond-patterned perforated roof over the chancel; but the lights never were installed. Again, the congregation never built the small chapel planned originally on the south side. It, too, was to have had a perforated roof with lights beneath it.

Later, when the church received a gift from Helen Bonfils Somnes of New York the associate pastor planned the Bonfils chapel on the Main street side, abruptly terminating the church structure at a point where it was intended to have swept off southward with the parking levels. To add further insult, if that were possible, a wing of utterly pedestrian design was added to the southeast.

To experience what architecture remains there one should enter the church from Forty-sixth street and wander along the angular passageways leading to the sanctuary. The church was designed on a 5-foot module, with a delightful interplay of wall surfaces meeting at 60 and 120-degree angles.

The center has a light well with a mezzanine library, another playful handling of space. The choir is placed in a loft behind the pulpit, mostly hidden by a concrete screen pierced by diamond patterns. Most of the roof of the church is flat, being designed outdoor services should the pastor ever desire to compete with the traffic.

Less of a challenge to Wright, the Sondem house was nicely executed and expanded by Wright in 1949 for Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Adler. It is now owned by Richard Stern.

The Sondem home hardly can be seen from the road, and its plan remains a mystery until one gets inside. The site is very large and the home is set for the utmost privacy, at the end of a long drive. Wright again indulged his fondness for concealing the entrance, and

continued on page 25
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From a wooded hillside north of the Missouri river the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bott thrusts its concrete jaw—a massively cantilevered terrace overlooking the city.

What Wright Wrought

though the door is wide and nearly entirely of glass, it is in the shadows at one end of the carport. A strongly cantilevered and perforated roof covers the carport, which is divided by brick piers into three parking spaces.

To the right of the entrance foyer is the kitchen, recently expanded. Beyond the kitchen is the wing added in 1949, with the characteristically large fireplace and living and dining space. The older part of the home, at right angles to the added wing, points northwest and is dominated by what was once the living room and is now a study, with one side facing a terrace and glazed with windows nearly nine feet high.

Scattered between the old and new living areas are the bedrooms and baths. Beyond the carport, an area damaged last spring by fire is being remodeled as a bedroom, unfortunately without much sympathy for the original materials of the house. Metal-framed French doors have been installed, though the rest of the house is trimmed and panelled with cypress, and the interior walls of this room are not being carried through with cypress.

Indeed, one of the great beauties of the Sondem home is its exemplary use of a restricted range of materials; inside and out, the house is entirely of cypress and tapestry brick.

A swimming pool, another project in the expansion of the home, is at the rear, and a small spray pool is off one corner of the living area. Sited off the crest of the hill, extended in several directions as if some kind of creeping plant, securely sheltered under broad eaves, the Sondem house has an aura of oriental serenity—yet there are no oriental motifs in the design. The uncluttered rooms, heated through the floor mat as in the Community church, come to life each day with that incomparable light achieved through clerestories.

In short, this house is a complete expression of the values Wright sought in a home.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bott had the good fortune to acquire early in 1956 a long, narrow lot (roughly 70 by 250 feet) on Briarcliff road, north of the Missouri river. The outer rim of Briarcliff road offers perhaps the best vista in the Greater Kansas City area, encompassing in a single panorama the downtown skyline, the two rivers, and the hills of Clay and Platte Counties.

The Botts long had been attracted to Wright's architecture and particularly impressed by the interiors of his homes, such as the delightful Pew home in Madison, Wis.

continued on page 27
DESIGN PROBLEM

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What Wright Wrought

They commissioned Wright and set him topographical studies of the steep and difficult site they had purchased. He began plans late in 1956 and they were completed six months before his death.

For the Bott home Wright chose walls of concrete poured over rubble, the same technique used in the architect's winter home at Taliesin West, near Scottsdale, Ariz. For trim and panelling he chose Philippine mahogany.

In plan, the house again took the logical solution as determined by the site. The carport is at the street side, parallel with a short drive. The house continues to widen as it shoots off from the hillside, reaching a spatial climax in a living and dining area that opens through French doors onto a wildly cantilevered terrace, projecting ship-like toward the southwest.

On the entire first floor there are only two main areas; the master bedroom, toward the carport, and the living and dining space with a study nook at one side and kitchen area at the other.

The second floor (going down) has two guest bedrooms and baths, and the bottom floor has mechanical equipment and storage space. The house was set so far down the precipitous site that foundation problems resulted in the bottom floor having a ceiling about 13 feet high, five feet more than was planned.

Wright's aesthetic concern can be noted in studying a section drawing, which shows that with a datum of 0 at the living floor level the ceiling was 8 feet above and the top of the massive chimney 16 feet; while working downward, the second floor level was 8 feet below and the bottom floor level 16 feet below.

Another subtlety occurs in the design of the terrace, which is assymetrical. The farthest point of the parapet is off-center about four feet, making one side of the terrace shorter and broader than the other side. Presumably, this was to combat the prow-like appearance that naturally came from such an immense cantilever. On the other hand, Wright mysteriously canted the floor of the living and dining area four different ways, which might seem ship-like indeed to a person with a refined sense of balance.

As in the Sondem home, the roof is cantilevered and perforated for airiness and play of light and shadow. The Bott home, however, has a battened hip roof instead of a flat roof. And it is covered with sheet metal painted a hue known as Taliesin turquoise.

The use of painted sheet metal instead of naturally aging copper, measured against Wright's principles of expressing the natural state of materials, can be questioned. Perhaps the brighter color was what prompted Wright. A flamboyant use of color was just coming into his work in his last years. As to paint over metal, Wright probably gave his best explanation when questioned by Bruce Goff about a similar aberration. "Can't I have a holiday?" he responded.

The Bott home has been constructed slowly and with care. It is now nearly finished. From U.S.71, far below Briarcliff road, it can be seen how much lower to the earth the Bott home is compared with its neighbors, and yet how much farther it projects off the hillside so its owners may enjoy the magnificent view. Because the home fully utilizes its site, there is little opportunity for altering it in the future. Thus it seems destined to be the most exactly realized of Wright's three projects here.

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One of the outstanding architectural landmarks in America is the Frederick C. Robie house on Chicago's South Side. The drive to gather funds for its restoration is making slow progress and is still far short of the $250,000 goal.

The Frederick C. Robie house for 55 years has weathered Chicago soot and the neglect of its owners. Still it retains impact as a unique work of art. Prowl through it, pound on it, gaze at its elevations and ponder its plan; then realize how impossible it is to dissolve the mystery of this house.

What other project could conceivably bring together such diverse architectural talents as Walter Gropius, Kenzo Tange, Mies van der Rohe, Alden Dow, Philip Johnson, and Edward Durell Stone? All are members of the distinguished Committee for the Preservation of the Robie House.

By the end of 1963 the committee had raised more than $40,000. The goal is $250,000. "In the past 11 months we have received contributions from all parts of the United States," Ira J. Bach, committee chairman, said. "Contributions also have been made by people in Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Italy, England, and France.

"We are hopeful that contributions will increase as people come to realize the significance of this great architectural landmark, and the importance of its preservation. Modern architecture cannot afford the loss of one of its greatest achievements."

Completed in 1909, the Robie house was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in his first maturity. Robie, a bicycle manufacturer, occupied it only a few years. It was purchased in 1926 by the Chicago Theological Seminary, used for various purposes and eventually neglected. The seminary at one time planned to demolish it to make way for a dormitory.

Wright remained fond of the house and he took its neglect and proposed demolition personally. "That shows the danger of entrusting anything spiritual to the clergy," he said.

William Zechendorf, chairman of Webb & Knapp, Inc., bought the house in 1957 at a reported figure of $125,000. He used it as a field office for the nearby Hyde Park renewal project. He gave the house to the University of Chicago last February.

The university has indicated that it is legally unable to use its general funds for purposes of architectural restoration. However, it continues to pay about $6,000 a year for taxes and maintenance and will bear all such costs if the house is suitably restored.

"It is in need of extensive work, although it is still structurally sound," Bach said. "One reason is that the house has not been used as a residence since 1926. The total fund-raising goal was set at $250,000, instead of the $190,885 shown in the estimate, because the work is to be done at an unspecified time in the future. Also, the estimate does not provide for architects' fees or landscaping work.

continued on page 31
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"We will be unable to set a definite date as a goal for starting work until enough money has been raised to start restoration. Our original goal was to have raised the entire $250,000 by the end of 1963. Restoration work itself will probably take about one year.

"The university has not yet made a definite decision as to the use of the house. It may be used as a residence for visiting scholars, or possibly as the president's house. It is understood that a portion of the house will be open to the public at specified times."

The original cost of the Robie house was only about $35,000. Though the restoration costs might appear exorbitant, they were carefully estimated by the H.B. Barnard company, which built the house, and several members of the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, in consultation with the university.

The high costs stem from such items as $26,146 for roof work, including new roof tile, gutters, decks, flashings, and copper cornices; $32,875 for reconstructing exterior brickwork; $17,550 for carpentry; $32,166 for heating and air-conditioning; $12,765 for plumbing and $10,903 for electrical work.

J. Roy Carroll, president of the AIA, in the August issue of the Journal asked architects to contribute to the Robie house fund. He suggested gifts between $10 and $50.

"The preservation and the already promised maintenance by the University of Chicago," Carroll said, "will show that our profession puts a high value on architecture as part of the national environment, and I earnestly recommend your support."

Though the Robie house has the low, horizontal emphasis which characterizes Wright's prairie houses, it is in fact a large town house on a long and narrow urban lot. The remarkably extended roofs thus serve as much to provide privacy as shelter. The strip of French doors is shielded by the long parapet on the south side of the house.

Art critics have had a field day with the Robie house for its plan cannot be successfully analyzed in terms of function but must be discussed in the aesthetic terms of mass and space, light and shadow, line and shape.

Latter-day students of art and architecture should have the opportunity to visit the Robie house, restored and maintained in a manner respecting the wonder of its design.

Contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes. Checks should be made payable to the Robie house restoration fund, University of Chicago, and sent to the Robie house committee, room 1006, City Hall, Chicago 2, Ill.

The south elevation of the Robie house shows its ribbon-windows, with leaded patterns; the fine Roman brickwork; the wide eaves, and its serene lines in sympathy with the earth.
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Translated by R.P. Harper.

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