

Lake Forest Preservation Foundation NEWSLETTER

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Pond & Pond: Lake Forest's Socially-Conscious Architects

by Janet M. Gibson & Paul Bergmann

A small, elegant pavilion gracefully identifies West Park. Although small in size, its presence defines the park with its detailed brickwork and accents, dog-eared gables, and low overhangs. When one thinks of Lake Forest's notable architects, the names Howard Van Doren Shaw, David Adler, and Stanley D. Anderson immediately come to mind. However, the architectural firm of Pond & Pond designed this pavilion in 1922, already having left its imprint on Lake Forest with several significant educational and residential projects while also making a larger impact on Chicago's architecture in the early 20th Century. The pavilion was nominated recently as a contributing structure to the proposed West Park National Register Historic District.

Brothers Irving K. Pond (1857-1939) and Allen B. Pond (1858-1929) were graduates of University of Michigan. Irving had received his first architectural training in the Chicago offices of William Le Baron Jenney, who was

Chicago's first Beaux-Arts-trained architect, and later, with Solon S. Beman. In Beman's office Irving worked on the initial design of the new company town of Pullman. Irving gained invaluable knowledge and experience with brick detailing and craftsmanship that would later appear in the firm's work.

In addition to the West Park pavilion, Pond & Pond designed several social settlement houses, most importantly the 13 buildings at Jane Addams' Hull-House. The firm also designed the Settlement House of Northwestern University, as well as numerous educational and recreational facilities on the North Shore, including Ravinia School and the Highland Park Club House.

The Pond Brothers were very involved in social services activities throughout their lives. Irving participated in architectural activities ultimately becoming president of



Irving K. and Allen B. Pond in their office on the eleventh floor of Steinway Hall (Bentley)

the nationally-recognized American Institute of Architects (AIA). Allen became a trustee and secretary at Hull-House for 34 years until his death. Pond & Pond's buildings were often related to social services, an outlook perhaps inspired by their father's role as warden of the State Prison at Jackson, Michigan. As part of the social services movement, they believed

that architecture could be instrumental in curing some of the ills of tenement housing caused by the explosive growth of Chicago following the Great Fire in 1871.

The earliest known commission for Pond & Pond in Lake Forest was the three-building campus for Lake Forest Academy, then part of Lake Forest University, designed in 1892. The large brick main building with its chapel was Reid Hall, given in honor of the late Simon S. Reid, Chicago grocery merchant and Lake Forest resident. As part of the campus, the firm also designed two residence halls: Annie Durand Cottage and East House. East House is the only surviving structure and is now known as Moore Hall of Lake Forest College. When East House burned in 1922, it was restored with an added fourth floor and significant changes to its facade.

As research by Shirley M. Paddock, Daniel Meyer and Arthur H. Miller has shown, the Lake Forest connection with Pond & Pond continued with the Hull family. In 1900 Miss Helen Culver, cousin to Charles J. Hull and heiress to Hull's extensive real estate holdings, bought a neglected farm and commissioned Pond & Pond to build Rookwoods on Telegraph Road (now Waukegan Road). Miss Culver was the

well-known philanthropist who had given Hull's Chicago home to Jane Addams who in turn developed the pioneer settlement house, Hull-House, named after her cousin. Both the Lake Forest home Rookwoods and the 13-building Hull-House complex were built by Pond & Pond.

In addition to Rookwoods, Pond & Pond also designed Lake Forest's 1909 Arthur D. Wheeler estate, Thalfried, on East Deerpath (site of the 2007 Preservation Foundation's Holiday Celebration). The house has a romantic driveway that bridges the ravine as it wanders to the house.

The firm's innovative architecture is notable for its exceptionally-detailed brickwork and distinctive decorative elements, as well as its influence on the turn-of-the-century architecture. Both Pond brothers were members of "The Eighteen", the seminal group of Chicago architects, including Wright, Shaw, Hugh Garden, Dwight Perkins, and others. This group referenced the Prairie School partly through their use of horizontal massing, ribbon windows, and low overhanging eaves. Pond & Pond's buildings rank among the city's best. West Park's pavilion, Rookwoods, and Thalfried all fit into the simple, horizontal character of this approach.

Both Ponds were prolific writers and speakers. Illustrating his social conscientiousness, Allen Pond said in a 1901 architectural magazine article, "The architect, if he fulfills the true spirit of his calling, is both an idealist and utilitarian." His brother Irving may have coined the term "Prairie Style" when he wrote in 1918, "...the new style echo[ed] the spirit of the prairies of the great Middle West."

Irving and Allen Pond had passions for architecture, life, and social causes. This intensity is demonstrated through their architectural designs striving to improve quality of life, including the Hull-House, the Highland Park Club House, and Lake Forest's very own pavilion at West Park. Lake Forest is fortunate to enjoy this graceful pavilion.

INFILL By Sarah Wimmer

Infill is defined by new construction in an already-existing neighborhood or district. In recent years, infill has become increasingly evident as Lake Forest has become built-out, and there is very little open space remaining. Primarily, infill has come about due to demolition of existing structures. It also exists for new construction in open space or by subdivision of larger properties. This presents challenges to the sites in terms of context, compatibility, design, scale and appropriateness.

At the "Sense and Cents-abilities Conference" in May 2004, sponsored by the City and the Preservation Foundation, our speaker Donovan Rypkema said convincingly: "The value of one's property is derived from the properties surrounding it and not solely from the confines of its lot lines."

In 1998, the Preservation Foundation initiated an award for "new construction that exhibits outstanding contextual compatibility" in order to increase public awareness of issues of infill design.

Four areas in Lake Forest will be mentioned in this article which have had numerous infill projects over the last fifteen or more years. They are: Lake Road, Onwentsia Road, Green Bay Road, and the West Park neighborhood. At the same time, infill has affected Lake Forest as a whole for a number of years.

LAKE ROAD Lake Road is the prime example of an area changed by infill. The new development of the '80s and '90s transformed it. This was largely the work of a single architect.

As a part of Lake Forest's first National Register District, infill of this dimension has changed the character and streetscape of Lake Road.

- 700 North Lake Road
- 950 North Lake Road
- 1505 North Lake Road, a new mansion on a vacant lot just south of the Lake Forest Cemetery is in the planning stage at this time.
- It should be noted that in 2007, the Foundation recognized the new house on vacant land at 745 East Woodland Road with an Infill Award (Diana Melichar, architect, in the Arts and Crafts Style).
- Another new project (not on Lake Road) at 245 Sheridan Road (Thomas Rajkovich, architect) also received an Infill Award for being harmonious with older homes nearby.

ONWENTZIA ROAD Onwentsia Road and streets off Onwentsia have been especially hard hit by infill in recent years. Once a walking street, the character of this semi-rural area has been severely impacted.

- 55 East Onwentsia Road
- 111 East Onwentsia Road
- 261 East Onwentsia Road
- 3 West Onwentsia Road
- 77 Sequoia Court
- 70 Sequoia Court
- 200 West Onwentsia Road
- 25 Shawnee Lane
- 380 West Onwentsia Road



261 East Onwentsia Road (demolished)

GREEN BAY ROAD The Green Bay Road National Register Historic District, listed in November 1995, extends from 10 South to 1596 North Green Bay Road and adjacent properties. Several infill properties include:

- 602 South Green Bay Road
- 685 South Green Bay Road
- 30 North Green Bay Road
- 1451 North Green Bay Road, a recently-built house at the southeast corner of North Green Bay and Alden. It is just outside of the North Green Bay Road National Register District.
- On the west side of North Green Bay Road, a new subdivision parcel off of 910 North Green Bay is planned.

WEST PARK The West Park National Register Historic District was approved by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office in September. Certification by the Department of the Interior in Washington is expected shortly. This neighborhood

appears to be the least impacted by infill in Lake Forest.

- At 98 East Woodland Road, an English cottage designed by David Poulton opposite the park, fits neatly on a property less than half an acre and fifty feet wide. It received an Infill Award in 1998.
- Another property at 60 East Woodland Road should be mentioned. This house was built on two lots, thus permitting a much larger home.



98 East Woodland Road

Statistics regarding demolitions and infill, provided by the City of Lake Forest, are as follows:

- 2007 13 demolitions
- 2006 16 demolitions
- 2005 23 demolitions—the peak year

Over a 15 year period, there have been 10 to 12 demolitions per year in Lake Forest on average.

Numerous examples, in addition to those mentioned, can be seen throughout Lake Forest. How have these projects affected the built environment and visual character of our community? There should be a delicate balance between the old and the new. Has that balance been kept? You decide.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Free to Members * \$10 for Non-members

"Lake Forest College's Preservation Plan Project & Campus Guidebook"

presented by Art Miller, Franz Schulze & Sara Woodbury '08

Sunday, March 2 * 2:00 p.m. * Lake Forest College

(please note date change from February 24)

Copies of the Guidebook Will Be Available for \$18

"Our Historic Train Station: 1900 to the Present"

Sunday, April 6 * 2 p.m. * Gorton Community Center

The Lake Forest Preservation Foundation Annual Meeting

with Presentation of Our Preservation Award Winners

Sunday, May 18 * 2 p.m. * Gorton Community Center

"Garden Design by Craig Bergmann"

including a Garden Visit

Sunday, June 8 * 1-3 p.m. * Gorton Community Center

"Chalk Talk and Tours"

Summer architecture course geared toward High School students

June 16 – 19 Watch for details

FOUR GOOD BOOKS

as Recommended by President Art Miller

“How to Look at Buildings,” by Darcy Braddell, 4th edition. London: Methuen & Company, 1949. The first edition was first published in 1932 when modernism was beginning to challenge the Beaux-Arts consensus. The author saw a need to codify the tenets of architectural success. The table of contents is a listing of classic or Beaux-Arts topics:

- expression
- proportion (with two subsections on windows)
- scale
- detail (including the nature of materials)
- ornament
- texture
- colour [sic]
- civic sense (“a question of good manners”)

“The Old Way of Seeing,” by Jonathan Hale. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994. This little book provides a geometric and mathematical insight into the old, pre-industrial revolution principles of architecture and a system for evaluating the regularity of facades—Beaux-Arts repetition. It shows how Frank Lloyd Wright, who had worked for Ecole-trained Louis Sullivan, was more a part of this tradition than some later modernists.

“The Perfect House: A Journey With the Renaissance Master Andrea Palladio,” by Witold Rybczynski. New York: Scribner, 2002. Hardly the final word on Palladio or a pictorial survey of the master’s work, rather this is a very personal guide to the essence of Palladio’s invention of the modern residence of the type we know in Lake Forest. The author visited all the Palladio villas in the countryside near Venice and actually rented one for a while, to experience living in it. “...Palladio’s real secret: his equilibrium, his sweet sense of harmony. He pleases the mind as well as the eye. His sturdy homes, rooted to their sites, radiate order and balance...”

...And Don’t Forget the “Dos and Don’ts”

“Traditional Construction Patterns: Design and Detail Rules of Thumb,” by Stephen A. Mouzon. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004. “This book explains, in layman’s terms, the vague sense of unease we’ve all had with traditional architecture done incorrectly for the past half-century and provides the tools for doing it right again.” Here is a “collection of 108 patterns illustrated as Dos and Don’ts with diagrams and photographs.” It will inspire a trip around town!

CHICKEN COOP

By Pauline Mohr

As the rehabilitation of the farm buildings in the Elawa Farm Buildings complex moves forward, one member of the ensemble remains in need of rehabilitation—the David Adler designed chicken coop. The chicken coop stands out as unique as a henhouse with its brick walls covered by a slate roof. The level of architectural detail also raises the Elawa coop above the level of an ordinary chicken house. With large windows to regulate the airflow and whimsical arches above the openings for the comings and goings of the hens, this coop provided elegant shelter for the Elawa hens. Once rehabilitated, the coop would be used as a supplement to the center for outdoor education at the farm, as museum display space focusing on the history and science of farming in Illinois and for traveling or rotating exhibits.

Although this henhouse stands out as unique in its design, the existence of henhouses in Lake Forest can be found in a number of locations around town—most being adaptively reused. A bit of “hidden” history in plain sight. John T. McCutcheon’s studio, now an artist’s studio, and one of the dwellings in the Meadowood National Register District are two that come to mind. A rehabilitated Elawa coop would join this distinguished group of humble shelters transformed into singular structures of historic value and current and future worth and usefulness.

CHALK TALK AND TOURS: A FOUNDATION FIRST!

The Preservation Foundation is pleased to announce its first ever summer architecture course geared toward high school students. President Art Miller and Program Chair Jane Partridge are putting together a four-day intensive program scheduled for the afternoons of June 16–19. It will include at least one day-long field trip. Keep your eye on the mailbox and the Foundation’s website at www.lfpf.org for details on this and other upcoming Foundation events.

BECOME A MEMBER!

By joining the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, you will have a voice in and the ability to play an active role in efforts to preserve and enhance the quality of life that influenced you to choose Lake Forest for your home or business.

Together, we can ensure the preservation of the historic visual character of Lake Forest.

To become a member visit our website at www.lfpf.org or call 847-234-1230 for a membership brochure.

A CALL FOR 2008 PRESERVATION NOMINATIONS

18TH ANNUAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Each year the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation honors individuals and organizations who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in the preservation of Lake Forest's architectural heritage.

Any structure or landscape constructed over fifty years ago is eligible to be nominated. Nominations may be made by any interested person—the owner, a neighbor or friend, an admiring passerby. The owner's approval will be obtained by the Foundation for nominations by one other than the owner.

Awards, which are handsome bronze plaques, are presented at the Preservation Foundation's Annual Meeting. This year's meeting is on Sunday, May 18, at 2 p.m. in the Community Room of the Gorton Community Center. Following the meeting, everyone is invited to a reception at an historic Lake Forest property that exemplifies efforts to preserve Lake Forest's historic visual character.

There are five categories of awards, the first four based on "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties" with an additional category for new construction or infill. Judging is based on the ten standards from "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation" and may be viewed at www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/tax/rhb/.

Preservation

Maintaining the historical integrity and character of a structure or landscape through conservation, maintenance and repair.

Rehabilitation

Continuing the use of an historic structure through repair, alterations and additions while protecting its historical, cultural and architectural character. Includes adaptive re-use.

Restoration

Recovering, revealing or representing the state of an historic structure or landscape as it appeared at a particular time in history.

Reconstruction

Recreating the form, features and details of an historic structure or landscape through new construction.

New Construction or Infill

Building new construction that demonstrates exemplary contextual compatibility in an established neighborhood.

Nominations are now being accepted by completing the form found on the Foundation's website, www.lfpf.org or by requesting one from the office at 847-234-1230.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At a recent "Fireside Chat" at Gorton I gave an overview of the contextual reasons behind Lake Forest's significance as an architectural and landscape-architectural treasure in the Midwest and the country.

During the Country Place Era, from the 1890s to the 1930s, the historic visual character of Lake Forest was established, one of a few leading community examples of American Renaissance building and landscape development of this highpoint in American classic design. It corresponds to the zenith of Chicago's Railroad Empire era, when the city was the distribution capital of the continent. Its 1850s founding Presbyterians in east Lake Forest were Scots and New Englanders, whose access to capital elsewhere helped them drive Chicago's growth.

Later the town grew and included the many earlier settlers' farms west of the 1855 completed rail line. This was the original western boundary of the elite, almost-gated community east to the lake among the ravines and on the bluffs. On the prairies west of Green Bay Road these farms starting in the 1890s yielded to estates, and then by the mid 20th C. to subdivisions, as tax policies broke up the concentrations of capital which had made those storied places possible.

These estates first east and later west provide the template for this community, its DNA. Their houses and gardens, fields and farms, were a culture that briefly flourished, and with it a large local community, too, of stable supporting business people and professionals, highly specialized for this unique community. The lake and neighbor Samuel Insull's electric initiatives combined to create a unique microclimate here for English gardens that were the wonder of the country's elite in the first third of the 20th C. Recently some have been restored, visited increasingly, and treasured by many. Modern smaller lots on former estates all are built on or near formerly-designed landscapes and gardens, sometimes with remarkable surviving elements—small fountains or garden forms, or even sweeping vistas, the work of masters a few generations ago.

The Foundation's Board and its members, over five hundred today, are building on three decades of history advocating for saving and preserving the best of this complex estate and related educational and built heritage. Periodically it is essential to recall for the whole community, as new residents arrive and as new challenges present themselves, the world-class significance of this built and nurtured legacy, and how it colors our daily lives here. Its fragile fabric evolves, but to date has avoided breaking down into disharmony and disequilibrium in new development. This is the result of efforts of many, yesterday and today, working together to preserve the best of the streetscapes, open spaces, built landmarks, and designed landscapes.

With the support of the community our efforts continue,

Art Miller

UP-TO-THE MINUTE INFORMATION

Want to know what is going on at the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation? Reminders of programs and upcoming events? Send your e-mail address to info@lfpf.org and we will keep you in the know!



The Lake Forest Preservation Foundation

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