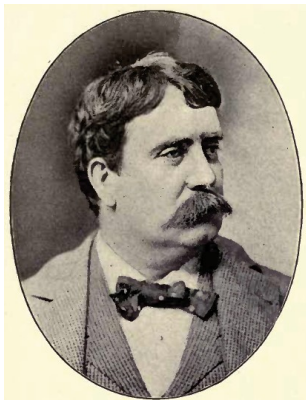


BURNHAM & ROOT IN ST. LOUIS

by Esley Hamilton

The centennial of Daniel Burnham's plan for Chicago Plan in 2009 produced an outpouring of articles and exhibitions. The University of Chicago Press published Carl S. Smith's book, *The Plan of Chicago*, in 2007, and the next year reprinted Thomas S. Hines' 1974 biography, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*. A few years earlier, Rizzoli published Kristen Schaffer's *Daniel H. Burnham: Visionary Architect and Planner*, filled with sumptuous color photos by Paul Rocheleau.



Daniel Burnham 1846-1912



John Wellborn Root 1850-1891

Surprisingly, the list of works that Hines published in 1974, providing names of clients but no addresses, has never been updated, in contrast to the scholarly attention given to the early work of Adler & Sullivan, at least by a few devotees. After the death in 1891 of Burnham's original partner John Wellborn Root, his new firm, D. H. Burnham and Company, produced many large civic and commercial works which remain landmarks in their communities. The early practice, by contrast, included several hundred residential commissions which are almost unknown. The chances of recovering knowledge of these houses seem slim, partly because of the fire that destroyed the offices of Burnham & Root in 1885 and partly because of the massive demolition that Chicago undertook after World War II.



John Whittaker Residence, 901 Garrison at Franklin; razed 1957.
Photograph by William Swekosky, 1940s, Missouri Historical Society
Photographs and Prints Collections

In his 1973 monograph, *The Architecture of John Wellborn Root*, Donald Hoffmann identified only two or three houses as still standing. The City of Chicago's Historic Resources Survey lists 11 surviving buildings from the Burnham & Root era: three office buildings (the Rookery, Monadnock, and Reliance), two churches, the Union Stockyard Gate, and these residences:

32 E. Bellevue Place

442 E. Oakwood Blvd, for I.N.W. Sherman

1308-1310-1312 Astor St., the Houghteling Row

2944 S. Michigan Ave., for Sidney Kent

4545 S. Drexel for W. E. Hale

4941 S. Drexel

All three of the houses that Burnham & Root designed for St. Louis are among the fallen, but at least they are documented by photographs or drawings, and something is known about them from the impact they had on their contemporaries.

The first house of the three to be built was the large one for John Whittaker, in 1880. It was located at 901 Garrison Avenue, on the northwest corner of Franklin in what was "then one of the aristocratic residence sections of the city," as the *Globe-Democrat* later wrote. General William T. Sherman's house was just across the street at 912

North Garrison. Whittaker was a native of Ireland who was making a fortune with Francis Whittaker & Sons, his father's pork packing business. He was married to the socially connected Violet Kennett; a niece of Mayor Luther Kennett and of Ferdinand Kennett, builder of Kennett's Castle, Violet's brother Alfred was treasurer of Washington University, and her sister Grace was married to Hugh McKittrick, vice president of the Hargadine-McKittrick Dry Goods Company, successors to Wayman Crow. John was only 38 when the house was built.

The house garnered much attention when it was built, as its style, then called English Gothic "adapted to the necessities of our peculiar climate," was new in this area. The *Post-Dispatch* called it light and graceful, "of a style that will prove popular in sections of the city where yard room can be spared."

William R. Hodges, a Civil War veteran on Sherman's staff and subsequently in insurance executive, served as art and architecture critic for the short-lived St. Louis monthly magazine, *The Spectator*. He saw the Whittaker House as the opening salvo in the struggle to introduce more up-to-date architectural design to the city, and he wrote a long piece about it for the June 24, 1882 issue of his journal. To him, the house was "the most beautiful, complete and comfortable one in St. Louis."

Hodges underscored several of the novel features of the design. It used brick unashamedly throughout instead of appending a stone front, as blocks of Second Empire houses were doing. Several rooms displayed beautiful fireplaces, but the house had central heating. Instead of the fitted or wall-to-wall carpet used at mid-century, Persian carpets were used on polished floors. And the floor plan featured a large living hall at the entrance instead of a narrow corridor. This space had its own fireplace and broad openings into the adjacent rooms fitted with pocket doors and door drapes or "portieres." The woodwork of the doors, wainscoting and ceiling were cherry birch, and the floors were cherry. The staircase was broad, with three landings, each marking a turn in direction; Hodges described balustrades and newel posts as works of art.

The parlor was lighted by side brackets rather than a chandelier, leaving the ceiling free for a paneled composition paneled like antique stamped leather and framed with gilt. Next to the parlor, the library was paneled in "rich, dark oak." On either side of the fireplace were triple windows whose upper sections were filled with stained glass representing Shakespeare, Milton and other writers. This room had a Gothic Revival chandelier in silver. Continuing along the south side was the dining room, which had a smaller breakfast room to its rear.

The second floor hallway was larger than the one below, measuring about 50 by 25 feet. The principal bedroom, at the southeast corner, had a ceiling painted to represent the blue sky with a flight of swallows across it. Adjacent were dressing rooms, bathrooms "and conveniences," another innovation. Hodges noted that the children's bedroom was decorated with buds and blossoms and "pictures of children of the Kate Greenaway kind," referring to the English artist whose imaginative book illustrations were helping to shape the incoming Queen Anne style at this time.

Hodges does not call the large room at the front of the third floor a ballroom, but says it was intended for private theatricals, music, dancing, or other purposes. Even the basement was part of the entertainment zone, with a billiard room in front, "also adapted for receptions."

John Whittaker lost heavily in the panic of 1893 and withdrew from business. He and his wife sold the property in 1894 and eventually retired to England, where he died in 1914 at age 72. Judging from correspondence in the Burnham Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, the architect and client remained friends; in 1901, Burnham invited Whittaker to come to Chicago to play golf. By then, the house had been acquired by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and they used it as a school for the deaf. In 1934 Father Dunne's Newsboys Home bought it, but after 1946, it became a rooming house. It was demolished in 1957, and the site is now a parking lot.

The list prepared by Thomas Hines has an M. M. Farr House in 1880 and a W. B. Farr House in 1882, but only the latter was built. M. M. Farr was probably Marie M. Farr, the wife of Watson B. Farr, and possibly she approached the firm first. Farr was a banker, born about 1838 in New York. Watson and Marie had a daughter May, born about 1873. Before they built at 17 Vandeventer Place, they were living at 2907 Pine.

William R. Hodges wrote an appreciation of the Farr House for *The Spectator* a month after his Whittaker article. He saw Farr as a hero of progressive patronage because he had not only sought out Burnham & Root but had stopped construction of the house he had already started and had torn out all the work done, including the foundations. (This version of what happened is contrary to the story sometimes told that the new design was constrained by the foundations of the old.)

Hodges repeated several themes from his previous article. "Brick is a beautiful material for building purposes, and there is no better brick made than that of St. Louis, and nothing in Europe compares with it." He expatiated on the quality of the entrance hall, "not a narrow, contracted, imperfectly lighted passageway, but a fine, large apart-

ment,” with fireplace and beautifully carved mantel with art tiles set about the opening, wainscoting a ceiling of paneled oak, windows of stained glass, floors of cherry: “there is an air of perfect home-like taste; nothing of garishness, nothing of ostentation.” He noted that some people thought the ceilings in modern houses such as these were not high enough but opined that there was no need for walls to be more than 13 feet high.



Watson B. Farr Residence, 17 Vandeventer Place, 1882, razed 1950. Photograph by Dorrill Photographers, c. 1946. Missouri Historical Society Photographs and Prints Collections

The parlor woodwork was of maple, decorated in gold. The library behind finished in oak and decorations much lower in tone than the parlor. The dining room was fitted with a carved sideboard and opened through doors to the “piazza” or porch on the west side of the house.

The second floor, reached by a turning staircase with stained glass on the landings, had sleeping rooms, including a hexagonal room called the guests’ room. Also here was a “delightful snugger for the master of the house, with broad inviting chairs and a suggestion of after-dinner Havanas, and the appliances for writing and study. A billiard room was on the third floor. Much of the furniture in the house was custom designed.

At the end of his article, Hodges, wrote “People are fast getting their eyes open, and they will soon demand of the men who design them homes that comfort, convenience, taste and beauty shall be united in their dwellings; and if these are not furnished by St. Louis architects, they will go to Burnham & Root, of Chicago, as did Messrs. Whitaker and Farr, to Peabody & Stearns, of Boston, or someone else who will supply their needs.”

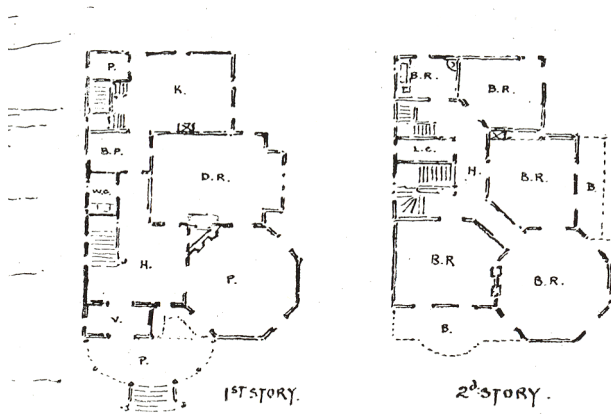
In fact, St. Louis clients did increasingly turn to local talent, although Peabody & Stearns maintained a presence

in the city until 1893 and Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge until 1900. All their work on Vandeventer Place disappeared after 1948, when the site was chosen for the John Cochran Hospital. The Farr House was demolished in 1950.



Sketch for residence for H. Burnett, Esq., St. Louis, Mo. American Architect and Building News, Sept. 9, 1882 The house was built at 3637 Delmar, now Grandel Square

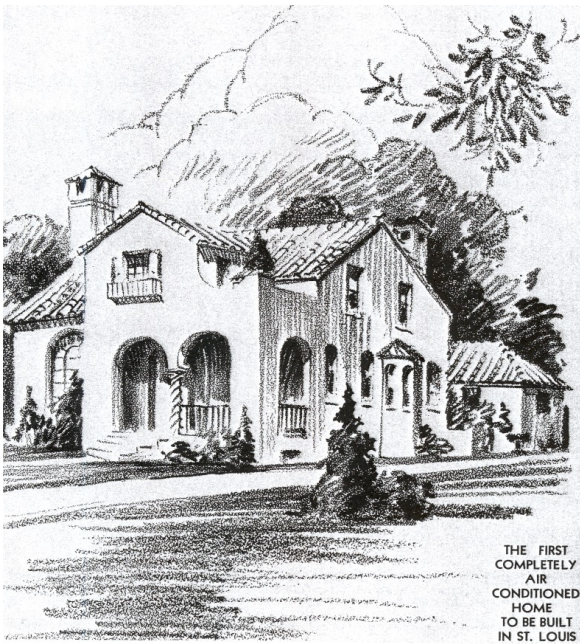
Burnham & Root designed just one other house in St. Louis. It is not included in the Hines list, but it was illustrated in the *American Architect and Building News* on September 9, 1882 (Vo. 12, No. 350). With its porches, balconies, and finials, the house in the drawing is so fanciful that in the absence of photographs one might doubt that it was actually built. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, however, show its footprint exactly as designed. A gap does exist, though, between the design of the house in 1882 and the client’s first appearance in the city directories in 1886 at 3637 Delmar west of Grand (now Grandel Square). His name is often given as Halstead Burnett, but the correct spelling of the family name is Burnet. His first name was variously written Halsted or Holsted. Born in Ohio in 1852, he was in 1886 the manager of N. K. Fairbank & Co., distributors of lard. He changed jobs several times. In 1891, he attempted to secure employment with D. H. Burnham & Co. Instead, he became president of Plows Candy Company. About 1912, just as the neighborhood was beginning to be transformed into an entertainment and office district, the family moved to Cabanne Avenue west of Union. By 1920 he was dealing in agricultural equipment. He died in 1924 at the age of 71. His widow Margaret moved to the Fairmont Hotel, where she survived until 1931.



Floor plans for the Burnet House, part of the sketch from *American Architect and Building News* shown above.

Special thanks to Nathaniel Parks of the Ryerson & Burnham Libraries in the Art Institute of Chicago for checking records and locating correspondence.

THE FIRST AIR-CONDITIONED HOUSE IN ST. LOUIS?



Have you seen this house? Dennis Northcott of the Missouri History Museum has been cataloguing *Union Electric Magazine*, an in-house publication for our power company's employees. The cover for September, 1931, illustrates a Spanish-style house, purporting to be "the first completely air conditioned home to be built in St. Louis."

Here's the whole article as originally published.

A MODERN home within the reach of the average buyer is to have conditioned air throughout. This is a distinct departure in home building – but a practical idea that will have general acceptance when home builders and owners

learn of the complete year-round comfort to be had at reasonable cost. In this home, now being constructed in St. Louis Hills, the heating and cooling system will not only supply fresh, vitalizing air, but will keep the air clean and healthful.

When the summer sun beats down and sweltering weather prevails outside, it will be delightfully cool inside. When blizzards rage and the thermometer hovers around zero, the system will provide the wholesome warmth of a perfect June day. The air will be warmed or cooled for comfort, humidified for health, filtered and purified. These conditions can be applied to any home at moderate cost by application of standard equipment.

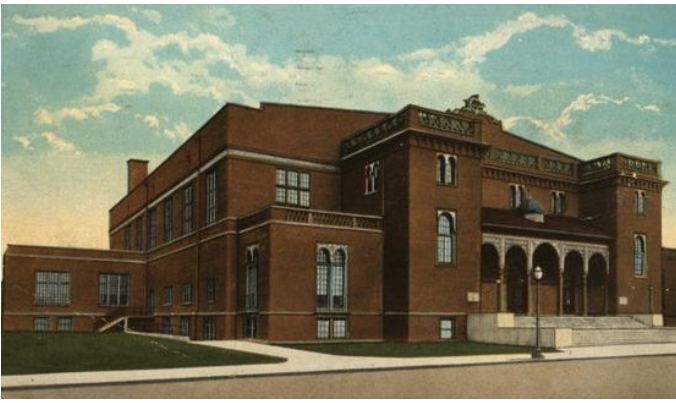
This modern home will also have electric auxiliary heating installed and available when occasion requires. The kitchen will be equipped with electric range, refrigerator, dishwasher, toaster, percolator, and other electric helpers that render such helpful service to the homemaker. In the laundry there will be electric washer, ironer and electric water heater. An electrically operated oil burner will heat the home. In each room an adequate number of properly placed convenience outlets will provide for the convenient use of vacuum cleaner, radio, floor lamps and other appliances that contribute so much to the pleasure and comfort of humanity. Soft, subdued lighting will come from modern, effective lighting fixtures.

This home, which is to be finished in the autumn, will be a model of interest to many and will, upon completion, be open to the public for inspection. Union Electric engineers have counseled with owner and builder of this modern home.

A cursory survey of the St. Louis Hills neighborhood has not identified the house. Like so many projects in those Depression years, it may have been cancelled. If built close to Hampton Avenue, it may have fallen to commercial construction along that corridor. If you have seen this house, please contact the editor.

ARCHITECTURE OF EAST ST. LOUIS FEATURED IN NEW BOOK

Most St. Louisans know less about East St. Louis than they do about Chicago. And what they do know (or think they know) doesn't encourage them to learn more. Mark Abbott, professor of history at Harris-Stowe State University, is trying to remedy that with the new book he edited: *The Making of an All-American City: East St. Louis at 150*, published by the Institute for Urban Research at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.



former Ainad Temple, 609 St. Louis Avenue, East St. Louis, 1922, by William B. Ittner, from a postcard published in 1927

The book is part of an East St. Louis Sesquicentennial Series, edited by Andrew J. Theising. The anniversary refers to April 1, 1861, the date that the municipality of East St. Louis was incorporated, although settlement had been going on for many decades before that, or even centuries if the Cahokia civilization is included.

Abbott has collected 15 essays by a range of scholars and local residents and has arranged them into four chapters, with as epilogue a long poem by Eugene B. Redmond, the city's poet laureate. It turns out that floods, riots, political corruption, and economic decline make surprisingly engaging and upbeat reading.

Michael Allen, formerly of Landmarks Association and now head of the Preservation Research Office in St. Louis, gives the architecture of East St. Louis substantial treatment in his essay, "The Second Skyline: Downtown East St. Louis' Unique Architecture." Illustrating the buildings with postcards and other vintage illustrations, Allen makes the case that the city's business district had a very respectable collection of buildings for its time, far more so than any community in St. Louis County. It included work by St. Louis architects, such as Ittner's Shriners Temple, but also by local designers, notably A. B. Frankel, who designed the Murphy Building in 1909 and the high-rise Spivey Building in 1927 (both now standing abandoned).

A PLACE IN THE COUNTRY: E. A. MANNY'S HOUSE FOR LILBURN MCNAIR by Esley Hamilton

Dennis Northcott of the Missouri History Museum has been working to find the locations of buildings seen in many unlabeled photographs and other materials in the museum's collections. With the aid of Bing maps and other modern sources, he has had considerable success.



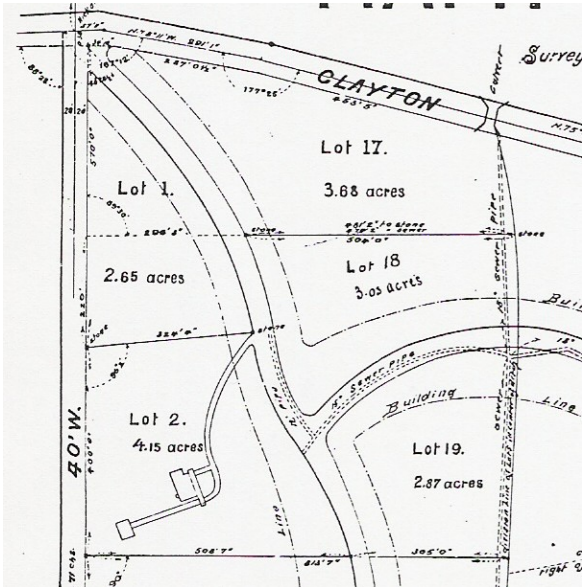
The caption says "Suburban Residence of L. G. McNair, E. A. Manny, Architect."

The picture above presented a particular challenge even though it does name the client. It is found in the 1899 publication of the Saint Louis Architectural Club, *Annual architectural exhibition: being an illustrated catalogue of architectural drawings and examples of work in the allied arts exhibited*. The club, organized in 1891, had several exhibitions, and other catalogs survive in local collections from 1895, 1900, 1902, and 1913.

The L. G. McNair in the caption was Lilburn Gazzam McNair (1856-1924), a grandson of Alexander McNair, Missouri's first governor. He had established the McNair-Harris Realty Company in 1893, the year of his marriage to Minerva Primm (1872-1906). They had two daughters, Jane and Cornelia. In 1896, the *Post-Dispatch* wrote, "The name of no man in St. Louis is better known than that of 'Lil' McNair. He is the undisputed leader of the swell society set. . . In business circles Mr. McNair is no less distinguished than in social life. He began as a railroad man but went into the brokerage business. He was made President of the Kansas City Electric Railway & Tunnel Co. After that he became a promoter of great business enterprises, and in connection with this runs a brokerage office in the Security Building. He is director in half a dozen banks and trust companies. He is a persistent club man, and his name appears on the roster of the St. Louis, University, Marquette, Elks, and Jockey Clubs."

The couple were called "patterns of correctness in style in everything from the elegance of dress to the most minute details in the appointments of their home" in another article published in 1906: "Their wealth and breeding made them natural leaders in society." Mrs. McNair was described as one of St. Louis' most charming hostesses and was conceded to be one of the "best gowned" women in the city. She was one of the best women golfers in the nation. "Of splendid physique, excellent temper and indomitable courage, she far excelled any of her friends on the golf links of St. Louis."

The McNairs built the house in the picture near the south-east corner of Hanley and Clayton roads in 1896. Their interest in golf may have attracted them to the area, since the St. Louis County Club had moved to the west side of Hanley opposite the west end of Wydown in 1896. The site of the house is now occupied by 1053 and 1115 Hampton Park Drive in the private subdivision of Hampton Park.



A detail of the 1897 plat map of Hampton Place showing the McNair house and stable or service house on Lot 2. Note the extension of the front porch to form a porte-cochere, also seen in the photo.

Hampton Park was laid out in its present form in 1910. But its origins go back to 1895, when Ashbel L. Fields bought the tract of 123 acres from John H. Gay. (Gay's family had developed a large country estate along the south side of Clayton Road a generation before, with a large house called Gay Villa where Lake Forest is now.) Fields was a bookkeeper and was presumably acting for others in this transaction. He sold the land a month after buying it to the Country Realty Company, which was headed by Charles Hodgman. A year later, however, Fields obtained 4.15 acres of this tract directly from Gay in return for partial repayment of a mortgage.

Charles Hodgman platted the whole tract in 1897 as "Hampton Place" (Plat Book 5, page 15), using Pitzman's Company as his surveyor. Pitzman designed Lot 2 to accommodate the 4.15-acre parcel that Fields had reserved. The plat map drawn by Pitzman shows a house and carriage house already standing on the lot.

Minerva McNair won several golf tournaments in the next few years, but eventually the family moved back to the city. They had leased the Hampton Place house to Harold Tittman, secretary of St. Louis Cooperage, and were living at 3775 Delmar (now Grandel Square) when

the house burned to the ground on February 21, 1903. The *Post-Dispatch* reported the Mr. Tittman, "helpless with rheumatism," had to be carried from the house. The closest fire truck was on Arsenal Street.

The McNairs moved to 4629 Berlin, now Pershing, and there Mrs. McNair, suffering from depression after the death of her father, committed suicide in 1906. Lilburn eventually moved to the Racquet Club on Kingshighway, where he died in 1924. Jane McNair married Andrew Jackson Lindsay, a great-grandson of John Mullanphy, and Cornelia married Alfred H. Murphy.

Edmund A. Manny, the architect of the house, was born in 1863 and as a teenager worked in the St. Louis hardware and wholesale shoe businesses. After traveling abroad for two years, he began as an architectural draftsman in 1885. About 1890, he attended MIT, the first college in the country to offer an architectural degree, then worked for Eames & Young. After another year abroad studying architecture, he opened his own office in 1892. He married Edith Scarritt in 1895, and his career benefitted over the years from patronage by her family. He built only one other major project in St. Louis County, a large house in Normandy for Wilson P. H. Turner, a grandson of Ann Lucas Hunt. He entered the competition for the St. Louis Country Club in 1895, and although he did not win, this may have introduced him to the McNairs.

Manny's early career coincided with the building boom in the Central West End, and most of his surviving works are located there, including houses on several private streets:

- 37 Kingsbury Place, 1907
- 50 Kingsbury Place, 1908
- 4938 Pershing Place, 1897
- 4950 Pershing Place, 1898
- 25 Washington Terrace, 1906
- 28 Washington Terrace, 1901
- 4441 Westminster Place, 1897
- 5023 Westminster Place, 1901
- 5221 Westminster Place, 1904
- #24 Windermere Place, 1903 for Henry Hafner

Several of these were published in *Inland Architect*. Another surviving work that may be familiar is the Pendennis Apartments at 3737 Washington Avenue, the three-story building across the street from the Contemporary Art Museum.

Even though the house is gone, the photo opens the door to a whole chapter of St. Louis social and architectural history.

NEW SAH 2012 LECTURE SERIES

For the first time, the St. Louis Chapter has arranged with the centrally located Schlafly Branch to sponsor a series of talks by members. All talks will be free and open to the public. This spring they focus on foreign architecture.

Talk: Le Corbusier, Nouvel & Piano in France
 Thursday, February 23, 7 p.m.
 Schlafly Branch Library, Lindell & Euclid

Richard Mueller speaks about his visits to some of the key monuments of modern and contemporary building.

Talk: The Architecture of Cuba
 Thursday, March 29, 7 p.m.
 Schlafly Branch Library, Lindell & Euclid

Peter Wollenberg, architectural conservator and former chapter president, shares his experiences in Havana.

Talk: The Architecture of New Zealand
 Thursday, April 19, 7 p.m.
 Schlafly Branch Library, Lindell & Euclid

Esley Hamilton, newsletter editor, shows the range of buildings in the islands from 1840 to the present, as well as losses from the recent Christchurch earthquakes.



The Anglican Cathedral of Christchurch, New Zealand, originally designed in 1858 by George Gilbert Scott, has collapsed as a result of earthquakes in the past year, but Neil Dawson's sculpture "Chalice" still stands.

Exhibit: "Made in the Shade: Paul Rudolph's Florida Houses Revisited"
 Friday, February 17 to Saturday, May 19
 Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Avenue

Models, drawings and photographs of Paul Rudolph's pivotal mid-century architecture are juxtaposed with full-scale prototypes, models and drawings from a studio project conducted at Washington University's Graduate School of Architecture, bringing together two separate exhibitions: *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses*, an exhibition of the architect's early residential work, and *Made in the Shade: Re-fabricating Florida's Modern Architecture*, examples from the studio project at Washington University in St. Louis.

Born in 1918, Paul Rudolph studied with Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius at Harvard Graduate School of Design and was later chairman of the school of architecture at Yale University. Buildings of his design can be found in cities around the world, including Boston, Fort Worth, Singapore, Hong Kong and Jakarta. Rudolph continued to design buildings into the 1990s and died in 1997 at the age of 79.

The airy designs of Rudolph's Florida designs contrast with the massive exposed concrete he favored later. Maintenance problems and popular antipathy have resulted in preservation controversies around several of these later works. His Orange County Government Center in Goshen, New York, for instance, is on the World Monuments Watch List. The early works have been under threat as too modest for the increasingly valuable land they occupy. The Paul Rudolph Foundation was established in 2002 to defend his legacy. It occupies his former townhouse in Manhattan, 246 East 58th Street.

Brown Bag Talk on Paul Rudolph
 Wednesday, March 21, noon
 Sheldon Galleries, 3648 Washington Avenue

Ken Tracy, Curator of the exhibition and Visiting Assistant professor of Architecture at Washington University will speak on Rudolph and the exhibition. Box lunches will be available by reservation for \$12. Call 314-533-9900, ext. 18 to reserve.

ANNUAL GATHERING

Sunday, February 12, 2012, 6 to 9:30 p.m.
Grbić Restaurant, 4071 Keokuk at Meramec

This year we return to Grbić Restaurant, where we enjoyed delicious Bosnian food in a picturesque setting at the 2010 Annual Gathering. Grbić (pronounced GER-bich, with a hard “G”) is located just off Meramec Avenue one block south of Gravois and two blocks south of Chippewa. You may remember the building as Bailey Farm Dairy. The website is www.grbicrestaurant.com.

Please bring a few slides of a building or place for our traditional slide show. To use PowerPoint or other computer visuals, please contact John Guenther at 314-560-1493 or john.c.guenther@gmail.com. Kindly limit your presentation to no more than four minutes in order to accommodate everybody.

The cost is \$30 payable at the door. You can renew your membership for 2011 at the same time for just \$10. Please RSVP to Esley Hamilton at 314-615-0357 or ehamilton@stlouisco.com. Note that the deadline to RSVP is the previous Wednesday, February 8. Grbić is ADA Accessible. Vegetarian plates can be prepared given notice; please include this information with your reservation.

EWALD HOUSE LOCATED

Sue Rehkopf, the intrepid archivist of the Historical Society of University City, has identified another house by Lawrence Ewald. It was listed in our Summer 2011 newsletter as one of the unlocated properties by Ewald. The house is located at 7467 Kingsbury Avenue between Jackson and Hanley in University City. The permit was issued to George Dauss on August 5, 1929 for a brick house to cost \$8,000. As with so many other Ewald designs, the style of this house is ambiguous. Spanish Eclectic? Mediterranean?



Lawrence Ewald's Dauss House, 7467 Kingsbury, U. City, 1929

News Letter

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Spring issue	15 February
Summer issue	15 May
Fall issue	15 August
Winter Issue	15 November

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