

Purcell-Cutts House Window Conservation Project

The art glass windows in the Purcell-Cutts House are a significant contribution to its success as an example of the Prairie School style of architecture. The windows have aged well since the house was completed in December 1913, but several are in need of imminent repair. Architect George Grant Elmslie provided the designs for the windows to E. L. Sharretts's Mosaic Art Shops of Minneapolis. Sharretts fabricated them using zinc came (metal channels that hold together the glass panes) and various types of glass: clear craquelure, colored opalescent, green tint hammered glass, and window glass.

From June through September 2016, six windows and their sashes are being conserved, as well as the sashes of two other windows, all from the second floor of the house. Several of these windows are from the east (front) façade of the house, where excessive exposure to sunlight and built-up heat between the art

glass windows and the interior storm windows have degraded the grout securing the glass in the comes, causing bowing and leaking.

Because the windows are objects in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's collection (the house is the largest object in the collection), they are being conserved to maintain as many of their original parts as possible. The Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC) in Minneapolis is conducting the window conservation under the supervision of art glass conservator Drew Anderson of New York City. MACC conservators will stabilize and flatten the zinc came, waterproof the windows, and clean both sides of the art glass. Chiral Arts LLC of St. Paul, Minnesota, will repair the window sashes under the supervision of Stuart MacDonald, AIA, of Minneapolis. After the windows are reinstalled in September 2016, Mia will insert climate monitors near the windows with the goal of better stabilizing their environmental conditions in the future.



Purcell, Feick, and Elmslie, architects, Minneapolis and Chicago
Purcell-Cutts House (a.k.a. Edna S. Purcell House), 1913
Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of Anson Cutts 90.92

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Details of windows in need of conservation, showing broken or missing grout, bowing, and leaking areas.

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