

## Purcell-Cutts House Furniture Dining Room Suite

This dining room suite, including the table (with two removable leaves), sideboard, and six chairs, is a modern reproduction of the dining room suite George Elmslie designed for Mrs. William H. Hanna's home in Chicago.

The original Hanna suite was created in 1915 by John S. Bradstreet and Company of Minneapolis, a prominent firm in interior design and furniture manufacturing. The original dining room suite, which was on view at the *Minnesota 1900* exhibition during the summer of 1994, was never actually used in the Edna S. Purcell residence. It was only in the house to be photographed for a spread in the Western Architect (see period photograph on display in the house). Purcell had not designed a dining room suite specifically for his home; the suite that **was** used by the Purcells in the house had been brought from Purcell's bachelor apartment on Humboldt Avenue (see separate sheet on two reproduction dining room chairs from that suite). The Hanna suite, which had just been finished and was on its way to Chicago, was thought to be more appropriate for the photo than the heavier, dark Purcell suite.

This suite was modeled in every aspect on the original suite, which Purcell later called their "most highly jeweled set." Indeed, the combination of severe angularity and lavish decorative detail surpasses any known furniture designed by P&E. The entire suite is mahogany stained a rich reddish brown shade.

The linear design following the edges of the table, leaves, and sideboard was created with wood inlay stained in many different colors. Each corner of the table and leaves is punctuated with two inset pieces of iridescent glass. The rods near each of the table legs and on the sideboard are silver-plated. The six chairs contain stained glass inserts in the cresting rail, each with a different color scheme. The triangular design within these inserts is echoed in the actual shape of the backs of the chairs and the drawer pulls of the sideboard, which in turn recall the "surprise point" chairs designed for the Purcell house. The sideboard has been faithfully reproduced with a secret drawer in the back. Please do not attempt to operate this feature.

The plain raisin-colored upholstery fabric of the chairs is the only aspect which is not a faithful reproduction of the original suite. A suitable patterned fabric, similar to that seen on the original suite in the photograph, has not yet been located. The present fabric was chosen for its neutrality and may be changed in the future.

After Mrs. Hanna's death in 1929, the original suite was sold, eventually making its way to California, where it entered the last lender's collection in the 1970s. In 2011, Mia acquired the original Hanna Suite, now 2011.3.1-6, which is on view in Gallery 302. In

2013, with generous donations from Purcell-Cutts House docents and others, the chairs were reupholstered in a sympathetic fabric (see photo below).

The reproduction suite was produced in Santa Cruz, California in 1995 by nationally-recognized woodworker Sandor Nagyszalanczy. The stained glass inserts were produced locally by Monarch Studios.

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November 2018



Chair from the original Hanna suite, with period-appropriate upholstery (2011.3.1-6)