Marion Alice Parker: Pioneering Woman Architect and the Progressive Prairie School

Qualifying Paper
Submitted by Nicole M. Watson
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The University of St. Thomas
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Committee members:
Jennifer Komar Olivarez (advisor)
Dr. Victoria Young
Dr. Shelly Nordtorp-Madson

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Abstract

Marion Alice Parker (1873-1935) became the first "draftsman" hired by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Purcell and Feick in 1908 (later, the firm became Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, and finally – and probably most notably – Purcell and Elmslie). Parker remained with the firm until 1915, and she was a significant member of "The Team" that comprised Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, for she was mentioned frequently throughout Purcell's own extensive writings about the history of the firm and its employees. Yet to date, Parker' biography and architectural contributions, completed with the firm and during her years as a successful independent Minneapolis architect, have gone undocumented—a fact that can be attributed to her minority status as an early female architect working within the male-dominated field of American architecture. Within this minority lies another, for only a handful of women, including Chicagoan Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961) and Parker herself, were practicing the Prairie School-style aspects of progressive design.

Parker was exposed to the modern forms, non-traditional methods and democratic ideals of progressive design throughout her tenure with Purcell's firm in the early twentieth century. Strong Prairie School characteristics can be observed in at least one of her early projects as an independent architect. As she continued to practice into the 1920s, the public's preference for revival house types led her to adapt her style, one that blended progressive principles with more traditional architectural elements. This paper will recognize the life and work of Parker as a female architect in the early twentieth century, while revealing her career-long commitment to progressive design.

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Marion Alice Parker (1873-1935) became the first "draftsman" hired by the progressive Minneapolis firm of Purcell and Feick in 1908 (in 1910 the firm became Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, and finally – and probably most notably – Purcell and Elmslie in 1913, figure 1). William Gray Purcell (1890-1965) and George Feick, Jr.'s (1881-1945) decision to expand their young firm by first hiring a woman was unusual—historically, American architectural firms were largely made up of men, and at the time of Parker's employment, society did not encourage middle and upper-class women to work outside of the home. Yet Purcell and Feick's progressive social attitudes concerning the employment of a female drafter revealed a progressive philosophy that extended to the architectural style they promoted along with their colleague, George Grant Elmslie (1869-1952). Purcell, Feick and Elmslie had adopted a decidedly "modern" approach to architecture that was characterized by elements that are now identified with buildings of the Prairie School: long, low rooflines, deep eaves, long bands of stained-glass windows, spacious interior floor plans, a varied integration of structural forms and unified decoration (for example, see figures 2-6). While many American architects in the early twentieth century remained devoted to historical revival styles, Purcell's firm sought to create buildings – specifically home designs – that reflected contemporary American life. Writing for the *Western Architect* in 1913, Purcell and Elmslie's article "The Statics and Dynamics of Architecture" shunned the forms of " by-gone architectures," and instead emphasized the importance of developing a progressive architecture, one that reflected a new age, new problems and "a modern heart and soul."[1] At the same time, Purcell's vision of progressive design upheld democratic ideals about the creation of architecture, a

[1] William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie, "The Statics and Dynamics of Architecture," *Western Architect* 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1913): 4.

process he felt relied on teamwork. In Purcell's 1956 manuscript "Building Production as People and Process," he reflects about the operation of his firm, explaining that "a moving idea [could] come from the thought of the most humble and most socially unimportant person, or arrive seemingly out of the blue in a democratically operating group to wholly change the direction and result of any work in progress."[2] Purcell and Elmslie's office was atypical for its time—most architectural firms supported a hierarchical (and highly competitive), rather than collaborative, working environment. Thus, when understood from Purcell's perspective, Marion Alice Parker's employment in his firm becomes less of an anomaly for she was considered a full collaborator during her tenure with his firm.

Parker remained with the firm until approximately 1915, and her eight-year employment there belies a commitment to the philosophy behind progressive architecture. After leaving Purcell and Elmslie, Parker practiced successfully on her own in Minneapolis, and her immersion in Prairie School design influenced at least one of her built projects as an independent architect. Additionally, drawings and plans she designed for local and national home design competitions, as well as those she developed to accompany home-construction articles in the locally printed journal, *Keith's Magazine*, are also indicative of Parker's affinity for progressive design. However, with the demise of the Prairie School after World War I, Parker brought her progressive sensibilities to more traditional house types.

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[2] William Gray Purcell, "Building Production as People and Process: A Study in Pioneering," 17 January 1956, photocopy, p. 2, (Box 24, File 10, P&E Office Records, Manuscripts, Biographical Materials, "The Team" [AR:B4d3]), William Gray Purcell Papers, University of Minnesota Northwest Architectural Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Parker is one of this country's earliest female architects, and her significance as such is two-fold. First, Parker represents a minority of women working in the field of American architecture in the early twentieth century. Second and most importantly, within this minority lies another, for only a handful of women, including Chicagoan Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961) and Parker herself, were whole-heartedly practicing the Prairie School-style aspects of progressive design. Mahony Griffin was among the most prolific drafters and architects to work for Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) and unlike Parker, she has received much scholarly attention in historical studies related to the Prairie School (figure 7).[3]

Although the Prairie School and the firm of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie have been the topic of scholarly and general interest for decades, Parker's life and career have largely gone undocumented—and the process of uncovering her biography and architectural designs presents practical and historical challenges. Practical challenges include the scope of available research materials located in the William Gray Purcell Papers collection in the Northwest Architectural Archives at the University of Minnesota. It is evident that Parker was a significant member of "The Team" that comprised Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, for she is mentioned frequently throughout Purcell's own extensive manuscripts relating to the history of the firm and its employees, particularly job notes, biographies, correspondence and "Parabiographies" (Purcell's self-titled collection of

[3] Two of the most recent include Debora Wood's book, *Marion Mahony Griffin: Drawing the Form of Nature* (Evanston, Illinois: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art and Northwestern University Press, 2005), which accompanied the 2005 exhibition by the same name; and Paul Kruty's *Marion Mahony and Millikin Place* (St. Louis: Walter Burley Griffin Society of America, 2007).

information he compiled for each project completed by his firm).[4] However, specific information about Parker is sporadic and finding references to her is a time-consuming task: the William Gray Purcell Papers consist of 256 cubic feet of information on over 300 projects, whereas Parker's own collection at the Archives contains twelve items. The disparity between these two collections points to a staggering deficiency of compiled information for a seemingly important contributor to Purcell's firm.

Historical challenges to the research include Parker's absence in scholarly studies about Purcell, Feick and Elmslie. Today, only three sources on this subject address Parker's employment with Purcell's firm, though they contain little specific information about Parker herself. The late Dr. David Gebhard was the first to mention Parker in his 1957 dissertation, "William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie and the Early Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900-1920." Gebhard's reference of Parker takes place in a footnote, and while he provides no information about her other than her involvement in some early projects for Purcell's firm, he does recognize Parker's unique role as a female drafter.[5] Following Gebhard's dissertation, the next published scholarly discussion of Parker came over forty years later—historian Mark Hammons's 1994 essay "Purcell and Elmslie, Architects" gives Parker more attention, recognizing her as the "first full-time permanent drafter" hired by the firm.[6] Although Hammons

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[4] Note that Purcell wrote his Parabiographies in the 1940s and 1950s, long after the dissolution of his partnership with Elmslie in 1921 (however, Elmslie himself made contributions to the Parabiographies as well).

[5] David Gebhard, "William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie and the Early Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900 to 1920" (P.h.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1957), 50; An edited version of Gebhard's dissertation was recently published posthumously with information about Purcell's drafters, but offers even less information about Parker than his original manuscript (in both cases, Parker's first name is spelled incorrectly). See David Gebhard and Patricia Gebhard, *Purcell and Elmslie: Prairie Progressive Architects* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2006), 70.

[6] Mark Hammons, "Purcell and Elmslie, Architects," in *Minnesota 1900: Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi, 1890-1915*," ed. Michael Conforti (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 233.

asserts Parker was "fully committed to the organic principles" of progressive architecture, some of the author's biographical information about her is inaccurate.[7] Finally, author Dixie Legler and photographer Christian Korab's 2006 book, *At Home on the Prairie: The Houses of Purcell and Elmslie*, recognizes Purcell and Parker's collaborative projects for the firm, including the Goetzenberger, Buxton and Adair residences.[8] Legler does not elaborate as to the scope of Parker's involvement with these designs, nor does she attempt to draw connections between them. None of the above authors provide a solid biography for Parker, nor do they attempt a close examination of her role within the firm or her subscription to progressive design. Most importantly, these sources ignore Parker's success as an independent architect between 1915 and 1925.

The scarcity of available archival sources and scholarly information about Parker presents a common case in the history of American architecture: women architects tend to be grossly understudied. Architectural historian Judith Paine, in her essay "Pioneer Women Architects," provides an explanation for women's silent role in the early history of American architecture. For reasons ranging from cultural conceptions concerning the "masculinity" of jobs such as building design and construction to the late acceptance of women into American architecture schools in the 1870s (the granting of degrees came even later in the 1880s), Paine points to the sexist environment women architects were forced to navigate while attempting to enter their field.[9] As a result, many women architects purposely downplayed their pioneering roles in the field, hoping their work

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[7] Ibid.
[8] See Dixie Legler and Christian Korab, *At Home on the Prairie: The Houses of Purcell and Elmslie* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2006).
[9] Judith Paine, "Pioneer Women Architects," in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977), 54.

would be judged for its talent rather than the gender of the designer.[10] Historian Pamela Simpson, in support of Paine's analysis, appropriately concludes "prejudice bred anonymity. It is not so much that [women's'] work is ignored that it is simply unknown."[11]

Throughout history, the architecture field and specifically the Prairie School, has been primarily associated with men. Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin (1876-1937), Purcell, and Elmslie have dominated historical studies on American progressive architecture since the 1960s. This author has identified at least four other women, in addition to Parker and Mahony Griffin, who worked as drafters within the Prairie School movement, but they, like Parker, have been bypassed within the history of modern American architecture due to the lack of research on and documentation of their roles. Through the examination of Parker's life and work, this paper has two main goals that will ultimately alter existing historical studies about progressive design, the Prairie School and the firm of Purcell and Elmslie. First, this paper will remedy Parker's anonymity as an architect—this research is significant because, to date, no scholarly material accurately addresses Parker's biography, her valuable role in the work of Purcell's firm or her success as an independent architect. This research is also significant because it recognizes contributions made by a woman to the progressive design movement, an aspect that has little precedence in the history of

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[10] Ibid.; Gwendolyn Wright, a prominent architectural historian and professor of architecture, has also noted that early women drafters and architects self-censured their ambitions in order to obtain (and keep) apprenticeships that provided professional experience. Wright explains: "rather than stir up prejudice and censure by being too forward, most women stayed in the background in order to learn." Often, women working in architectural firms in the early twentieth century simply participated where they could, completing tasks deemed unimportant by their male colleagues. Gwendolyn Wright, "On the Fringe of the Profession: Women in American Architecture," in *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession*, ed. Spiro Kostof (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 280 and 291.

[11] Pamela H. Simpson, review of *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, by Susana Torre, ed., *Women's Art Journal* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1990-Winter 1991): 45.

American architecture: Mahony Griffin is the only female progressive architect who has gained recognition to this point. The second goal of this paper is to establish Parker's contributions to the Prairie School (through her work with Purcell, Feick and Elmslie) and to the larger stylistic canon of progressive architecture (through commissions she gained as an independent architect). The analysis of Parker's work reveals a career-long dedication to the principles of progressive architecture and design. Thus, this paper seeks to uncover Parker's biography and the buildings she designed while establishing her role as a pioneering woman architect within the progressive design movement.

I. Biography and Education: Marion Alice Parker, 1873-1896

Marion Alice Parker was born September 6, 1873 in Reading, Massachusetts, now a northeast suburb of Boston. Her father was a book keeper while her mother kept house and cared for Parker and her sister Maud, who was four years younger.[12] Research has uncovered little else about Parker's younger years, but based on Purcell's written recollections of her, Parker's father likely worked for the lumber industry, a business that would have brought he and his family from Massachusetts to Minnesota in 1881.[13]

In Minneapolis, Parker attended high school at the Minneapolis Academy, and by 1892, she was a freshman at the University of Minnesota, where, in her sophomore year, she became a member of the School of Design.[14] Parker's college transcript indicates she followed a "Classical" course of study—she took several foreign language classes, as well as courses in rhetoric and pedagogy, subjects that prepared her for a career as a teacher or a librarian, jobs that were socially acceptable for women to pursue in the late nineteenth century.[15] However, Parker also took classes in drawing, design and "aesthetics" (or art appreciation), courses that were likely requirements of the School of

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[12] Ancestry.com and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *1880 United States Census Record* for Reading, Middlesex, Massachusetts [database on-line] (Provo, Utah: The Generations Network, Inc., 2005), pg. 416.000.

[13] In Purcell's biographical note on Parker, he writes: "she was a typical New England 'down-easter,' of a family which came West from Maine 'with the lumber.' (See *Holy Old Mackinaw* by _____)." Purcell is referring to the book *Holy Old Mackinaw: A Natural History of the American Lumberjack* by Stewart H. Holbrook, originally published by the Macmillan company in 1938. In his book, Holbrook discusses the migration of the lumber industry from Maine and the northeastern United States to the Lake States and finally the Pacific Northwest. William Gray Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 2 (folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257), William Gray Purcell Papers, University of Minnesota Northwest Architectural Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[14] "Alice Parker Summoned," (obituary), *South Coast News*, Laguna Beach, California, 22 November 1935, p. 4; "School of Design," University of Minnesota yearbook, *The Gopher 1895*, University of Minnesota University Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[15] *Official Transcript*, Marion Alice Parker, Bachelor of Literature, 1896, University of Minnesota Office of the Registrar, Minneapolis; Information regarding a "Classical" course of study was supplied by the University of Minnesota University Archives.

Design.[16] The School of Design roster in the 1895 yearbook is accompanied by drawings of trees, the University of Minnesota's Pillsbury Hall and decorative lettering (figure 8).[17] Such elements suggest that coursework for the School of Design emphasized compositional drawing or lettering, supporting Purcell's memory of Parker's skills during her early days with his firm: "she did pretty well from the first. Her fingers were skilled, draughting dependable, but not brilliant, her knowledge of construction sufficient to follow but not to organize . . . she learned most of what she knew of architecture as a building art, as distinguished from a graphic art as she had learned it in school."[18] Parker's own designs for women's calling cards, drawn around 1920, also indicate she had knowledge of (and talent for) the graphic arts (figure 9).

Parker graduated with a Bachelor of Literature in 1896, and the yearbook of the same year provides Parker's senior picture, only the second known photograph of her (figure 10).[19] Parker's only listed activity is the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and her senior quote reads "the power of gentleness is irresistible."[20] While Parker's comment seems innocent and hopeful (certainly appropriate given the circumstances of her upcoming graduation and her young age of 23), Purcell paints a different picture of Parker. Parker was in her mid-thirties when she began working for Purcell and Feick, and in a pitying biographical note of her, Purcell remembers her as

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 1.
[19] A Bachelor of Literature was a degree from the University's then College of Science, Literature and Arts. Today, it is probably equivalent to a degree in the Liberal Arts, with an emphasis on one course of study (in Parker's case, design). *1896 University of Minnesota Commencement Bulletin*, p. 338, University of Minnesota University Archives; "Senior Class," *The Gopher 1896*, p. 63.
[20] *The Gopher 1896*, p. 63.

generally lonely, "frustrated" and "unhappy."[21] We have no way of knowing Purcell's intentions in his description of Parker's personality, but it is important to recognize that Parker never married (which was unusual for her time), and she pursued a career in a field that had few successful female predecessors. The combination of these aspects of her life placed her outside societal and cultural norms. It is fair to suggest that if Parker was indeed "frustrated" or "unhappy," such feelings may have been due to challenges she faced as a woman architect in the early twentieth century.[22]

On the other hand, Parker's involvement with the YWCA suggests she was quite aware of the challenges she would face in the working world beyond university life. The Minneapolis branch of the YWCA was established in 1891, and its main goal was to promote the acceptance of women working outside of the home.[23] As a young woman, Parker chose to align herself with an organization that provided support for women who wanted careers. Perhaps instead of "frustrated" or "unhappy," she was headstrong and independent.

To view Parker's education more fully, as well as contextualize her entrance into the architecture field through Purcell's firm, it is valuable to examine the early history of women architects in America. By the time Parker was attending the University of

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[21] Purcell attributes Parker's unhappiness to a large, dark "blemish" she had one cheek. He writes of Parker: "she made a real effort to discount her lone life, and except on certain to-be-forgotten occasions, over which Strauel and I have shaken some heads, she was a pleasant enough companion." (Fred Strauel also was a drafter for Purcell's firm.) Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 2.

[22] It is interesting to note that although Parker had an early interest in art and design, it does not appear that she became involved with the Handicraft Guild (1904-1918), a Minneapolis organization founded and run by women who intended to disseminate specific personal social values (patience, self-knowledge and teamwork) associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement. The group offered women classes in the applied arts, emphasizing skills in metal work and ceramics. Rather than joining an already established group of creative women, Parker went on to pursue architecture, a field that offered few career opportunities for women. Marcia G. Anderson, "Art for Life's Sake: The Handicraft Guild of Minneapolis," in *Minnesota 1900: Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi, 1890-1915*, ed. Michael Conforti (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 122, 133-141.

[23] YWCA Minneapolis, "About the YWCA: history," (Minneapolis: YWCA, n.d.), http://www.ywca-minneapolis.org/about/history.asp (accessed 23 April 2007).

Minnesota, an unknown number of women had had the privilege of attending prestigious American architecture schools for twenty years: Syracuse and Cornell universities began accepting women into their architectural programs in 1871, and the University of Illinois followed in 1873.[24] Yet women were not able to obtain degrees until somewhat later—the first woman to ever receive an architecture degree graduated from Cornell in 1881.[25] MIT is considered America's first school of architecture, and Sophia Hayden, best known for her winning competition entry for the design of the Woman's Building at the 1893 World's Fair, became the first woman recipient of the school's four-year architecture degree in 1890.[26] Parker's aforementioned contemporary, Marion Mahony Griffin also graduated with a degree in architecture from MIT in 1894.[27] Around 1898, Californian Julia Morgan (1873-1957) made history within the international community of architects: after earning an engineering degree from the University of California at Berkeley, she went on to become the first woman ever accepted the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.[28] She graduated in 1902 and opened her own practice in San Francisco the same year.[29] By

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[24] Paine, 55.

[25] Ibid., 54; Gwendolyn Wright (292) claims that Margaret Hicks was the first woman to graduate from Cornell's architecture school, and it is not clear if Paine is referring to the same woman. Both Wright's and Paine's research were published in the same year (1977); if the authors are discussing the same woman, there is a discrepancy between them concerning Hicks' graduation date. Paine's analysis is supported by research completed at Cornell whereas Wright's source is not referenced—for purposes of consistency and sound research methods, in this paper, Paine's analysis is considered the most accurate.

[26] Paine, 55, 57.

[27] Ibid., 75.

[28] Sara Boutelle, "Julia Morgan," in "Some Professional Roles: 1860-1910," in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, 79.

[29] Probably one of the most prolific early American women architects, Morgan's work is often described as an eclectic combination of the historicism emphasized by her Beaux-Arts training and the avant-garde architectural trends of the California School, which had stylistic connections to the American arts and crafts movement as well as progressivism. Although many of her early houses carry similarities to the small house designs of Purcell's firm, Morgan's most well-known buildings include her rebuilding of the upscale Fairmont Hotel (San Francisco, c. 1906) and the lavish San Simeon castle (San Luis Obispo, California, 1920-1937) completed for William Randolph Hearst. Morgan also designed several buildings for women's organizations and clubs (most notably, local and national branches of the YWCA), an aspect of her work that can be compared to Parker's commission for the Pi Beta Phi Sorority (see pages 41-43); It is unknown

1910, approximately fifty women architects in America had received formal training, yet despite women's growing interest in architectural education, half of the architecture schools in America at that time were not admitting women to their programs.[30]

The course of study for academically trained architects was rigorous, and it appears women were held to the same academic expectations as male students, provided they could pass the entrance exams (figure 11).[31] By 1912, there were only twenty schools in America that offered a four-year architecture degree, and their curricula were largely modeled after the competitive environment of the École.[32] Students in most architecture programs took several courses in architectural design and rendering, mathematics, engineering and building construction, as well as life-drawing, water-color painting and modeling. The curriculum required classes in architectural history, which placed heavy emphasis on classical periods of Greek, Roman and Renaissance building and design.[33] Although academic training was strongly supported by the American Institute of Architects (the then-premier organization dedicated to the professional

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if Morgan and Parker knew each other, but since Parker lived in southern California while Morgan was still practicing architecture, the author surmises Parker knew of Morgan and her work. Ibid. 80-87.

[30] By "trained" Paine (54) seems to be referring to an education in an established architecture school.

[31] Louise Bethune, a late nineteenth-century architect, confirmed that "with few exceptions, the education facilities are the same for men and women." Louise Bethune, "Women and Architecture," *Inland Architect and News* 17 (Mar. 1891): 21; Arthur Clason Weatherhead, in his dissertation on the history of architectural education in America, provides a detailed account of the curriculum of early architecture schools, making no distinctions between men's and women's courses of study. Arthur Clason Weatherhead, "The History of Collegiate Education in Architecture in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1941); For more information about entrance exams required for early architecture schools, see Paine, 56.

[32] Somewhat similar to the atelier system at the École, American architecture students were instructed to compete with one another in all class projects. Weatherhead, 75, 134, 150.

[33] Weatherhead (150-174) characterizes a "typical graduate" of a turn-of-the-century American architecture school as skillful in monumental, revivalist design and "a habitual plagiarist rather than a creative artist. He had developed a sense of superiority over the practical, the economical, and the small in detail in the architectural requirements of modern life."

development of the field), most architecture schools did not require their students to gain practical experience in a professional office before graduation.[34]

Since Parker's academic education emphasized skills related to drawing and graphic design, much of her architectural experience with Purcell, Feick and Elmslie was probably similar to apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship had always been the most accepted method of architectural education for men, and some women, like many of their male counterparts, chose to gain entrance to the field by seeking a position in an established architectural firm. The course of study typical for apprenticeships included many hours of drafting, visiting construction sites and studying materials from a firm's library. Some recent feminist scholarship suggests women who received their education through apprenticeship, rather than academia, gained valuable practical experience that better prepared them for successful professional development within the field.[35] This is certainly the case for two of America's earliest independent female architects, Louise Blanchard Bethune (1856-1913) and Minerva Parker Nichols (1863-1949). Bethune, who initially prepared to attend Cornell's architecture program, ultimately decided in 1876 to apprentice as a draftsman for New York architect Richard A. Waite—by the age of 25, she opened her own office (figure 12).[36] Similarly, Nichols, who had studied architecture for four terms at Franklin Institute Drawing School, began an apprenticeship with Philadelphia architect Frederick Thorne, Jr. in 1884. After his retirement, she

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[34] Weatherhead, 174; By encouraging an academic education in architecture, the American Institute of Architects (AIA), was, in part, helping women gain access to the field. Elizabeth G. Grossman and Lisa B. Reitzes, "Caught in the Crossfire: Women and Architectural Education, 1880-1910," in *Architecture: A Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 27.
[35] Grossman and Reitzes, 35-36.
[36] Adriana Barbasch, "Louise Blanchard Bethune," in *Architecture: A Place for Women*, ed. Ellen Perry Berkeley (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 16.

gained control of his office (figure 13).[37] Throughout her training in Thorne's firm, Nichols also took college-level courses in architectural design; this combination of assistantship duties and academic class work had long been the traditional course of study of men pursuing careers in architecture.[38] The apprenticeship training received by Bethune, Nichols and Parker gave them valuable on-the-job experience for the practicalities of running independent practices.

[37] The Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, "Minerva Parker Nichols," in *American Women of Architecture* [historical database on-line], (New York: n.d.), http://www.bwaf.org/timeline/architect/show/Nichols_Minerva (accessed 23 February 2008); Grossman and Reitzes, 33.
[38] Ibid.

II. Progressive Attitudes and Architecture: Marion Alice Parker and the Firm of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, 1908-1916.

In the thirteen years between Parker's graduation from the University of Minnesota and her employment with Purcell and Feick, Parker held a teaching position at the Holmes School in 1897, and by 1905 she was a drafter for the Keith Company.[39] The Keith Company was a "lifestyle venture" that produced *Keith's Magazine*, a publication that offered house plans and prescriptive essays related to the decorative arts, home building and homemaking.[40] It was probably here where Parker first gained experience in architectural design. In 1908, Parker was hired as the first full-time permanent drafter for Purcell and Feick, Architects, and she remained the only woman drafter ever to work for Purcell's firm.[41]

Parker's singular position as a female drafter within Purcell's firm is underscored by the challenges women faced while attempting to enter the male-dominated field of architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Journal articles written by men and women – many of whom were architects – and dating from the early 1880s to the 1910s, paint a poignant picture of professional discrimination against women architects. In 1884, Lulu S. Beem relays common doubts held by the public and established architects alike regarding a woman's ability to manage male subcontractors, builders and tradesmen.[42] Concerns were also raised about a woman's physical

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[39] Professor Paul Kruty, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, email correspondence with the author, 29 April 2007; Research regarding Parker's employment with the Holmes School is ongoing.
[40] Patty Dean, Helena, Montana, email correspondence with the author, 25 March 2008.
[41] Gertrude Phillips is the only other woman known to have worked for Purcell's firm—she was a secretary there between 1910 and 1917. David Gebhard, "William Gray Purcell and George Grant Elmslie and the Early Progressive Movement in American Architecture from 1900 to 1920," 50, note 6.
[42] Lulu S. Beem, "Women in Architecture: A Plea Dating from 1884," *Inland Architect* 15 (Dec. 1971): 6.

endurance for standing at a drafting table all day or for climbing scaffolding.[43] Ethel Charles, writing for *The American Architect and Building News* in 1902, wittily refutes misconceptions about a female architect's supposed lack of business sense: "without tact a business man will not go far, and this indispensable quality seems universally acknowledged to be dealt out more generously to Woman than to Man."[44] Robert Weir Schultz, writing for *The Architectural Review* in 1908 straightforwardly confirms the sexist environment of the architecture field; he maintains that most practicing architects "consider[ed] quite honestly that architecture [did] not come within the legitimate sphere of women's work."[45]

In addition to being questioned about the professional competency of their gender, early women architects were pressured to choose between their careers and accepted social ideals of marriage and family. Parker's own role as a career-oriented woman of the early twentieth century was unusual: at that time, women were expected to marry, raise a family and keep a household.[46] Such ideals defined propriety and social acceptance for women, and as Paine points out, those who declined to follow this "Victorian code . . . risked being labeled improper, peculiar or both."[47] At the same time, very few women architects of that period achieved a balance between family life and finding independent success in the field. Alice Johnson, in her 1901 article for *The Interstate Architect and Builder*, cautioned her gender that architecture should not be

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[43] Alice E. Johnson, "Architecture as a Woman Sees It," *Interstate Architect and Builder* 3 (April 1901): 9; Robert Weir Schultz, "Here and There: Architecture for Women," *The Architectural Review* 24 (Sept. 1908): 153.
[44] Ethel M. Charles, "A Plea for Women Practising Architecture," *The American Architect and Building News* 76 (April 19, 1902): 20; the capitalization of "woman" and "man" is by the author.
[45] Although *The Architectural Review* was a London publication, Schultz (153) accurately describes the professional environment of architecture in America, too, created and dominated by men.
[46] Paine, 54.
[47] Ibid.

distracted by the roles of wife and mother. For Johnson, architecture was a life-long endeavor, "not merely as a sort of vestibule to marriage."[48] Johnson implies that for women architects, achieving legitimacy meant sacrificing other possible personal aspirations of marriage and family.

Though Parker's inclusion in Purcell, Feick and Elmslie was distinctive given the social and professional environment of the architecture field, her employment with the firm became an extension of its progressive architectural principles. To better understand the relationship between the firm's progressive architecture and its progressive social attitudes, it is important to briefly review the history of progressive design as it relates to the work of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie.

In the late nineteenth century, the majority of American architects were looking to the past for inspiration in their designs. As historian Mark Hammons explains, revivalists believed "beauty was a discretely identifiable presence in architecture that could be calculated and applied ready-made" across the ages.[49] Chicago architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) rejected such a philosophy. He desired a new, modern approach to architecture, one that was "organic" in that a building's construction, function, site and beauty were to be fully integrated into a cohesive design that truly represented the social, cultural, technological and industrial changes present in contemporary American life.[50] Although Sullivan applied his progressive philosophy mainly to commercial structures, his assistants and followers, including Purcell, Elmslie and Frank Lloyd Wright, imported his ideals to the American family home. The architectural forms resulting from their

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[48] Johnson, 9.
[49] Hammons, 214.
[50] Ibid.; Jennifer Komar Olivarez, *Progressive Design in the Midwest: The Purcell-Cutts House and the Prairie School Collection at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2000), 20.

work now define the progressive stylistic elements of domestic Prairie School architecture.

In 1936, Wright coined the phrase "the Prairie School" to describe the progressive style of architecture he and his contemporaries practiced in the Midwestern United States roughly between the years of 1895 and 1915.[51] Today, the Prairie School encompasses the progressive work of Purcell and Elmslie, Wright and several other drafters and architects who worked for and with these men. From the exterior, Prairie School architecture was characterized by low, hipped roof lines, horizontal massing, a variety of integrated structural forms, bands of decorative leaded glass windows and exaggerated eaves (figures 2-5). Prairie School interiors displayed unified design through the exacting coordination of color, furniture and fixtures as well as open floor plans (figures 2, 4 and 6). The domestic work of Purcell and Elmslie was in stark contrast with the revival house designs commonly used by American architects of the early twentieth century. Progressive house designs became the new visual expression for Sullivan's philosophy: Prairie School homes emphasized and exhibited twentieth-century advances in building technology and materials; they carried a respect for their natural surroundings through their sensitive physical, spatial and visual relationships to their sites; and most importantly, they were a modern expression of modern people.

For Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, the progressive philosophy behind Prairie School architecture held aesthetic as well as social implications. Purcell felt revivalist home designs suffocated the modern person because they did not reveal or celebrate her existence as such. A progressive house, on the other hand, sought an active relationship

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[51] H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwestern Contemporaries* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972), 13.

with the dweller, offering a more pleasing experience that was ultimately beneficial to human life.[52] Purcell believed all Americans, regardless of social class, deserved access to this improved state of living through the functionality, beauty and spacious feeling of a well-designed house.[53] Purcell's desire to make progressive architecture available to anyone became evident in his firm's diverse commissions for house designs, which were often executed to suit the varying budgets of their home owners, from large to small. Purcell felt that good design was not related to the size of the house, but rather, the progressive approach to its form.

The firm's democratic approach to progressive architecture also affected the daily office operations of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, and it is this aspect that reveals Parker's remarkable acceptance within the firm. From the firm's inception, all drafters (Purcell dubbed them "The Team") were encouraged to participate in the entire design process as well as sign their own work.[54] This kind of atmosphere was extremely unusual among architecture firms of the time, when it was typical for a firm's partners to take sole credit for a project. Yet Purcell valued the creative possibilities of teamwork. In his own discussion of "The Team," Hammons quotes Purcell:

> There were no important differentials of class or station, no priorities of talent. The good idea—the resolution of a tough problem could come from anyone in the office or on the job, and usually without controversy . . . Without Necessity, and the old barn-raising spirit of the pioneers, we knew a building would have no life.[55]

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[52] Purcell states: "it would seem as if the playfulness of life never had a chance in our rigidly planned American houses . . . houses should not be clamps to force us to the same things three hundred and sixty-five days in the year . . . they should be backgrounds for expressing ourselves three hundred and sixty-five different ways if we are natural enough to do so." William Gray Purcell, "Own House Notes" Job File 197, William Gray Purcell Papers.

[53] Purcell ("Own House Notes") explains that "the 'style-period' house," is planned on a jumble plan of daily life within the house and an essentially aristocratic view toward the community."

[54] Olivarez, 24.

[55] William Gray Purcell, *Parabiographies*, 1916 volume, (fragmentary manuscript dated October 1957), William Gray Purcell Papers; quoted in Hammons, 233.

The team-oriented production of projects in the office of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie created an environment in which a female architect like Parker could actively learn, work and thrive professionally. The democratic spirit promoted by Purcell indicates that Parker's position as a female drafter had no impact on her inclusion or participation in the firm's projects. She, like her male counterparts, was fully capable of, and expected to, make valuable contributions to the firm's architectural designs.[56]

Parker's position as a woman drafter working for a progressive architectural firm had very little precedence. Today, Chicagoan Marion Mahony Griffin is the most well-known female architect of the Prairie School. After receiving her architectural training at MIT, she began to work for her cousin and architect Dwight Perkins; Mahony met Frank Lloyd Wright in Steinway Hall where he and Perkins (among others) shared a studio space.[57] Interestingly, just as Parker became the first drafter hired by Purcell's firm, Mahony became Wright's first employee in 1895.[58] Mahony remained with Wright's firm until approximately 1911, carrying on and finishing several of his projects (along with architect Hermann von Holst) after his departure from his own office.[59] During this time, Mahony married another architect from Wright's studio, Walter Burley Griffin, and

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[56] Identifying those contributions can be challenging. The firm's emphasis on collaboration makes attribution to one person almost impossible. At the same time, and in keeping with his democratic vision of his firm, Purcell desired to recognize individual drafters, and he often did so in his Parabiographies.
[57] Susan Fondiler Berkon, "Marion Mahony Griffin," in *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, 75; Brooks, 79; Fred A. Bernstein, "Rediscovering a Heroine of Chicago Architecture," *New York Times*, 1 January, 2008.
[58] Ibid.
[59] When Wright left for Europe in 1909, he initially asked Mahony Griffin to run his office in his absence, but she refused. Instead, von Holst agreed to the job. During Wright's trip (and even after his return in 1911 when he decided to build a home in Wisconsin) von Holst and his eventual partner, James Fyfe, "confided authority" in Mahony Griffin, who finalized the designs from this period. Brooks, 150; Berkon, 76.

a year later in 1912, the Griffins collaborated to win the international competition for the design of the new capital city of Canberra, Australia.[60]

Mahony Griffin is most often recognized for her excellent Japanese-inspired rendering skills (figure 14), and during much of her time with Wright' progressive firm, she designed many pieces of furniture and decorative elements (murals and mosaics) for his houses.[61] Scholar and historian H. Allen Brooks, in his 1972 study, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwestern Contemporaries*, points out that Mahony Griffin did not often prepare architectural drawings.[62] However, Brooks re-attributes four progressive designs previously given to von Holst to Mahony Griffin. These include the David M. Amberg house in Grand Rapids, Michigan (built 1909-1910, figure 15) and the Adolph Mueller house in Decatur, Illinois (built 1910, figure 16).[63] These houses exhibit progressive elements such as a low, horizontal massing; integration with the site; and open interior floor plans. However, Brooks identifies some specific characteristics that can only be associated with Mahony's work: a "pinwheel" arrangement of rooms around an off-center axis, interior and angular tent-like ceilings, "high and heavy" foundations and "sharp gable roofs."[64] Mahony Griffin utilized her knowledge of progressive design to create new variations on the existing forms of Prairie School architecture—a trend this author has also observed in the Purcell and Elmslie homes associated with Parker (see pages 31-36).

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[60] Brooks, 165, 262; Berkon, 78-79; Bernstein, "Rediscovering a Heroine."
[61] Brooks (80) calls Mahony Griffin "more of an artist than an architect."
[62] Brooks, 80; Berkon (75-76) also notes that prior to Mahony Griffin's architectural designs for von Holst, she accomplish two architectural commissions independent of Wright's firm: "a small mountain cottage" (possibly an unexecuted home design for her family in Hubbard Woods, Illinois), and the All Souls Unitarian Church in Evanston, Illinois.
[63] Brooks, 150-164. Brooks (164) also notes that Mahony's work on the Amberg house may have included some preliminary sketches by Wright.
[64] Ibid., 161.

In addition to Mahony Griffin, there were other women working in Wright's Oak Park studio, though scholars and historians have compiled extremely limited information about their lives or work. Working in Wright's office mostly before 1911, this group included Isabel Roberts, the daughter of one of Wright's clients, who was a secretary, manager, and bookkeeper as well as an occasional babysitter for the Wright children.[65] Roberts did do some assisting with drafting and art glass design, and by 1916, she began her own architecture firm in Orlando, Florida, with partner Ida Annah Ryan.[66] Even less is known about potter and muralist Blanche Ostertag, who had done some collaborative work with Wright; Anna Hicks and Marion Chamberlain were also present (probably as assistants) in Wright's office around the turn of the century.[67] Like Parker, these women represent a distinct minority within the history of early women architects in America; at a time when women architects struggled to gain presence in the field, very few of them were practicing progressive design.

During Parker's seven years with Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, she played a significant role in several house designs produced by the firm. Unlike Mahony Griffin, who seemed to be relegated to interior design during her tenure with Wright, Parker made major architectural contributions to projects of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, a fact that is reinforced by Purcell's effort to give her credit for her work in his Parabiographies. The houses discussed here will provide a starting point from which to examine Parker's introduction and eventual subscription to the progressive elements of Prairie School architecture. As research on Parker's role in the firm continues, surely more designs will

[65] Ted Cueller, Research Center at the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, Oak Park, Illinois, email correspondence with the author, 18 November 2007.
[66] Ibid. For more information about Ryan, see Paine, 66.
[67] Cueller, correspondence with the author; Kruty, correspondence with the author.

be recognized as being linked with Parker during her time with Purcell, Feick and Elmslie.

Ed Goetzenberger Residence (built 1910): 2621 Emerson Avenue S., Minneapolis, Minnesota (Job #77)

The first home design in which Parker played a significant role was for Ed Goetzenberger, a Minneapolis tinsmith often subcontracted for work by Purcell, Feick and Elmslie.[68] The working drawings for the Goeztenberger house began in 1908, the same year Parker joined Purcell and Feick. Although she had not been with the firm long, the original plans for the house list Parker as the drawer and tracer, implying she was at least partly responsible for the origination of the design (figure 17).[69] In his Parabiography entry for the Goetzenberger house, Purcell notes the collaborative effort between him and the "Lady Architect": "Elmslie had no hand in this house. Miss Parker and I alone, hung over the draughting boards and gave it the best we had and it proved on this house a good best."[70] Though the extent of Parker's architectural knowledge at this early date is unknown, she must have exhibited a talent for planning and drawing, skills she may have developed while working as a drafter for the Keith Company previous to Purcell's firm. Parker's participation in the drawings for the Goetzenberger house almost immediately upon being hired suggests she was a strong delineator who had prior knowledge of architectural design. Her practical architectural experience, in fact, may have been roughly equivalent to Purcell's; by the time he and Feick hired Parker in 1908,

[68] William Gray Purcell, *Parabiographies*, 1910 volume (bound), Job #77 (William Gray Purcell Papers, P&E Office Records, Manuscripts, AR:B4dl.4 (b), N3, 23/8), p. 14; Gebhard, 50, note 6.
[69] Jennifer Olivarez, an expert on the history of Purcell and Elmslie – and in consultation with the author – supports this claim. The original plans and a job file for the Goetzenberger house are located in the William Gray Purcell Papers. In the plans, Purcell's initials are listed under "checked by."
[70] Purcell, *Parabiography*, 1910 volume, Job #77, p. 15.

Purcell had served two years of apprenticeships for architectural firms in San Francisco and Seattle between 1904 and 1906.[71]

Purcell called the Goetzenberger home design "plain and rather severe," perhaps due to its large massing and more traditional two-storied gabled-end design (figure 18).[72] Most of its charm lies in its diamond-shaped attic windows. This element was often used in the firm's early home designs, and was perhaps inspired by Walter Burley Griffin's Prairie School house design for his brother, Ralph, completed just one year before the Goetzenberger residence in 1909, and located in Edwardsville, Illinois (figure 19).

The Goetzenberger residence is very similar to the Atkinson residence of Bismarck, North Dakota, completed by Purcell and Feick in 1910 (402 Avenue B. West, Job #81) (figure 20).[73] Purcell's Parabiography for the project indicates that he, Parker and Feick collaborated on the draughting for the Atkinson home; in addition, the Atkinson and Goetzenberger designs were executed within a few months of one another, further accounting for their likeness.[74] The homes share several obvious architectural elements, including the same two-story volume, exaggerated eaves, wood frame banding below the three centered window openings of the second-story, a side porch with a hipped roof, and most prominently, the diamond-shaped window in the peaks. The interior plans of the Goetzenberger and Atkinson houses are nearly identical as well (figures 21 and 22). Although the Atkinson house has a side entry, both of these compact designs include a simplified and open arrangement of dining and living rooms, along with a sun porch (two are found in the Goetzenberger plan), wrapped around a central hearth.

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[71] Olivarez, 24.
[72] Ibid.
[73] This similarity was brought to my knowledge through email correspondence with Dick Kronick.
[74] Purcell, *Parabiography,* 1910 volume, Job #81, p. 18.

Additionally, both houses feature a small, corner kitchen and an elongated hallway running the length of the house.[75]

In his Parabiographies, Purcell claimed that the layout for the Goetzenberger house "followed logically in the plan trail mapped out by Jones, McCosker, Atkinson and Meyers."[76] While the Jones and Meyers houses seem quite different from the similar forms and size of the McCosker and Atkinson designs, the organization of first floor interior space in all of these homes includes spacious transitions between rooms and an anchoring fireplace (or a sideboard, as in the case of the Jones plan) in the center of the home (figures 22-25).[77] The Goetzenberger, Atkinson and McCosker plans, like many of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie's smaller home designs, were essentially adaptations of Frank Lloyd Wright's innovative yet compact 1907 plan for "A Fireproof House for $5,000.00 (figure 26)."[78] In addition to utilizing Wright's relatively spacious "L-" shaped floor plan (which resulted from bringing the staircase and entryway to the home's perimeter), Purcell, Feick and Elmslie often moved the entry door to the front corner of the house while separating the terrace from the entry, enclosing it as a porch located near the living or dining rooms.[79] The modest construction prices of the small homes

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[75] Photos and interior plans for the Atkinson house are available on-line in the Northwest Architectural Archives William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Images Database, http://snuffy.lib.umn.edu/image/srch/bin/Dispatcher (accessed 18 May 2007).

[76] Purcell, *Parabiography* 1910, Job #77, p. 15.

[77] Photos and interior plans for the Jones, McCosker and Meyers homes are available on-line in the William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Images Database, http://special.lib.umn.edu/manuscripts/digital/pursearch.html (accessed various dates). The tight, narrow and tall Jones house (Job #23, Minneapolis), a very early project completed by Purcell and Feick in 1908, was a remodeling job that converted an existing barn into a house. The McCosker house (Job #40, Minneapolis) was completed in 1909, and the Meyers house (Job #178, Minneapolis), the last most expansive in the group, was completed in 1912.

[78] Published in *Ladies Homes Journal*, Wright's "compact reinterpretation of the cube-shape vernacular house" was much unlike the cantilevered forms of his work in the early twentieth century. The Fireproof House also appealed to speculative builders who were dealing with expanding cities and smaller urban lots. Brooks, 123-126.

[79] Purcell and his colleagues often utilized Wright's second-floor arrangement in the Fireproof House. For example, in the Goetzenberger house, Parker and Purcell included four corner bedrooms surrounding a

designed by Purcell's firm in 1910 were also comparable to Wright's inexpensive plan: the McCosker house cost $4,000.00 and the Goetzenberger house was built for approximately $5,000.00.[80]

Finally, the Goetzenberger project provides a possible early example of a dining room table designed by Parker as a custom furniture piece for the home to fulfill Purcell, Feick and Elmslie's unified design concept. A hallmark of the Prairie School, unified design describes architecture that was fully realized through progressive elements such as sawed-wood ornament, decorative stained glass windows and furniture—components that transformed a building into a total work of art. In the tracing Parker completed for the Goetzenberger dining room table, her faint initials appear to have transferred to the vellum from the original drawing (figure 27). It is probable that Parker is completely responsible for the design—the writing on the drawing does not appear to be Elmslie's, though he was usually responsible for designing furnishings and ornamentation. The drawing itself, particularly the indications of sawed-wood ornament, seem stiff and tentative, more akin to the hand of someone only learning furniture design rather than a more experienced designer. If she is responsible for the design, Parker was modifying Elmslie's dining room suite for Mrs. T.B. Keith of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, completed the same year as the Goetzenberger house in 1910 and now in the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (figure 28).[81] The Goetzenberger table design is very similar to the Keith table, especially with its round tabletop and thick cruciform support

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bathroom; the McCosker design is similar, subtracting one of Wright's bedrooms for a sleeping porch and placing a bathroom in one of the corners.

[80] Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, "Terry McCosker – $4,000.00" and "Goetzenberger – $5,000.00," Job Files #40 and #77, William Gray Purcell Papers. Please note that these prices were attained from early drawings; it is likely that the overall final construction costs were slightly higher.

[81] For more information about the history of the Keith suite, see Olivarez, 108-109.

pierced by sawed-wood decoration. The execution of sawed-wood ornament applied to the edge of the Keith table also is an element used in the Goetzenberger design—the "V" motif often identified with Elmslie was used in the design for both tables, though it appears slightly simplified in the Goetzenberger piece. It is unclear if the Goetzenberger table was ever built, but it seems to be an extravagant piece of furniture for the smaller size and modest budget of the house.

The Buxton Bungalow (built 1912): 424 Main St. E., Owatonna, Minnesota (Job #154)

Compared to the Goeztenberger house, the house built for C.I. Buxton, then-secretary of the Minnesota Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and his wife, Grace, is a more original example of Prairie School architecture. It is also a singular example within Purcell and Elmslie's body of residential work (figure 29).[82] Parker's initials are on the original plans for the Buxton bungalow, and Purcell remembers Parker being quite involved in the home's design. Writing in 1951, Purcell commented: "our Miss Parker took great interest in this house, and together she and I spent time and study on every smallest arrangement and detail . . . Miss Parker and I take credit for the design. George Elmslie seems to have been busy elsewhere."[83] While Purcell gives the impression of a highly collaborative project, in 1954 he gave more credit to Parker, writing: "I remember that Miss Parker was the one that [sic] struggled over the details, made the drawings, and

[82] Legler (104) explains that Buxton also was a member of the National Farmer's Bank board of directors, and came to know about Purcell, Feick and Elmslie through the bank's president, Carl K. Bennett. In 1906, Bennett commissioned Sullivan and Elmslie (Sullivan's assistant at the time) to design the successful and progressive Farmer's Bank. "An idealist, Bennett believed passionately in architecture's ability to transform lives and asserted that beauty was good not only for the spirit but for the bottom line." Bennett also commissioned home designs from Sullivan in 1910 and from Purcell and Elmslie in 1914, neither of which was realized. Larry Millet, *The Curve of the Arch: The Story of Louis Sullivan's Owatonna Bank* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 105-106, 135.

[83] William Gray Purcell, *Parabiography*, 1912 volume (bound), Job #154 (William Gray Purcell Papers, P&E Office Records, Manuscripts, AR:B4dl.6 (b), N3, 23/12), p. 31.

I leaned over her shoulder and we worked things out together."[84] From Purcell's later recollection, it seems possible Parker did most of the designing for the Buxton house, with Purcell in more of a supervisory role. This could explain the colorful stencil work on the home's exterior, which appears less intricate and delicate – but more graphic in quality – than Elmslie's style of ornamentation (figure 30). The execution of this decorative detail, in addition to Elmslie's absence at the time drawings were being completed, reveals Parker's significant role in the design.

The Buxton house is extremely unusual among Purcell, Feick and Elmslie's designs of this time—Parker employed her own understanding of Prairie School tenets to design this progressive home, which was related to the then-popular one-story bungalow forms. In keeping with progressive ideals concerning a respect for and integration with natural surroundings, the house was built into its sloping site, keeping the overall structure long, low and immensely private (figure 31). The dining room and kitchen are toward the front of the house, while the living room and three bedrooms (divided between the main and lower-level floors) are to the rear of the house, facing the back yard (figures 32 and 33).[85] The Buxton house also includes the open arrangement of dining and living rooms, a common progressive element in Prairie School homes. However, these rooms are not arranged around the hearth, instead, the fireplace marks a division along the length of the house between private and public spaces (for instance, the main floor bathroom and "Bedroom #1" are only accessible via the sleeping porch or through the kitchen). Allowing the site to dictate her form, Parker created a compact house design that did not look like the tall, gabled forms of the Goetzenberger, Atkinson

[84] William Gray Purcell, "Owatonna," typed and handwritten notes from Job File #154, William Gray Purcell Papers.
[85] The original plans and a job file for the Buxton bungalow are located in the William Gray Purcell Papers.

or McCosker homes; yet she preserved the importance of perceived interior spaciousness and ease of movement, while accounting for the necessary proximity of the bedroom and living room areas on the same floor.[86]

The bungalow (as it was designed for the Buxtons) became an interesting house type for Parker, especially during her transition between 1915 and 1916 from working for Purcell and Elmslie to running an independent architectural practice. Some of Parker's small house designs from this period are reminiscent of the Buxton house—in 1915, she submitted a bungalow design for her second-prize entry in the Minnesota State Art Commission's Model Village House competition (figure 34).[87] Parker's Model Village House, like the Buxton bungalow, is a long, low form with shallow gables and deep eaves. Other similarities to the Buxton bungalow include the design's side entry with an integrated flower box (along the longest wall of the home); and the placement of transom and casement windows in the east elevation of the Model Village House are nearly identical to the arrangement of main-floor windows in the east elevation of the Buxton bungalow. Other similar designs were completed by Parker in 1916: two issues of *Keith's Magazine* showcased Parker's bungalow-like designs—"Rain-on-the Roof" in April and "The Mary and John House" in August (figures 35 and 36).[88] As with the Model Village House design, Parker created an open plan in these compact one-story houses by enlarging the living rooms and placing the bedrooms to the back or sides of the

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[86] A less private combination of a bedroom and living room on the same floor can be seen in Purcell and Feick's design for the Jones house, figure 23.

[87] Minnesota State Art Commission, "Minnesota Helps Home Builders: Village and Farm House Plans Furnished by the Minnesota State Art Commission, *The Minnesotan* 1, no. 2 (August 1915): 12.

[88] In both articles, the homes are referred to as "bungalows." The "Rain-on-the Roof" article is particularly interesting because Parker wrote it herself—this cabin-like plan was designed as a quiet getaway for the busy and single career woman. Photographs in the article indicate that the "Rain-on-the-Roof" house was built at an unknown location. Marion Alice Parker, "Rain-on-the-Roof: A Summer Bungalow," *Keith's Magazine* 35, no. 4 (April 1916): 247-250; "The Mary and John House," *Keith's Magazine* 36, no. 2 (August 1916): 100-101.

plans. Her small house plans utilized the free-flowing space and horizontality of progressive architecture, setting them apart from the narrow footprint and tight arrangement of rooms common in more traditional bungalow designs in then-popular mail-order catalogs such as Sears, Roebuck & Company (figure 37). At the same time, the dissemination of Parker's bungalow designs through *Keith's Magazine*, a circulating publication similar to *Ladies Home Journal* and *Better Homes and Gardens*, made her work available to many Americans, recalling Purcell's desire to bring good design to all.

Possible attributions

For various reasons, researchers and scholars have connected several other Purcell, Feick and Elmslie projects with Parker. In some cases, determining the extent of Parker's participation in the projects is difficult due to a lack of information supporting her responsibility for the design. For instance, Hammons gives Parker credit for the Carl O. Jorgenson House (Job #120), located in Bismarck, North Dakota and built in 1911 (figure 38).[89] However, Hammons' assertion is based on a very brief Parabiography entry written by Purcell, who mentions that Parker "conscientiously worked out the details."[90] The William Gray Purcell Papers Collection at the Northwest Architectural Archives does not contain the original plans or a job file for the Jorgenson House—as a result, it is unknown if Parker's initials are on any of the drawings.[91] Similarly, in his Parabiography entry for the Dr. John Adair house (Job #218), located in Owatonna,

[89] Mark Hammons, Organica website, "Marion Alice Parker, Drafter, Architect" in "The Team" in *Purcell and Elmslie, Architects: The Web Sanctuary*, http://www.organica.org/peparker1.htm (accessed various dates); the Jorgenson house is located on 1022 Fifth Street in Bismarck.
[90] Purcell, *Parabiography* 1910, Job #120, "Carl O. Jorgenson;" quoted in Hammons, Organica, "Carlo [sic] Jorgenson residence," in "Marion Alice Parker, Drafter, Architect," http://www.organica.org/pejn120.htm (accessed various dates).
[91] Job files often contain further drawings, notes, correspondence, contracts and cost estimates related to a project. If the job file was available, its contents could create a stronger case for Parker's role in the design.

Minnesota and built between 1915 and 1916, Purcell indicates that he and Parker worked on the project together, but he goes in to greater detail about his own design decisions for the home (figure 39).[92] Furthermore, only Purcell's initials are on the original Adair house plans. The lack of documented involvement by Parker notwithstanding, the individual anomalous nature of these designs suggests that Parker may have had a hand in their origination.

Architectural historian Ken Allsen has made a stronger case for Parker's involvement in the home design completed by Purcell's firm for E.A. Knowlton (Job #116), located in Rochester, Minnesota and built in 1911 (figure 40).[93] Knowlton was a difficult client who had created preliminary drawings for his own home, causing he and Purcell to clash when it came to the overall structural and stylistic attributes of the home.[94] Parker "stayed on the job" (possibly as a result of Purcell's dislike for Knowlton), and managed to create a cohesive progressive exterior that was acceptable to Purcell.[95] In his Parabiography for the project, Purcell notes Parker's use of long and thin Roman brick to unify the project; she aligned doors and windows into a "series of units" and "lin[ed] up heights, cornices and belt courses."[96] Purcell also praised Parker for her determination to "organize the interior for the use of our plastic trim system which pulled

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[92] William Gray Purcell, *Parabiography*, 1913 volume (bound), Job #218 (William Gray Purcell Papers, P&E Office Records, Manuscripts), p. 38; The Adair house is located on 322 Vine Street in Owatonna, and original plans and a job file for the home are located in the Northwest Architectural Archives.
[93] Mr. Allsen works for the Olmstead Historical Society in Rochester, Minnesota. He came across Parker in his research of an archival photo of the Knowlton house, and contacted me of his findings in September, 2007. The Knowlton house was originally located at 306 West College Street, and when Rochester restructured its city streets in 1918, the address was changed to 306 4th Street S.W. According to Allsen, the Knowlton house was razed in the early 1970s; a parking lot for the Mayo Clinic was put in its place.
[94] Purcell did not hide his dislike for Knowlton—in his Parabiography for the job, he called Knowlton a "holy terror" and "a bombastic raucous rube." William Gray Purcell, *Parabiography*, volume 1911 (bound) Job #116 (William Gray Purcell Papers, P&E Office Records, Manuscripts), p. 18.
[95] Purcell called the Knowlton house "a fairly presentable if rather dry scheme." Ibid., 19.
[96] *Parabiography*, 1911, Job# 116, p. 19.

things together."[97] Although research is largely ongoing for the Knowlton house, Parker demonstrated her ability to creatively incorporate progressive elements into the owner's original design.[98]

The best links to Parker are evident in projects for which she signed the original plans. Such is the case for the Patrick E. Byrne House, Job #69, located in Bismarck, North Dakota and built in 1909; and the J.W.S. Gallagher House, Job #187, located in Winona, Minnesota and built in 1913 (figures 41 and 42).[99] Little else is known about these designs at this time, though to this author, like the Jorgenson and Adair houses, the Gallagher and Byrne designs stand apart in Purcell and Elmslie's body of work from this period, especially in their massing and their arrangement of structural forms. Like the Buxton Bungalow, the execution of progressive architectural forms in the above homes resulted in significantly different examples of Prairie School houses, suggesting Parker's upper hand in the designs.

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[97] Ibid., 19.

[98] It is also worth noting the slight similarity between the overall massing and form of the Knowlton and Adair houses, especially in their steeper hipped roof lines and attic dormers. Whether or not this similarity speaks of Parker's involvement in both designs is yet to be determined.

[99] The original job files and Purcell's Parabiography for the Gallagher house did not single Parker out in any way, and Parker's involvement in the Byrne residence was only recently brought to the author's attention in December, 2007.

III. Progressive Design Meets Historic Styling: Marion Alice Parker as an Independent Architect, 1915-1925

Around 1915, and after her years with Purcell's firm, Parker began seeking and accepting her own commissions as an independent architect in Minneapolis—by early 1916, Parker advertised her services of "home planning and house decoration" in *Keith's Magazine* (figure 43).[100] Parker's reasons for leaving Purcell and Elmslie at this particular time are unclear, though after the beginning of World War I, the firm experienced a significant decline in architectural commissions.[101] At the same time, the make-up of the firm itself was changing: Elmslie had been running the Chicago branch of Purcell and Elmslie since 1912,[102] and Purcell, probably concerned about supporting his family and wanting to contribute to the war effort, began investigating work outside the firm in 1915.[103] By 1916, he accepted a dual position as an architect and advertising manager for the Alexander Brothers Leather Belting Company in Philadelphia; until 1919, he traveled back and forth between Minneapolis and Philadelphia in order to oversee his work in both cities.[104] Although the firm of Purcell and Elmslie remained intact until 1921, the drafters of the Minneapolis office were without the presence of consistent leadership. One can only surmise Parker's reasons for striking out on her own. Parker had often collaborated with Purcell on the firm's projects—perhaps she knew of his plans to leave, and did not want to work in his firm without him and resigned as a result. Perhaps she left the firm due to the lack of available work. Or, after seven years of employment, having accumulated a tremendous amount of experience in progressive

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[100] In a project information card for "Women's Dormitory, 'Miss Countryman's Scheme,'" Job #158, Purcell claims Parker left the firm; it does not appear that she was fired. Job File 158 (folder AR: JN158[AR: Bla107), William Gray Purcell Papers.
[101] Olivarez, 63; Hammons, "Purcell and Elmslie, Architects," 269.
[102] Legler and Korab, 28.
[103] Olivarez, 63; Hammons, 269.
[104] Olivarez, 63 and 71, note 55; Hammons, "Purcell and Elmslie, Architects," 269.

architecture, she may have felt she was ready to open her own office. More than likely it was a combination of these factors. It is interesting to note that some of Parker's early independent projects were run through Purcell and Elmslie's accounting system, suggesting a fluid and friendly business relationship between her and her former employer.[105]

Pi Beta Phi Sorority House (built 1916, now the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity House): 1019 University Avenue S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota

Parker continued working as an independent architect in Minneapolis until 1925, and like her work for Purcell's firm, the majority of her commissions were house designs. The Pi Beta Phi sorority house, affiliated with the University of Minnesota and built in 1916, was among the first projects Parker accomplished as an independent architect (figure 44). However, Parker had some help in the design—the building permit for the house lists both Parker and Ethel Bartholomew as the architects.[106] Bartholomew graduated with a degree in architecture from MIT in 1895 and became an editor of *Construction Details*, an architecture magazine published monthly in St. Paul.[107] Both Parker and Bartholomew had ties to *Keith's Magazine* and were probably introduced through their work with the publication (Bartholomew became an editor for the magazine in 1916).[108] The sorority house, in fact, may have come to Parker through her professional relationship with Bartholomew, who possibly had been a Pi Beta Phi during

[105] Hammons, "Purcell and Elmslie, Architects," 233.
[106] City of Minneapolis Building Permit No. B121574 for Pi Beta Phi Sorority, 5 May 1916 (folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257), William Gray Purcell Papers.
[107] Paine, 69.
[108] Paul Larson, St. Paul, Minnesota, email correspondence with the author, 1 November 2007. Mr. Larson also suggested that Bartholomew and Parker's "ad hoc partnership" for the sorority in 1916 could be one reason Parker's designs appeared so often in *Keith's Magazine* the same year.

her years at MIT.[109] Additionally, Parker probably identified with the pioneering mission of Pi Beta Phi, which was the first national society of women to be modeled after the Greek-letter fraternities of men.[110]

Though the scope of Bartholomew's contribution to the design is unknown, the sorority house is a clear example of Parker's subscription to Prairie School architecture. Outwardly, the building's bands of windows, first floor projection, low hipped roof, central chimney and side entrance recalls designs completed by Purcell's firm, including the Edna S. Purcell House and E.S. Hoyt House (both built in 1913, figures 4 and 5) as well as the C.T. Backus House (built in 1915, figure 45).[111] The interior of the sorority house has been somewhat remodeled, but certain progressive aspects remain intact, such as the front entry way seating nook, raised hearth fireplace and banding of wood trim throughout the house, though the latter has been repainted over time (figure 46).[112] The house was likely designed for ten to fifteen occupants, each person with a small bedroom and desk area.[113]

The most significant architectural element connecting Parker's hand to the design of the sorority house is also the building's only exterior decorative feature. The sawed-wood ornament underneath the arch crowning the side entrance exhibits a style of

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[109] In the 1893 University of Minnesota yearbook *The Gopher*, Bartholomew is listed as a Pi Beta Phi under the Latin heading "Sorores in Urbibus Geminis," or "Sisters in the Twin Cities."

[110] "Pi Beta Phi Fraternity Founders" in Pi Beta Phi "About Us" (Town & Country, Missouri: Pi Beta Phi Fraternity, Inc., 2007), http://www.pibetaphi.org/aboutus/history.html (accessed 20 April 2007).

[111] The overall size and massing of the sorority house, however, more closely resembles the Edna S. Purcell house and C.T. Backus House.

[112] Much of the house still needs some repairs, though nearly $50,000.00 worth of remodeling work already has been carried out by current owner and landlord, Mark Freund, who refinished the hardwood floors and made repairs to the plaster walls.

[113] This speculation is based on the author's tour of the building and an informal interview with Will Snowden, president of Kappa Alpha Psi (KAP) fraternity at the University of Minnesota in 2007. The Pi Beta Phi sorority house currently houses KAP, a predominantly African American service fraternity that has gained stronger membership in recent years. For the first time in the history of Greek life at the University of Minnesota, KAP occupies a house.

decoration specific to progressive design (figure 47). The simultaneous presentation of abstract and organic forms – a stretched triangle with encircling tendrils – reflects a tradition of progressive decoration begun by Louis Sullivan himself, who desired to give every building a "system of ornament."[114] Elmslie, who had apprenticed for Sullivan for several years before joining Purcell's firm, mastered Sullivan's style of ornamentation, and continued to apply it in some way to nearly all Purcell and Elmslie house designs (see figures 2-6). Parker, in turn, witnessed the depth of Elmslie's forms first-hand, and Hammons believes she, too, learned to draw and apply such ornament almost as successfully as Elmslie.[115] The formal complexity of the sawed-wood ornament on the sorority house supports such a claim; the ornament design is certainly Parker's for the same form can also be found as a logo on her business cards and her designs for ladies' calling cards (figures 9 and 48). Notably, Parker's 1919 alterations on the J.S. Ulland House in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, included decorative leaded glass on the front door that employed the same design (figure 49).[116] The motif was Parker's graphic signature, one that announced her commitment to progressive design.

Marion Alice Parker House (built 1921): 4933 Oliver Avenue S., Minneapolis, Minnesota

In contrast to the sorority house built five years prior, Parker's design for her own home displays a significant break from Prairie School architecture and sets a precedent

[114] Olivarez, 20.
[115] Hammons, "Purcell and Elmslie, Architects," 233.
[116] According to Hammons (Organica website, "J.S. Ulland, alterations" in "Marion Alice Parker, Drafter, Architect," http://www.organica.org/pejn386.htm, accessed various dates), Parker's alterations for the Ulland house "were carried as a courtesy on the P&E books." The Ulland house is located on 109 N. Union Avenue in Fergus Falls.

for her work of the 1920s (figure 50). Among the first built on the block,[117] Parker's compact design of just over 1,000 square feet was constructed for a modest $6,300.00.[118]

By the time Parker designed a home for herself, the avant-garde qualities of Prairie School architecture were no longer in fashion. H. Allen Brooks attributed this to changing cultural trends in America, especially during and after World War I. According to Brooks's hypothesis on the "Demise of the Prairie School," Midwesterners rejected individuality in favor of conformity; they were influenced by "eastern standards of taste," including architectural forms.[119] The revival of colonial and Tudor Gothic forms in American houses at the time were a result of "patriotic sympathy" for England, which many Americans identified as the "mother country."[120] These trends were also paralleled in the overwhelming popularity of the colonial and Tudor Revival styles for furniture and interiors,[121] and the new phenomenon of European and American period rooms in American art museums. As John Harris has shown, "English Rooms" became prominent in North American museums between the 1890s and 1950s.[122] In fact, the Minneapolis

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[117] Unfortunately, the current owner of the house was not willing to give the author a tour of the interior, nor did she supply any information about the original plans. Nancy I. Fitzgerald (current owner of the Marion Alice Parker house), Minneapolis, Minnesota, letter to the author, 28 April 2007, transcript typed.

[118] In 1934, subsequent owners added a small garage to the lot and made some minor alterations to the home. The inspection record for the home does not specify the type of alterations, but this author is suspicious of the treatment of the front entry, which appears to have been built out and enclosed after the home was completed. *Inspection record for 4933 Oliver Ave. S.*, Minneapolis History Collection, Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[119] Brooks, 337-338, 340.

[120] Ibid., 340.

[121] The historical development of furnishings created by interior decorator John S. Bradstreet exemplifies these trends. In the early twentieth century, Bradstreet's furniture and interiors were known for an aesthetic that combined oriental styling with the stylized forms of the Arts and Crafts Movement. By the 1920s, however, Jacobean revival pieces dominated his work. Ledger books for John S. Bradstreet and Co., Minneapolis Institute of Arts Archives.

[122] John Harris, *Moving Rooms: The Trade in Architectural Salvages* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 136-199.

Institute of Arts installed the Tudor Room in 1923, making the museum one of the first to install an English period room (figure 51).[123]

Parker, like her former colleagues Purcell and Elmslie, adjusted her style in order to compensate for a decrease in clients willing to build modern homes. However, unlike the slavish reproductions of Tudor and colonial homes that predominated post-World War I suburban neighborhoods, Parker melded progressive principles with historical home designs, producing a hybrid that drew upon her understanding of the positive aspects of progressivism during her work with the socially conscious firm of Purcell and Elmslie.

Parker's own home is a good example of the influence of her progressive training on one of the most popular historical home types of the period, the Tudor revival (figure 52). Some elements of Parker's house, such as the deep eaves and peak window of the front gable, as well as the deeply-situated side entry and the varied integration of structural forms reflect Parker's knowledge of progressive design (figure 50). Parker combined these elements with common Tudor Revival devices, which resulted in a balanced and visually lively expression of historic and modern forms. For instance, the eaves of the front gable of Parker's house are enclosed, an aspect of Tudor revival architecture that, when combined with the exaggerated form of the home's eaves, flattens the front façade for a graphic appearance that recalled the geometric planes of Prairie School houses. In the same vein, although the presence of peak windows was a progressive architectural element known to Parker, she chose to make the peak window of her own home long and narrow (in keeping with styling typical to Tudor revival home

[123] The Tudor Room, originally known as the "Jacobean Paneled Room," was acquired by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in May of 1919 for $13,800.00. Harris, 166-167.

designs), instead of diamond-shaped, as seen in Prairie School houses such as the Goetzenberger design. Although the steep main gable, cross-gables and shallow dormer puncturing the south side of the house are all more traditional structural characteristics of Tudor revival home designs, their arrangement and varying massing in Parker's house creates surprise and rhythm, especially in the second-story of the home.

Purcell and Elmslie's work of the 1920s reflected the firm's similar situation with regard the demise of the Prairie School. Just a year before Parker built her own house, the firm built a similarly style house for Purcell when he moved to Portland, Oregon in 1920 (figure 53).[124] The multiple gables, placement and sizing of windows, and the graphic quality of the façade created by the smooth plaster exterior of Purcell's house are all elements seen in Parker's own home design. After the dissolution of the firm, Elmslie incorporated such forms in his own modern adaptation of a Tudor revival for the E.A. Forbes residence in Rhinelander, Wisconsin (figure 54).[125] Built in 1923 (and one of the first house designs Elmslie completed after the end of his professional partnership with Purcell),[126] the Forbes home was more decorative than the homes of Parker and Purcell, with its octagonal windows and painted ornament. Yet Elmslie's inclusion of brick facing encourages a stronger association with Tudor revival architecture. It is unclear as to how much contact Parker had with her former employers during the 1920s, but the similarities between their house designs at this time suggests they were certainly aware of one another's work, revealing their comparable approaches of blending progressive and traditional architectural forms.

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[124] Purcell's Portland residence is located at 2649 Southwest Georgian Place. He moved there with his family after the Alexander Brothers went bankrupt in 1919; Olivarez, 63; Brooks 305.
[125] The Forbes house in Rhinelander is located at 105 E. Frederick St.
[126] Hammons, Organica website, "George Grant Elmslie, Post-P&E Commission List, 1920s-1930s" in "The Compleat Commission List," http://www.organica.org/peggejobs.htm (accessed 13 March 2008).

Frank P. Stover House (built 1922): 1320 W. Oak St., Fort Collins, Colorado

Though it can be stylistically likened to Parker's design for her own house, the home she designed for Mary and Frank P. Stover was built far outside the geographical boundaries common for Parker's work (figure 55). Mr. Stover was a well-known community member in Fort Collins, most notably for his ownership of the town's drug store and his roles as both county treasurer and town recorder.[127] Mary owned the land on which the house was built, facing a public park.[128] Though it is unknown as to how the project came to Parker, the design is easily attributed to her—the mastheads for the original plans read "Marion Alice Parker, Architectural Advisor." Today, the house is protected through the local Landmark Preservation Commission, which describes the design as a Tudor revival.[129]

The exterior of the Stover House exhibits several of the architectural elements Parker used for her own home: multiple, steep gables, punctuating and shallow gabled-dormers and enclosed eaves. Additionally, peak windows on the front, east and west gables of the Stover design are identical in shape to the one Parker used for the front gable of her house (figure 56). The exterior of the home was originally covered with smooth white plaster which was in keeping with Parker's design for her own home and Purcell's design for his Portland house. The plaster recalled the simplified stucco exteriors of Purcell and Elmslie's progressive homes, which made the Stover house appear more modern (figure 55b). Later the house was completely faced in brick, a nod to the traditional Tudor revival characteristics of the home and a move which ultimately

[127] City of Fort Collins Community Planning and Environmental Services Advance Planning Department, "Landmark Preservation Commission, April 23, 1996, Staff Report" (folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257), William Gray Purcell Papers.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

changed its character (figure 55c). One of the unique architectural features in the original plans for the Stover house is an arched colonnade for a breezeway that connects the house to the garage. While the breezeway introduces some classicism to the design, the roof-line of both the breezeway and the garage is low and hipped, in what appears to be a reference to Prairie School design (for example, see the roofline for Purcell and Elmslie's Hoyt house, built in 1913, figure 5).[130]

Although the basement and second-story floor plans appear typical for the time, Parker's arrangement for the first-floor plan included several progressive elements used in Purcell, Feick and Elmslie's smaller houses, including the "L-" shaped configuration of living and dining areas wrapped around a central hearth; a sun room (or porch) off the living room; and wide openings between these public spaces, promoting better interior flow (figure 57). In the same manner as the main-floor plan of the Buxton bungalow, Parker situated the more private areas of the Stover house (Frank and Mary's bedrooms, dressing rooms and a bathroom) on the opposite side of the design, separating them from the open plan of the living and dining room areas through a series of narrow hallways. The doorways on this half of the house are narrow as well, and compared to the public areas of the house, there are far more divisions of space. Yet there is a clear progression from room to room—ease of interior flow was an important aspect of progressive architecture, and Parker achieved this in the Stover house by making movement from the bedroom areas to the living areas appear almost circular (from living room to hall and rear hall to kitchen and finally, the dining room).

[130] The author has not seen the Stover house in person; because there are only a few photographs of the Stover house available to the author, it is unclear how closely the constructed design followed the original plans.

Parker also took great consideration of the relationship between the house and its outdoor site, another principle important to progressive design. As with Prairie School homes such as the Edna S. Purcell House and the Buxton Bungalow, the Stover residence has a large flower box integrated with the structure of the front steps and the entry door (figure 55). Flower boxes adorn the windows of the front gable, and Parker included a landscaping plan in her drawings for the house (figure 58). In the plan, various fruit trees, a vegetable garden, a clothesline yard, cement walkways and a driveway were to surround the house. Historic photographs of the front of the home show that some of Parker's landscaping was carried out; the specificity of the overall design suggests the Stovers took a significant role concerning the execution of their landscaping plan.

In correspondence with the author, Hammons has noted the striking exterior similarities between the Stover house and the Clayton F. Summy residence designed by Elmslie and built in Hinsdale, Illinois in 1924 (figure 59).[131] The general organization of structural forms is nearly the same in both houses, with one large gable intersected by another and dormer gables piercing the front of the house. The arrangement of the facades for the Stover and Summy houses is similar as well, particularly in the grouping of windows across the first floor and the placement of the entry door. Like Parker's design for the Stover house, Elmslie's Summy residence hovers between a traditional Tudor revival home and progressive design, yet his execution of the forms is more daring, an aspect that appears especially evident in the strong triangular geometry of the façade and the unusual roofline (figure 60). Other characteristics typical of Elmslie can be found in the Summy house, notably the combination of brick and smooth plaster on the exterior. Instead of incorporating sawed-wood or painted decoration, the playful

[131] Mark Hammons, email correspondence with the author, 2 November 2007.

trapezoidal peak windows of the Summy house act as ornamentation, an aspect that would have been crucial to Elmslie's style of design. (Also note the trapezoidal form of the chimney, which was an element Purcell included in his Portland house four years earlier.) Although Hammons believes Parker may have been involved with the drawings for the house, the overall finesse of the design leads this author to believe that it only belonged to Elmslie.[132] While the houses are generally similar, the later date of the Summy residence does suggest Elmslie and Parker were communicating about these projects in some way: perhaps Elmslie assisted Parker in her design with the Stover house; or more likely, he may have seen and been inspired by Parker's work, and designed the Summy residence accordingly. As Brooks has noted, Elmslie mostly completed commercial projects during the 1920s; if he struggled to gain residential commissions at this time, he may have looked to the work of his progressive colleagues so as to create a more successful design for the Summy residence, especially during this stylistically transitional period.[133] Nevertheless, Parker's design for the Stover house, as well as her own home, showed her commitment to progressive ideals in the face of changing styles. Like her progressive mentors Purcell and Elmslie, Parker found a way to infuse historic styling with modern design.

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[132] Ibid.

[133] Brooks, 306; Hammons claims Parker was working out of the Architects and Engineers Building office in Minneapolis in the early 1920s; Fred Strauel was managing what was left of Purcell's firm at the time, which was located in the same building. Parker's proximity to Purcell and Elmslie's Minneapolis "toehold" suggests she may have had regular contact with Elmslie and his projects. For Hammons, the Stover and Summy house designs could be the result of such contact. Hammons, email correspondence with the author, 2 November 2007.

Fred N. Hegg Residence (built 1925): 1546 E. Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis, Minnesota (and surrounding housing development)

Parker's employment with Purcell and Elmslie led to work on some speculative housing in Minneapolis in the 1920s. Fred Hegg was a building contractor often hired by Purcell and Elmslie, and in the early-to-mid 1920s, he invested in a plat of land along Minnehaha Parkway between Bloomington Avenue and 16th Avenue South in Minneapolis.[134] Hegg subdivided the block and built approximately fifteen homes, hoping to sell them for a profitable return.[135] According to Purcell, Hegg hired Parker and another drafter from his firm, Fred Strauel, to design all the homes.[136]

In 1954, Purcell wrote to Strauel seeking to identify a home design he remembered seeing in advertising mailings for Hegg's Minnehaha Parkway development. Purcell did a rough sketch of the house in question, commenting that it had been built "many times" (figure 61).[137] In his letter, Purcell asked Strauel whether he or Parker designed the home.[138] Strauel identified the sketch as Hegg's own house on Minnehaha Parkway, and gave Parker credit for the design.[139] No address was listed, but two houses on Minnehaha Parkway resemble Purcell's drawing: 1536 and 1550 E. Minnehaha Parkway both include a half-gabled side entry and short banks of three windows across the first and second stories of their front façades (figures 62 and 63).[140] However,

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[134] "Hegg, Fred M., Member of the Team of Purcell and Elmslie" index card (Folder, Box 24, file 10, P&E Office Records, Manuscripts, Biographical Materials, "The Team," [AR: B4d3]), William Gray Purcell Papers; Fred Strauel, location unknown, to William Gray Purcell, location unknown, 10 October 1954 and 11 January 1955, transcript in the hand of William Gray Purcell and typed notes by Fred Strauel, folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257, William Gray Purcell Papers.
[135] Fred N. Hegg, Minneapolis, Minnesota, to William Gray Purcell, Los Angeles, California, 17 December 1925, transcript typed, p. 1, folder N3, Hegg, F.N., C: 149, William Gray Purcell Papers.
[136] "Hegg, Member of the Team" index card.
[137] Fred Strauel to William Gray Purcell, 1955 and 1954.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] 1536 even shares the steeply pitched roof and narrow massing of Purcell's drawing.

according to city directory information, neither of these houses belonged to Hegg. He resided at 1546 E. Minnehaha Parkway—the home only resembles the general style of Purcell's drawing, but it reads as a larger and more complex version of Parker's design for her own home (figures 64 and 50). [141] Although the author has not toured the home or seen original plans for the design, Hegg's house does include the crisp geometry, simplified façade and a combination of structural forms that were common among Parker's revivalist designs. The wrought-iron flower box frame, as well as the organization of windows across the front of the home, specifically recall Parker's house.[142]

Hegg's house more closely resembles a traditional Tudor revival design while 1536 and 1550 E. Minnehaha Parkway appear to be variations on a slightly different, though singular and more modern, architectural form. At the same time, all three homes share a linear and planar quality with their flat, geometric facades. The extent of Parker and Strauel's collaboration is unclear, though if Parker was responsible for all three, the more traditional outcome of Hegg's house may have resulted due to his own requirements for the home (he likely used it as a selling point as well, attracting possible homebuyers who preferred a more straightforward Tudor revival design). Although the building permits for 1536, 1546 and 1550 E. Minnehaha Parkway do not confirm Parker's responsibility for any of the designs (only Hegg or Strauel are listed as the architects),[143] the exterior similarities between these houses and Parker's previous work,

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[141] "Frederick N. Hegg, 1546 E. Minnehaha Parkway," *Minneapolis City Directory*, 1930, Minneapolis Public Library, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[142] Note the trim color for both houses is also nearly the same, though it is unknown if it is the original color in either case.

[143] Since Hegg was the developer, it is not unusual that he would be listed as the home owner and/or the architect on the building permits. Strauel was listed as the architect for the building permit for Hegg's house; if Parker was solely responsible for the design, she and Strauel may have chosen to include only

coupled with both Purcell and Straul's memories of her role in the development, make a strong case for Parker's involvement in these designs. As in her previous work of the 1920s, the Minnehaha Parkway houses include architectural devices that were common in Tudor revival homes (crossing gables, peak windows and stone-embellished entries), yet they present some progressive elements as well: bands of windows along the front facade (albeit short); a varied integration of second-story forms; and planar plaster-faced facades that have little or no texture or decoration.

In addition, the Minnehaha Parkway houses present progressive aspects of Parker's previous work, further supporting her involvement in the designs. Just as parallels can be drawn between Hegg's house and Parker's design for her own home, 1550 Minnehaha Parkway (arguably the most original design of the three Parkway houses discussed here) recalls elements of Parker's much earlier progressive design for the "Model Farm House Competition" offered by the journal *American Architect*, around 1915 (figure 65).[144] Specifically, the east elevation of Parker's farm house design, with its asymmetrical gabled-roof line, cross gable and bands of windows (one with a narrow, non-structural roof section) was nearly replicated in the front façade of 1550 Minnehaha Parkway. A major exception is the orientation of the roofline—in Parker's drawing, the longer portion of the gabled-end slants to the right rather than the left, as in 1550.[145] The well-articulated architectural forms of the Minnehaha Parkway houses, as well as their visual cohesiveness as a group, reveal a mature and confident level of design work that

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Hegg's name on the permit so as to avoid sexist discrimination among building inspectors and subcontractors (probably all of which were male).

[144] "The Model Farmhouse – A Vital Problem," *The American Architect* 107, no. 2058 (June 2, 1915): 369.

[145] The long slanted roof of the farm house design also extends over a side entry, whereas the front façade of 1550 Minnehaha Parkway does not.

this author believes would have been attained by Parker by the mid-1920s, after nearly a decade in private practice.

Parker's designs for her own home, the Stover house and the Minnehaha Parkway speculative development, reveal her architectural adaptation to changing cultural conditions in America. The stylistic similarities drawn between Parker's work and the independent work of her Prairie School colleagues, Purcell and Elmslie, suggests that these progressive architects were all working in the same manner, infusing traditional-looking houses with aspects of progressive design. Parker's successful integration of progressive architectural elements with traditional Tudor revival designs showed her complete understanding of and commitment to progressive principles. One of the most important of these was that progressive design could exist at any time and any place as long as it was a manifestation of contemporary American life. While Parker's house designs from the 1920s did not possess the dramatic massing and decorative elements of Prairie School architecture, their plans (to the extent that they have been viewed by the author) and exterior treatments convey her modern take on the historic architectural forms that preoccupied American homeowners after the First World War.[146]

[146] The author has not yet obtained access to any of Minnehaha Parkway homes.

IV. Career Change: The Laguna Beach Years, 1926-1935

In 1926, Parker retired from architectural practice in Minneapolis and moved to California, first residing in Glendale, a suburb of Los Angeles.[147] By 1927 she relocated to Laguna Beach, a coastal town famous for its landscape and artist's colony (figure 66).[148] There Parker opened an arts and crafts store named The Home-Spun Shop, which was originally located in downtown Laguna Beach next to the Laguna Hotel.[149] By 1930, she combined her home and store in a new location, 664 Coast Boulevard S., just a few blocks away from the shop's original site (figure 67).[150] It is possible that Parker designed her Laguna Beach house and store: in his biographical note on Parker, Purcell claims she "built" her home and shop.[151] The design of the large, bungalow-like building form with cedar shakes also is reminiscent of certain architectural elements of Parker's previous home designs, particularly in its exaggerated asymmetrical roof line and tall, multi-paned casement windows. It is unknown if Parker designed any other buildings in the area, but her interest in arts and crafts as well as home decoration was evident in the numerous hand-woven textiles she sold in her shop, such as curtains, rugs, embroidered linens, bedspreads and throw blankets.[152] Her store was featured in several local newspaper articles in the 1930s, considered a highlight among the town's shopping establishments. Compared to the many local gift shops selling collectibles, Parker's store

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[147] Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 1; "Alice Parker Summoned," *South Coast News.*
[148] Ibid.; For more information about Laguna Beach and its history, see Michael McFadden and John Hardy, *Only in Laguna: A Pictorial Essay on the Highlights, History and Humor of Southern California's Famed Art Colony Produced by Local Residents* (South Laguna: John Hardy, 1972) and the *Laguna Beach Visitors Bureau*, "Local History" on-line (Laguna Beach-California.com, 2005), http://www.lagunabeach-california.com/Laguna_Beach/Local_History/.
[149] "Alice Parker Summoned," *South Coast News*.
[150] Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 1; Marianne Bosque, "World Famed Shops Keep Open House," *South Coast News*, 12 August 1932, p. 30; Marion Alice Parker, Laguna Beach, California to William Gray Purcell, Monrovia, California, 13 July 1935, transcript in the hand of Marion Alice Parker (folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257), William Gray Purcell Papers.
[151] Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 1.
[152] Bosque, "World Famed Shops Keep Open House," *South Coast News*.

appears to have been more specialized and sophisticated: her inventory came from across the world, and she advertised her shop as a "studio of interior decoration," implying that she may have sold her own services in interior design (figure 68).[153]

Aside from running a successful business, Parker was well-liked and respected among Laguna Beach residents. She was an active community member—she participated in the Women's University Club and "manifested an interest in civic affairs."[154] In her obituary, she was lauded as "a woman of high intellectual attainments and splendid education," who "was looked upon as a natural leader."[155] Finally, Parker was remembered for her "kindly disposition" and "broad human sympathy."[156] These glimpses into Parker's activities and personality suggest she was happily established in Laguna Beach.

Parker's reasons for ending her architectural practice and leaving Minnesota are unclear, though she may have decided to move to California because her sister and brother-in-law were living in Monrovia, just 40 miles north of Laguna Beach.[157] Parker passed away on November 18, 1935, and Purcell calls it a "strange coincidence" that she fell ill on her way to visit him in Monrovia where he, too, was living and recovering from surgery for his tuberculosis.[158] Parker stopped at her sister's house before her intended

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[153] Ibid.; Advertisement for the Home-Spun Shop, *South Coast News*, 25 August 1933, p. 13.
[154] "Alice Parker Summoned," *South Coast News*.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Parker's death certificate was signed by her sister, Mrs. I.T. (Maud) Reyonlds, who listed a Monrovia address (216 Poppy Avenue). *State of California Standard Certificate of Death* for Marion Alice Parker, 18 November 1935 (folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C:257), William Gray Purcell Papers.
[158] In fact, Purcell seems to have felt partly responsible for Parker's death. In his notes for Job #158, Purcell wrote: "Parker, who had retired to Laguna Beach, California, and had a small gift shop there for many years, died of heart disease at the foot of the hill on which I lived in Monrovia, California, in 1935. She was on her way up to call on me and exertion on a warm day proved too much for her. I did not learn for several years of her intention and its disastrous result." William Gray Purcell, "Miss Countryman's Scheme, Women's Dormitory," index card (Job File #158, [project] 1912, AR:JN158 [AR:Bla107]), William Gray Purcell Papers; Research is on-going concerning Parker's involvement in the Women's

meeting with Purcell, and suffered a fatal heart attack.[159] While little else is known about Parker's sister, Maud (Parker) Reynolds, because she was married, this author believes she may have had children. Ongoing research seeks to discover whether or not Parker has any living descendants who could shed more light on her life and career.

Dormitory (also known as the Business Women's Dormitory), which was located on 8th Street in Minneapolis. Purcell's notes indicate that his firm consulted for the project in 1912, and Parker "saw it built, very credibly as an architect" in 1919. Parker's drawings for the project are located in the Marion Alice Parker Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives.

[159] Purcell, "Marion Parker," p. 1; *Certificate of Death* for Marion Alice Parker.

V. Variety and Adaptability: The Progressive Architecture of Marion Alice Parker

The wide range of house types for which Parker can be credited presents an architectural career marked by variety and adaptability, characteristics that were founded by her continued commitment to the principles of progressive design. Probably hired for delineating skills already developed through her previous work experience with the Keith Company, Parker's employment with the democratic architectural firm of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie strengthened her architectural skills through her active involvement in and significant contributions to several of the firm's modern home designs.

During the firm's earliest years, Parker attained knowledge of Prairie School architecture through the dramatic massing and open interior floor plans of projects such as the Goetzenberger and Atkinson homes. Parker's later contributions to the Buxton bungalow reveal her seasoned understanding of progressive principles concerning a home's integration with its landscape, unified decoration and navigable interior spaces. The Buxton home became a singular example of Purcell and Elmslie's Prairie School houses, and other designs linked to Parker – such as the Jorgenson, Knowlton, Adair, Byrne and Gallagher houses – also present a unique stylistic creativity within the genre of home designs produced by Purcell's firm. Parker had a deep comprehension for progressive design, and her ability to manifest it diversely in several Prairie School home designs points to her complete subscription to modern architecture.

The variety of Prairie School houses attributed to Parker's involvement indicate her ability to utilize progressive design in many ways, an aspect that contributed to her success as an independent architect. In her early years in private practice, Parker adhered to the unified design concept and style of Prairie School architecture with her design for

the Pi Beta Phi Sorority house. As the popularity of early modern architecture waned and American suburbs were dominated by historic house forms such as Tudor revivals, Parker adapted her stylistic approach, blending progressive and traditional forms in the designs for her own home, the Stover house and Hegg's Minnehaha Parkway speculative development. These houses resembled the independent work of both Purcell and Elmslie, a possible result of Parker's continued contact with her colleagues until after the dissolution of the firm. The graphic treatment and linear quality of the architectural forms produced by Parker, Purcell, and Elmslie spoke a new type of progressive architecture, one that was contemporary to the changing cultural conditions in America after the First World War.

Parker's significance as a successful progressive architect is underlined by her position as one of the few documented female members of the American progressive design movement.[160] Her acceptance into a progressive firm with a significant output allowed her to subvert the male-dominated American architectural field and leave her mark as an independent and accomplished female architect with a knowledge of and commitment to progressive design. This status distinguishes her pioneering career among other women in the architectural field of the early twentieth century. At the same

[160] A similar situation existed within the larger context of international modernism, which ultimately began with the British Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1860s. Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh (1865-1933) represents a minority of European women involved in the progressive architecture movement during the early twentieth century. Mackintosh, an interior designer, often collaborated with her husband, Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928). She is well-known for her contributions to their unified designs, which included paintings and decorative gesso panels for tea rooms and private homes. Like their progressive counterparts in the Prairie School, the Mackintoshes sought to create harmonized interiors through the use of pattern, color and forms. And like Parker, Mackintosh's work revealed her commitment to a modern aesthetic through progressive principles. However, since women architects were the minority, much more common were women involved in pottery, graphic design or other "applied arts" associated with the various arts and crafts centers in Europe and America in 1900. Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, *International Arts and Crafts* (London: V&A Publications, 2005), 250; Also see Anderson's discussion of the Handicraft Guild in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in "Art for Life's Sake," *Minnesota 1900*, 122-141; For more information on the work of Margaret and Rennie Mackintosh, see Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995).

time, Parker's adaptability – her aptitude for re-working and re-casting the architectural forms of Prairie School homes – allowed her to continuously and successfully adhere to the ideals of progressive design throughout her twenty-year career as an architect.

APPENDIX A:
CHRONOLOGY OF PARKER'S BUILT PROJECTS, BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND RELATED HISTORIC EVENTS

Please note that projects described with a Job Number were completed during Parker's employment with Purcell's firm.

1873: Marion Alice Parker is born in Reading, Massachusetts.

1896: Parker graduates from the University of Minnesota with Bachelor of Literature.

1905: Parker is working as a drafter for the Keith Company.

1908: Parker becomes the first, full-time permanent drafter hired by the progressive Minneapolis firm of Purcell and Feick, Architects.

1909: The Byrne house is completed (Job #69, possible attribution to Parker).

1910: The Goetzenberger and Atkinson houses (Job #s 77 and 81) are completed; Elmslie joins Purcell and Feick.

1911: The Knowlton and Jorgenson houses (Job #s 116 and 120) are completed (possible attributions to Parker).

1912: The Buxton bungalow (Job #154) is completed.

1913: The Gallagher house is completed (Job #187, possible attribution to Parker); Feick leaves the firm, which becomes known as Purcell and Elmslie, Architects.

1914: World War I begins.

1915-1916: The Adair House is completed (Job #218, possible attribution to Parker); Parker leaves Purcell and Elmslie and establishes an independent practice.

1916: The Pi Beta Phi sorority house is completed (possibly Parker's first project as an independent architect).

1918: World War I ends.

1919: Alterations on the Ulland house are completed (an independent project carried through Purcell and Elmslie's accounting system).

1921: The Marion Alice Parker house is completed.

1922: The Frank P. Stover house is completed.

1925: The Fred N. Hegg house (and most of the surrounding E. Minnehaha Parkway housing development) is completed.

1926-1927: Parker retires from architectural practice, settles in Laguna Beach, California, and opens The Home-Spun Shop.

1935: Parker suffers a fatal heart attack on her way to visit Purcell in Monrovia, California.

APPENDIX B:
STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARKER'S BUILT PROJECTS

Projects completed during Parker's employment with Purcell's firm:

Please note that the extent of Parker's contributions to the firm's projects is more fully explored in the text above.

Goetzenberger House (Job #77, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1910):

- Large massing, traditional two-storied gabled-end design.
- Diamond-shaped attic peak windows.
- "L-" shaped interior first-floor plan adapted from Frank Lloyd Wright's 1907 plan for "A Fireproof House for $5,000.00."
- The Atkinson home (Job #81, 1910) is nearly identical in design.

Buxton Bungalow (Job #154, Owatonna, Minnesota, 1912):

- Colorful exterior stencil work that is graphic in quality.
- Built into sloping site; long and low structure with deep overhangs.
- Open arrangement of living and dining rooms, which are oriented toward the back yard.
- Fireplace marks a division along the length of the house that separates private (bedroom) and public (living area) spaces.

Projects completed by Parker as an independent architect:

Pi Beta Phi Sorority House (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1916):

- Long bands of windows, first-floor projection, low hipped roof and central chimney that recalls designs completed by Purcell's firm.
- Interior progressive elements have remained intact: front-entry seating nook, raised-hearth fireplace and wood-trim banding.
- Sawed-wood ornament over the side entrance displays Parker's graphic signature.

Marion Alice Parker House (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1921):

- Modern adaptation of a Tudor revival.
- Progressive architectural features: deep eaves, inclusion of a peak window (front gable), deeply-situation side entry and varied integration of structural forms.
- Traditional Tudor revival architectural features: enclosed eaves (front gable), long and narrow peak windows, steep cross-gables and shallow dormers.
- Graphic, linear and simplified façade (smooth white plaster on exterior).

Frank P. Stover House (Fort Collins, Colorado, 1922):

- Exhibits similarities to Parker's home: multiple, steep gables, long and narrow peak windows, punctuating and shallow gabled-dormers and enclosed eaves.
- Originally covered in smooth white plaster, later faced in brick.
- Attached garage with an arched colonnade for a breezeway.

- Progressive features of interior plan: “L” shaped configuration of living and dining rooms wrapped around a central hearth, inclusion of a sun room and wide openings between public spaces.
- Private spaces are on the opposite side of the house, with bedrooms and hallways more tightly arranged.

Fred N. Hegg Residence (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1925)

- Larger and more complex version of Parker’s house: multiple, steeply-pitched cross-gables, wrought-iron flower box frame and short bands of windows across the front of the house.
- More traditional example of Tudor revival architecture (compare to the modern variations in the home development surrounding Hegg’s house—**1536 and 1550 E. Minnehaha Parkway** were likely designed by Parker and Fred Strauel).
- Crisp geometry, simplified façade and combination of structural forms common among Parker’s revivalist designs.

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Figure 1
Photographer unknown, *Office for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects* (1910)
(Marion Alice Parker at left; Elmslie standing in front; Feick in front left corner.)

Marion Alice Parker became one of the first "draftsman" hired by the progressive architectural firm of Purcell and Feick in 1908. As part of "The Team," Parker and her fellow drafters were encouraged to participate in the entire design process.

Image from: Olivarez, *Progressive Design in the Midwest*, p. 25

a.

b.

Figure 2
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #98, *E.L. Powers House*, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1910)
a. front exterior entry; b. living room interior

The Powers house exhibits several progressive elements common in the Prairie School homes completed by Purcell's firm, including a varied integration of structural forms and a unified system of decoration.

Images from: Legler and Korab, *At Home on the Prairie*, p. 69 (a) and 71 (b)


a.


b.

Figure 3
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #179, *Grace and Charles Parker House*, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1912)
a. front exterior entry; b. detail of sawed-wood ornament over entry door

The Parker house (the author is not aware of any relation to Marion Alice Parker) presents progressive architectural elements such as long bands of windows, a varied integration of structural forms and unified decoration.

Images from: Legler and Korab, *At Home on the Prairie*, p. 118 (b) and 119 (a)

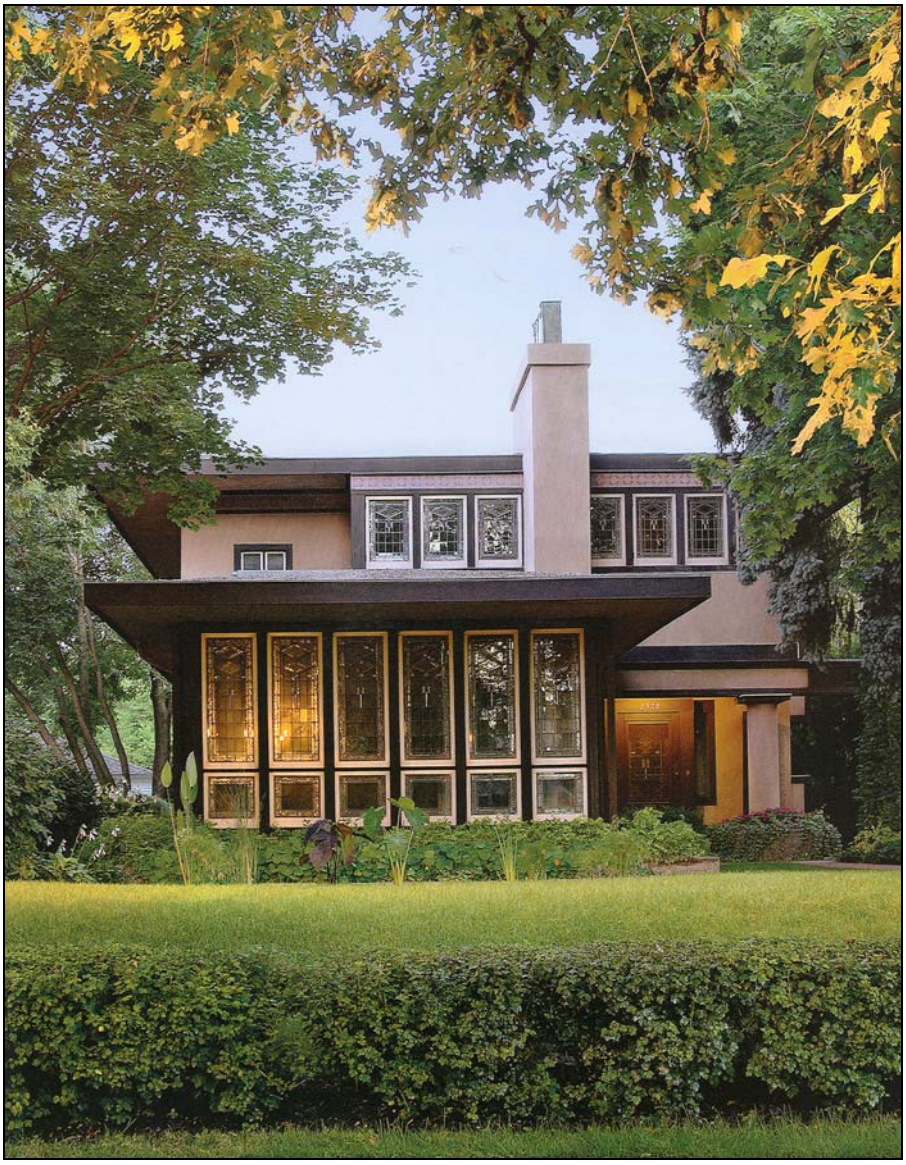
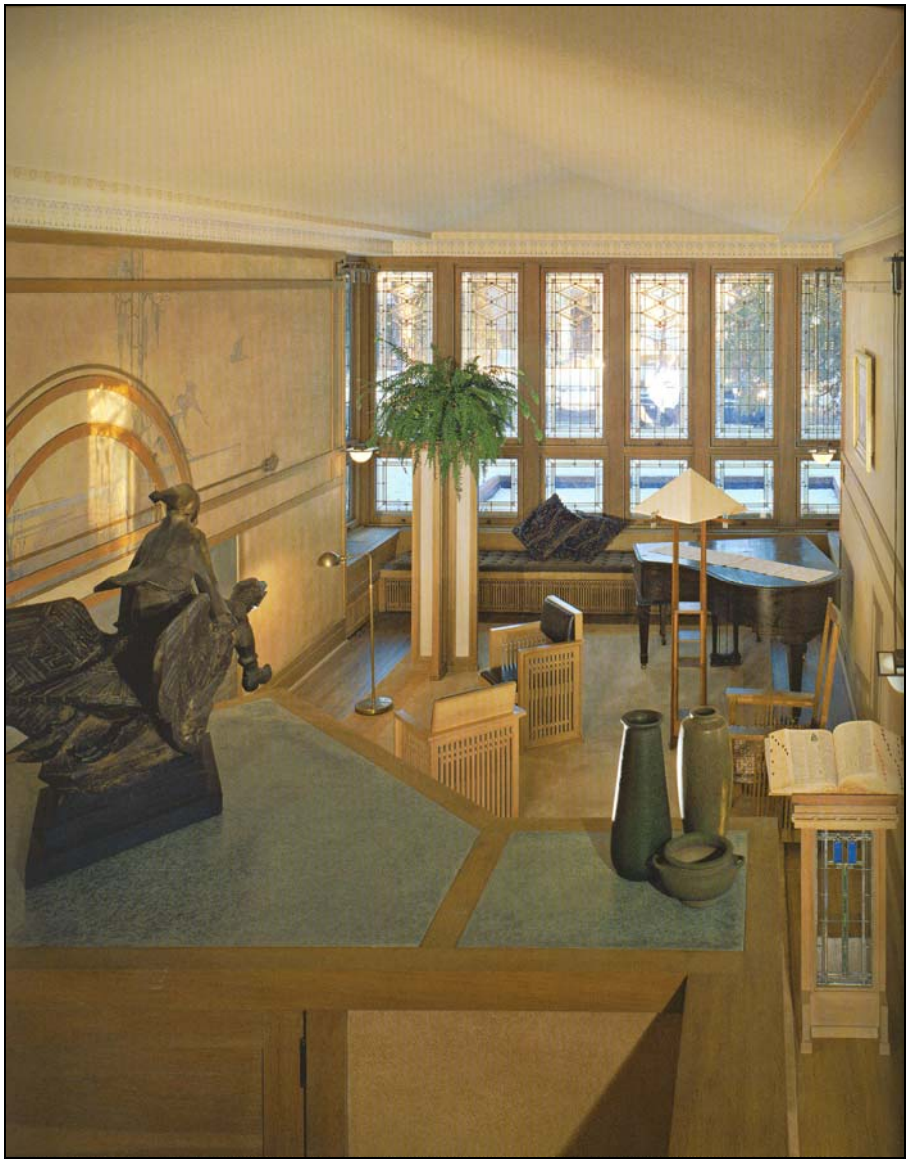

a.

Figure 4 (continued on following page)



b.

Figure 4
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #197, *Edna S. Purcell House* (now the Purcell-Cutts House), Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1913)
a. exterior front; b. interior view of living room from dining room

Purcell's own Minneapolis home was decidedly modern with its long bands of stained-glass windows, flat roof and deep eaves, elements that emphasize the structure's horizontality. An open floor plan and coordinated furniture were also important to the home's cohesive progressive design.

Images from: Legler and Korab, *At Home on the Prairie*, p. 138 (a) and 142 (b)

Figure 5
Purcell and Elmslie, Architects, Job #200,
E.S. Hoyt House, Red Wing, Minnesota (built 1913)

The long, low roof line and long bands of stained glass windows were used to emphasize the horizontality of the Hoyt House. The cantilevered second story of the home became an element that characterized the Prairie School architecture of Purcell, Elmslie and their progressive colleagues.

Image from: Legler and Korab, *At Home on the Prairie*, p. 149

Figure 6
Purcell and Elmslie, Architects, Job #218, *Dr. John Adair House, living room interior*, Owatonna, Minnesota (built 1915-1916)

Purcell and Elmslie often enlarged passageways between rooms to create open floor plans. In the Adair house, double doors made with stained glass allowed natural light to filter between living spaces, even when these areas were closed off for privacy. The home also includes built-in book cases enclosed by stained-glass, which display a diamond motif used as a decorative feature throughout the home.

Image from: photo courtesy of Patrick Watson

Figure 7
Photographer unknown, *Marion Mahony Griffin* (c. 1914)

Marion Mahony Griffin was among a handful of women architects who were practicing the Prairie School-style aspects of progressive design in the early twentieth century.

Image from: The Magic of America Digital Image Database for Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html

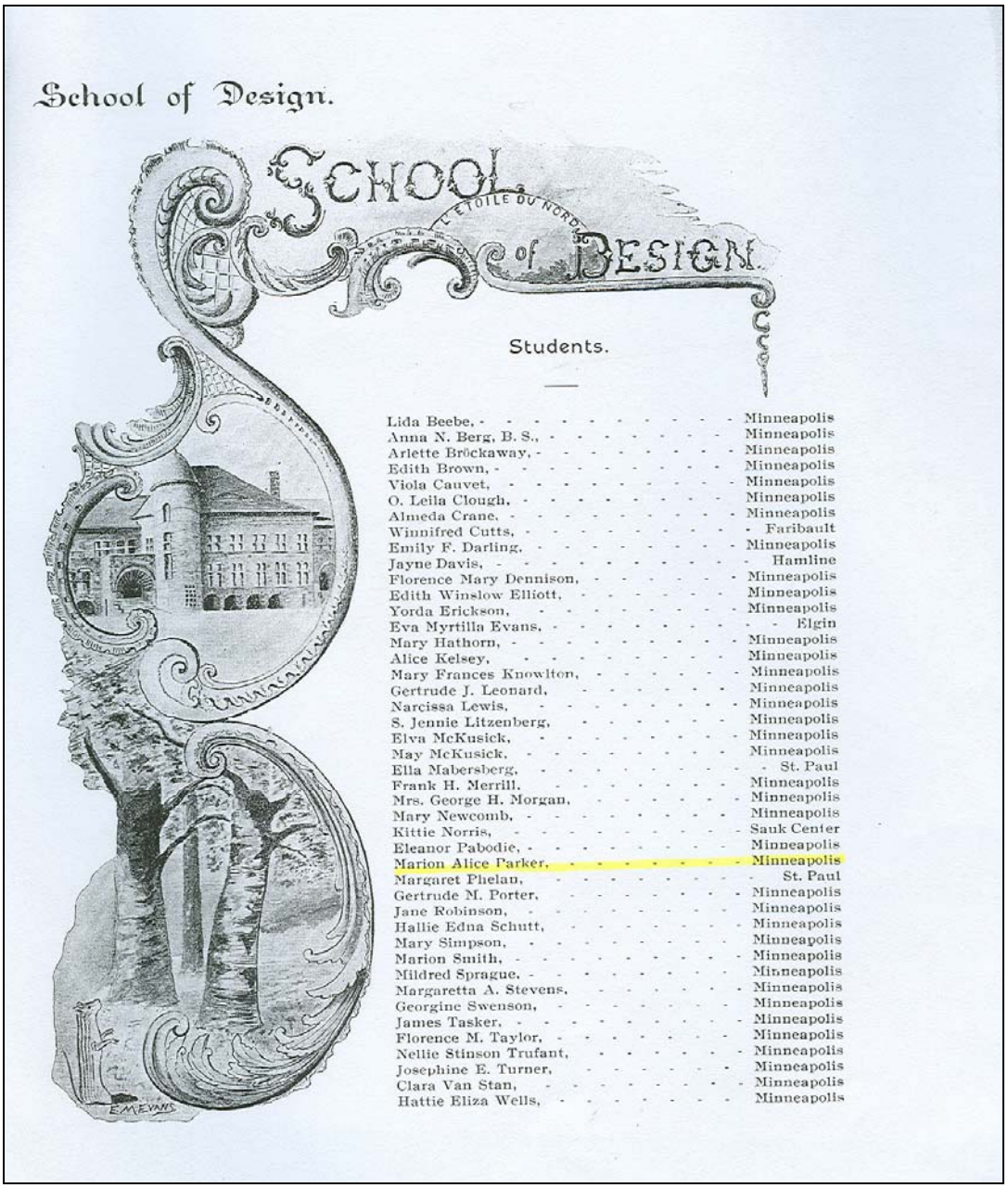


Figure 8
University of Minnesota School of Design Roster (1895)

The University of Minnesota's School of Design Roster displays landscape and architectural sketches as well as decorative lettering, elements that suggest Parker learned compositional drawing or lettering during her college years.

Image from: University of Minnesota yearbook, *The Gopher 1895*

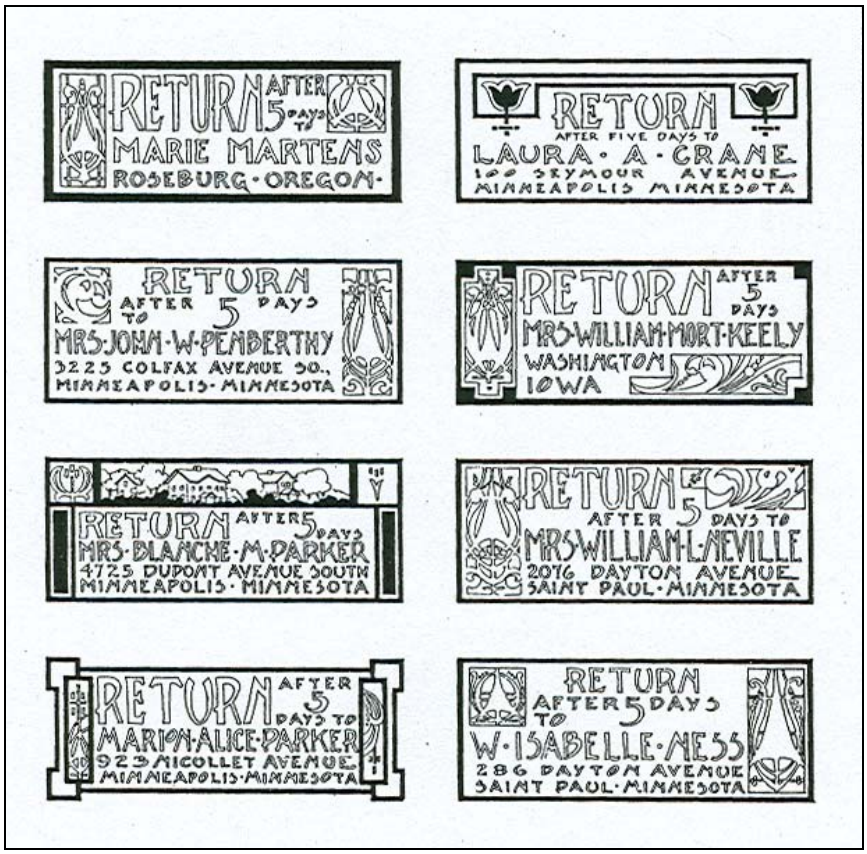


Figure 9
Marion Alice Parker, *Ladies' Calling Cards* (c. 1920)

Parker's designs for women's calling cards indicate
she had knowledge of (and talent for) the graphic arts.

Image from: photocopy in folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257,
William Gray Purcell Papers

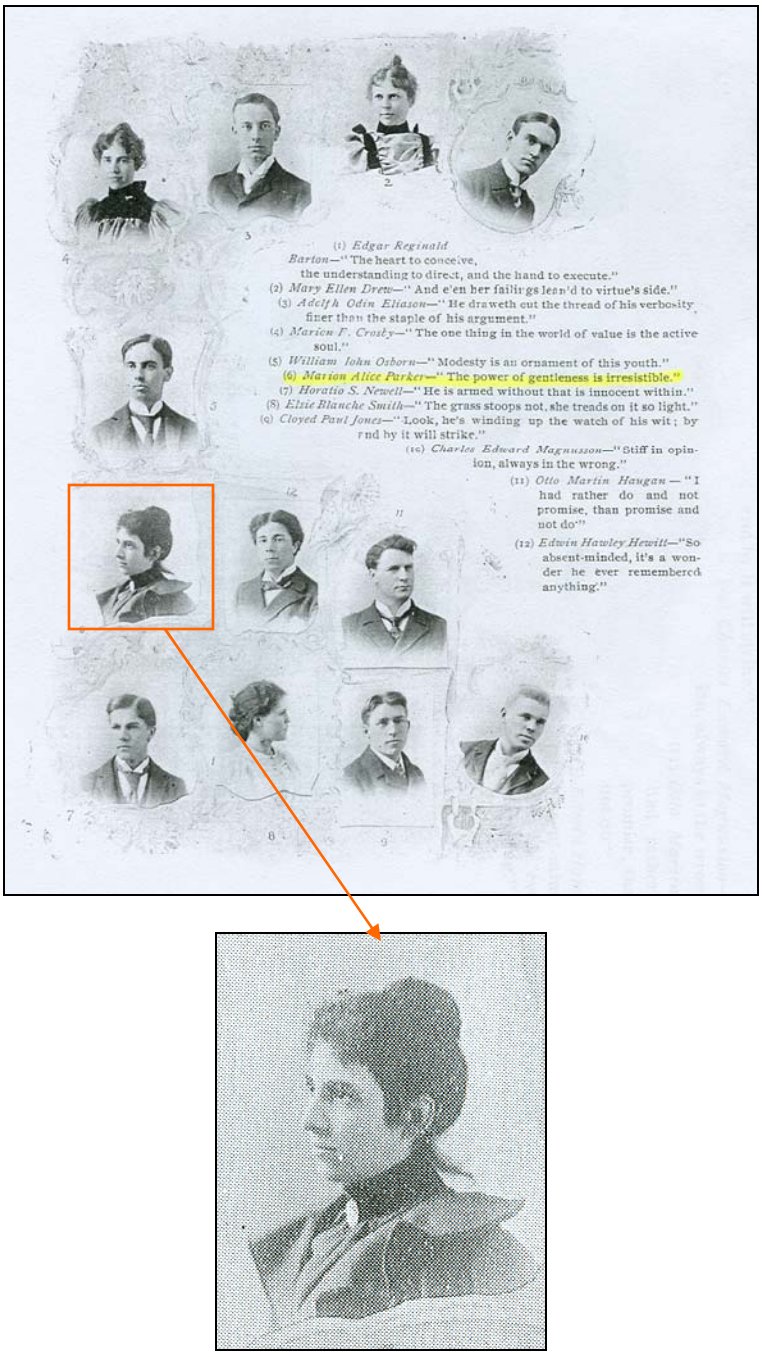


Figure 10
Marion Alice Parker, Senior Yearbook Page with Photo Detail (1896)

Parker graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Literature in 1896, and the yearbook of the same year provides only the second known photograph of her.

Image from: University of Minnesota yearbook, *The Gopher 1896*

Figure 11
Photographer unknown, *A Class of Architecture Students and Faculty at MIT* (1909)

Although clearly the minority, female students in architecture schools were held to the same academic expectations as their male peers. (From left to right, the four women in the image above have been identified as Rebecca Hull Thompson, Lahvesia Paxton Packwood, Helen McGraw Longyear and Florence Luscomb.)

Image from: Grossman and Reitzes, *Caught in the Crossfire*, p. 30.

Figure 12
Photographer unknown, *Louise Blanchard Bethune* (c. 1890)

Louise Blanchard Bethune gained practical experience in the architecture field when she held an assistantship with New York architect Richard A. Waite.

Image from: Barbasch, "Louise Blanchard Bethune" in *Architecture: A Place for Women*, p. 16

Figure 13
Minerva Parker Nichols (date unknown)

One of America's earliest independent female architects, Minerva Parker Nichols's architectural education was a combination of academic training at local colleges and apprenticeship work through the office of Philadelphia architect, Frederick Thorne, Jr.

Image from: "Wayne, Pennsylvania History Online," http://www.waynepa.com/HISTORY/buildersarchitects/default.htm

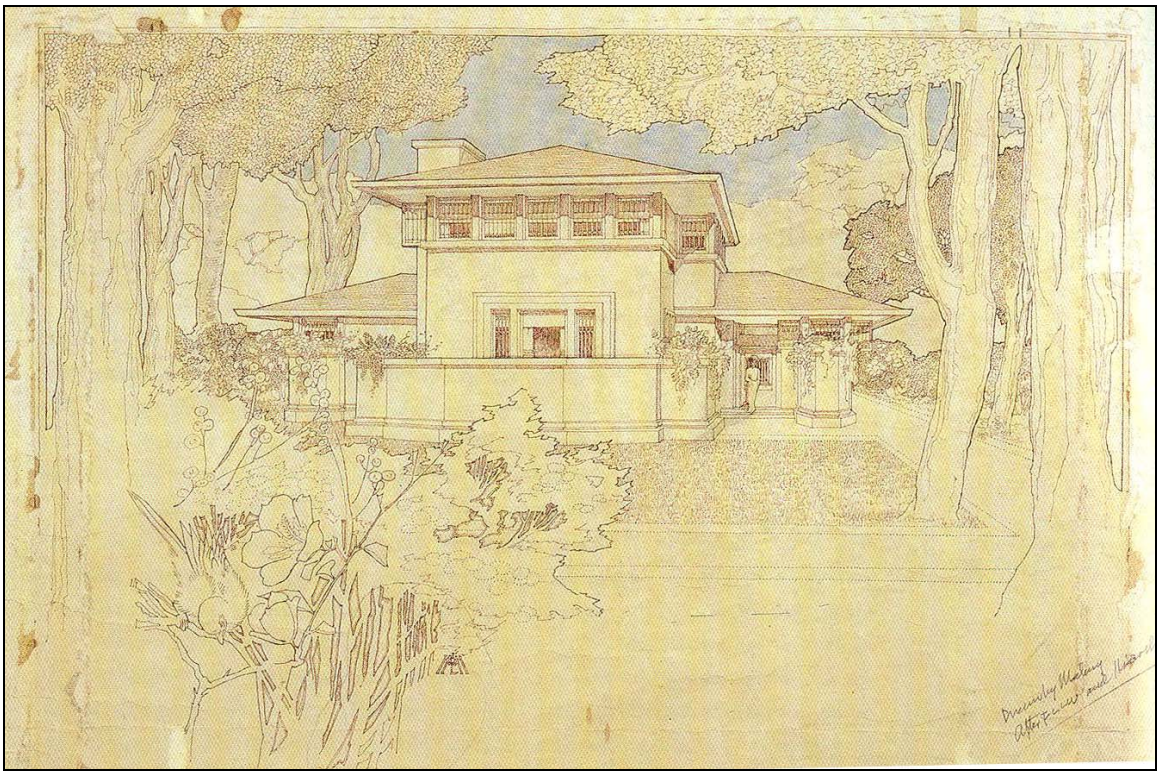
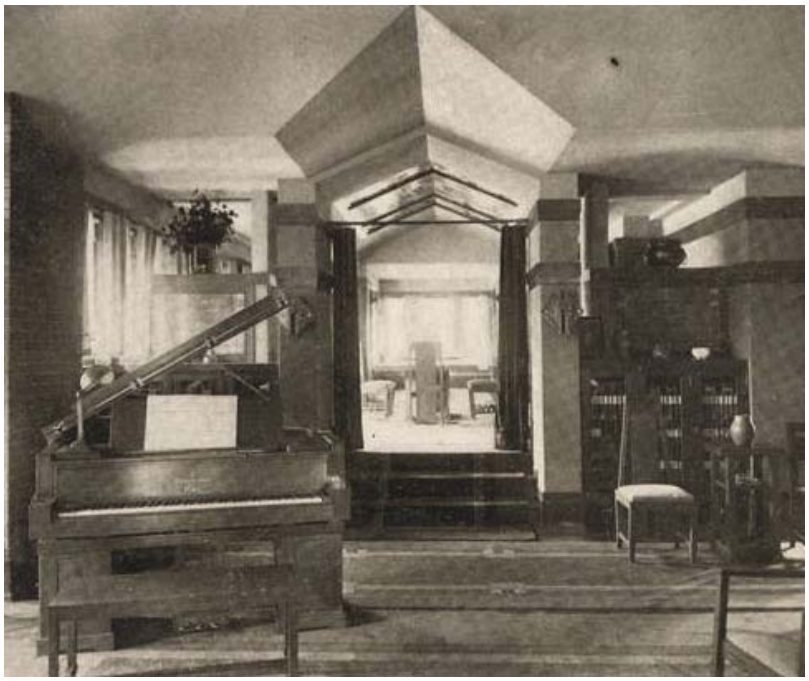


Figure 14
Marion Mahony for Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect,
Drawing of K.C. de Rhodes House, South Bend, Indiana (built 1906)

Mahony Griffin is most often recognized for her excellent Japanese-inspired rendering skills, which she often employed for her delineations of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural designs.

Image from: *Marion Mahony Griffin: Drawing the Form of Nature*, p. 8

a.



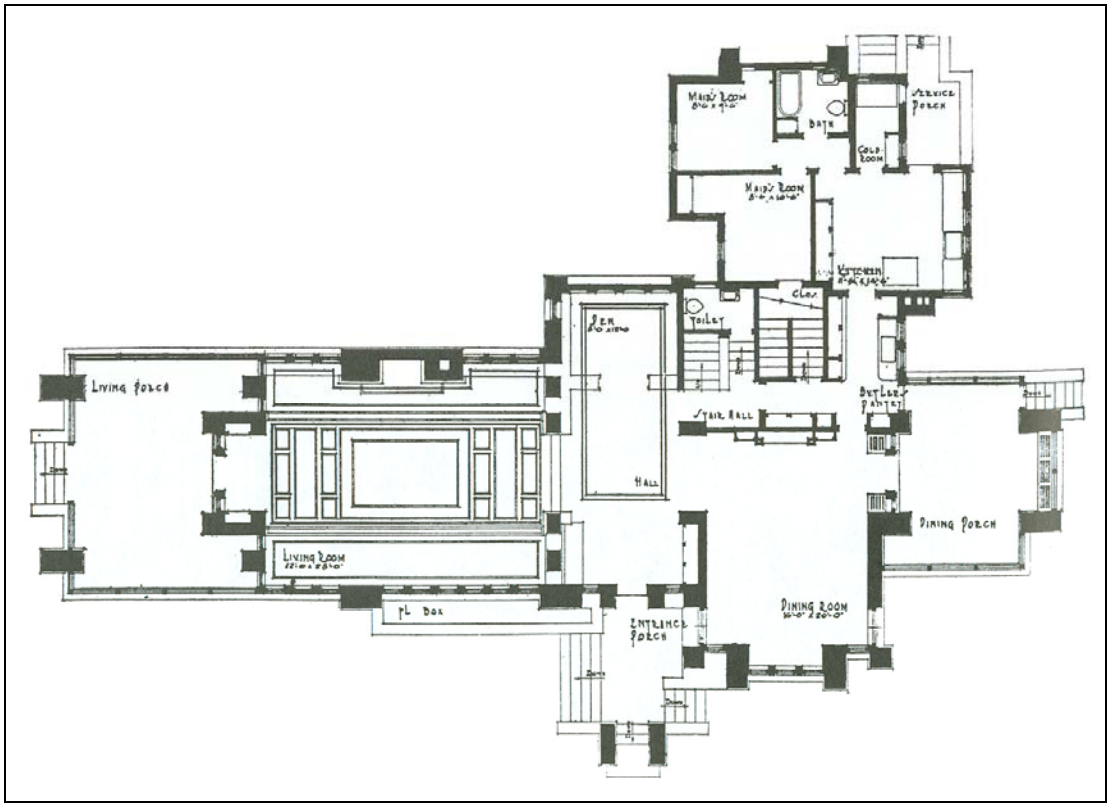
b.

Figure 15
Marion Mahony, Architect, *David M. Amberg House*,
Grand Rapids, Michigan (built 1909-1910)
a. front exterior, historic photo; b. living room, historic photo

The David M. Amberg House includes characteristics commonly associated with Mahony Griffin's work of this period: a long, horizontal massing pierced by a sharp gable, a "heavy" foundation and tented interior ceilings.

Images from: The Magic of America Digital Image Database for Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html (a and b)

a.



b.

Figure 16 (continued on following page)


c.

Figure 16
Marion Mahony, Architect, *Adolph Mueller House*, Decatur, Illinois (built 1910)
a. front exterior, historic photo; b. first floor plan; c. living room, historic photo

The Adolph Mueller house displays several progressive elements specific to the work of Mahony Griffin, including a "pinwheel" plan and a tented ceiling in the living room, which was decorated with a laylight. Custom rugs and furniture also contributed to the unified presence of the home.

Images from: "Prairie Styles," online information about the architects and architecture of the Prairie School, http://www.prairiestyles.com/mahony_comm.htm (a); Brooks, *The Prairie School*, p. 160 (b); The Magic of America Digital Image Database for Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html (c)

Figure 17
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker,
for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #77,
Ed Goetzenberger House, Minneapolis, Minnesota (historic photo, built 1910)

The Goetzenberger house became one of the first projects for Purcell's firm in which Parker played a significant role in the design process.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database, http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00337.jpg


a.


b.

Figure 18
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker,
for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #77,
Ed Goetzenberger House, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1910)
a. front exterior; b. rear exterior

Although Purcell maintained the house was "plain and rather severe," the diamond-shaped attic windows add some interest to the overall design of the Goetzenberger house (note that the rear attic window was likely altered after the house was completed).

Images from: photos taken by the author

Figure 19
Walter Burley Griffin, Architect
Ralph Griffin House, Edwardsville, Illinois (historic photo, built 1909)

The diamond-shaped attic windows of the Goetzenberger house were perhaps inspired by Walter Burley Griffin's Prairie School house design for his brother, Ralph.

Image from: The Magic of America Digital Image Database for Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, http://www.artic.edu/magicofamerica/index.html

Figure 20
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #81, *Atkinson House*,
Bismarck, North Dakota (historic photo, built 1910)

Parker can be linked to the Atkinson house, which carries strong stylistic similarities to the Goetzenberger design—both homes exhibit a two-story gabled-end form with diamond-shaped attic windows.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00363.jpg

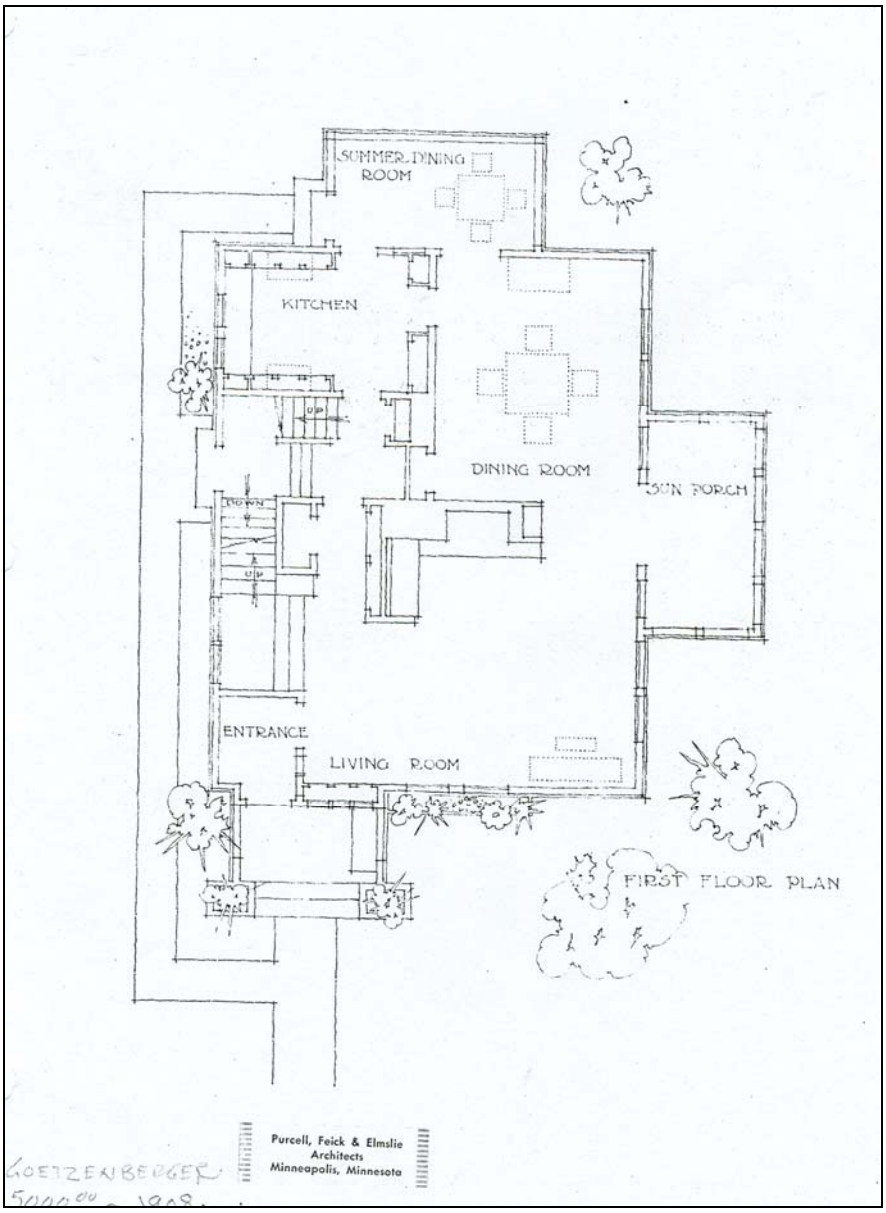


Figure 21
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #77, *Goetzenberger House, first-floor interior plan*, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1910)

The Goetzenberger house includes a first floor plan characteristic of Prairie School houses produced by Purcell's firm: an open arrangement of living and dining rooms wrapped around a central hearth, and sun porches that extended the space of this areas.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00334.jpg

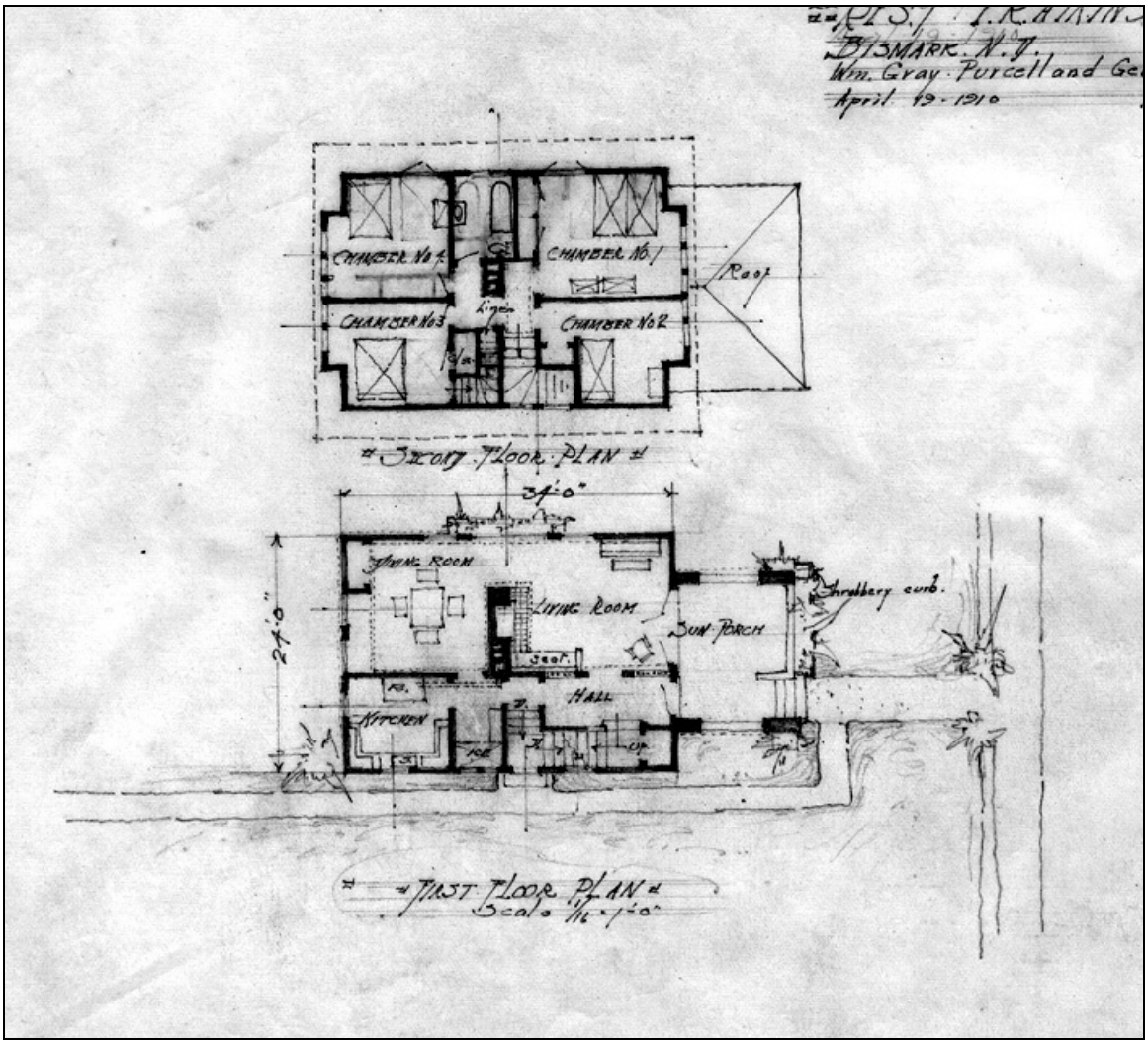


Figure 22
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #81,
Atkinson house first and second-floor interior plans,
Bismarck, North Dakota (built 1910)

Although the Atkinson house was given a side entry, the first-floor plan of the home is nearly identical to that of the Goetzenberger residence with its compact, though seemingly spacious interior.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00359.jpg

a.

Figure 23 (continued on following page)

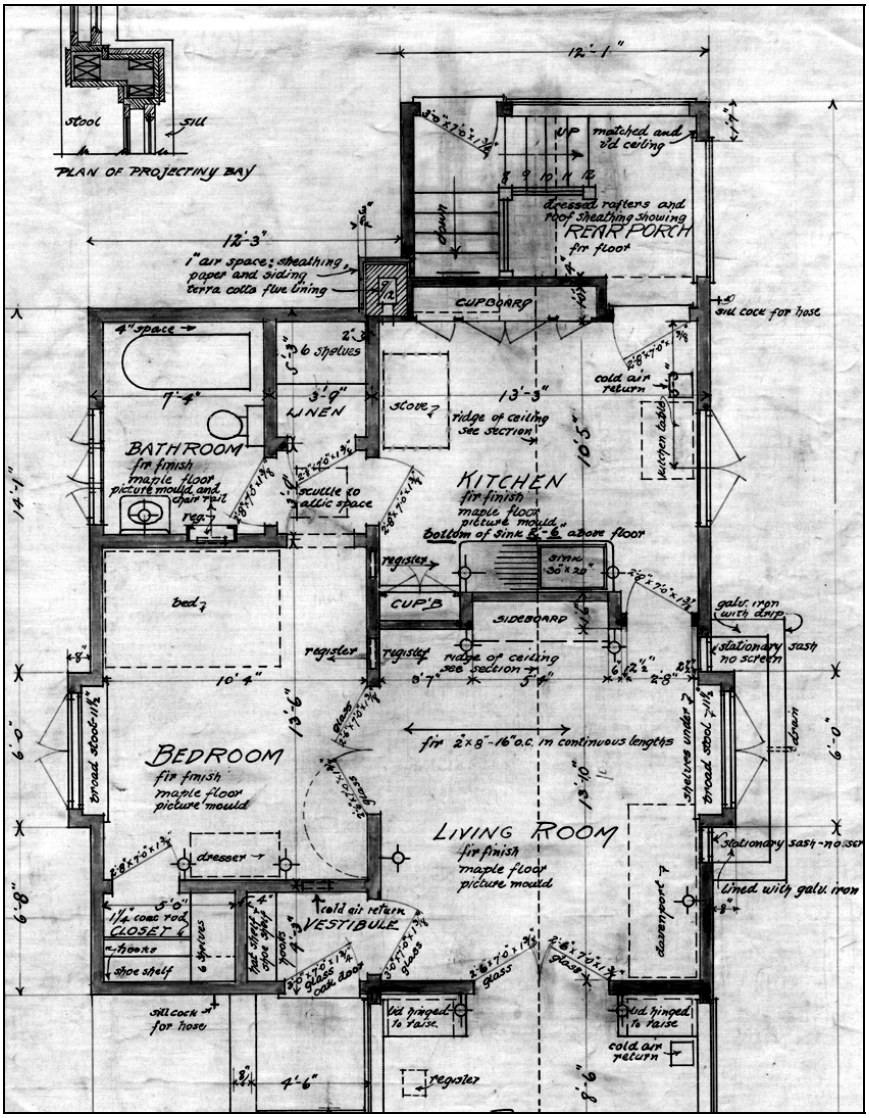


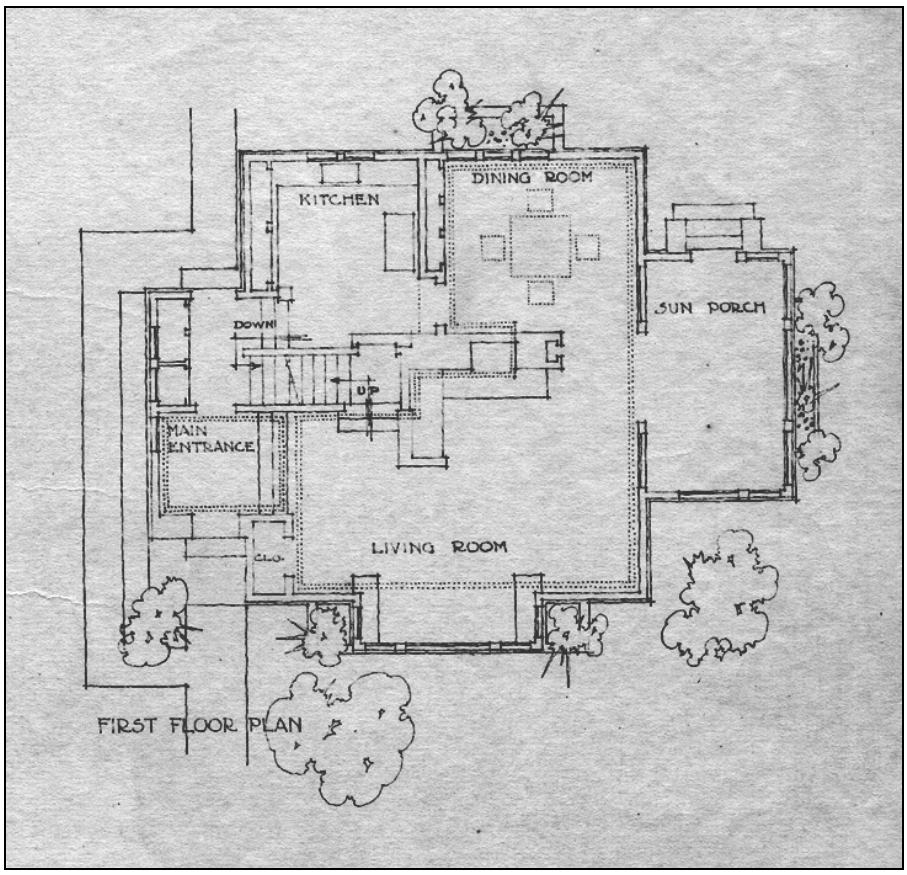
Figure 23
Purcell and Feick, Architects, Job #23, *Arthur Jones Residence Alterations*, Minneapolis, Minnesota (completed 1908)
a. front exterior; b. first floor plan

For the Jones project, Purcell and Feick converted a barn to a home; despite the narrow and compact layout of the house, the interior plan appears spacious due to the wide transitions between rooms.

Images from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00136.jpg (a) and
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00133.jpg (b)


a.

Figure 24 (continued on following page)

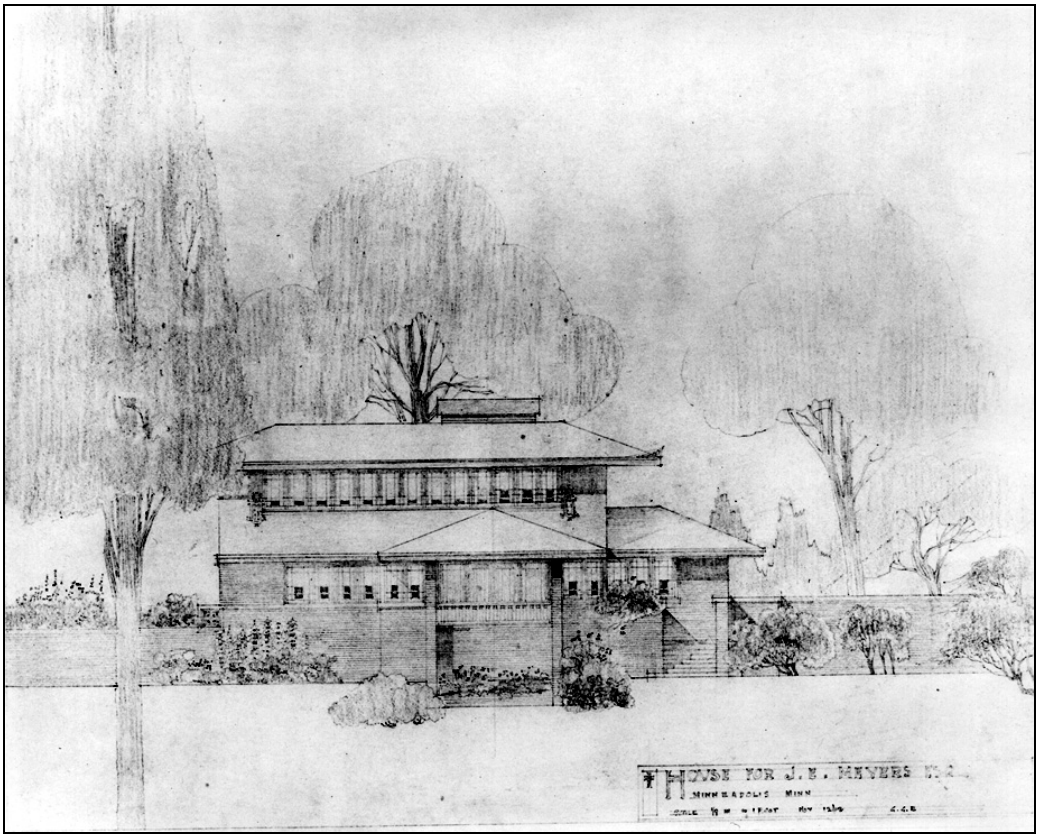


b.

Figure 24
Purcell and Feick, Architects, Job #40, *Mrs. Terrance McCosker House*, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1909)
a. front exterior, historic photo; b. first floor plan

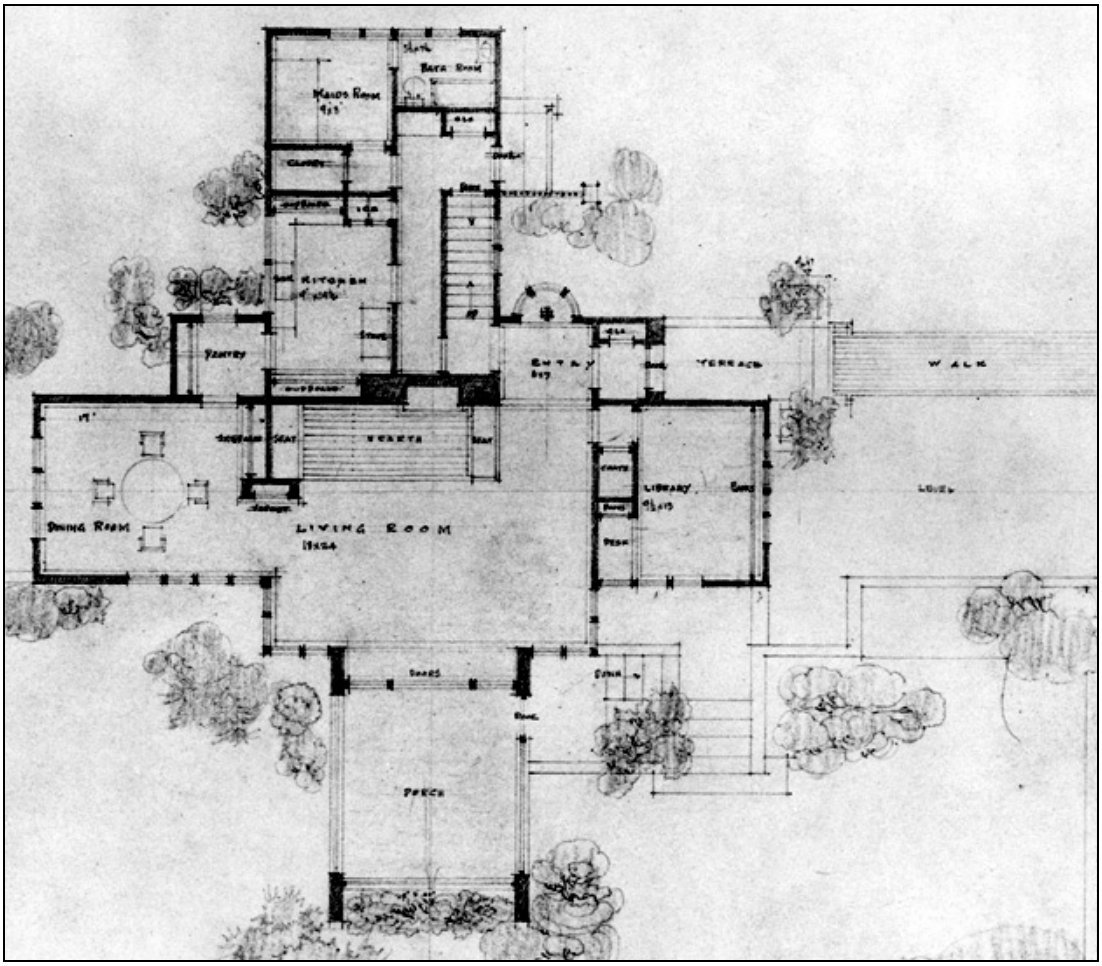
Like many of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie's smaller home designs, the McCosker plan was essentially an adaptation of Frank Lloyd Wright's 1907 plan for "A Fireproof House for $5,000.00"

Images from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00157.jpg (a) and
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00154.jpg (b)



a.

Figure 25 (continued on following page)



b.

Figure 25
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #178, *J.E. Meyers House*,
Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1912)

Compared to the compact designs for the Jones, McCosker, Atkinson and Goetzenberger houses, the Meyers house is an expansive open plan, with the living, dining and porch areas spread out along most of the first floor.

Images from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00898.jpg (a) and
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00896.jpg (b)

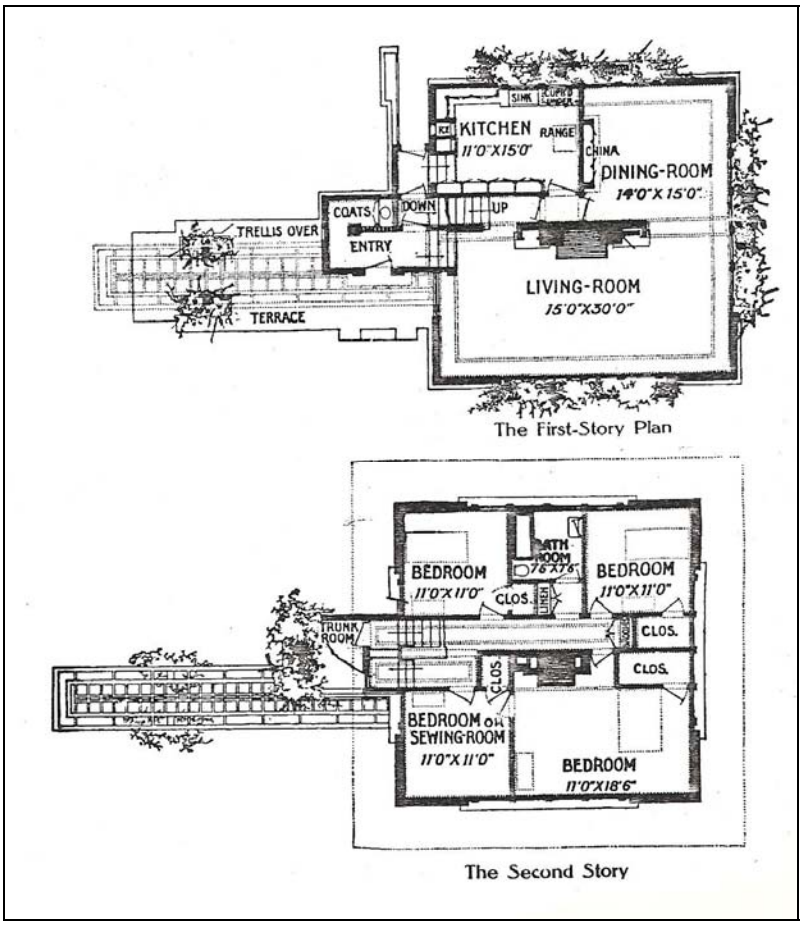


Figure 26
Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect,
Plan for "A Fireproof House for $5,000.00"
Published in *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1907

Purcell, Feick and Elmslie often adapted Wright's plan by moving the entry door to a front-facing corner of the house and separating the terrace from the entryway, enclosing it as a porch near the living or dining rooms.

Image from: Brooks, *The Prairie School*, p. 123

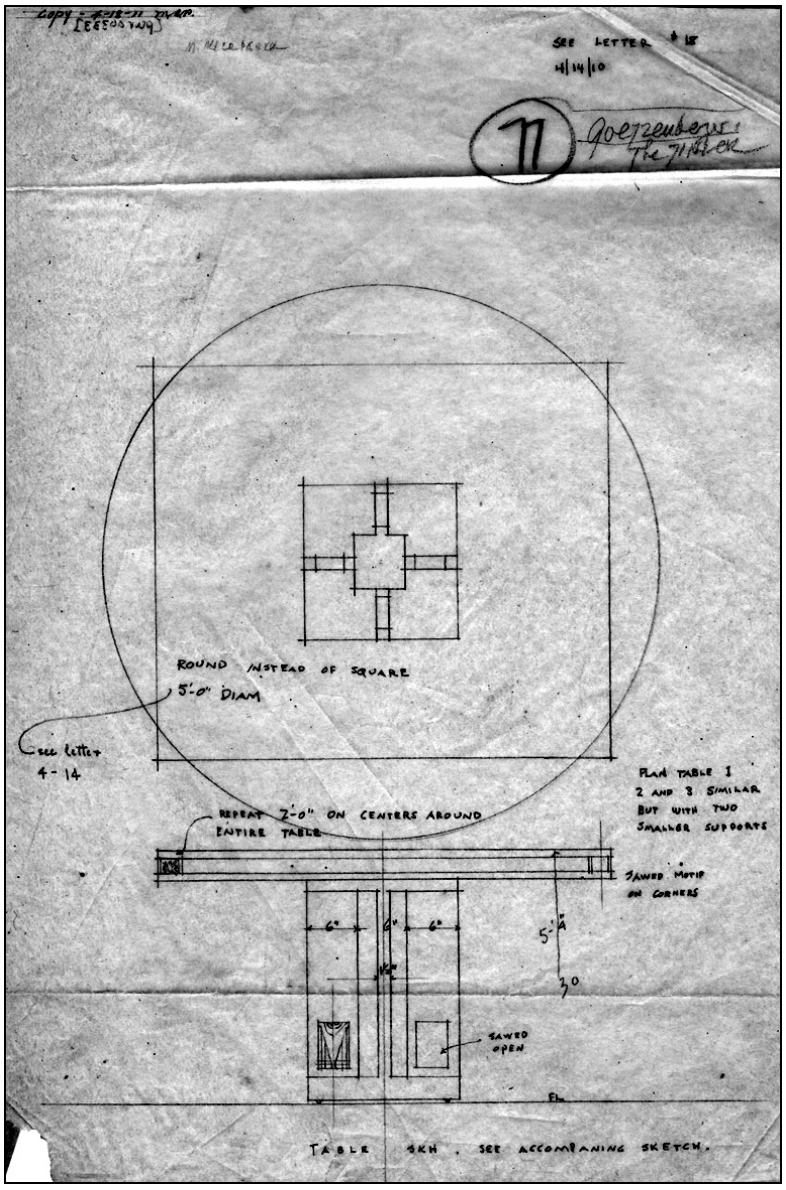


Figure 27
Marion Alice Parker (?), for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects,
Tracing for the Goetzenberger Dining Room Table (1910)

It is possible that Parker was responsible for the dining room table designed for the Goetzenberger house. The drawing itself is stiff and tentative, more akin to the hand of someone only learning furniture design.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00333.jpg

Figure 28
George Grant Elmslie, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects,
Dining Room Suite for Mrs. T.B. Keith, Eue Claire, Wisconsin (1910)
Oak, oak veneer, synthetic upholstery, jute webbing
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
99.62.1-9

If Parker was responsible for the design of the Goeztenberger dining room table, she was modifying Elmslie's dining room suite for Mrs. T. B. Keith. Like the Goetzenberger table design, the Keith dining room table includes a round tabletop, a thick cruciform support and sawed-wood decoration displaying the "V" motif often identified with Elmslie.

Image from: photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Figure 29
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job # 154, *Buxton Bungalow*, Owatonna, Minnesota (photo c. 1950s, built 1912)

The Buxton bungalow is a stronger, yet more original example of Prairie School architecture, supporting Parker's independent involvement in the design.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00762.jpg

a.

b.

Figure 30
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #154, *Buxton Bungalow*, Owatonna, Minnesota (built 1913)
a. rear exterior, photo c. 1950s; b. stencil detail

Parker's significant role in the design of the Buxton bungalow is evident in the colorful stencil work of the home's exterior. The painted forms appear less intricate and delicate – but more graphic in quality – than Elmslie's style of ornamentation.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00761.jpg (a) and
Legler and Korab, *At Home on the Prairie*, p. 105 (b)

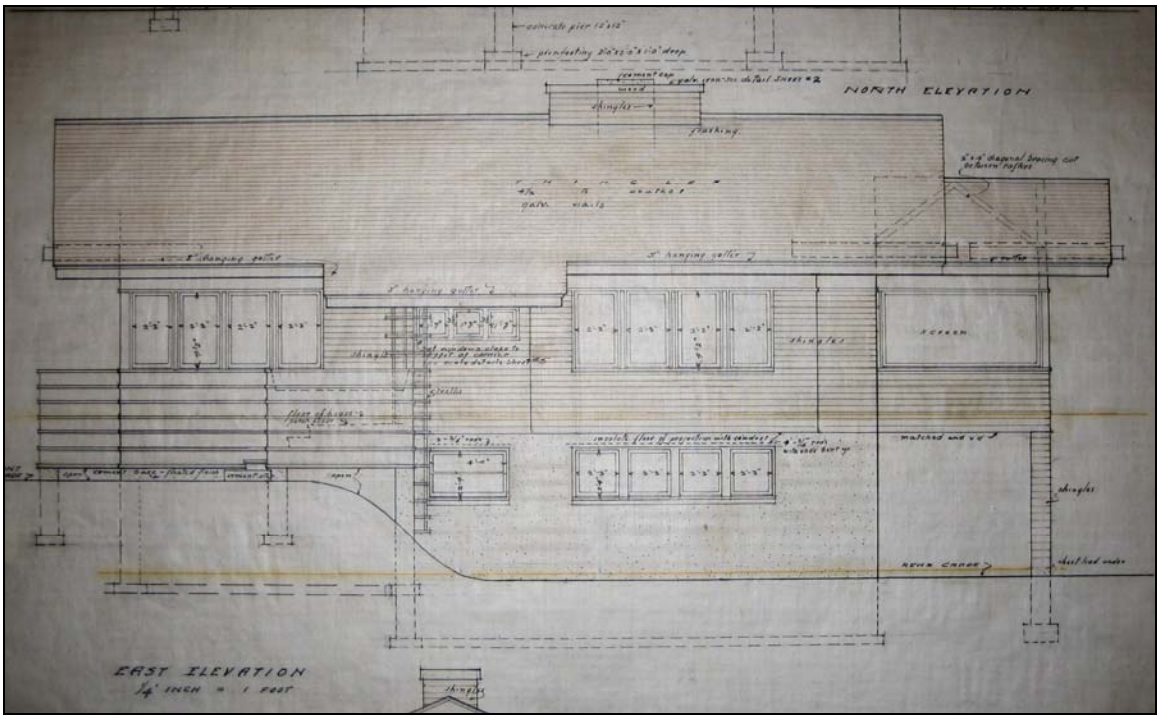


Figure 31
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #154, *Buxton Bungalow, east elevation drawing,* Owatonna, Minnesota (built 1913)

In keeping with progressive ideals concerning a respect for and integration with natural surroundings, the Buxton house was built into its sloping site, keeping the overall structure long, low and immensely private.

Image from: William Gray Purcell Papers Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives (photo of original drawing by the author)

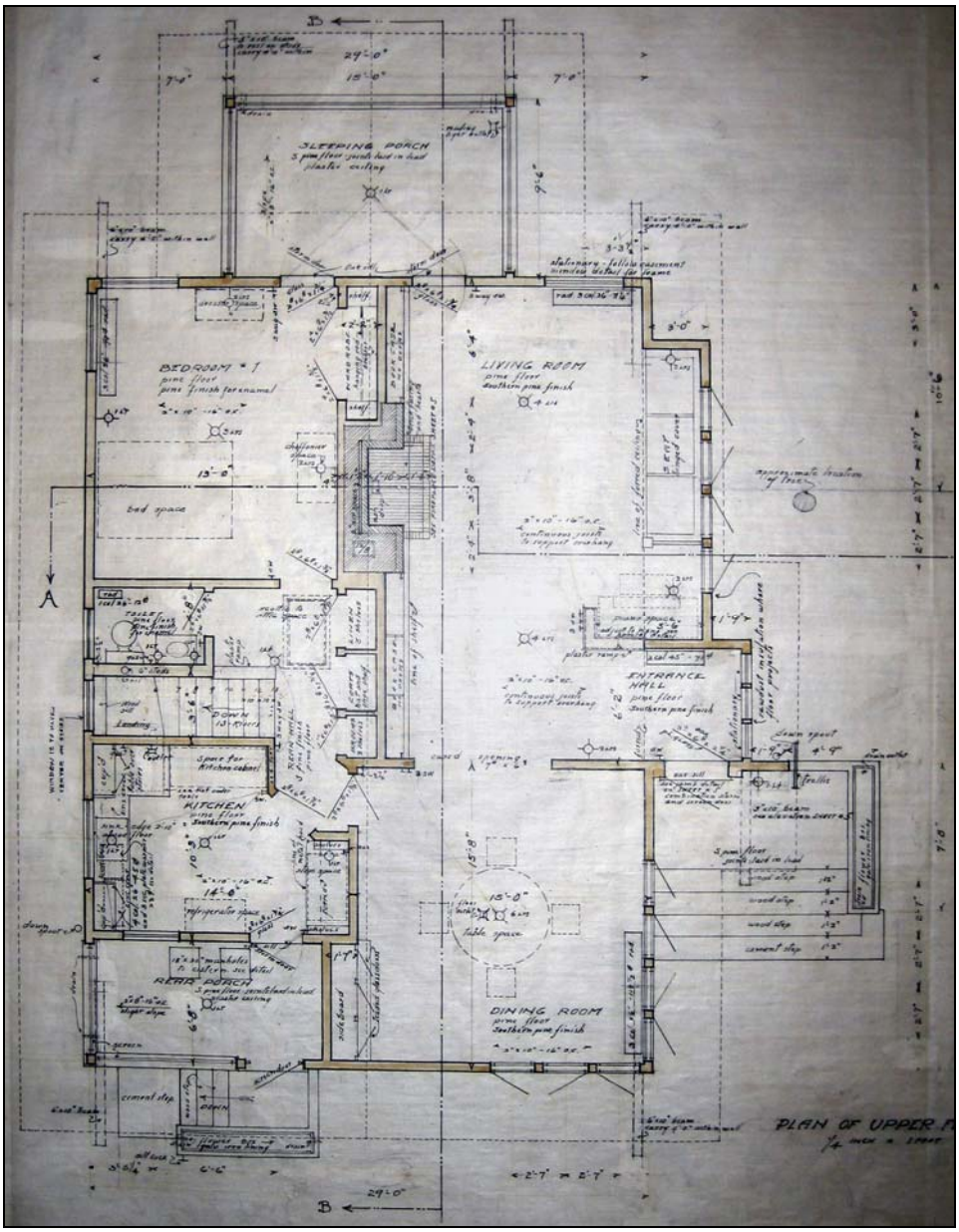


Figure 32
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #154, *Buxton Bungalow*, *main floor plan*, Owatonna, Minnesota (built 1913)

The Buxton house includes the open arrangement of dining and living rooms, a common progressive element in Prairie School homes. However, the rooms were not wrapped around the hearth; instead, Parker used the fireplace to mark a division along the length of the house, separating public and private spaces.

Image from: William Gray Purcell Papers Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives (photo of original plan by the author)

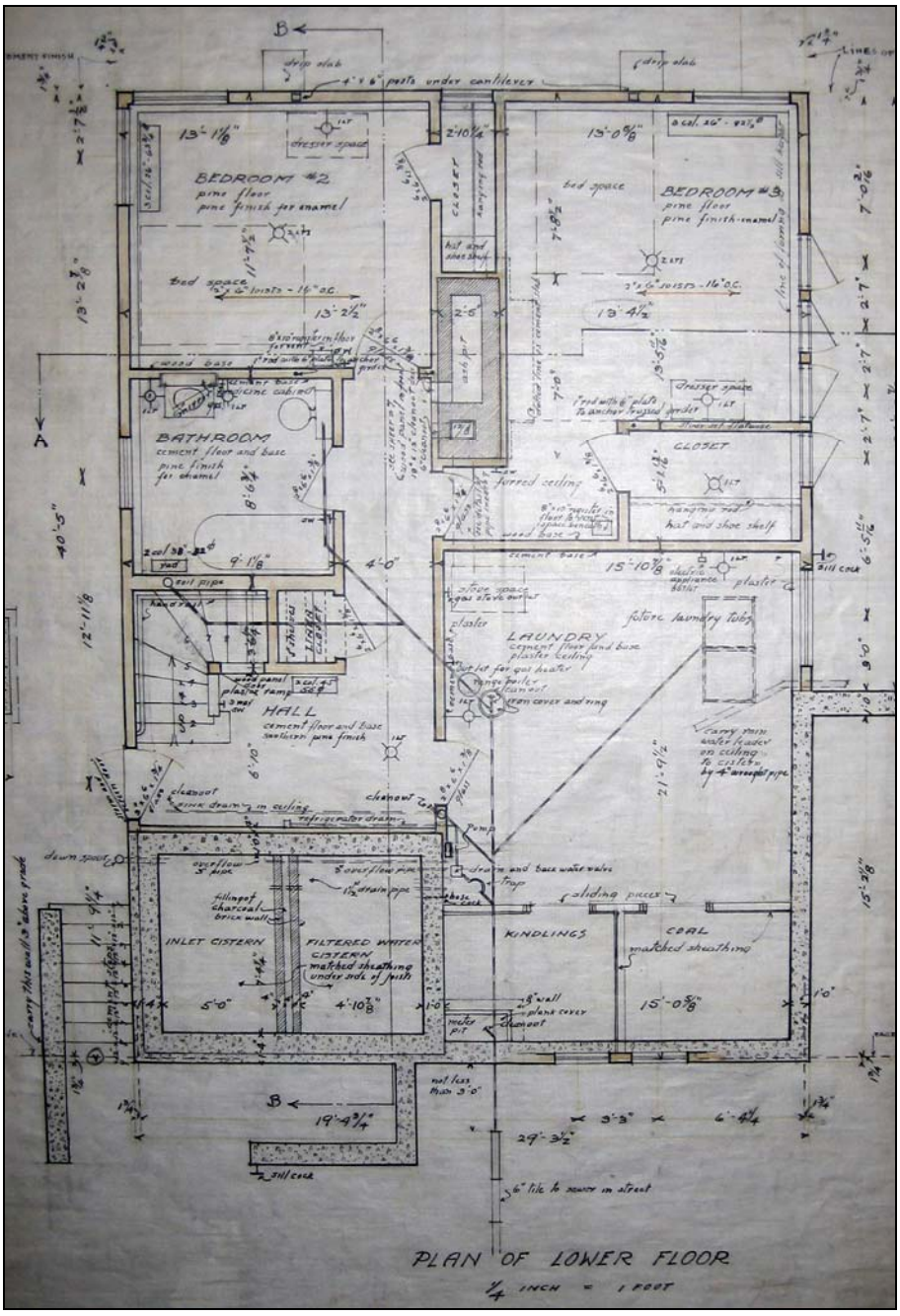


Figure 33
William Gray Purcell and Marion Alice Parker, for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #154, *Buxton Bungalow, lower-level floor plan*, Owatonna, Minnesota (built 1913)

The bedrooms of the Buxton house are divided between the main and lower-levels, and they are situated toward the rear of the home, facing the back yard.

Image from: William Gray Purcell Papers Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives (photo of original plan by the author)

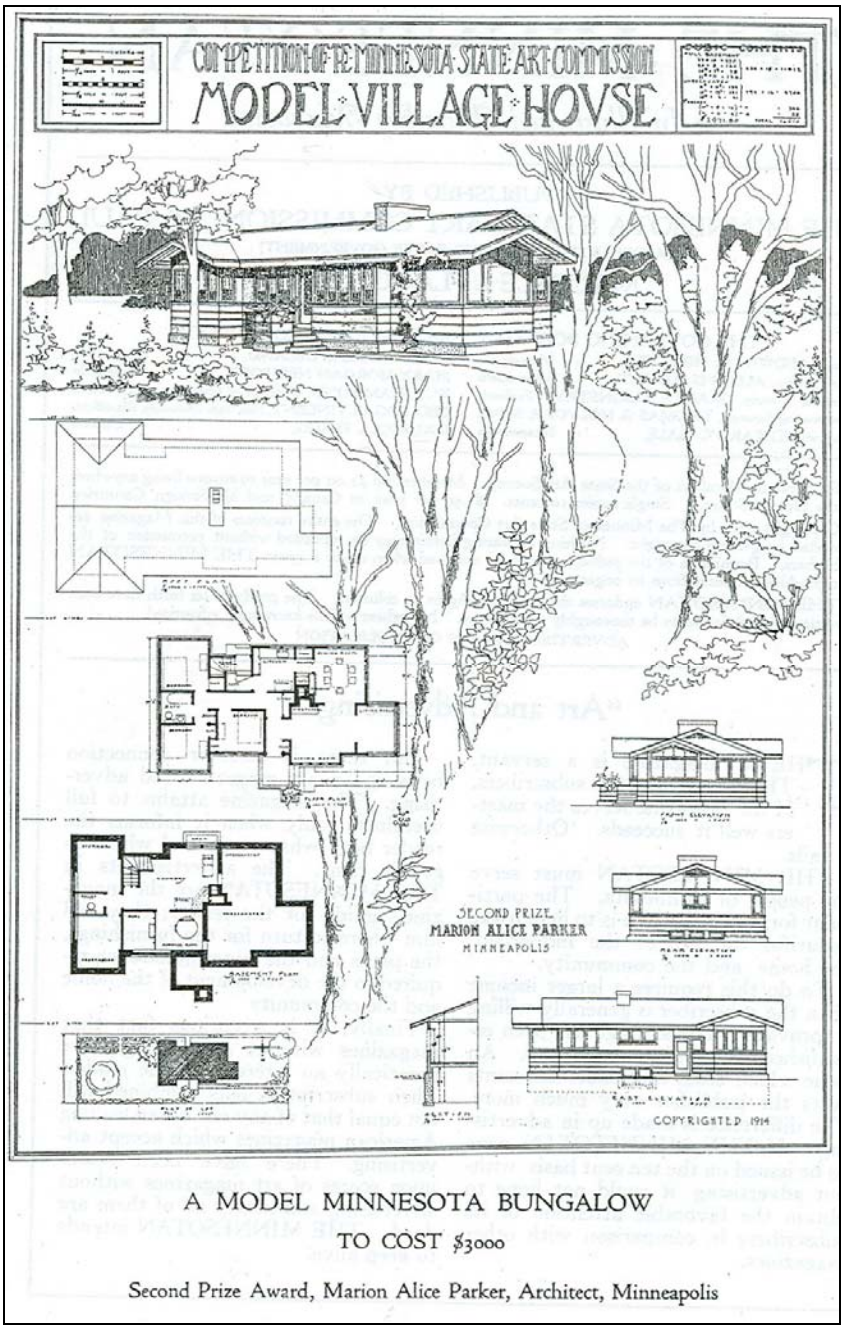


Figure 34
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, *Second Prize Entry for a "Model Village House"*
Published in *The Minnesotan*, August 1915

Like the Buxton bungalow, Parker's design for "A Model Minnesota Bungalow" is a long, low form with shallow gables and deep eaves. The organization of transom and casement windows were similarly used in the east elevation drawings for both designs.

Image from: Minnesota State Art Commission, "Minnesota Helps Home Builders," *The Minnesotan* 1, no. 2 (August 1915), p. 12.

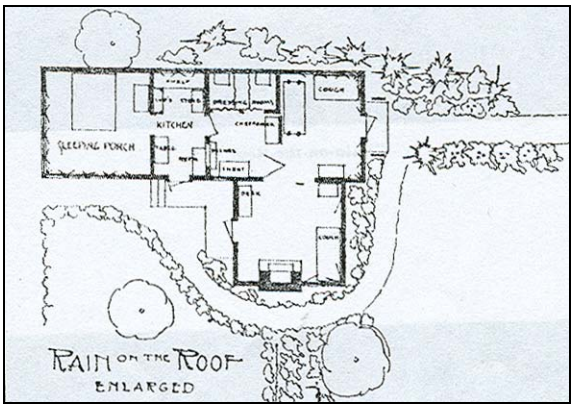
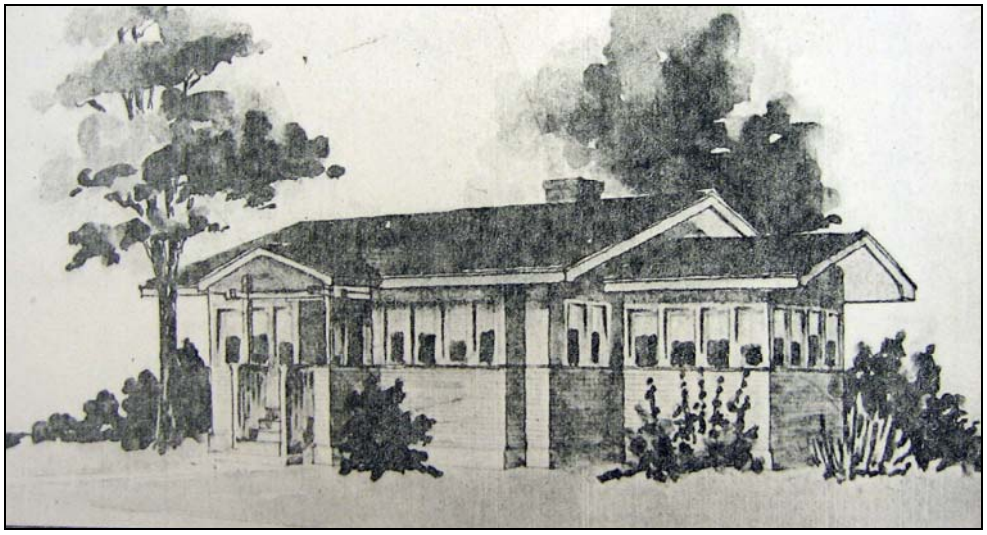


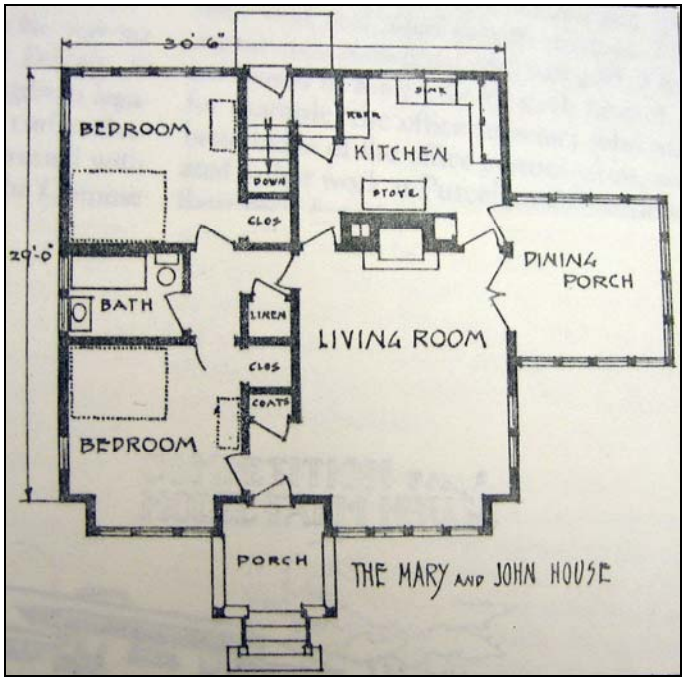
Figure 35
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, plan for *"Rain on the Roof: A Summer Bungalow"*
Published in *Keith's Magazine*, April 1916

Keith's Magazine showcased Parker's bungalow-like designs—for her compact, one-story "Rain on the Roof" house, Parker created an open floor plan by enlarging the living room and placing the sleeping porch in the left wing of the home.

Image from: *Keith's Magazine* 35, no. 4, April 1916, p. 247-248



a.



b.

Figure 36
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, *"The Mary and John House"*
Published in *Keith's Magazine*, August 1916
a. exterior sketch; b. interior plan

Like the Buxton bungalow, "The Mary and John House" design separates public and private spaces while retaining an open floor plan between the living and dining areas.

Image from: *Keith's Magazine* 36, no. 2, August 1916, p. 100-101

Figure 37
Sears, Roebuck & Company, *Modern Home NO. 264P245 ("Argyle")*
Available between 1915 and 1926
Published in the *Modern Homes Catalog*, 1915

Sears home kits could be purchased through the company's then-popular mail-order catalog. The plan of this modern home, with its narrow footprint and more tightly arranged layout of rooms, typified traditional bungalow designs in the early twentieth century.

Image from: The Arts and Crafts Society, http://64.66.180.31/archive/sears/page45.html


a.


b.

Figure 38
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #120,
Carl O. Jorgenson House, Bismarck, North Dakota
(historic photos, built 1911)
a. front entry; b. side yard

Based on a brief Parabiography entry written by Purcell, Hammons gives credit to Parker for the Jorgenson house. The full extent of Parker's contributions to the design is unknown due to the lack of available documentation of the project.

Image from: *Purcell and Elmslie, Architects: The Web Sanctuary*, http://www.organica.org/pejn120_3.htm

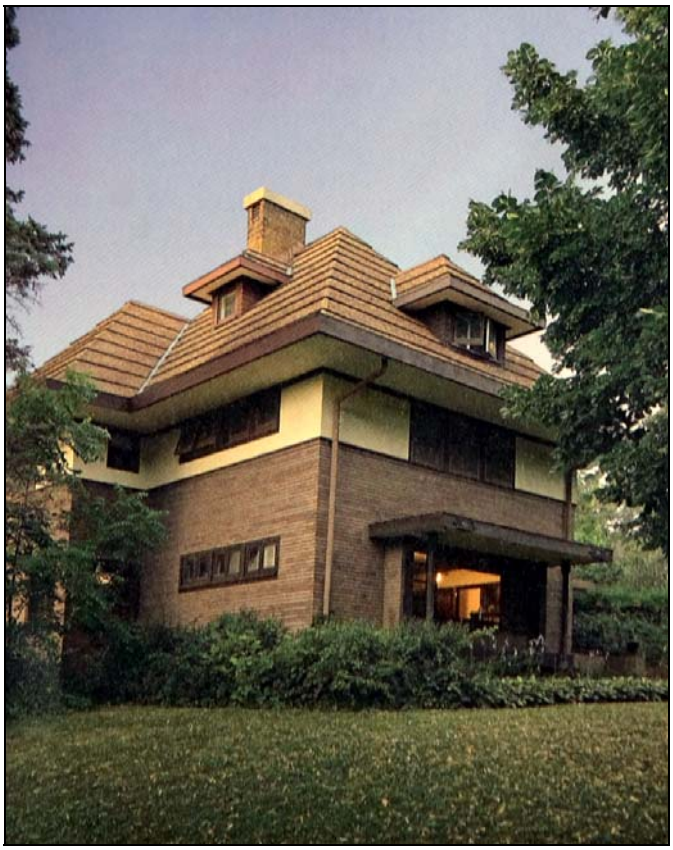


Figure 39
Purcell and Elmslie, Architects, Job #218, *Dr. John Adair House*,
Owatonna, Minnesota (built 1915-1916)

Though Parker's involvement in the Adair house design was probably secondary to Purcell's role, it is important to note that this home was – like the Jorgenson house – unique within the genre of progressive homes created by Purcell's firm at the time.

Image from: Legler and Korab, *At Home on the Prairie*, p. 156.

Figure 40
Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects, Job #116, *E.A. Knowlton House*, Rochester, Minnesota (built 1911, demolished c. 1970s)

Parker has been linked to the E.A. Knowlton house, a design in which she managed to create a cohesive progressive exterior despite the strong involvement of the client, who initially insisted on completing most of the design himself.

Image from: photo courtesy of the Olmstead County Historical Society

Figure 41
Marion Alice Parker for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects,
Job #69, *Patrick E. Byrne House*, Bismarck, North Dakota (historic photo, built 1909)

Although research is ongoing for the Byrne house, Parker's initials can be found on the original plans. The home is unique within the body of work produced by Purcell's firm at the time, suggesting Parker's upper hand in the design.

Image from: Northwest Architectural Archives
William Gray Purcell Job Files Digital Image Database,
http://digital.lib.umn.edu/IMAGES/reference/pur/pur00293.jpg

Figure 42
Marion Alice Parker for Purcell, Feick and Elmslie, Architects,
Job #187, *Dr. J.W.S. Gallagher House*,
Winona, Minnesota (built 1913)

Parker was involved in the design of the Gallagher house, a fact that is confirmed by her initials on the original plans for the home. Although research is ongoing for this design, the Gallagher house stands apart in Purcell and Elmslie's body of work from this period, especially in its massing and arrangement of structural forms.

Image from: photo courtesy of Jennifer Olivarez

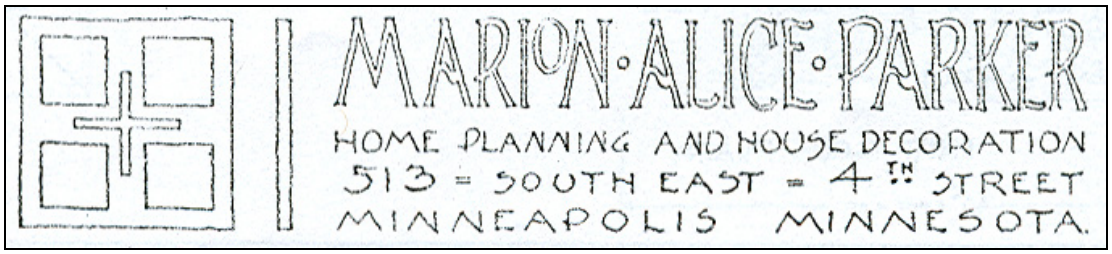


Figure 43
Marion Alice Parker, *Advertisement for "Marion Alice Parker, Home Planning and House Decoration,"* Published in *Keith's Magazine*, January 1916

Parker went into independent practice in 1915, and by early in 1916, she was advertising her architectural services in *Keith's Magazine*.

Image from: *Keith's Magazine*, January 1916, p. 62,
photocopy in N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257,
William Gray Purcell Papers

a.


b.

Figure 44
Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew, Architects,
Pi Beta Phi Sorority House (now the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity house),
Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1916)
a. front exterior; b. rear exterior

The Pi Beta Phi sorority house is a clear example of Parker's subscription to Prairie School architecture, with its bands of windows, first floor projection, low hipped roof, central chimney and side entry.

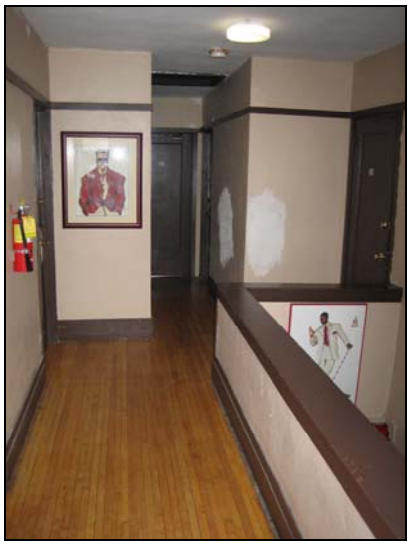
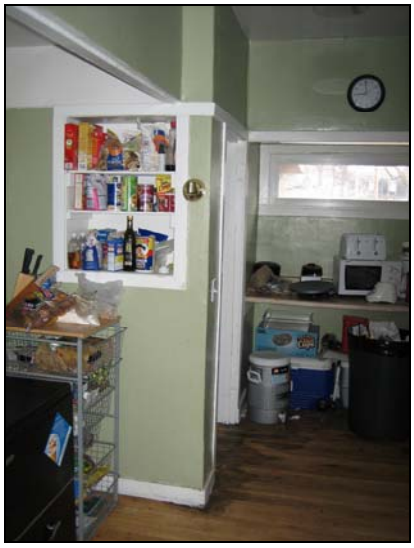
Images from: photos by the author

Figure 45
Purcell and Elmslie, Architects, Job #283,
C.T. Backus House, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1915)

Parker and Bartholomew's design for the Pi Beta Phi sorority house can be likened to the Backus house—both buildings include long bands of windows, low, hipped roofs and a central chimney. The sorority house and Backus home are also similar in their massing and size.

Image from: Unified Vision, Minneapolis Institute of Arts,
http://www.artsmia.org/unified-vision/architectural-tour/backus-1.cfm


a.

b.

c.

d.

Figures 46
Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew, Architects,
Pi Beta Phi Sorority House, interiors, (now the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity house),
Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1916)
a. entry way; b. raised hearth; c. hallway; d. kitchen

The interior of the sorority house has been somewhat remodeled, but certain progressive aspects remain intact, such as the front entry way seating nook, raised hearth fireplace and banding of wood trim throughout the house.

Images from: photos by the author

a.


b.

Figure 47
Marion Alice Parker and Ethel Bartholomew, Architects,
Pi Beta Phi Sorority House, entry with sawed wood,
Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1916)
a. side entry; b. sawed-wood ornament detail at side entry

Parker's simultaneous presentation of abstract and organic forms in the sawed-wood ornament above the side entry of the Pi Beta Phi sorority house reflects a tradition of progressive decoration in which every building contained "a system of ornament."

Images from: photos taken by the author

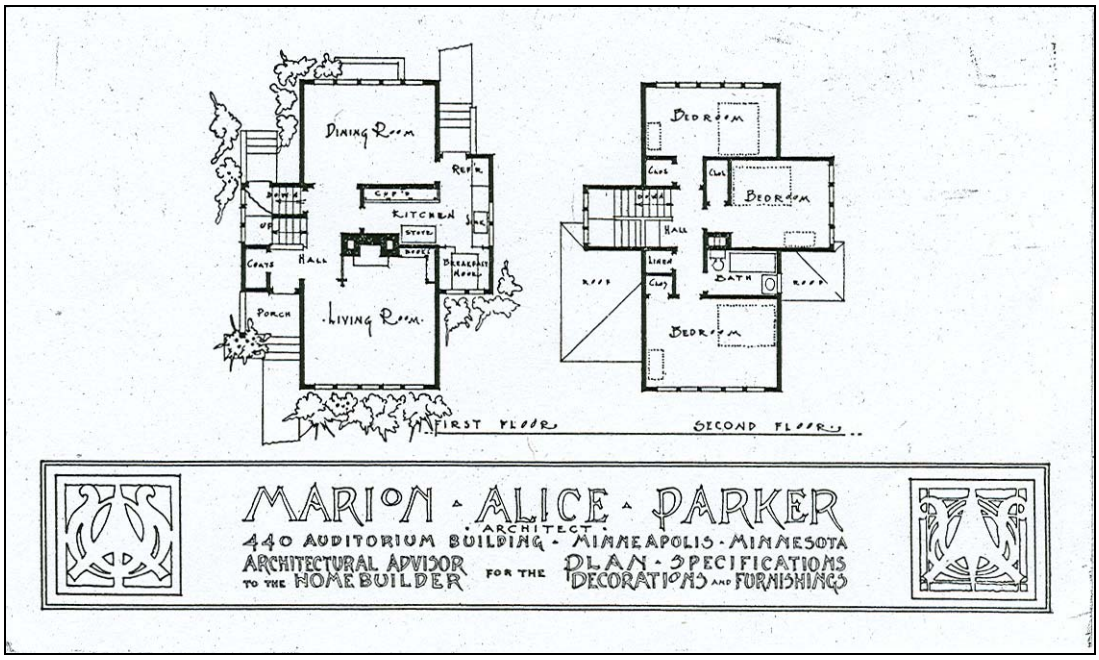


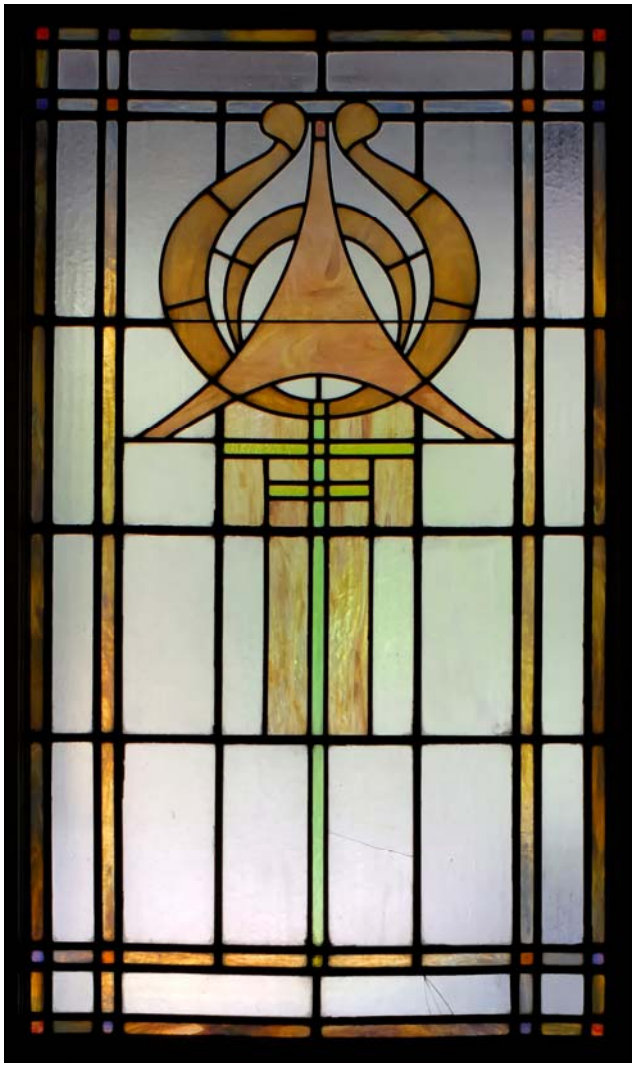
Figure 48
Marion Alice Parker, *Business Card* (date unknown)

The ornament design over the entry to the Pi Beta Phi sorority house is certainly Parker's, for the same form – a stretched triangle with encircling tendrils – can also be found as a logo on her business cards.

Image from: folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257 (photocopy)

a.

Figure 49 (continued on the following page)



b.

Figure 49
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, *J.S. Ulland House Alterations*,
Fergus Falls, Minnesota (completed 1919)
a. front exterior; b. front door leaded glass

Parker utilized her graphic signature in her alterations for the Ulland residence; the leaded glass of the front door includes a simplified version of the ornament displayed over the entry of the Pi Beta Phi sorority house.

Images from: photos courtesy of Tom P. Shearer, copyright 2007


a.

Figure 50 (continued on the following page)

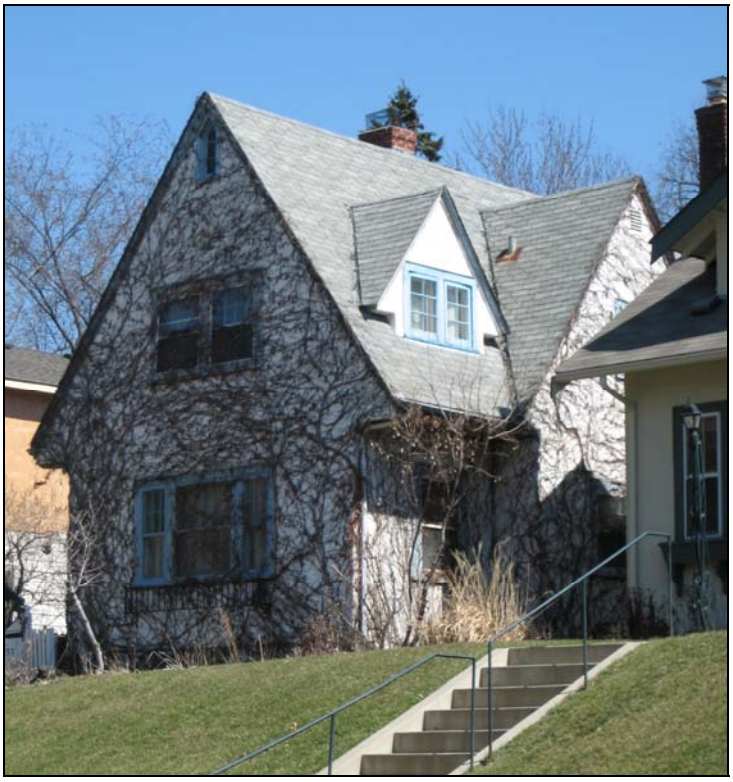

b.

Figure 50
Marion Alice Parker, Architect
Marion Alice Parker House, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1921)
a. front; b. west and south facades

For the design of her own home, Parker drew upon the popularity of Tudor revival forms, and infused their styling with progressive elements such as a deeply situated entry and a varied integration of structural forms.

Images from: photos by the author

Figure 51
Tudor Room,
from the Hingham Manor House, England (16th century)
Oak, stone, glass, iron
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
23.67

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts installed the Tudor Room in 1923, making the museum one of the first to obtain an English period room. The central panel above the hearth carries a coat of arms that is believed to have belonged to Charles Bowen, a silk merchant. The oak-paneled walls, as well as the dark, heavy and ornate furniture exemplifies Tudor design and décor.

Image from: photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

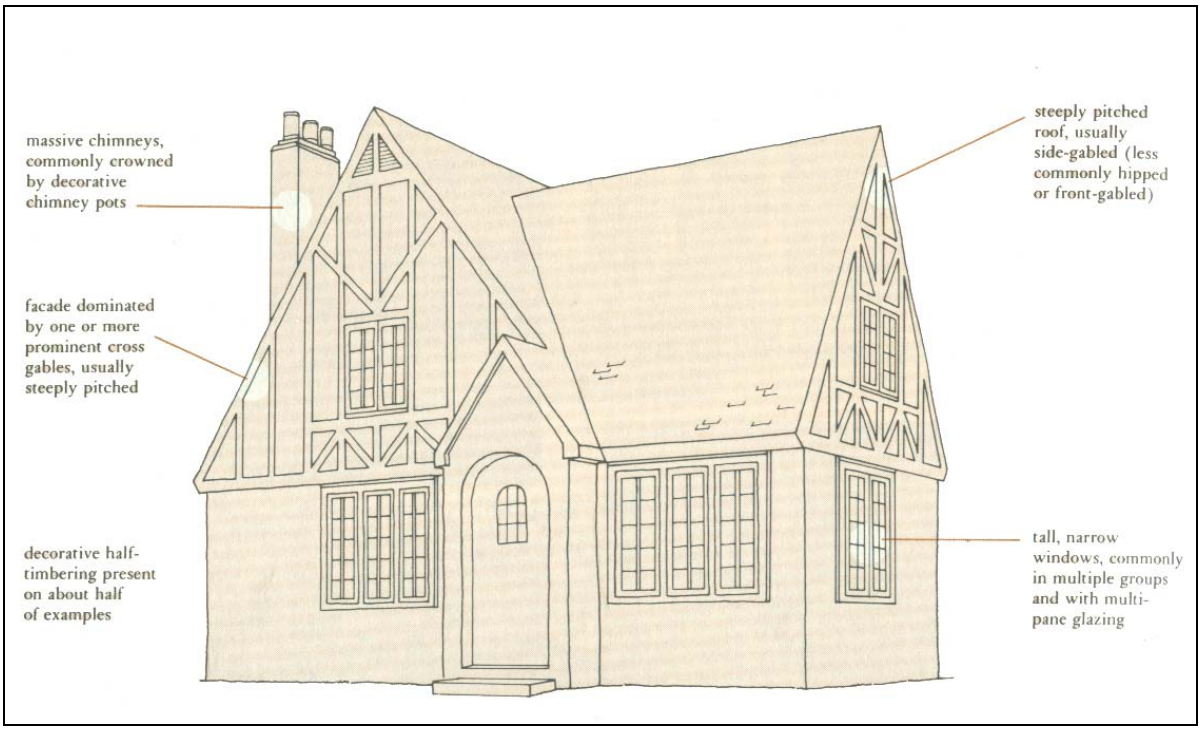


Figure 52
Identifying Features of Tudor Revival Home Designs

Suburban examples of Tudor revival homes of the 1920s often included steeply pitched cross-gables, tall, narrow, multi-paned groups of windows, brick or stone-cladded exterior walls and round-arched doorways. Though not pictured above, second-story dormers and narrow attic windows also were common elements of Tudor revival designs.

Image from: Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, p.354

Figure 53
Purcell and Elmslie, Architects,
William Gray Purcell House,
Portland, Oregon (historic photo, built 1920)

Like Parker's Minneapolis house, Purcell's Portland residence combined progressive design with Tudor revival architectural devices. The multiple gables, placement and sizing of windows, and the graphic quality of the façade created by the smooth plaster exterior are all elements Parker employed in her home's design.

Image from: *Purcell and Elmslie, Architects: The Web Sanctuary*,
http://www.organica.org/pejn607_3.htm

a.

b.

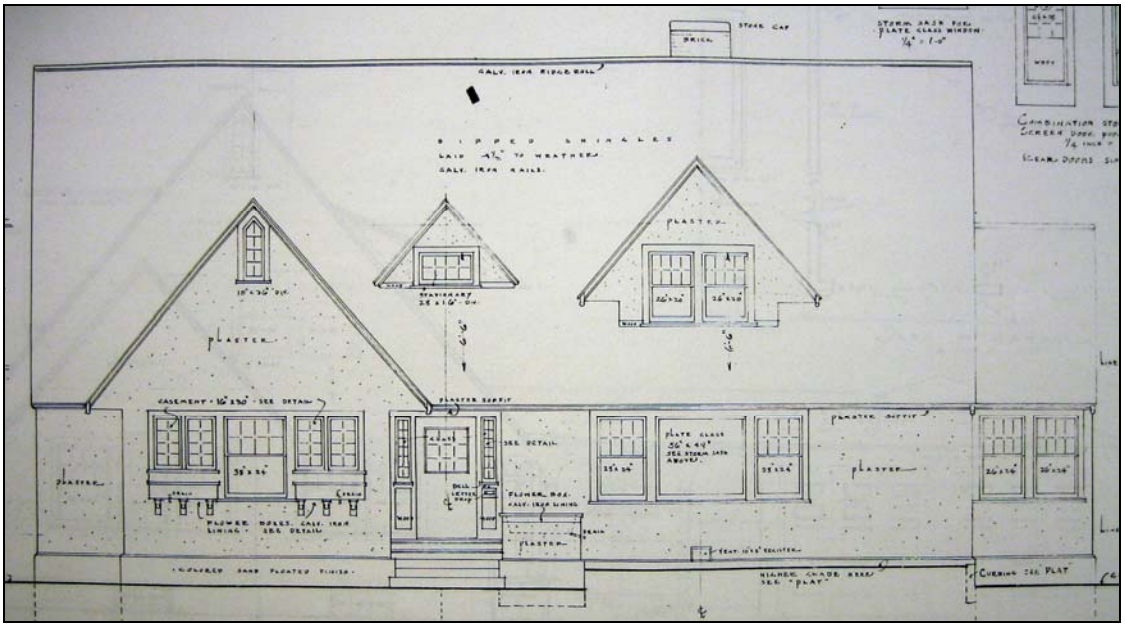
Figure 54 (continued on the following page)

 c.

Figure 54
George Grant Elmslie, Architect, *Edward A. Forbes House*,
Rhinelander, Wisconsin (built 1923)
a. front entry; b. painted decoration detail; c. view of side yard

Elmslie's modern adaptation of a Tudor revival was evident in his design for the Forbes House. Though the octagonal windows and painted decoration made the design more decorative than Purcell and Parker's homes, Elmslie's inclusion of brick facing (along with prominent cross gables) encourages a stronger association with traditional Tudor revival architecture.

Images from: The Prairie School Traveler,
http://www.prairieschooltraveler.com/html/wi/rhinelander/forbes.html



a.

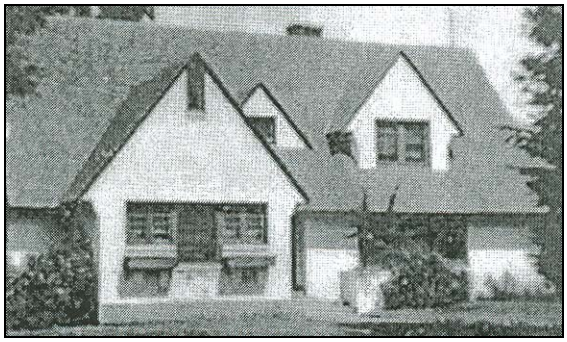

b.

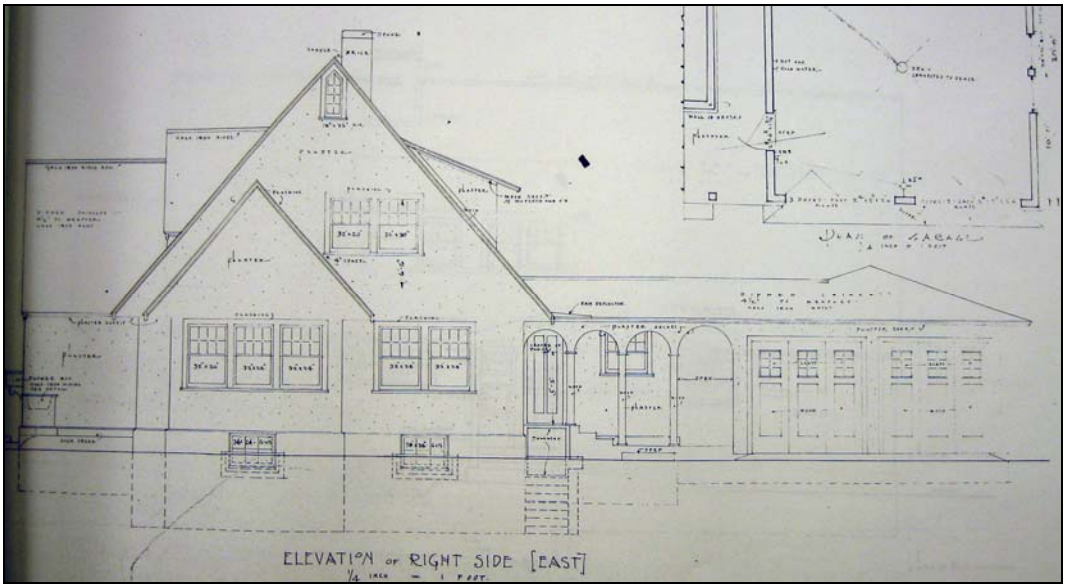
Figure 55 (continued on following page)

 c.

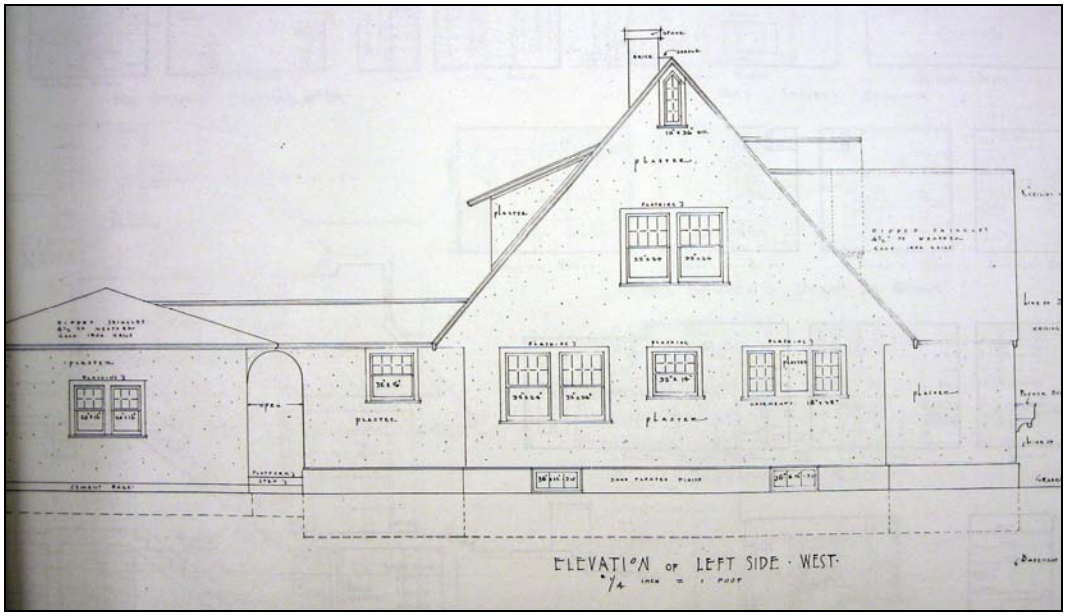
Figure 55
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, *Frank P. Stover House*, *front exterior*
Fort Collins, Colorado (built 1922)
a. front (south) elevation drawing; b. historic photo., circa 1920s; c. current photo

The exterior of the Stover House exhibits several of the architectural elements Parker used for her own home: multiple, steep gables, punctuating and shallow gabled-dormers and enclosed eaves.

Image from: Marion Alice Parker Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives (photo of original plan by the author) (c); Folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257, William Gray Purcell Papers (photocopy) (b); Fort Collins Local History Archive, http://history.fcgov.com/archive/scripts/landmark2.cfm?ID=258 (c)



a.



b.

Figure 56
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, *Frank P. Stover House, elevation drawings,*
Fort Collins, Colorado (built 1922)
a. east elevation drawing; b. west elevation drawing

The peak windows on the front, east and west gables of the Stover design are identical in shape to the one Parker used for the front gable of her house. While the arched colonnade of the breezeway introduces some classicism to the design, the garage is low and hipped, in what appears to be a reference to Prairie School design.

Images from: Marion Alice Parker Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives
(photos of original drawings by the author)

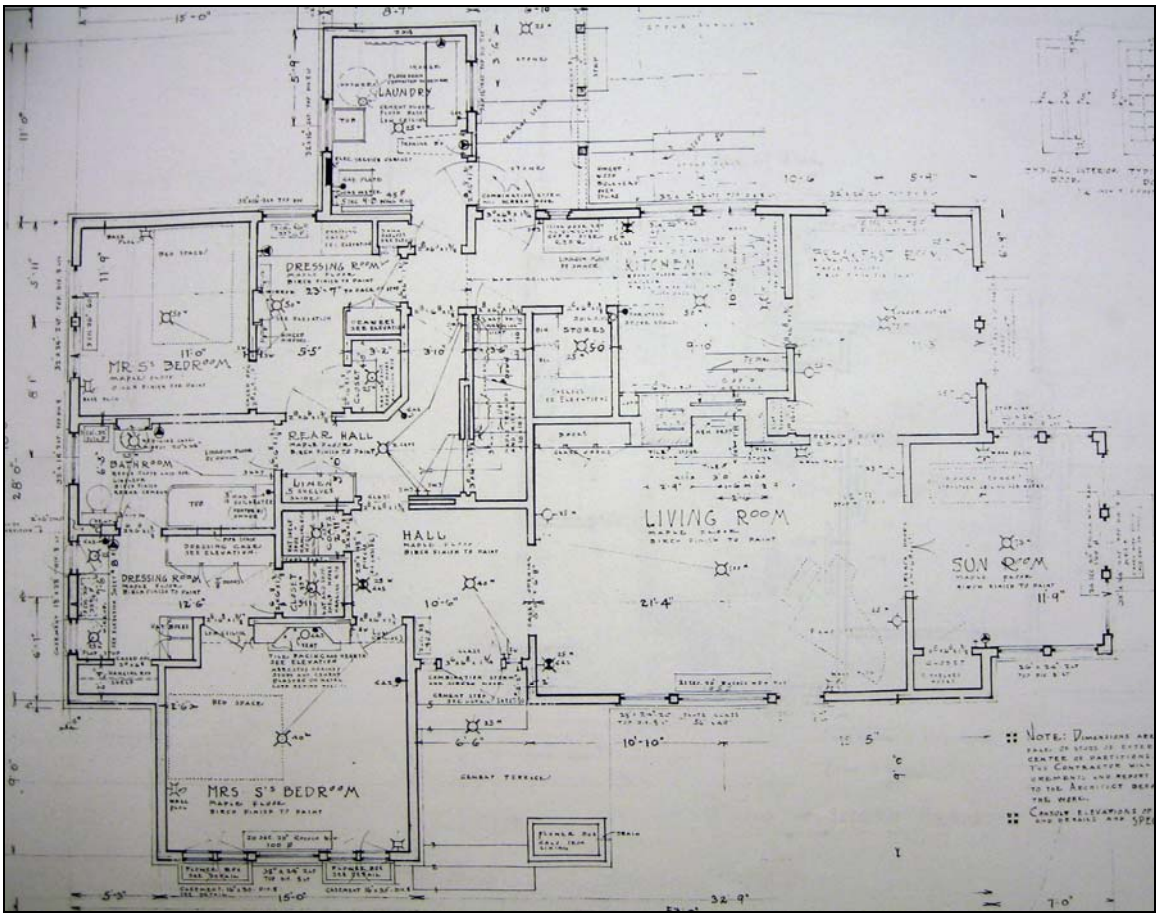


Figure 57
Marion Alice Parker, Architect
Frank P. Stover House, first floor plan
Fort Collins, Colorado (built 1922)

Parker's arrangement for the first-floor plan of the Stover house includes several progressive elements used in Purcell, Feick and Elmslie's smaller home designs, including the "L" shape configuration of living and dining areas wrapped around a central hearth; a sun room (or porch) off the living room; and wide openings between these public spaces, promoting better interior flow.

Image from: Marion Alice Parker Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives
(photo of original plan by the author)

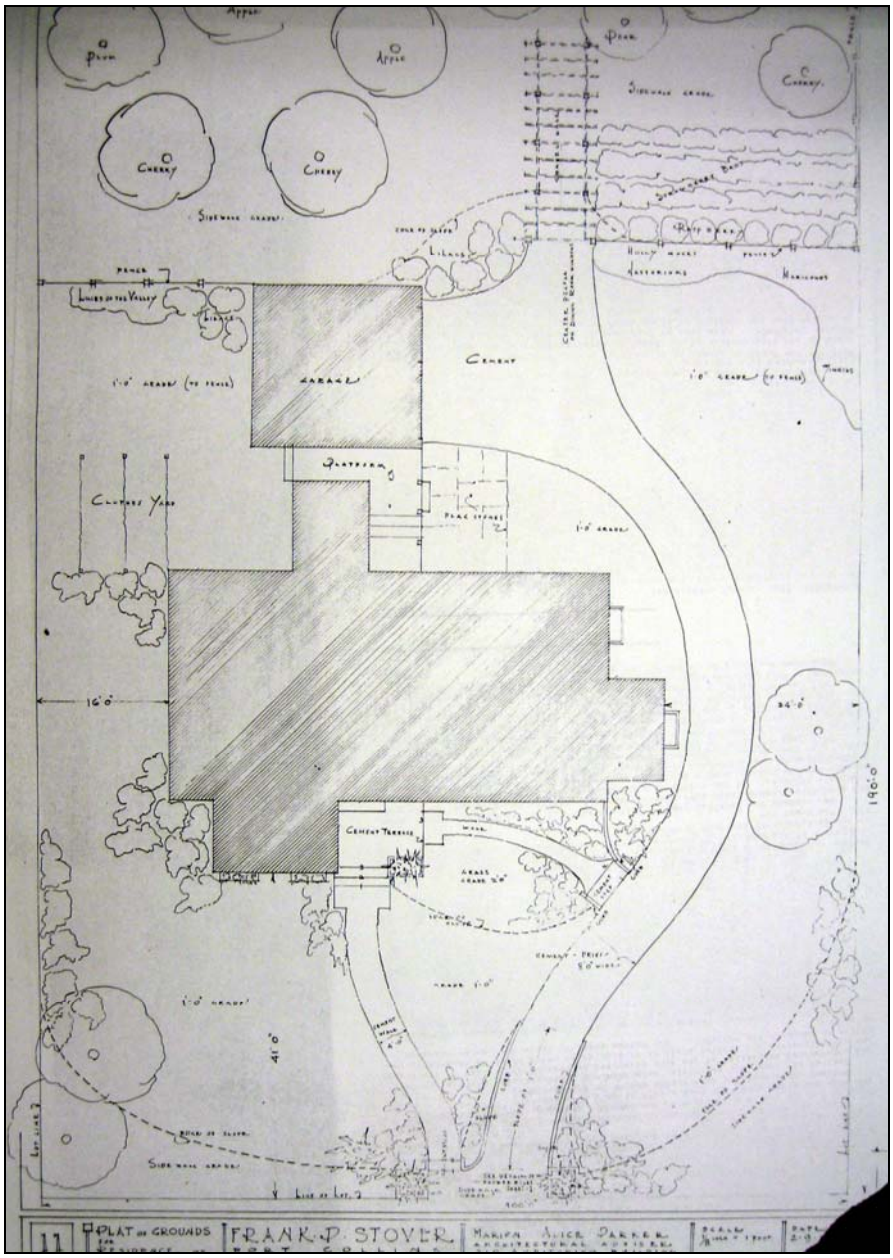


Figure 58
Marion Alice Parker, Architect, *Frank P. Stover House*, *landscaping plan*,
Fort Collins, Colorado (built 1922)

Parker also took great consideration of the relationship between house and its outdoor site, another principle important to progressive design. In the landscaping plan that accompanied the design of the home, various fruit trees, a vegetable garden and a cement walkway and driveway were to surround the house.

Image from: Marion Alice Parker Collection, Northwest Architectural Archives
(photo of original plan by the author)

Figure 59
George Grant Elmslie, Architect, *Clayton F. Summy House*
(now the Summy-Baab residence), Hinsdale, Illinois (built 1924)

The Summy house is strikingly similar to Parker's Stover house; the organization of structural forms is nearly the same in both houses, with one large gable intersected by another and dormer gables piercing the front of the house.

Image from: "Prairie Styles," online information about the architects and architecture of the Prairie School, http://www.prairiestyles.com/elmslie_comm.htm

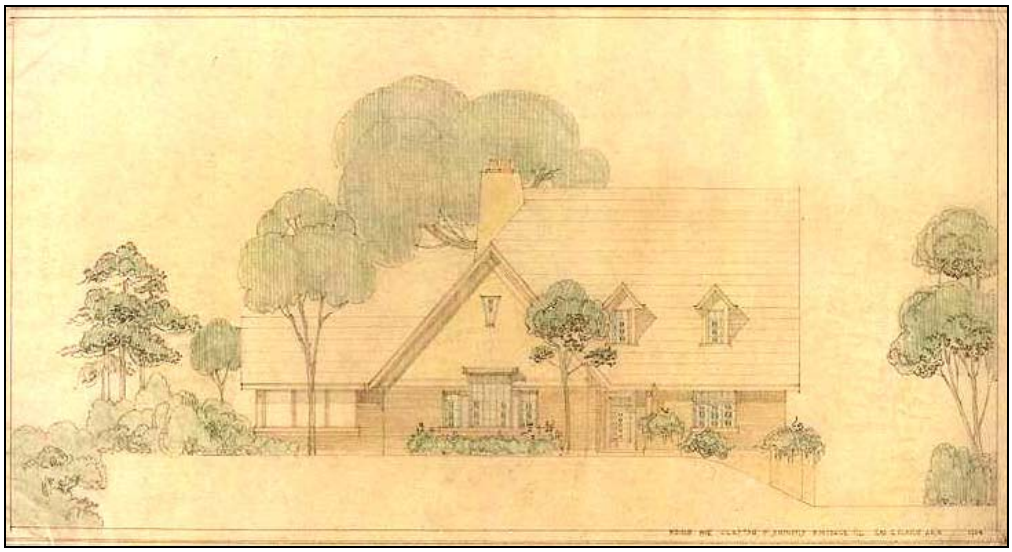


Figure 60
George Grant Elmslie, Architect,
Clayton F. Summy house, front elevation drawing
(now the Summy-Baab residence),
Hinsdale, Illinois (built 1924)

The arrangement of the front façade of the Summy house can be likened to Parker's design for the Stover home, particularly in the grouping of windows across the first floor and the placement of the entry door. Elements such as the unusual roofline of the Summy house, as well as its playful trapezoidal windows, are indicative of Elmslie's ownership of the design.

Image from: *Purcell and Elmslie, Architects: The Web Sanctuary*, http://www.organica.org/pegge278_2.htm

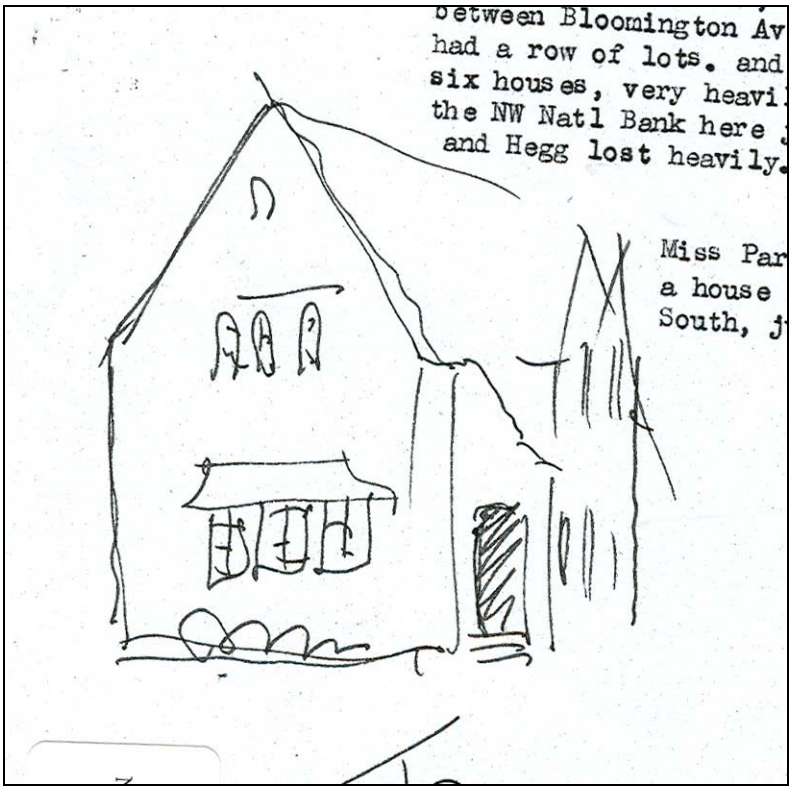


Figure 61
William Gray Purcell, *Sketch of a Home from Advertising Mailings for the Fred N. Hegg Development* (1954), Minneapolis, Minnesota

Strauel identified Purcell's sketch of a house featured in advertising for Hegg's development as Hegg's own house on Minnehaha Parkway; Strauel also gave Parker credit for the design.

Image from: Folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257 (photocopy)

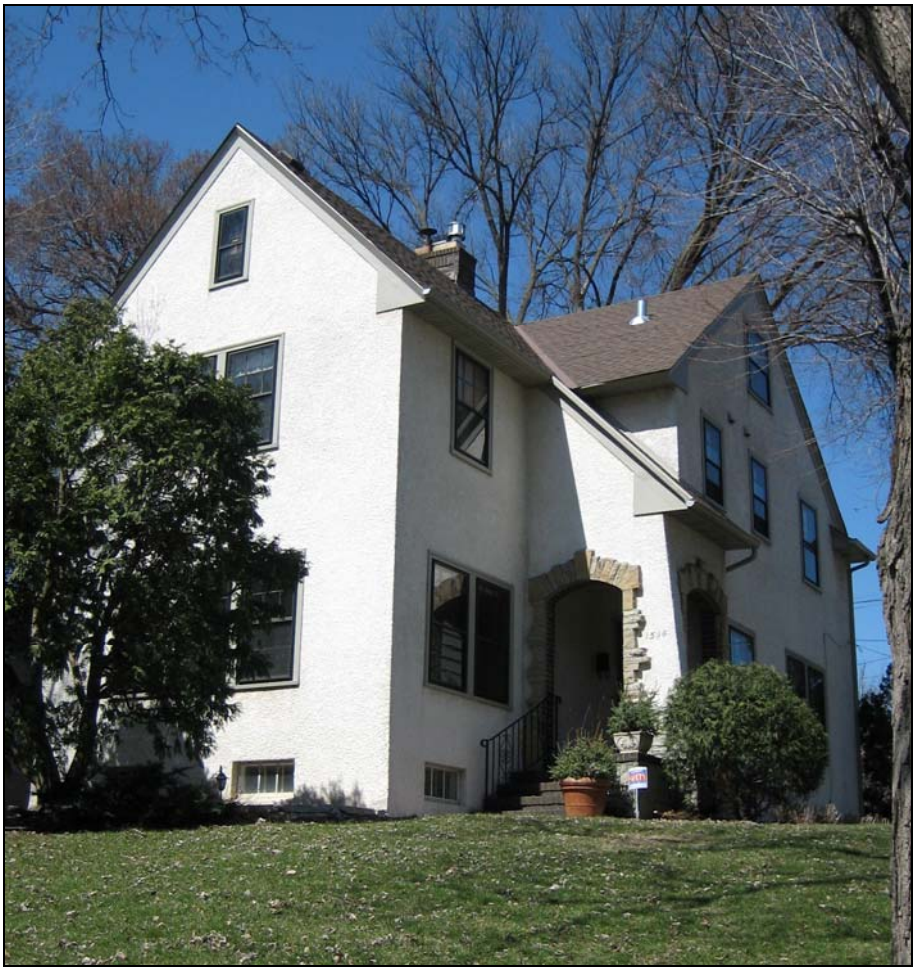


Figure 62
Fred Strauel and Marion Alice Parker, Architects (?),
Home at 1536 E. Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1925)

The house at 1536 E. Minnehaha Parkway, with its narrow form, half-gabled entry and short banks of windows across the first and second stories of the front façade, most resembles Purcell's sketch of a house Strauel believed belonged to Hegg.

Image from: photo by the author

Figure 63
Fred Strauel and Marion Alice Parker, Architects (?),
Home at 1550 E. Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1925)

The house at 1550 E. Minnehaha Parkway carries some general similarities to Purcell's sketch of a house believed to belong to Hegg, namely the half-gabled entry and short banks of windows across the first and second stories.

Image from: photo by the author

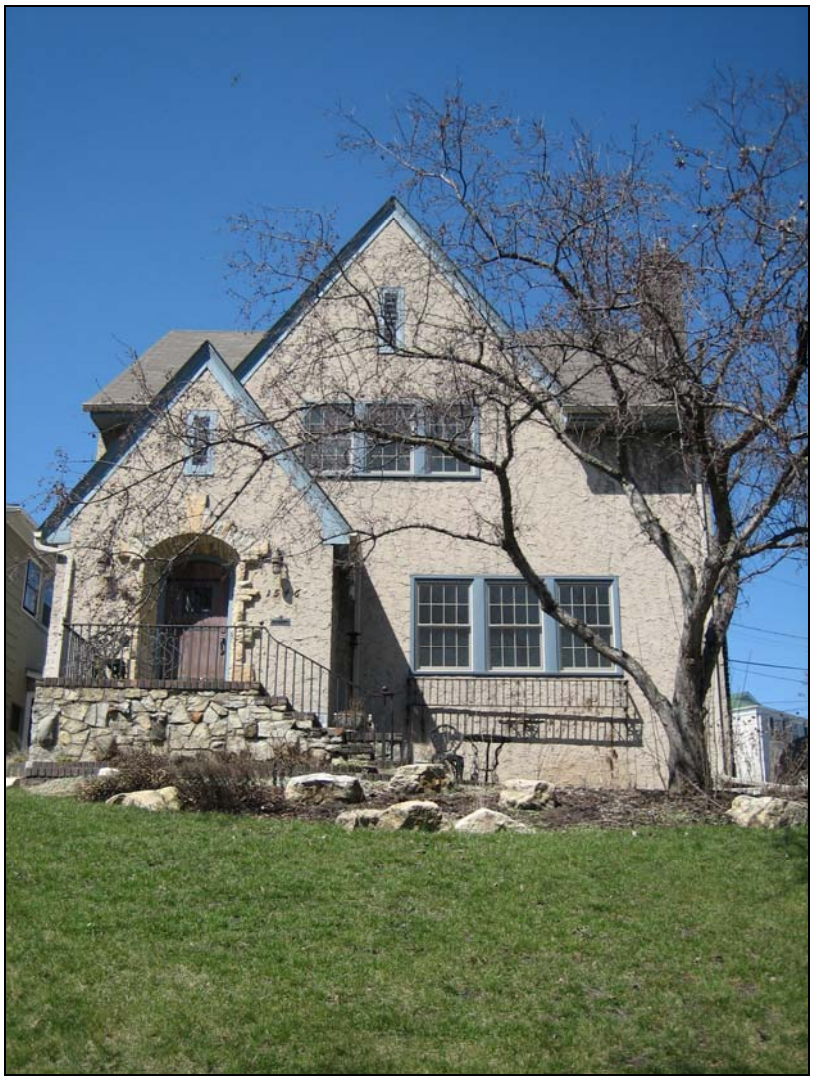

a.

Figure 64 (continued on following page)


b.

Figures 64
Marion Alice Parker, Architect (?)
Fred N. Hegg House at 1546 E. Minnehaha Parkway,
Minneapolis, Minnesota (built 1925)
a. front entry; b. front with side view

Appearing as a larger and more complex version of Parker's design for her own home, Hegg's house includes the crisp geometry, simplified façade and a combination of structural forms that were common among Parker's revivalist designs.

Image from: photo by the author

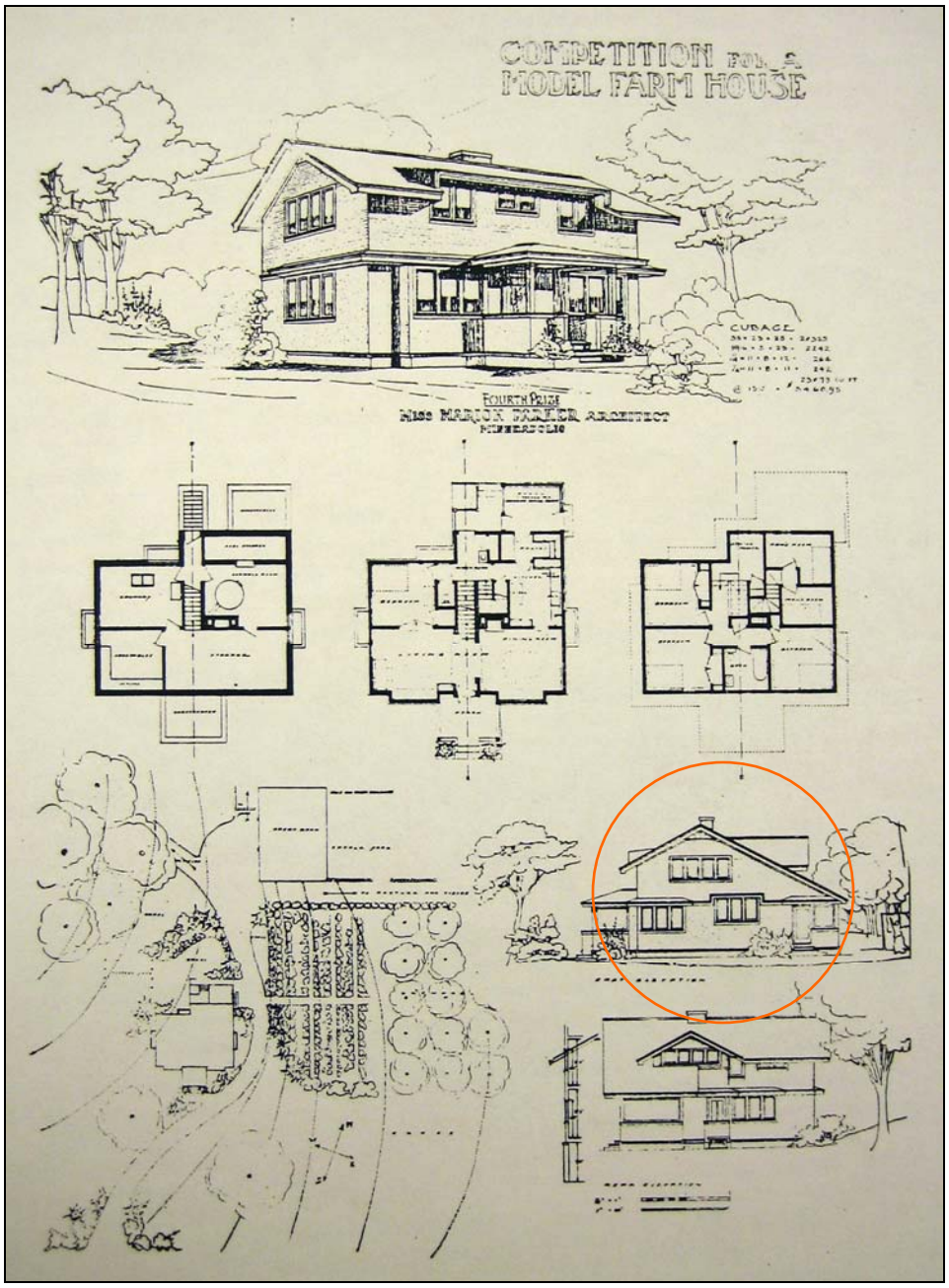


Figure 65
Marion Alice Parker, Architect
Drawing for the Competition for a Model Farm House (c. 1915)

The east elevation of Parker's Model Farm House design (circled), with its asymmetrical gabled-roof line, cross gable and window sets (one with a narrow, non-structural roof section) was nearly replicated with some elements reversed in 1550 Minnehaha Parkway.

Image from: "Competition for a Model Farm House," in *American Architect*, photocopy in folder N3, Parker, Marion Alice, C: 257, William Gray Purcell Papers

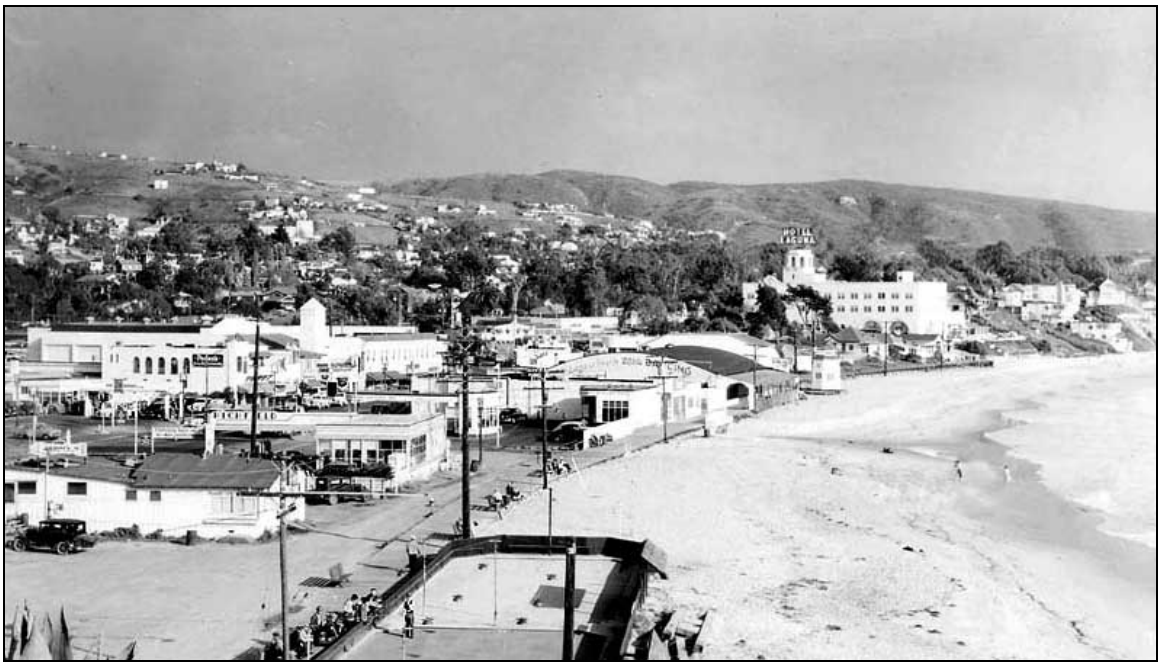


Figure 66
Photographer unknown, *Laguna Beach, California* c. 1930s

In the middle to later 1920s, Parker "retired" from architectural practice in Minneapolis and moved to Laguna Beach, California, a coastal town famous for its landscape and artist's colony.

Image from: Laguna Beach Photographic History compiled by Steve Turnbull, http://www.light-headed.com


a.


b.

Figure 67
Marion Alice Parker, Architect (?), *Marion Alice Parker House and Store*,
Laguna Beach, California (built c. 1930)
a. front façade b. front façade showing small shed dormer and secondary gable structure

Parker's home and store is a large, bungalow-like building form with cedar shakes; it recalls certain architectural elements of Parker's previous home designs, particularly in its exaggerated asymmetrical roof line and tall, multi-paned casement windows.

Image from: photograph courtesy of Jane Janz

Figure 68
Advertisement for the Home-Spun Shop, owned by Marion Alice Parker,
South Coast News, Laguna Beach, California, August 25, 1933, p. 13

In Laguna Beach, Parker opened The Home-Spun Shop, where she sold hand-crafted textiles such as curtains, rugs embroidered linens and blankets. It also appears she may have sold her own services in interior design and/or decoration.

Image from: *South Coast News newspaper*, 25 August 1933 (photocopy)