

Lake Forest Preservation Foundation NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2009

Lake Forest's Post Office

by Arthur H. Miller



Exterior view of the Lake Forest Post Office, 1930s. Susan Dart Collection, Lake Forest College Library.



Interior view, 2009.
Photo by Robert Moulton-Ely.

The recently announced decision by the U.S. Postal Service to sell its Lake Forest Art Deco building, adjacent to historic Market Square (1916), signals an end to a tenure of over three-quarters of a century in this location. Designed by Milman & Morphett in 1932, the Post Office was created to be compatible (height, materials, high style) with the historic first-ever shopping center to its south and east sides. Set back in a park-like setting in a simplified classicism of the day, this Post Office is among the most successful public buildings of the period on the North Shore and a fitting extension of the National Register, world-class Market Square.

The Post Office previous to 1932 had been located within the Market Square complex immediately east across Bank Lane, in the corner location of today's Helander's. The new structure was built with early Depression-era stimulus funds from the Hoover administration. The Post Office is pictured as it appeared in the 1930's in Susan Dart's 1984 book, *Market Square*, p. 51.

The Post Office's architects, Milman & Morphett, were successors to Howard Van Doren Shaw Associates and were on Market Square architect Shaw's staff when he died in 1926. The designer of this firm was Ralph J. Milman (1888-1963) who was Harvard-educated and Paris-trained, and a leading

Shaw firm designer of the 1910s and early 1920s. Milman also worked for the Lake Forest Improvement Trust on Market Square renovations, but the Post Office exemplifies his esteem for the French Art Deco style, also shown in a Rehearsal Hall for the Art Institute of Chicago and in several North Shore residences including his own of 1932 (1275 N. Green Bay Road). Milman designed a Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority house at the University of Illinois that is now on the National Register, among other non-residential projects detailed in a December 1937 monograph on the Milman & Morphett firm (*Architecture and Design*, v. 1, no. 3: "...a Selection from the Work Designed in the Offices of Ralph Milman-A.S. Morphett, Architects"). Milman's office from the 1930s to the 1960s was at 7 South Dearborn in Chicago.

Milman was married to Helen Brown Milman, a landscape architect trained in the 1910s in the University of Illinois landscape program under Professor R.R. Root. She also was in his Lake Forest Garden Club-sponsored Lake Forest College landscape class during the summer of 1916. In 1940 the Lake Forest Improvement Trust hired Mrs. Milman to design the park in Market Square, its walks and hedges surviving until the renovation of the park in 2000. The full-page photo of the

(continued on next page)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Residents and Property Owners of Lake Forest:

In this issue of the *Preservation Newsletter* we pay tribute to our many members, all listed on the insert in the center of this newsletter, whose support and generosity over the past 33 years have enabled the Foundation to carry out its mission of preserving the unique historic character of our town. Over 30 projects, both large and small, have been initiated and financially supported by the Foundation. From the 1980s rehabilitation of the Market Square train station to the saving of the Walden/Bluff's Edge bridge, the Foundation has worked hard to preserve the icons that define our community. Grants to important projects at Gorton, Ragdale, Dickinson Hall and Elawa Farm, as well as work on preservation ordinances, National Register Districts and artifact restoration are also part of the legacy the Foundation leaves for future generations. None of this would have been possible without your support. This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to recognizing your contributions and expressing our thanks.

Our newsletter is sent to every resident and business in Lake Forest as a public service. We have learned that our residents enjoy hearing about the City's historic properties, preservation issues and Preservation Foundation activities. If your name does not appear on our roster of members, join now and become a part of a great organization dedicated to helping our City maintain its beautiful and unique visual character.

Sincerely,
Thomas Daly, President

Lake Forest's Post Office *continued from page 1.*

Post Office exterior found in the 1937 Milman & Morphett monograph includes a modern formal landscape, short squared hedges with informally growing trees in front east and west.

The Post Office's Art Deco style reflects the Bauhaus-influenced French version of modern design promulgated by Le Corbusier in Paris in the late 1910s and 1920s. Le Corbusier's *Vers Une Architecture* was published in 1923 and translated into English in 1928. It advocated that new buildings should reflect the streamlined looks of recent ships, automobiles, and planes. This was followed by a 1925 Paris exposition that highlighted the style internationally, and soon it was being introduced in this country. At the same period Walter Frazier was employing the style in his 1930 Hodges house on Westminster a few blocks west. The 1931 Lake Forest Library a few blocks east on Deerpath was in much the same mode, a modern classicism, by Edwin Hill Clark. The Post Office exterior is decorated in low relief in the modern style introduced in the 1910s and 1920s by sculptor Paul Manship and others. The metalwork over the entrance doors east and west, also modern, reflects a domestic tradition found in great houses locally by Lindeberg (Clyde Carr, with Oscar Bach's art, 1916) and Frederick Perkins (Schweppe, with Samuel Yellin, 1915), and in Market Square itself.

On the Post Office's interior the organization or plan is fairly simple. There are two great spaces: public on the south and private for processing on the north. The public space is two stories in height, with metalwork details of federal motifs, a black marble and terrazzo floor, and striking period lighting. Postal boxes are on the north wall at the west end, with service windows and mail drop slots to the east.

Later Milman & Morphett/Ralph Milman projects in Lake Forest include French style houses on Ridge Lane (Mrs. J. Dorr Bradley) and East Westminster (Mrs. W. Fred Stevens, a renovation) and a French style pool complex for the Knollwood Club on North Waukegan Road. In the popular Georgian Colonial style in Lake Forest by 1937 the firm had designed a residence for the Fred Kramers, renovated the W.H. Hubbard 1892 North Green Bay Road house for the Philip Reddys, and created a kennel group for Harold Florsheim. In the 1950s Milman designed east side houses for General Robert Wood (Mayflower Road) and Mrs. Alfred Hamill (North Washington Road). Also, circa 1950, the firm designed the modern Deerpath School west of Green Bay Road, the firm's most visible public work other than the Post Office.

Lake Forest's Post Office is a significant contributing structure to the adjacent Market Square elemental ensemble of buildings, all part of Lake Forest's original National Register Historic District.

Sources:

Architecture and Design v. 1, no. 3 (December 1937). Issue on Design Work of Milman & Morphett.
Dart, Susan. *Market Square*. Lake Forest: Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society, 1984.
"Ralph Milman, Architect for 45 Years, Dies." *Chicago Tribune* (Nov. 5, 1963), C10.
"Uncle Sam O.K.s New Post Office at Lake Forest." *Chicago Tribune* (Feb. 14, 1932), 22.

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Postwar Modernism in Lake Forest

by Rommy Lopat, Arthur H. Miller, Sarah Wimmer • Photos by Roger Mohr

Post World War II modernism in Lake Forest residential architecture was largely a second-generation expression of European and Prairie School reform housing design that rejected classical and traditional styles. Several talented architects (Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson and others) responded to new materials like plate glass and steel and to inspiring local materials like Wisconsin yellow limestone and naturally finished wood (Frank Lloyd Wright). The local well-travelled and educationally elite clients encouraged the incorporation of east and west coast design trends into houses. Their houses included new living spaces independent of intrusive servants but influenced by the formalist precedents of Shaw, Adler, Lindeberg, and others of the previous generation.

This amalgamation of trends for a definable later modernism is a key topic of a 2009 book, *Walter Frazier, Frazier Raftery Orr & Fairbank, Architects: Houses of Chicago's North Shore 1924-1970*, that Art Miller co-authored with Kim Coventry (published by the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society). Frazier (1895-1976), a Chicago area architect with several upper North Shore clients, embraced new post war trends, in particular the International style of 1930s Chicago immigrant Mies van der Rohe and especially New York-based Philip Johnson. But Frazier and his partners filtered this innovative approach to residential architecture through a home-grown regional version of modernism albeit rooted in classical and traditional roots, a 1950s and 1960s New Formalism.

Several locally-based architects excelled at versions of these modern trends, both informal and formal. As the following examples of designers and local houses show, these designs ranged widely within the local and professional vogues of the period up to the 1960s and 1970s when classical and traditional styles reasserted themselves more forcefully. Some of these modern houses were built with experimental methods and materials and have not survived. Others are sound, and they remain beacons to a simpler life and smaller “carbon footprint.” Long out of fashion, once again these houses speak to current aesthetics and are on the verge of becoming “hot.” Though a counter-trend to the conservative mainstream of Lake Forest architecture, nevertheless they play a significant role in the local streetscape and in the architectural balance of a natural site with a harmonious structure.

(continued on next page)

Art Deco

Boyd Hill

(Circa 1950; the Telfer MacArthurs, 485 East Westminster Road)



Architect Boyd Hill designed at least ten homes in east Lake Forest from the 1930s to the late 1950s, many for descendants of old Chicago/Lake Forest estate families. Hill studied architecture at Cornell University (grad. 1919), in the 1920s was in partnership in Chicago with Ralph Huszagh (Aragon Ballroom, high-rise apartments), and worked later with Keck & Keck. Hill's client, Telfer MacArthur, was the publisher of the Pioneer Press newspapers. Telfer's brother Charles, married to the actress Helen Hayes, was co-author of the play "The Front Page" along with Ben Hecht. His brother, John D., established Chicago's MacArthur Foundation. Telfer lived in Oak Park for forty years but moved to Lake Forest with his second wife, Ruth McMaster Dicker, who died in 1953 soon after the house was built. Telfer married again, to Elizabeth Otis. He had two daughters, Mrs. William E. Looby and Mrs. W.N. Burdick, Jr. The 1952 landscape plan was created by Marshall Johnson, who was Jens Jensen's son-in-law. Johnson lived in Highland Park and became Jensen's chief designer after Jensen's retirement to Door County, Wisconsin. The MacArthurs' house shows Hill continuing his 1930s simplified brick colonial style as seen at 530 East Crab Tree for Albert Williams, though with more striking Art Deco elements. These appear in the front façade brickwork screen for the window to the right of the entry and in the crisp metalwork balcony railing just above. The effect is of an up-to-date postwar elegance rooted in tradition.

Modern

George Fred Keck/Keck & Keck

(1950; Fagen/McMahon, 1711 Devonshire Lane)



This house was designed in 1950 by Keck & Keck for Mr. and Mrs. Abel E. Fagen. It is in the horizontal, natural manner of an earlier Humrich-designed Wrightian house also of 1950 (see Humrich below). Keck & Keck, led by designer George Fred Keck (1895-1980), was among the most distinguished and well-known Chicago and U.S. modernist firms of the 1930s through the 1960s, second to both Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe. Fred Keck studied at state architecture schools in Wisconsin and Illinois before coming to Chicago firms in 1921. He also led architectural instruction for the New Bauhaus in Chicago in the late 1930s, having already built the first glass house in the United States (the "House of Tomorrow") for Chicago's 1933-34 Century of Progress. After World War II, the firm's North Shore commissions shared several characteristics with those of Wright's later homes. In the late 1930s their local work had shown more of a Bauhaus flair, as seen in the flat-roofed curving house built for the Benjamin Cahns at 303 South Green Bay Road. (When Mrs. Cahn met the Kecks, she told them that she knew about the "House of Tomorrow" but she wanted the "house of the day after tomorrow.") Even with a second story added in recent years, the flavor, if not the proportions, and relation to the site still can be appreciated. But the Fagen/McMahon house beautifully sums up the best of Keck & Keck design and respect for nature and energy conservation. In 2006, the Preservation Foundation acknowledged the house and stewardship of owners Franklin and the late Irene McMahon with its highest Preservation Award.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Preservation Foundation is compiling a comprehensive list of Modern architects and their Lake Forest projects. If you have further information, including photographs, for the houses listed above or others, please let us know. Office phone is 847-234-1230 and email contact is info@lfpf.org.

BECOME A MEMBER!

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

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

For your convenience, a membership envelope has been included with this newsletter or visit our website at www.lfpf.org to join online.

From *The American House Today* by Katherine Morrow Ford and Thomas H. Creighton. Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York. 1951. p. 87:

With a property of eighty acres Mr. and Mrs. Abel E. Fagen wanted for themselves and their three sons a pleasant place to live on a farm, with minimum upkeep, which would allow for out-of-door activities and relaxation in the country. The land is comparatively flat with a few small rises and is partly wooded. The house is situated in one of several groves of trees, and completely screened from the road which is about 1500 feet away. It is oriented to the south for winter sunshine and toward the major view which is in that direction. All major rooms face away from the entrance side giving privacy to the living areas. The plan is a development of the solar house which architect George Fred Keck reports is extremely popular with the owners who understand the principles of orientation and the development of regional types of houses. A point was made of the angular placement of large glass areas not only for view, but "also for the reflective values of the glass, which add a note to the spatial feeling in the house, and rid it of the monotony of the rectangular unit." Construction is of wood and stone in a traditional manner. The flat roof was designed to carry water for cooling the house in the heat of summer months.

Wide-spreading wings fan out from the centrally located living-dining room to afford a wider view from the living area: the study and bedroom wing to the northwest; and the service wing with a hobby room at the far end to the northeast. The central core, which contains the boiler room, has fireplaces opening to the living room and the study. Above and surrounding the angular wall of the fireplace in the living room is a clerestory which brings additional daylight to this focal part of the room. The master bedroom enjoys a wide expanse of view with its three-angled window wall oriented to the east, south and west....Radiant heating is provided through copper coils in the masonry floor which is directly on the ground. Mr. Keck reports that heat loss to the ground is negligible, and that the floors are cool in summer because they are in contact with the cool ground. A direct effort was made in construction to shelter the house from summer heat, equalizing as much as possible variations in temperature. Most lighting is indirect fluorescent cove lighting.

Edward Robert Humrich

(1950; the Franklin McMahons, 806 South Green Bay Road)



According to the job list in a 1993 master's thesis on Humrich, this architect designed ten houses from 1950 to 1966 in Lake Forest and also did several additions. The late Irene McMahon enjoyed telling the story of first going to Wright for a house plan. But after finding out that the master "didn't do budgets," she and Franklin were delighted to find the capable Mr. Humrich (1902-1991). Humrich had backed into architecture through Chicago 1920s real estate sales and development. He apprenticed or worked as a draftsman for Robert Seyfarth and Russell Walcott in the 1930s and 1940s, well-known classically trained architects. By 1947 he had his own practice doing modestly-scaled north suburban homes.

From <http://www.chicagobauhausbeyond.org>; Sept. 2009. Chicago Bauhaus and Beyond, P.O. Box 364, Flossmoor, IL 60422:

In the early 1950s, Humrich was chosen by steel magnate Edward L. Ryerson to be the recommended architect of Riverwoods, Illinois, as the town was being created. Ryerson owned forested property along the Des Plaines River, and wanted to create a unique area of homes that did not intrude on nature. Humrich designed and built over 40 homes there: low-slung, wood and glass houses that are reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses. Practically every suburb from Evanston north to Lake Forest has at least one Humrich house. The McMahon house, in a horizontal earth-toned Wrightian manner, perfectly fits its sloping site with a view to the west (rear) side of the irregular, wooded property. Three distinct units accommodate the studio and carport, at right angles with the bedroom wing, but with the major living center a squared central glazed portion at a forty-five degree angle facing into the descending landscape. This was the first of many such homes and additions for artists, writers, and others who loved natural settings.

Humrich trademark details: post and beam construction, passive solar siting, radiant heat in stained concrete floors, horizontal cedar or redwood siding, board-and-batten cedar ceilings and/or walls, multiple fireplaces, exquisite craftsmanship with custom millwork including many storage closets and built-in furniture (desks, bar, bed, headboards, etc). Custom wood French doors with full panes of glass and brass hardware create window/walls in main rooms. All the doors are operable and swing open to merge the home with the outdoors. Kitchens and bathrooms in Humrich homes always features custom cabinetry, many had travertine marble counter-tops and showers, double sinks, Crane and Grobe fixtures. Other design trademarks are the use of circular spaces, angled spaces, and long hallways to connect them, with storage closets along the hallways.

Many Humrich homes have 7' ceilings, but that is usually not an issue as the homes feel spacious and open. Mr. Humrich was a small man, often dressed in a cape and beret, and had his own ideas about human scale. He felt the low height "spreads the interior of the room out a bit."

Frank Lloyd Wright

(1955; Charles F. Glore, 170 North Mayflower Road)



Charles F. Glore, the client for this house, was a stockbroker and investment banker long associated with Marshall Field III, and with locals James H. Douglas, Jr., R. Douglas Stuart, William McCormick Blair, members of the Forgan banking family, and others. When iconic architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) failed to obtain the commission for Edith Rockefeller and Harold McCormick's Lake Forest estate Villa Turicum in 1907, the loss contributed to his legendary midlife-crisis escape to Europe with Mamah (Mrs. Edwin) Cheney. It was not until this 1955 Charles F. Glore commission that Wright built a house in architecturally conservative Lake Forest. But it was worth the long wait for one of the master's greatest late homes with its simplified elegance of detail and materials atypical of Wright's postwar work, and even a practical roof. As in Glencoe's 1905 Glasner House, Wright's Glore house hugs a spectacular ravine edge and enjoys a sublime "borrowed" landscape. The amply-proportioned house was planned for entertaining and for musical performance.

Edward Dart

(1957; David B. Peck III, 334 Circle Lane)



Christened Edouard Dupaquier Dart, Ed (or "Ned" as his family called him) Dart was born in New Orleans in 1922 and trained at Yale's School of Architecture. He came to Chicago in 1949 to work for his former professor, Paul Schweikher, an "avant garde" architect who was combining International style and Midwestern simplicity. Two years later, Dart formed his own firm. He "loved such modest finishes as exposed beams and common brick, and he assembled them in ways that achieved unique and pleasing effects in space and light" (*Chicago Architecture and Design*, p.193). In 1965, Dart became a

partner in the large Loeb Schlossman Bennett firm. He completed 41 projects for them but is best known for Water Tower Place (Chicago) and St. Procopius Abbey (Lisle, Illinois). He designed the "House of the Fifties" for *Good Housekeeping Magazine*, a model house for *Popular Mechanics*, and won the National Association of Homebuilders competition in 1951. He won 18 AIA Awards, becoming a Fellow at age 44, and he built 52 custom homes from 1949-1968 and 26 churches. He was an incredibly prolific architect with over 200 design projects to his name, including the 1968 Lake Forest College Sports Center. The Peck house is one of his surviving projects and is located in a high-styled modernist enclave, a couple of blocks from the lake on the 1896 Walden estate ravine of Cyrus McCormick II. It repeats the flat-roofed International style that Dart had employed in his own early 1950s Barrington home. Dart died suddenly in 1975. His sister, late Lake Forest resident Susan Dart (McCutcheon), wrote his biography *Edward Dart, Architect* (Evanston, Evanston Publishing, 1993). In it, she writes with warmth and affection about Dart's fresh, simplified designs and the joy of living in an open plan. The Peck residence is among the best local examples of modernist design built for a striking ravine site.

Irony at ELAWA

by Pauline Mohr

Less than two years ago the City approved the demolition of the David Adler designed chicken coop at Elawa Farm. Before the demolition took place, preservationists were in the process of lining up donors and tradesmen to save this unique and substantial building. This singular structure had been a part of Elawa, and later, LeWa, a gentleman farm built for A. Watson Armour in 1917. The preservationists proposed repairing the chicken coop to a usable and attractive state that, initially,



Gerald Siegwart

(1958; Siegwart/Cowler, 700 East Green Briar Lane)



Modernist Gerald Siegwart (1924-1966) designed this house for himself and his family in 1958. It was acquired by the second and current owner, Rosemary Cowler, in 1964 and is unchanged except for some of the landscaping. The house is a one-story, flat-roofed, asymmetrical, elemental grouping of units (garage, Asian garden, living rooms, bedroom wing). It fits into its wooded, spacious site with its low profile, simple lines and natural exterior wall color, punctuated by floor-to-ceiling International style windows and a wide chimney. The effect is to blend the best of Miesian and Wrightian modern inspirations. Siegwart is also responsible for the 1952 International style house at 881 Northmoor Road and another in the neighborhood that was demolished. He is best known for his striking Chicago south-side Pride Cleaners with its angled skyward roof, a high-profile example of 1959 “Googie”-futurist architecture of that moment when cars had large fins, too.

could serve as storage space. Perhaps in future years a more refined rehabilitation might take place and the building be converted to fill whatever needs might arise at Elawa. Some examples of uses included classroom, meeting and exhibit spaces. The demolition proceeded quickly despite these possibilities.

Now, an Ad Hoc committee composed of representatives from community organizations such as Open Lands, the Preservation Foundation, the Elawa Foundation and others are meeting to discuss uses and needs of Elawa Farm as it exists today. Although the committee is simply throwing out ideas about needs and uses, it is ironic that among the suggestions floated is reconstructing the Adler hen house on its original footprint! Think of it, an ersatz Adler hen house when we had the real thing just a short time ago and destroyed it. Lost Adler, Lost Lake Forest.

Balfour Ames Lanza

(1969; Allen and Eliza Davies, 230 North Mayflower Road)



Architect Balfour Lanza (1928-1996) designed at least fourteen Lake Forest homes, according to a 1997 pamphlet prepared by the Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Historical Society. His local residential work reflects a Wrightian inspiration for natural materials and earth-tone colors, sensitivity to ravine and prairie sites, and full-height windows that draw the landscape into the house. The Davies house, too, warmly reflects Wright’s enthusiasm for Japanese balance between the built and natural environments with its roof forms and Asian styled atrium gardens. Lanza also seems inspired by Philip Johnson’s idea of incorporating interior courtyards into open plans. In the commodious, elegant Davies house just north of Wright’s only local commission, Lanza created an outstanding example of the local modernist impulse, perfect for landscape-prioritizing Lake Forest.

Robert M. Roloson, Jr.

(1974; Charles F. Glore, 270 Overlook Drive)



Robert M. Roloson, Jr. (b. 1933), received his Masters Degree in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. His design philosophy involves listening carefully to the client, asking many questions, and then “giving them what they would want if they knew what I know.” He compares designing a house like creating “a custom pair of shoes.” This residence, late for modern architecture, was built for Charles F. Glore in 1974 and rejuvenated in 2002-03 by architect Wells Wheeler. It embraces its natural ravine-edge site in a highly-appropriate architectural manner. It is one of five houses designed by Roloson sited on the deepest ravine in Lake Forest. It employs both the International style lines and Wrightian sensitivity to setting that characterize local residential Modernism. Its massive brick fireplace echoes Wright, Lanza, Dart and Siegwart. Its long

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THE LAKE FOREST PRESERVATION FOUNDATION WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS FOR THEIR

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arcaded entrance walkway reflects the rich local heritage of covered approaches, as introduced by Adler in his 1916 Pike place on Lake Road and employed by Walter Frazier in the Elliott Donnelley house on West Melody Road.

New Formalism

Irving Walker Colburn

(1958; William L. McLennan, 1101 North Lake Road)



Architect I.W. or “Ike” Colburn won the 1960 AIA Homes for Better Living First Honor Award for his 1958 McLennan house on Lake Road on the bluff’s edge facing the lake. If Wright, Keck, Humrich, and Lee were attracted to edgy bluff and ravine sites, Colburn’s McLennan house stands out for being projected over the bluff’s sloping side. With its long low white-brick wall at the bluff’s edge and its flat-roofed, tall arched windows filling the symmetrical façade, it recalls Islamic and eastern temple forms while it reflects modernist simplicity. Built over a Marshall Johnson (Jens Jensen’s successor/son-in-law) soil-gripping landscape, the dignified residence commands awe and attention. A Sylvia Shaw Judson sculpture graced the inner court. Colburn (1924-1992), who was born in Boston and graduated from Yale in 1951, married into the local Donnelley family and within a broader national practice, designed many notable local residences and remodeled others. He also modernized the interiors of the Church of the Holy Spirit and the Church of St. Mary’s. In 1964, he built his own home at 700 Lake Road (demolished 2004) that had a central, two-story brick tower containing circular cutouts that inspired the nickname “Swiss cheese house.” His drawings are in the Department of Architecture and Design of the Art Institute; copies of some of his plans and photo images of some of his designs are in the Lake Forest College Special Collections and reference files.

Walter Frazier

(1955; the Elliott Donnelleys, 1050 West Melody Road)



Architect Walter Frazier (1895-1976) graduated from MIT in 1919 and attended L’Ecole des Beaux-Arts (Paris) the following year. In 1920 he joined Holabird & Root where he worked for five years; in 1924 he also started the firm, Frazier, Blouke & Hubbard. In 1927 he left to form a partnership with John Howard Raftery. Twenty-two years later, Frazier and Raftery became Frazier, Raftery, Orr & Fairbank (1949-1969). In 1934, Frazier had designed a house for the Donnelleys on Ridge Lane, an Art Deco-influenced multi-storied colonial. This second, one-story house is on a corner of the 1910 entrance to J. Odgen Armour’s Melody Farm estate off Waukegan Road. The Frazier firm designed it using an International style vocabulary but reflecting David Adler formal norms and symmetrics. From the 1920s to the 1970s, the firm built several other local houses, though typically in more classical and traditional styles. Elliott Donnelley was a third-generation Chicago printing executive, railroad enthusiast, Lake Forest mayor, and chairman of the Lake Forest College Board of Trustees. An addition to the house was added later by Stanley D. Anderson Associates, obscuring some of the original symmetry of the facade. The residence is featured in the new *Walter Frazier* book.

John Black Lee

(1960; Lydia Beckwith Lee, 367 Bluff’s Edge Drive)



John Black Lee was one of the Harvard Five who settled in New Canaan in the late 1940s. Lee built many notable modernist homes there, including a well-recognized 1956 house that recently has been renovated by architect Toshiko Mori. Lee designed a symmetrical, formal but modern Lake Forest home for his mother, Lydia. The house sits on the prized southeast corner of the former “Walden” Estate, overlooking Lake Michigan. The white-painted brick, one-story, flat-roofed house with broad lake views, numerous skylights, and a north facing courtyard and entry, conveys the essence of New Formalism. The house has been expanded south and west into the original Warren Manning landscape of the Walden estate and its century-old plantings. However, the original plan and character of the house, its relation to the 1890’s “Ravello” (overlook), and its approach drive, remain well-preserved.

Sources include the Lake Forest College Special Collections reference files for local addresses and for designers of local properties.

FOREST PARK MASTER PLAN

by Rommy Lopat



Photo by Rommy Lopat.

Earlier this year the City of Lake Forest, through funds generously donated by the Lake Forest Garden Club, contracted with the landscape architecture firm of Stephen Stimson Associates to create a Master Plan for Forest Park, located above the beach at the eastern end of Deerpath.

The goals of the effort are to prepare a comprehensive plan for guiding future decisions about the landscape, to stabilize the high bluff above the beach against erosion, to fix deteriorating roadways (including Lake Road) and poor drainage (there were 28 bluff and ravine “failures” in 2009), to create a safe environment for pedestrians, to improve the vista to Lake Michigan, and to prepare consistent standards for signage, benches, and other aesthetics.

On September 17, Stimson Associates presented several alternative concepts for Forest Park to the public at meetings held at Stirling Hall. Concepts included various layouts to move parking, increase pathways, and improve vistas by relocating, adding and/or “limbing up” trees. The concepts will be further refined and revised by Stimson during Winter 2010 with the input of the public, the Garden Club, the Park and Recreation Board and City Council. Costs and implementation schedules will follow from these discussions.

Forest Park, Lake Forest’s first park, was designated by Almerin Hotchkiss’s 1857 town plan with 3200 feet of lake frontage for the Lake Forest Association, who then donated it to the City. It is comprised of 29+ acres. The original oak savannah had been converted for two years in the 1890’s to a golf course which also incorporated part of the “Fairlawn” estate just to the west (965 East Deerpath). By 1900, the City had hired landscape gardener Ossian C. Simonds (1855-1931) to “restore” the landscape and its trees. Around the same time Simonds also restored the Lake Forest Cemetery, having already designed the Lake Forest College campus in 1892, some local estates and nearby Fort Sheridan. He is famous for designing Graceland Cemetery in Chicago and for writing the 1920 book, *Landscape Gardening*. Simonds’ plans for Forest Park are owned by the City.

Stephen Stimson Associates, located in Falmouth, Massachusetts and established in 1992, has a national reputation for planning university campuses, public parks, and private homes. The firm’s stated goal is to “create enduring, innovative landscapes which express cultural values and an environmental ethic...The firm’s work is strongly influenced by minimalism and a modern aesthetic, and [it] focuses on clear spatial ordering and efficient site relationships.” (SSA website, Sept. 2009) Some of its many institutional projects include work at Harvard, Yale, Brandeis and Northeastern Universities, the Dr. Seuss National Memorial, and the Pomfret School and Milton Academy. They have designed Parks in St. Louis and San Antonio.

In June, the public offered comments to Stimson via two visioning workshops. The Stimson firm used these comments to develop the concept plans it presented on September 17th.

For more information about the Forest Park Master Plan, please contact LFPF Board members Rommy Lopat (295-1215) or Arthur Miller (535-5064); Lake Forest Garden Club Centennial Project Co-Chairs Joan DePree (234-4278) or Jane O’Neil (234-8068); or Mary Van Arsdale, Director of Parks and Recreation (615-4332).



Courtesy of the Lake Forest College Archives, circa 1910.



The Lake Forest Preservation Foundation

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Join now and attend our legendary holiday party, December 6, 2009

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2009-2010 WINTER/SPRING PROGRAM SCHEDULE*

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 6, 2009 | Annual Holiday Party – Members only 1 PM-3 PM Howard Van Doren Shaw Private Home (Invitations will be mailed to members only. Don't miss your chance to attend, join now.) |
| February 21, 2010 | Exploring Lake Forest's Neighborhoods. The second of a series of small enclaves that members will explore |
| April 25, 2010 | Annual Meeting |
| May 23, 2010 | Exploring Lake Forest's Neighborhoods and Gardens. The third of a series of small enclaves, including a private garden. |
| June 19, 2010 | 2nd Annual Family Fair in Market Square |

UP-TO-THE MINUTE INFORMATION

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

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