



A HEARTFELT HARKENING

by Cynthia Shaw

On November 23rd, a cadre of Colorado Arts & Crafts Society (CACS) supporters met at Denver's Decker Library to discuss the future of our 28-year-old organization. Even though the day's turnout was less than anticipated, the quality of the conversations exceeded expectations as longtime board members shared the history of our founding principles with our newer members, receiving fresh feedback and illuminating insight in return.

After more than an hour of dynamic discussion, we walked a few blocks over to a bucolic bungalow renovated and restored by members Jon & April Lind. They had graciously invited us to join them for a potluck lunch inside their picture-perfect Craftsman home. Thrilled with this prospect, after touring the interior we sat down to enjoy a convivial mix of cocktails and conversation. While still concerned about CACS'

outlook, we ended the day feeling happy if not highly hopeful.

So where does CACS go from here? The stark reality is that our membership has dwindled steadily over the last five years. With the onset of COVID, we were forced to abandon such popular in-person gatherings as our Winter Symposium and Spring Gathering of the Guilds, reverting to virtual presentations and occasional outdoor outings. After enjoying years of lively camaraderie and collaboration with our gifted core of academics, artisans and artists, it is hard to settle for a chat on Zoom.

But it helps to know that we are not alone in these trying times. In the last five years, many other Arts & Crafts organizations, shows and publications (*American Bungalow*, *Arts & Crafts Homes & The Revival* and *Style 1900*) have fallen by the wayside. The good news is that, despite the recent havoc Hurricane Helene wreaked on the east coast, the iconic 38th Annual National Arts & Crafts Conference (<https://arts-craftsconference.com>) held at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina is still on for February 21-23, 2025!

So as challenging as it is to navigate through this transitional period, hope springs eternal as we try to figure out where our beloved Colorado Arts & Crafts Society goes from here. One thought is to simply revert to hosting small gatherings in our respective homes to not only discuss pertinent topics that were core to the original movement, but to also share our individual passions and projects. Please know how much we value and welcome your ideas and insights, so feel free to weigh in with us via cshaw8623@gmail.com.

Here's to a happy holiday season, preferably enjoyed around a heartwarming hearth!



CACS members Jon & April Lind hosting a gathering at their craftsman home.

THE HISTORY OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S BOYNTON HOUSE

By Beth Bradford

Part One: The Creation of the House and the Memories of the First Occupant

Growing up in the town of Irondequoit, New York located on the shore of Lake Ontario, I was totally unaware of my proximity to one of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural creations. Just over seven miles away, the Boynton house is in the city of Rochester's upper-class neighborhood filled with large 19th and early 20th century homes, now designated the East Avenue Historic District. The district is filled with gracious Tudor Revival, Shingle Style, and Queen Anne homes including the Colonial Revival mansion built for George Eastman (the founder of Kodak) between 1902 and 1905. There is only one Prairie style home among the 700 buildings in the district.

When visiting my family this summer, I was happy to explore this neighborhood and to attend a three-session gathering related to the house: a lecture by an architectural historian, a lecture by one of the previous inhabitants of the house and a panel discussion with the architectural

historian, the current house owner and one of the architects responsible for the latest restoration. Unfortunately, a tour of the home's interior was not included in the day's activities. Nevertheless, I find the house and its history fascinating, and the history certainly serves as a cautionary tale of what might have become of one of this outstanding architect's iconic creations. Much of the history of the original construction comes from a Rochester journalist, William Ringle, who in 1955 had the foresight to interview the original owner's then 69-year-old daughter. In Ringle's letter to her he stated, "One of the reasons I'm writing is that it is my own conviction that - because of Wright's position in architecture - the house will, one day, be of even greater artistic and historical interest than it is today." Ringle also received a brief letter from Wright in December of 1954 with his recollections of the house. (Its text will be related in an upcoming newsletter.)



Edward & Beulah Boynton (c. 1908)

(continued on next page) 3.

BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)

Edward Everett Boynton (born 1857) was a financially successful partner in the C. T. Ham Manufacturing Co. of Rochester, producing "Tubular and Railroad Lamps and Lanterns" as noted in their company catalogue. Unlike his financial life, his personal life was not so blessed as three of his four children died as infants in 1882 (Ethel), 1886 (Bessie), and 1892 (Percy) followed by his wife (Hattie) in 1900. As a result, Edward



Original-C.T.-Ham-Lantern Found in the Cellar by Current Owner and Restored

doted on his surviving daughter, Beulah (twin to the deceased Bessie).

In 1906, when the widowed Boynton decided to upgrade his living circumstances, he searched for an architect to build a house with his then 21-year-old daughter Beulah in mind. Boynton learned of Wright through his lantern business partner, Warren McArthur. McArthur had been a recipient of one Wright's "bootleg" houses, built in Chicago in 1896 while Wright was still working for Louis Sullivan. (Coincidentally, during the design of Boynton's house, Warren's eldest son, Arthur had become an architect and was working in Wright's office.) Beulah later recalled to a reporter, "I wanted Claude Bragdon to build our house, but father was quite taken with Wright." Bragdon, a leading architect working in Rochester at the time, embraced the ideas of Louis Sullivan in providing organic architecture. Participating in the arts and crafts movement, he worked with Harvey Ellis, Gustav Stickley, and became nationally respected. So, from this information, he was not that far from Wright in the use of the organic, but his application was very different with the use of regular geometry and musical proportion.

Wright was commissioned for design in 1906. Construction of the house started in May of 1907 and was finished in May of 1908. (I am astonished by the swiftness of this accomplishment.) The son of the contractor, recalled his father saying, "The contractors expected trouble with Wright but discovered to their surprise and delight



Warren McArthur House (1892) Chicago [Frank Lloyd Wright Trust]

BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)

that reasonably amicable relations with him were possible so long as they adhered to his specifications and instructions" and "He made no great trial for contractors, but he gave the workmen fits."

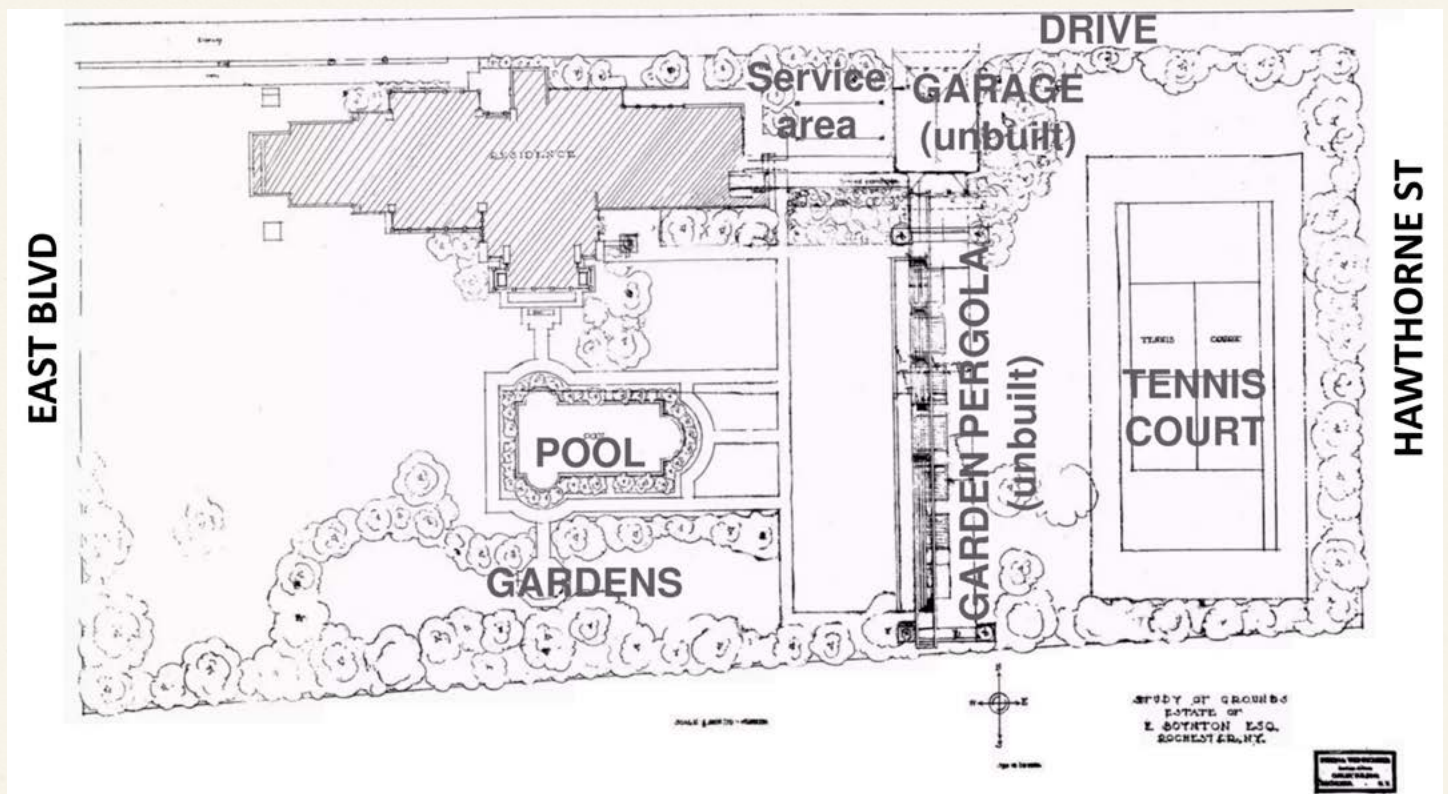
The building permit issued for construction listed the house with a valuation of \$10,000. Beulah later reported that her father spent around \$50,000 (current valuation of approximately \$1.7 million) on land, house, landscaping, furniture, carpets, curtains, linens, and tableware. The property was approximately one acre, comprised of four city standard lots, with the driveway stretching the length of a city block from one street to the next. The property included the 5,450 square foot residence, a 30-foot by 60-foot reflecting pool, a tennis court, lavish gardens and 28 newly planted elm trees. A garage and a pergola shown on the site plan were not originally built. However, since Boynton did own a car, a garage was eventually built.

Wright was heavily involved in the design process, visiting the site prior to commencing design. The house was located on the north edge of the property so the gardens would

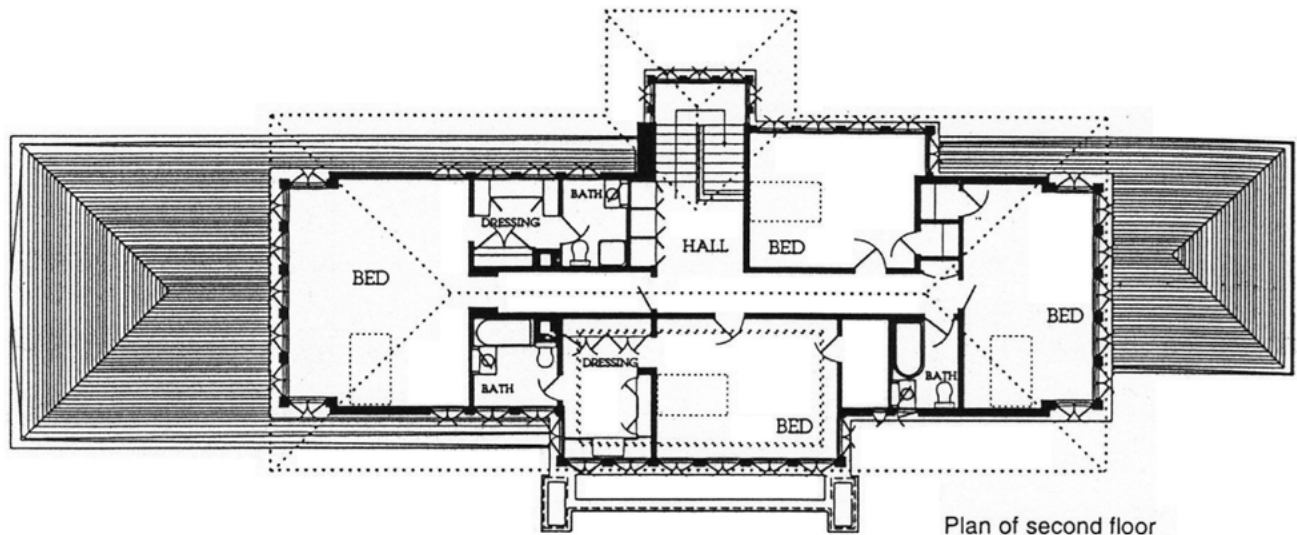
have the benefit from the sun on the south. The large lot provided the prairie feel. Wright traveled to Rochester several times to oversee the construction. He would remain on the site for the length of his stay, day and night, often lasting two or three days. Even before the house had a roof, he stayed on site in a hastily constructed lean-to of a tarpaulin over a few two-by-fours.

As with some of his other clients, Wright was open to collaboration with Beulah. Some of her design suggestions were incorporated into the structure and furniture by Wright, including the adjustable backs of the Wright-designed dining and lounge chairs. Beulah later recalled "My father liked different things perhaps. It was fun to do the house" and "I learned to read specs. I spotted an error in the masons laying the fireplace." She referred to Wright as "a genius" and said of him "I don't think we have anyone who measures up to Frank Lloyd Wright." The most striking feature of the house that Beulah later recalled was the overall "sense of light and space."

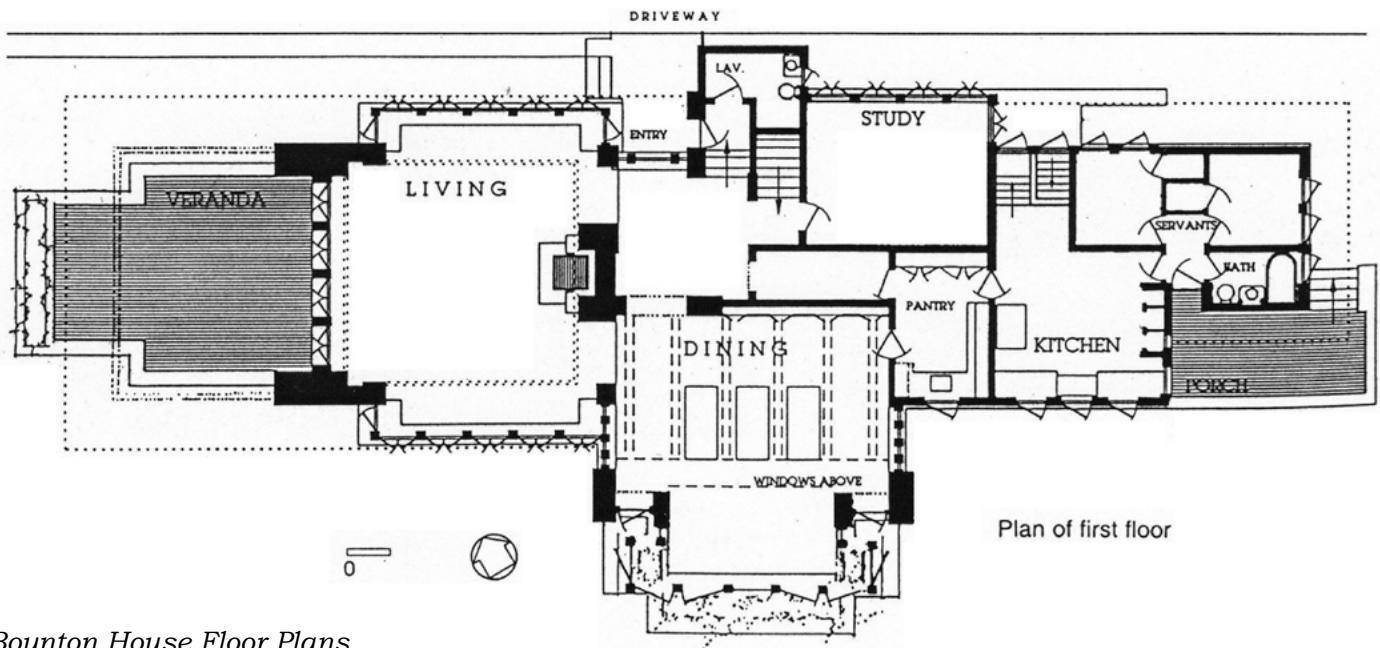
Beulah was in the upper echelon of society and loved to entertain. The dining room became the prime focus of the first floor with the living room a close second. She had an impressive wardrobe,



BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)



Plan of second floor



Plan of first floor

Boynton House Floor Plans

so her large dressing room contained very long drawers on ball-bearing rollers to store her long formal dresses. She was an avid tennis player, so the property included her tennis court.

In a statement to the journalist in 1955, Beulah recalled that the neighbors were extremely curious during the construction of the house. They thought the design was "revolutionary" with some remarking that the "style of architecture would not last." She relayed an incident: "One Sunday two women I knew were looking through

the house. The floors had not been laid. I was down in the cellar, and I could hear them say: 'Who in the world are these people? Why is this man building this house for his daughter?' 'Well, he wanted to build it for her and she's a little queer.' I had to leave word, finally, that people could not go through the house when I was not there. Some were surprisingly insistent." What a fantastic story that shows how little things have changed when it comes to gossip and people's sense of entitlement.

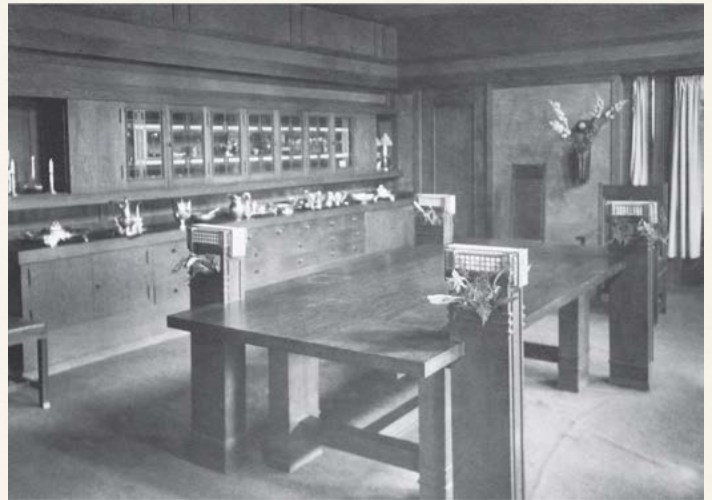
BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)

The architectural concept is like other Wright Prairie houses; the predominate lines are horizontal, the roofs extend out to provide protection and shade. Wright designed the two-story house to stand sideways on the lot in an elongated "T" plan. Art glass windows and a large veranda covered by a massive cantilevered roof characterize the house. The stair tower entrance is located on the north side of the house, on the side of the lot, not on the face toward the street.

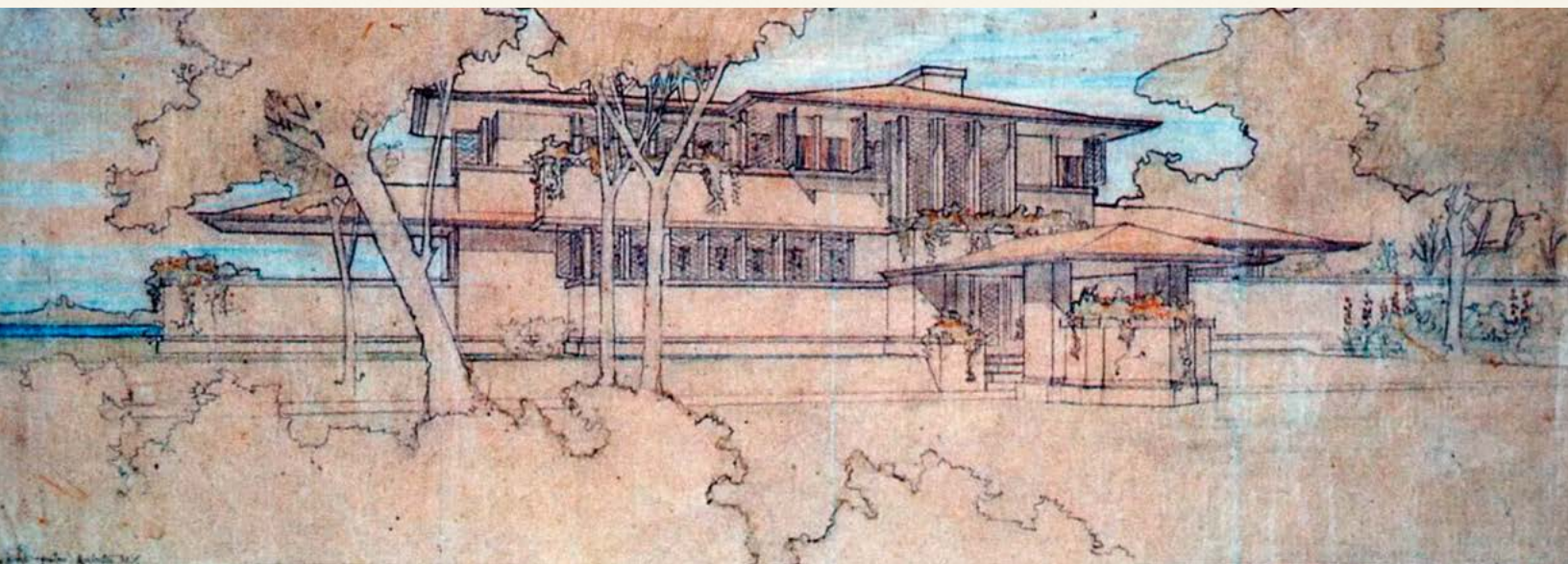
The ceiling heights vary to lead the occupant from one space to the next. The fireplace is the center of the house. It is clad in Roman bricks twelve inches by 4 inches with its vertical joints nearly flush and in grout color matching the bricks and the horizontal deeper joints of a lighter grout to maintain the emphasis on the horizontal. The first-story fenestration is abundant, especially in the dining room where the dropped skylights, a band of clerestory windows, and a bay with casement windows meet to create dazzling tiers displaying distinct abstract patterns. Windows look outdoors or into the adjacent room or in some cases, outside then followed by another window looking inside again into another space. The adjacent living room features bays with a similar configuration of windows on two sides and glass doors leading to a veranda on the northwest end of the structure. Built-in glass-doored bookcases

line the walls beneath the windows. In both rooms, the windows bring in massive amounts of light but that is augmented using recessed lights, art glass ceiling panel lights, and indirect soffit lighting.

The large dining room table, which features four standards supporting light fixtures and flower containers, is an especially noteworthy piece. Its design anticipates that of the Robie house dining table, completed two years later. The adjacent breakfast table provides a different dining experience in the same room. In this room, the ceiling height variations along with the high-backed chairs define separate spaces. A built-in buffet lines the interior wall.



Dining Room



BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)

Wright had a total design plan, incorporating all aspects of the house design and decoration. The hardware, window pieces, doorknobs, and curtain pulls were all made to order. The repetition of scale of art glass windowpanes and sconce light fixture supports is one example of the consistency of the design plan. The carpets were made in Scotland and the table linens in Ireland with a stripe down the middle. The curtains were alike in every room. The general interior design colors were brown, cream, and yellow.

Edward employed a cook, two maids, and two gardeners (one doubled as a chauffeur). Edward occupied the west bedroom at the front of the house and Beulah the south one with the large dressing room. In 1909, Beulah married Ransom

Kalbfleisch and he moved into Boynton house to live with her and Edward. In 1914, Beulah gave birth to a daughter Jean. Beulah, Ransom, and Jean moved to New York City in 1918 because Ransom's business was on the New York Stock Exchange. Edward joined them shortly after and the house was vacant for a year until it was sold in June of 1919. Sometime before 1930, Ransom and Beulah divorced and sometime before Ransom's death in 1951, Jean must have died because she isn't listed as one of his survivors. Beulah lived until 1974. Thanks to Beulah and the inquisitive reporter, we have some inside knowledge of the early days of the house, its design and construction.

The story of the house to be continued...



Back View of Boynton House



South Side View of Boynton House, Garden and Pond

JOIN CACS FOR TOUR OF ARTS & CRAFTS SITES IN COLORADO SPRINGS!

On Saturday afternoon of February 1st, CACS members Robert Rust and Cynthia Shaw will lead a special tour through the Colorado Springs' Pioneers Museum (215 S. Tejon St.), the Van Briggle Memorial Pottery (1125 Glen Ave.) and the Heller Center for Arts & Humanities (1250 N. Campus Heights Dr). This free event is being held in conjunction with Colorado Preservation Inc. during their 2025 "Saving Places" conference 1/30-2/1 (visit www.coloradopreservation.org for more information). Handouts with respective schedules and driving directions will be provided upon sign-up.

RSVP by 1/22/25 to Cynthia Shaw @ cshaw8623@gmail.com.

BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)



Front View of Boynton House



Front of Boynton House (c. 2023)

BOYNTON HOUSE (cont.)



Garden Detail



Jean in the Garden

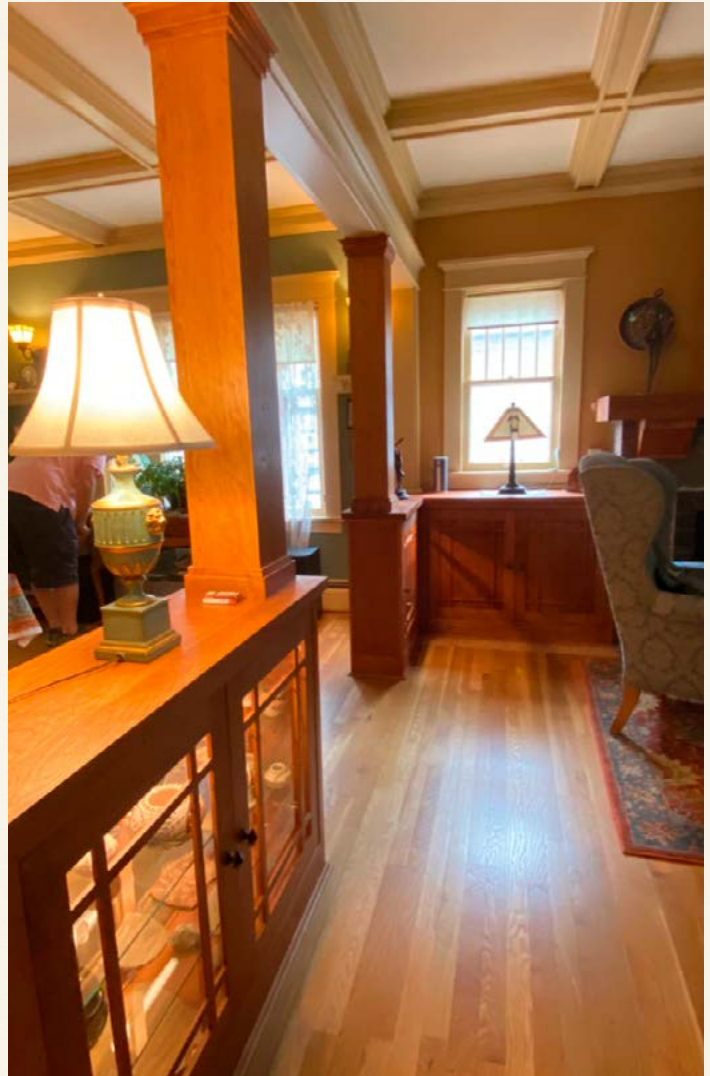
BUILDING A COLONNADE IN MY 1921 CRAFTSMAN IN LITTLETON

by Laura Thor

Since I was a little girl I've wanted to live in an old house, for all the romantic and aesthetic reasons known to CACS members. Our 1921 Craftsman home is in Littleton Heights, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Littleton, high above the Platte River. Upon moving in over 20 years ago, I noticed the ghost marks of a missing colonnade that once ran north to south and elegantly divided the living and dining rooms. Its former bookcases stood 48 inches tall at either end, with doors, as indicated by hinge recesses on the single remaining cabinet. This cabinet had been hacked down to about 33 inches tall, with a skinny column placed atop it, without visual or structural purpose. The opposite

cabinet was gone to make room for 1990s-era built-in, 24 inch deep cabinets flanking the fireplace on the south wall, to the west of the archway. These were electrified for stereo components behind solid doors. I wanted to change all this.

The owner had painted the cabinet and its archway, the ceiling beams, plate rail, window and door trim and the fireplace. And the cabinet tops, firebox and even the mantle had all been tiled in glossy white 'big box' 6 inch tile, with a strip of 4" Motawi in "granite" edged in bold white trim. I'd hoped to keep and work around the Motawi, because, well, Motawi.



BUILDING (cont.)

Years take their own course through life. The St. Paddy's Day storm of 2004 had broken our roof, and new trusses were lifted up by a small crew using ropes. What a mesmerizing site! In the demolition, they'd found a perfect, dense 2" x 4" with several initials and the year, "1921" carved into it. In 2010-11 we undertook a remodel, motivated at first by needing the house to hold heat above 64 degrees. One thing led to another, and that's a different story.

After launching a young adult, completing an advanced degree and seeing my parents through the death of my father and my mother's move to a new community, I was finally ready to begin research on the missing colonnade. The pandemic had already begun and, like many housebound homeowners, I began "demo'ing" the 1990s remuddle, beginning with the paint on the fireplace. Beneath the latex layer was an oil-based layer that gave pink warning hints

when I lead-tested it. I worked in a full respirator mask and goggles that summer, in our not-air-conditioned home. Things were better in January when I opened windows to the welcome cold. But the brick turned out to be the ugliest mud color. A lovely stained brick fireplace in a 1920s-era bungalow in a magazine ⁽¹⁾ had me testing my brick for porosity, but my brick failed that option. Perhaps I would finish the fireplace in handmade tile "one day."

Next, I took advantage of the already-falling-off Big Box tile along the firebox and popped off the rest, leaving the Motawi. When it came to the mantle I began using a heat gun but the adhesive was made of a black two-sided sticky fabric screen that I could not melt off. What was this stuff? And had the P.O. (Previous Owner) feared the tile would fly off of its own accord if simply set down with mastic?



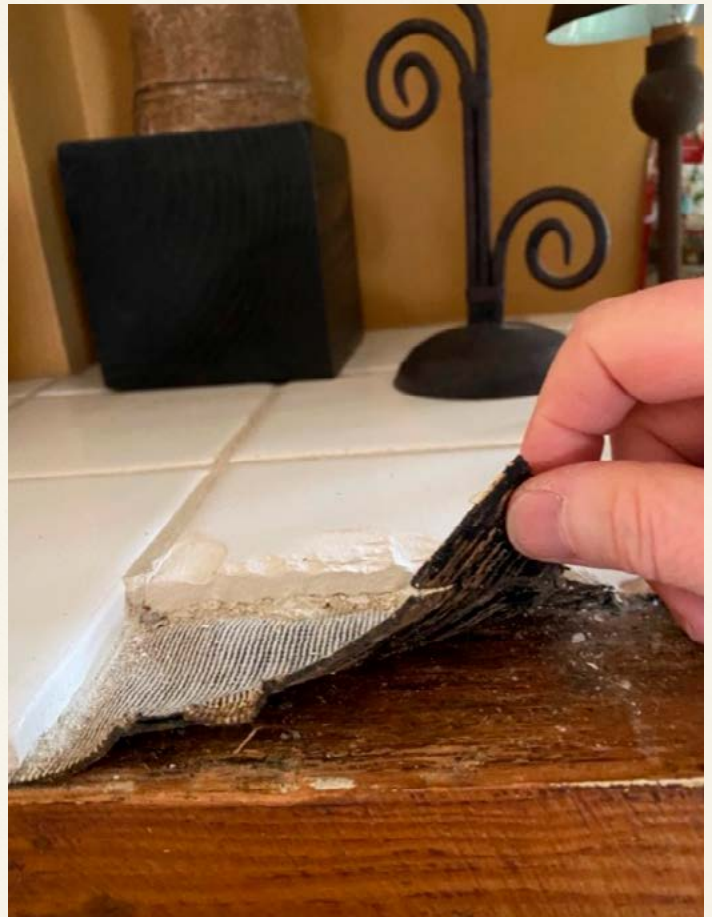
BUILDING (cont.)

Using “Goof-Off” and a chisel failed. I began hammering the chisel into the space beneath the tile, breaking off only a few small sections. The banging made our dog whine at the back door for escape to the yard. Over the weeks the black glue stayed stuck to the fir mantle. My shoulders hurt for what seemed a poor yield. Gouges marked the wood wherever the chisel did its work. I’d have to veneer the top and the sides to hide the new edge if I ever got this tile off. In need of a break, I turned my attention to the exciting challenge of the missing colonnade.

So many decision points presented themselves along the way. Could I find an unpainted colonnade in an architectural salvage? I found a few, across the country, but of course, they would need to be retrofitted into my archway. Would I find a carpenter who’d relish that task? And in any case, would the stained wood clash with the painted archway and trim all over the living and dining rooms? I found only one such combination in a new-build bungalow featured in a catalog. I wasn’t confident it would work in a century-old home.

Months of indecision passed. I moved on to the next option: finding a woodworker to build a new colonnade and fireplace cabinets, and maybe even replace the chopped-up colonnade cabinet and build back its missing sibling. I made calls and found I could not afford the few cabinet builders who worked from scratch. They did not seem interested. I had to send photos to explain colonnades! I researched online photos from old catalogues, the sort where one could once buy pre-made colonnades with bookcases standing 48” high, and with straight columns--tapered came as an option. It was fun to see the old-time prices, and to think these came by rail, like the 1920s Montgomery Ward house kits my old neighbor picked up at the train station a few blocks from here. (That house is gone now, replaced by a monstrosity.)

Then I found a congenial woodworker ⁽³⁾ who agreed to come see what I had going on. I worried she wouldn’t feel it was worth her time to replace



BUILDING (cont.)

just the colonnade. I figured I couldn't afford to both replace the fireplace cabinets and restore the mantle, and would have to buck up and finish the mantle myself. She took one look at my efforts to chisel off the mantle tile and asked me what my budget was. I shyly said a number between "rock bottom minimum" and "is this at all enough?" She kindly said some version of, "Oh Honey!" by which I thought she meant she was out of my league. But she was actually expressing pity for my efforts to remove that sorry mantle mess. In the end, I could even afford tall bookcases at the end of the living room.



As it turned out, she could build a colonnade and fireplace cabinets within my budget. She suggested I give up on and replace the damaged

mantle. But I didn't want the demo'd mess of plaster and wood to fall into and damage the flue of the gas insert. I also dreaded the certain job of repairing broken plaster around the fireplace. And finding a plasterer? I'd asked Matt Hubbard of Modern Bungalow if he knew any plasterers, but they had retired during the pandemic.

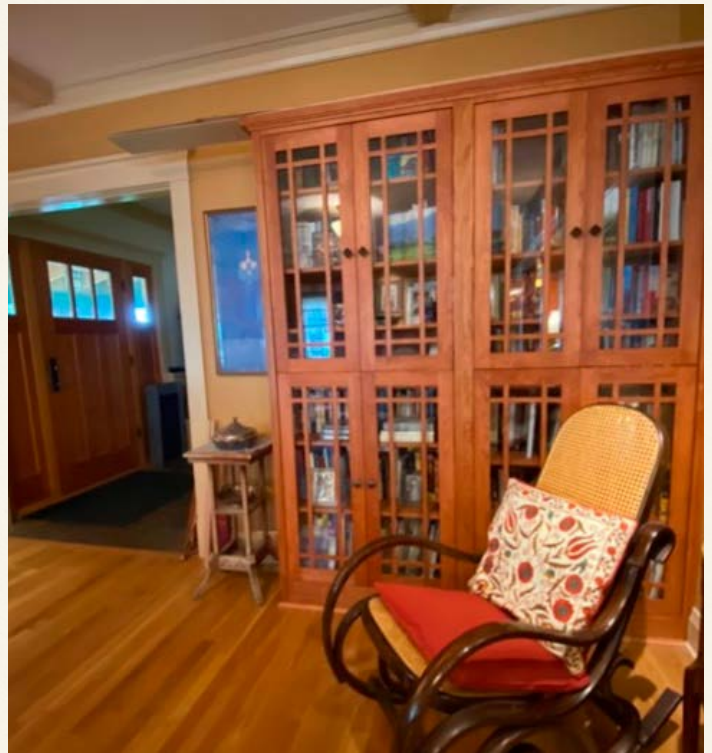
Her next option turned me off at first, but it came to make sense: she could slide a brand new mantle over the original, and build wood corbels to slide over the ugly brick ones. That way, I could tile over the brick without leaving the ugly brick corbels exposed. (My research had not found a single example of tiled-over brick corbels, and I could not imagine it looking right at all.) I feared the new mantle, coming in at about 5 inches thick, would be too large and horribly out of character with the original 4-inch fir mantle. And the wood-wrapped corbels would be 10 inches wide and 9 inches tall, protruding over 6 inches at the deepest point, to cover the originals. Fortunately the new "someday" tile I had my eye on, a Tile Restoration Center Batchelder reproduction at 5/8-inch thick, would bring the fireplace brick forward to meet and visually absorb some of the wood corbels and mantel. (Though the Motawi is also 5/8-inch, the look doesn't jibe with TRC, so it will go to another project.) The California Batchelder tile seemed appropriate for my Denver home, and a neighborhood house tour proved it: a nearby home of 1930s vintage has fireplace tile that looks similar to Batchelder, but is likely made in Denver, perhaps by the former Muresque Tiles company ⁽²⁾.

At this point, I wrestled over how deep the new fireplace cabinets ought to be. Practicality was certainly a factor: my husband wanted to keep the storage space for his 460 CDs. But I wanted the cabinets to protrude less into room than the earlier ones, themselves not original features. Did I care enough about history and strict Preservation ("All Hail!") to lose the space for the CDs? Did I want to risk marital harmony? I did not, in either case.

BUILDING (cont.)

As for keeping to the original Douglas fir: Tracy could obtain it, but did I really want it? Shouldn't I go with that or oak? We wandered the lanes of Austin Hardwoods, and I fell hard for mildly-rustic cherry with its occasional tiny black pits. (Heresy, I know.) I had wanted to keep its natural color with its pink streaks, but the cherry was far too light in my rooms. Stained a warm tone of Old Masters "Cedar" and finished with a matte coat of Osmo, the cherry mimics fir but without the large grain and the orangeness. And against the trim on the archway, which we'd repainted in Sherwin Williams "Bagel" years before (remember, we bought the house already covered in white), the warmth feels cozy. I'd considered adding cherry veneer along the inside arch, fearing the clash of painted and stained woods, but decided against it. (Anybody need some 6-inch wide cherry veneer?)

I added lighted glass cabinets in the colonnade, plain windows on



the dining room side. My husband got his CD cabinets, and all 460 CDs fit into the new shallow 19-inch depth so as not to protrude into the room



BUILDING (cont.)

as did the former 24-inch pair. That change made a comfortable difference in furniture placement near the hearth. I let the sun 'tan' the cherry for several weeks before setting anything on top, so as to avoid tan marks.

Choosing columns was interesting. Tracy Gray sent a talented young cabinet maker who'd never seen a colonnade before, and he didn't feel confident making tapered columns. I hesitated on straight columns, because everywhere I found photos of colonnades, I saw only tapers. Except in the old catalog, which showed them straight. That gave me a sense of permission. And it dawned me that the columns on my porch are straight. It was decided to make the columns 7 inches in girth and about 50 inches tall including the trim

at top and bottom. Sorting through photos of trim for top and bottom was fun. My research showed fancy and simple, and in a Craftsman, "simple" ruled. (The photo below doesn't show the final fit of the column to the cabinet top.)

Where once stood a sad, chopped-down single cabinet with missing doors and a skinny post, now a full colonnade with useful and handsome cabinets presents utility and grace. Every day I pass between the columns and feel the physical sense of being embraced. Passing through a portal as an adult still carries a childhood sense of liminality. I yearned for this feeling when I dreamed of living in a magical old house. Now I feel it as I go around raising shades in the morning and lighting the fireplace at day's end.

I'm coming to feel at home in my wonderful old bungalow.



Footnotes

1—Gwen Jones' lovely fireplace was featured in the 2022 Annual Special issue of *Arts & Crafts Homes and the Revival*. She had successfully stained her ugly brick a demure teal blue.

2—The book *American Art Tile: 1876-1941*, a Rizzoli coffee-table beauty written in 1998 by tile collector and photographer Norman Karlson, featured Muresque Tiles, a company first started in Oakland, California by Scottish-born William Muir and Vesta Powellson of Modesto, California by way of Oklahoma. "Muresque Tile (without the 's') reappears in Denver, Colorado, listed in the 1936 city directory at 224 West 10th Street, with David Heany as manager. F.J. Goldsmith became manager in 1937, and that same year the company reproduced its 1930 tile catalog. In 1939 the factory moved to 3220 Mariposa Street. Some residents of the neighborhood recall that there were three or four employees who molded, fired, sanded, and lacquered the tiles. Muresque Tile was last listed in the 1942 Denver directory, with Emily Goldsmith as manager. In 1952, Highway 25 was constructed over the site of the 3220 Mariposa Street factory."

3—Tracy Gray, owner of WoodWorks Studio, Denver, Colorado. www.woodworksstudio.com



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www.coloarts-crafts.org

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Annual membership fees are below.

You can make your membership payment through PayPal to:
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Checks can also be made out to the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society and mailed to: Beth Bradford at 413 S. Humboldt St.. Denver, CO 80209.

Please contact our membership chair, Helene Arendt at CACSmembership@gmail.com with any questions.

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