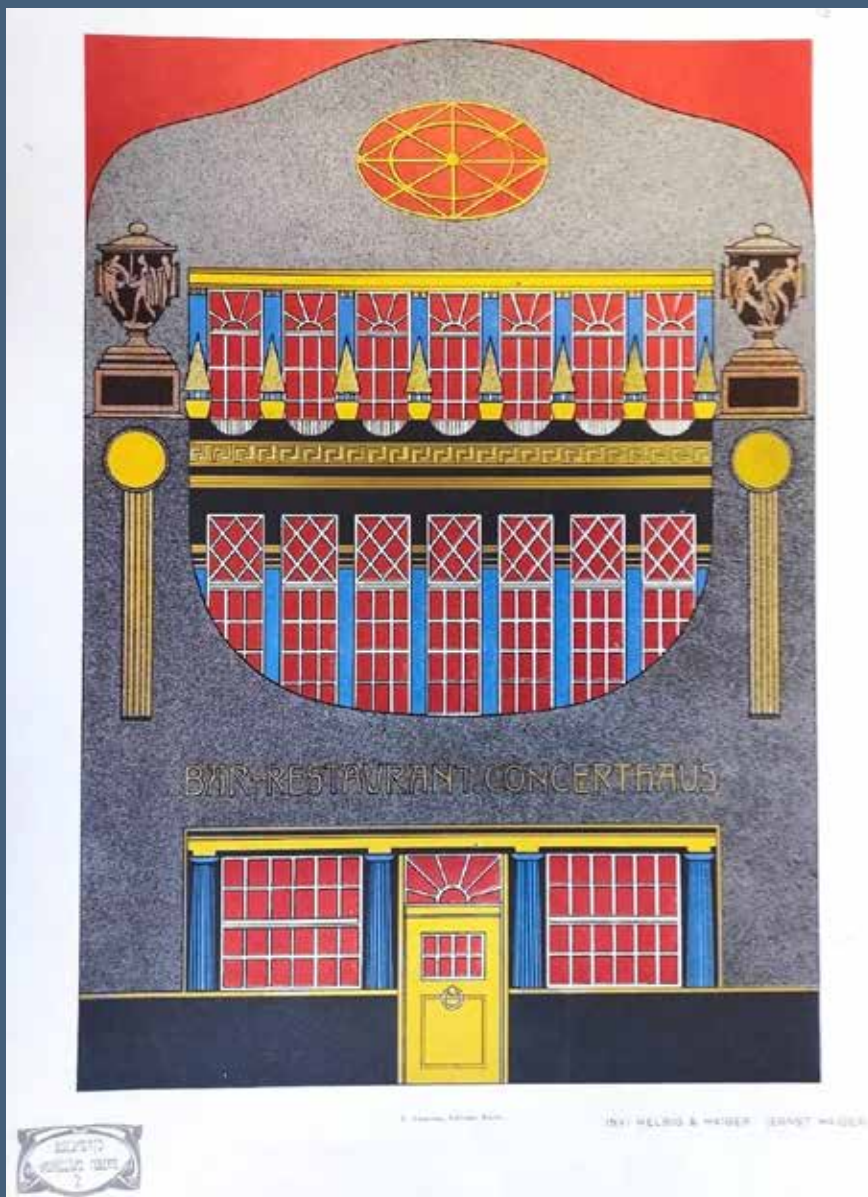


Preservation Matters

Newsletter of the Preservation and Conservation Association

To foster & encourage preservation & conservation, focusing on the built environment of Champaign County & East Central Illinois



Summer 2024 Newsletter

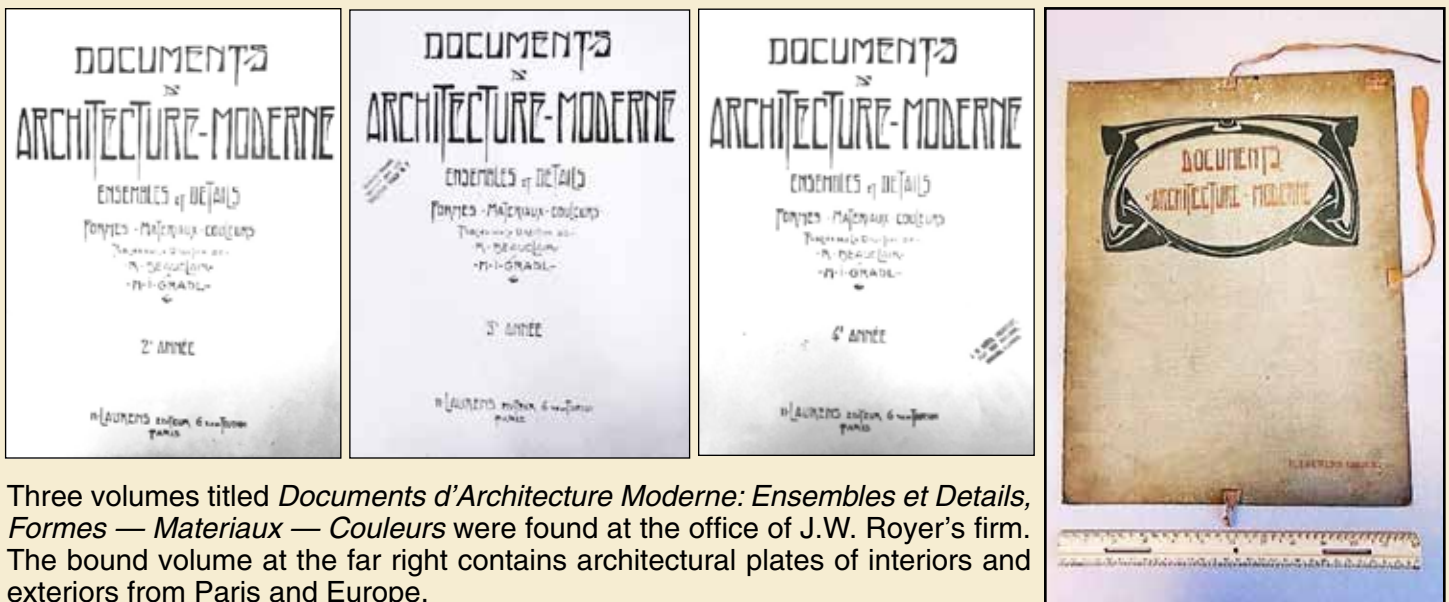


INSIDE:

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architect P. 2

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the Champaign Elks
Auditorium.....P.13

Year 2, plate 13. Helbig & Haiger, Munich.
"Facade of a concert house cafe" (with
gold overprinting).



Three volumes titled *Documents d'Architecture Moderne: Ensembles et Details, Formes — Materiaux — Couleurs* were found at the office of J.W. Royer's firm. The bound volume at the far right contains architectural plates of interiors and exteriors from Paris and Europe.

Recently discovered relics from the offices of Joseph W. Royer, Urbana's architect

By Brian Adams

Despite a career that spanned nearly 60 years, little physical evidence of Joseph Royer's architectural practice in Urbana remains. Some plans/blueprints have survived — found or retained by homeowners — while some churches, municipal locations, and architectural firms have retained plans of surviving buildings as both historical documents and as guides for necessary renovations. Some plans have been found fortuitously during architectural salvage projects, some of which have been donated for conservation and curation to the University of Illinois archives.

A range of other items — such as letterhead, checks, correspondence, and the like — exists, but these items are dispersed among local libraries

and archives and are not easy to track down for study. Joseph and Adelaide Royer left no direct heirs when they passed away in 1954, which may, in part, explain the dispersed paucity of “Royer memorabilia.”

Recently, fascinating relics from Royer's offices have turned up. A short time ago the author was put in contact with Brian Duffield, former president of the Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County and owner of the Bribe Antique Emporium in St. Joseph. While “cleaning house” in preparation for the closure of his shop, Brian has been discounting his stock and giving away items of possible historic value to interested parties. Among the items in his large inventory are plates, drawings, and photographs from Royer's office in Urbana,

including a collection of beautiful color plates of buildings and building interiors acquired along with other paper documents.

The items were never sold, and Brian noticed something about them he thought might interest the author: Nearly every document is stamped in purple ink with the following:

J.W. ROYER,
ARCHITECT, FLAT IRON
BUILDING (sic),
URBANA, ILLINOIS
or
J.W. ROYER,
ARCHITECT, FLAT IRON
BUILDING, URBANA,
ILLINOIS.

Drawings and photographs

The drawings and photographs consist mainly of pages

from architectural publications. These are as follows:

1. New Haven Savings Bank, New Haven, Conn. (*The Brickbuilder*, July 1902).

2. Bank Building, Leominster, Mass. (*The American Architect and Building News*, Regular Edition, Nov. 11, 1905).

3. Plan and Longitudinal Section: North River Savings Bank, 31 West 34th St., New York, N.Y. (*The American Architect*, Feb. 17, 1906).

4. Waltham Savings Bank, Waltham, Mass. (*The American Architect and Building News*, Regular Edition, Dec. 28, 1907, two pages).

5. First National Bank Building, Lynchburg, Va. (*The American Architect*, Nov. 3, 1909).

6. Exchange Bank Building, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Sherman Building, Watertown, N.Y. (*The Western Architect*, Oct. 1910; this does not bear Royer's stamp).

7. Private House, Paris, France. Detail. (*Modern French Architecture*, Plate XVI; no date; this does not bear Royer's stamp).

With the exception of Nos. 6 and 7, all of these have been stamped "56" in the upper right corner in purple ink.

Plates

The color plates are actually from three annual ("2 Année," "3 Année," and "4 Année") volumes published in Paris and edited by H. Laurens. The volumes are titled *Documents d'Architecture Moderne: Ensembles et Détails, Formes — Matériaux — Couleurs*, and each also includes the sequential year of the volume (i.e., 2e Année, 3e Année, and 4e Année) (*Documents of Modern Architecture: Ensembles and Détails, Shapes — Materials — Colors*. Year 2, 3, 4). The text is in French. Two sets of original fabric-covered cardboard covers with silk ties are included in the collec-

tion. Apparently the front and back covers were bound to a spine with gilt lettering, but these have not survived. It is likely the spine was intentionally removed to reorganize the plates.

In the upper right-hand corner of the front covers a small label has been adhered. Written on the label of one cover is "Res Interior," while the other reads "Res Exterior." It appears Royer had separated the plates depicting exterior views of structures from those depicting interiors. One set of covers is not included in the collection.

The table of contents for each collection lists a total of 96 plates for each volume. None of the collections from Duffield is complete, but fortunately the University of Illinois Library at Urbana-Champaign has copies of some of the plates that can be used to fill in the missing pages. The contents list a range images from architects/firms in Britain and Continental Europe (France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Finland).

Discussion

The plates in the volumes provide examples of interior and exterior architecture produced during the Art Nouveau Movement (or Style Moderne, as it was known in France) that flowered between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The exact publication dates of the three collections are not recorded, but some of the plates in Years 3 and 4 do have dates. Both years have a mix of plates dating primarily to 1903, with some from 1904 and 1905. One plate (#4) in Year 4 may be dated 1909, but it is difficult to read.

Based on this information, publication of the volumes likely occurred sometime in the first decade of the 20th century. The plates represent

the works of multiple architects/firms from a range of countries and illustrate the varied geographical interpretations of the movement. Building types represented include residences, train stations, post offices, hotels, churches, and monuments.

Inspired by natural forms such as plants and flowers, the Art Nouveau Movement originated in Brussels in the 1890s, later spreading to Paris and elsewhere in Europe. The Arts and Crafts Movement and William Ruskin influenced the style in Britain, which eventually spread to the United States.

By 1914, the style had waned, and Art Deco would supplant it in popularity. Well-known Art Nouveau artists included Louis Comfort Tiffany.

According to Duncan:

Art Nouveau was a movement, not a style, one that evolved differently in different countries in the late 19th century, with the single purpose of defeating the established order within the applied and fine arts. (Duncan 1994, p. 7)

Though born from the same social and cultural concepts that launched the Art Nouveau Movement (i.e., "...[r]esistance to the Victorian cult of revivalism...", "...protest against the traditional and the commonplace...", and "...Victorian preoccupation with a cluttered eclecticism — its horror vacui and outmoded taste..." [Duncan 1994, p. 7-8]), the Arts and Crafts Movement is considered a precursor to Art Nouveau (Champigneulle 1976, p. 43; Clark and Kaplan 1987, p. 108). According to Benton (1979, p. 15):

From a theoretical point of view, Art Nouveau was simply an offshoot of the British Arts and Crafts

Movement, stiffened by a range of rationalist writing such as that of Viollet-le-Duc. And many of the formal devices of Art Nouveau derive from the same search for new forms in nature which prompted the British designers. But in the field of architecture, British architects stopped short of anything truly comparable to what took place in Brussels, Nancy or Paris. (Benton 1979, p. 15)

Rooted in the ideas of Englishmen William Morris and John Ruskin, the Arts and Crafts Movement was a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and mass-produced products, because of which "...mankind had lost its soul and become engulfed in a morass of inexpensive mass-production that deadened its sensibilities, while cheapening life itself (Duncan 1994, p. 10). According to Duncan (ibid., p. 8):

The average 19th-century interior was solemn and tedious, with little air and less light. Every conceivable surface and space was used to create the dissonant and fusty mix of furniture, bric-à-brac, wall hangings that came to characterize home-ownership in the Victorian age.

Ruskin and Morris idolized the Middle Ages and rejected industrial society. They viewed the Middle Ages as a golden age of craftsmanship. Influenced by Owen Jones, Morris sought organic inspiration from plant forms for ornamentation (Champigneulle 1976, p. 44). The British, and later American, Arts and Crafts Movement would blaze a different path from those of the myriad Continental styles that would become known by the umbrella term of "Art Nouveau," but all

share a common root.

Royer occupied the Flat Iron Building from 1906 until 1935, so he could have secured copies of the *Documents d'Architecture Moderne* early in his career shortly after they were published when the Art Nouveau Movement was spreading rapidly. Royer's staff would have used these plates as inspiration for building exterior and interior designs. Like many American architects of the time, Royer was inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement — a precursor to the Art Nouveau Movement — and the images undoubtedly were consulted regularly for ideas and for the purpose of sparking creativity.

The discovery of these relics provides insight into the everyday activities of Royer's early 20th century architectural firm. Though the author is unaware of any buildings designed in the "pure" Art Nouveau style by Royer's firm, it is likely the plates provided inspiration for some of their designs.

For example, Plate 40 from 4 Année depicts ticket counters for the competition for the Karlsruhe railway station by the firm of Curjel & Moser, Karlsruhe. Visible in this plate are high, domed coffered ceilings that resemble Royer's entrance to the Samuel T. Busey Memorial/Urbana Free Library (1918).

Royer is known for his use of historical revival styles (Adams 2011), including many examples of styles inspired by the British Arts and Crafts Movement (e.g., Tudor Revival, Spanish Mission). Some plates clearly are inspired by medieval examples — especially those by architects representing Great Britain (e.g., Wyburd [London], Wood [Manchester], Hardwick [Kington-upon-Thames], Buckland & Farmer [Birmingham], Dawber [London], and Voysey [London]); as well as Germany

(e.g., Halmhuber [Stuttgart], Hennings [Stuttgart]), which was likewise influenced by the British movement (Latham 1979).

Among Royer's building designs representative of the Arts and Crafts Movement are the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel, the Chester House (Champaign), the Royer Residence (Urbana), the Schneider House (Arcola), the Urbana Country Club, the Anabel Huling Memorial (Rantoul), the M.M. Busey House/Alpha Xi Delta Sorority House (Urbana), and the Lincoln Lodge Motel (Urbana).

It is likely that careful examination of the plates in these volumes will reveal more architectural elements and details incorporated by Royer into some of his many designs and shed additional light on his decades-long architectural career.

The author wishes to thank Brian Duffield for passing along these historic documents.

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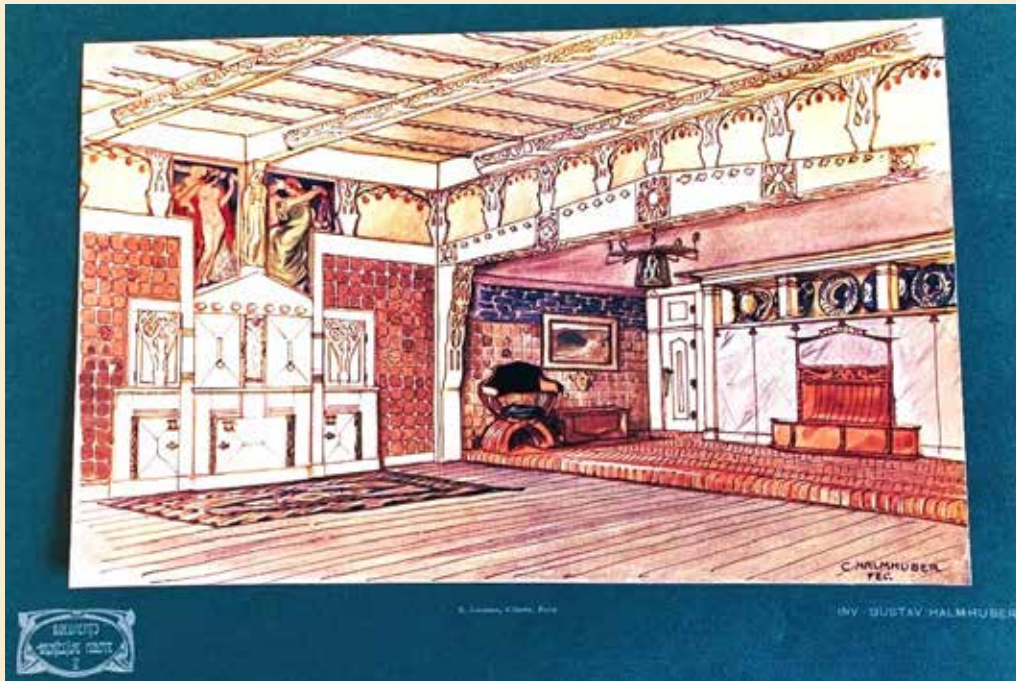
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Plates from *Documents d'Architecture Moderne*



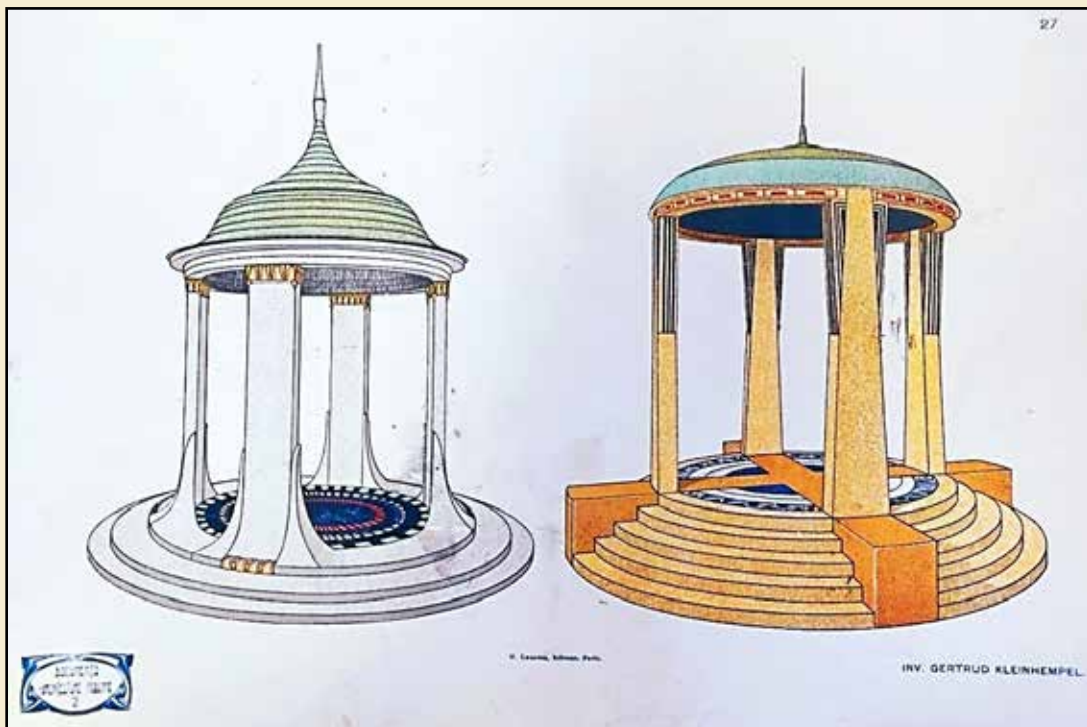
Year 2, Plate 3. Gustave Halmhuber, Stuttgart. "Hall."



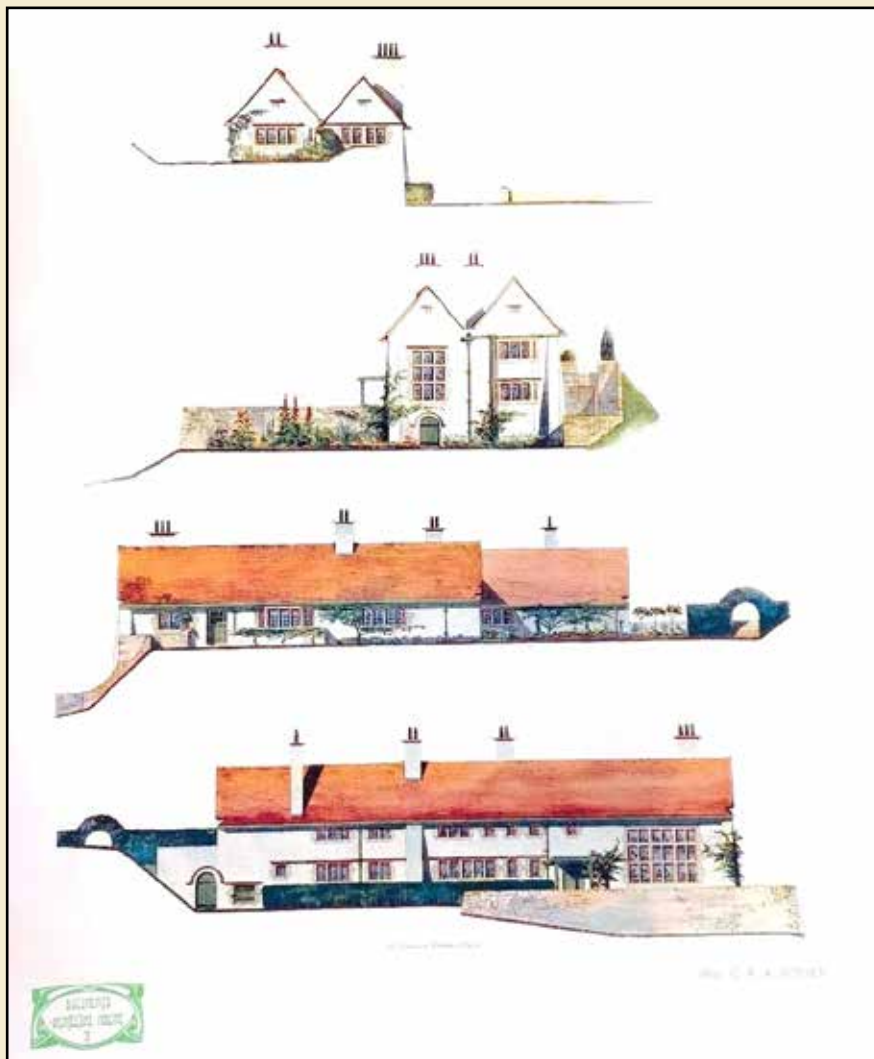
Year 2, Plate 6. A. Laverrière, Paris. "Country house built of stone and slate."



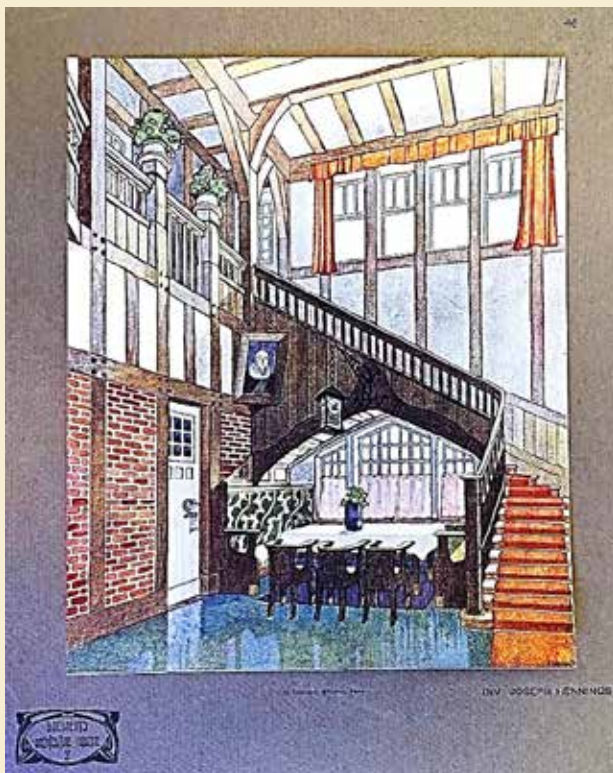
Year 2, Plate 18. E. Van Averbek, Antwerp. "Country House for artists." (plans on reverse)



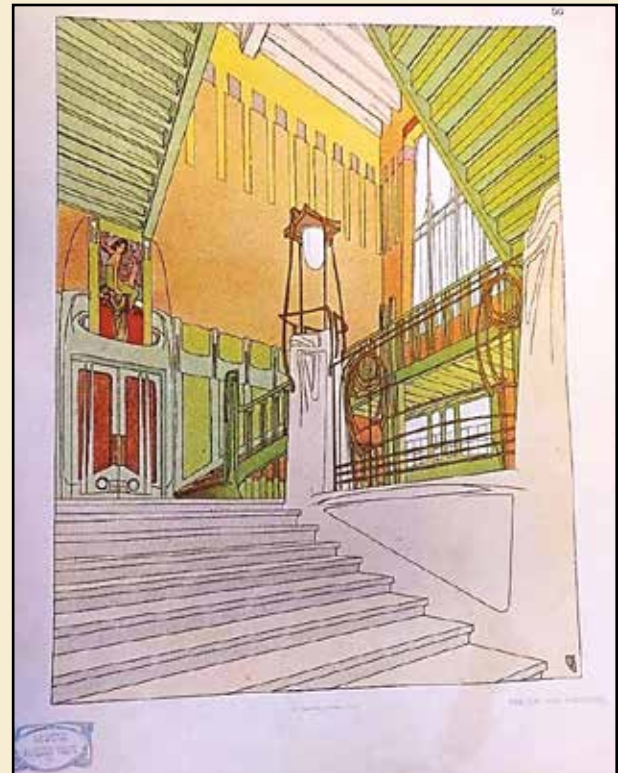
Year 2, Plate 27. Gertrude Kleinhempel, Dresden. "Belvederes/gazebos: Reinforced cement with copper dome and mosaics, left; stained stone with copper dome and parquet floor, right."



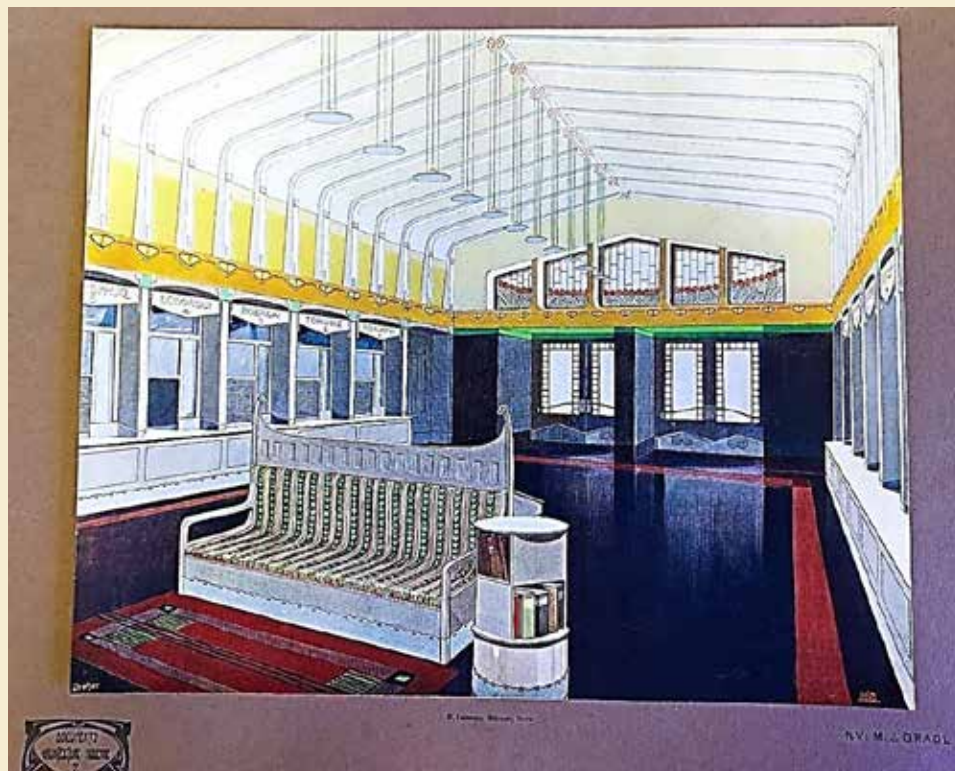
Year 2, Plate 41.
C.F.A. Voysey,
London. "Country
house built of stone
and brick." (plans
on reverse)



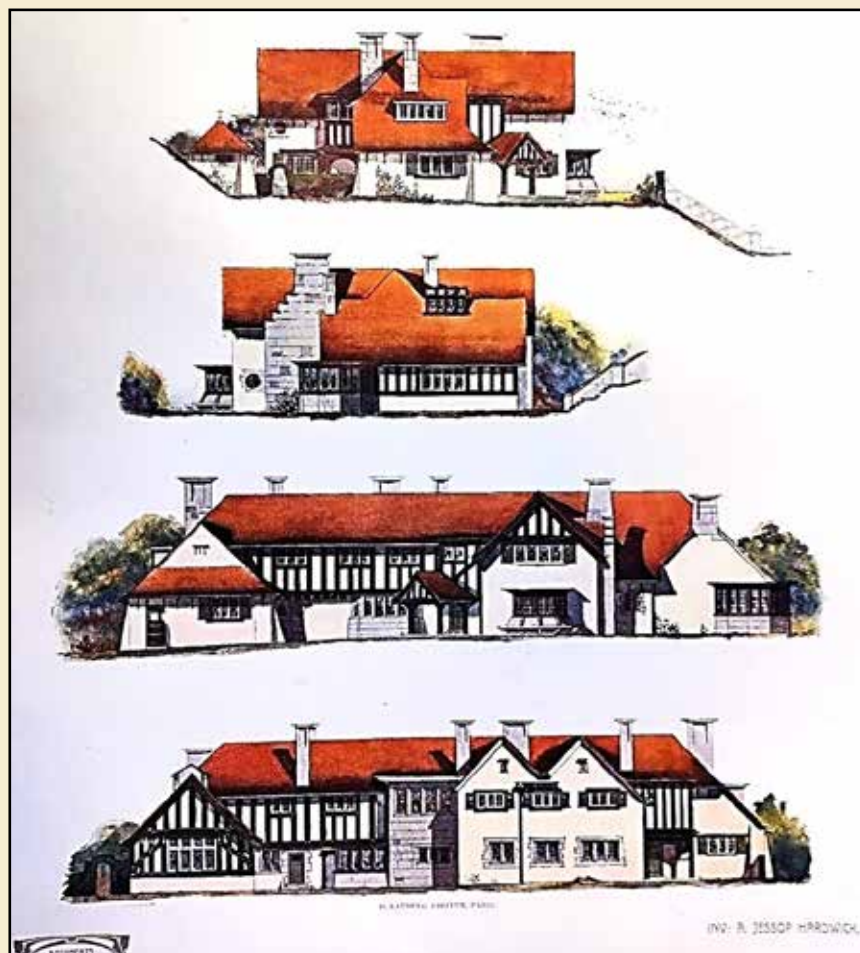
Year 2, Plate 46. Joseph Hennings, Stuttgart.
"Hall for a country house."



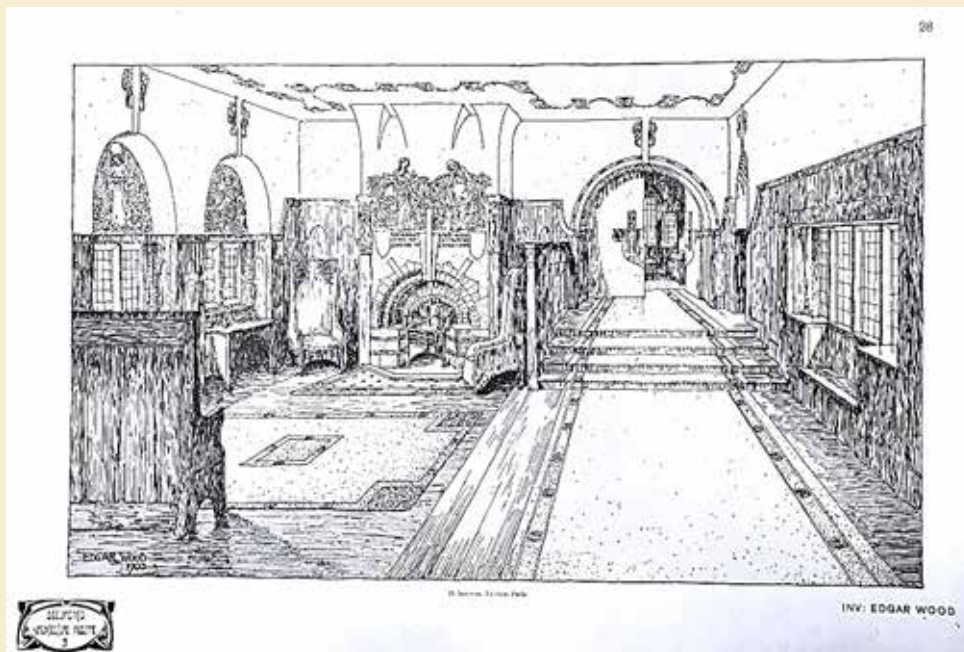
Year 2, Plate 50. E. Van Averbek, Antwerp.
"Stairwell of a private hotel."



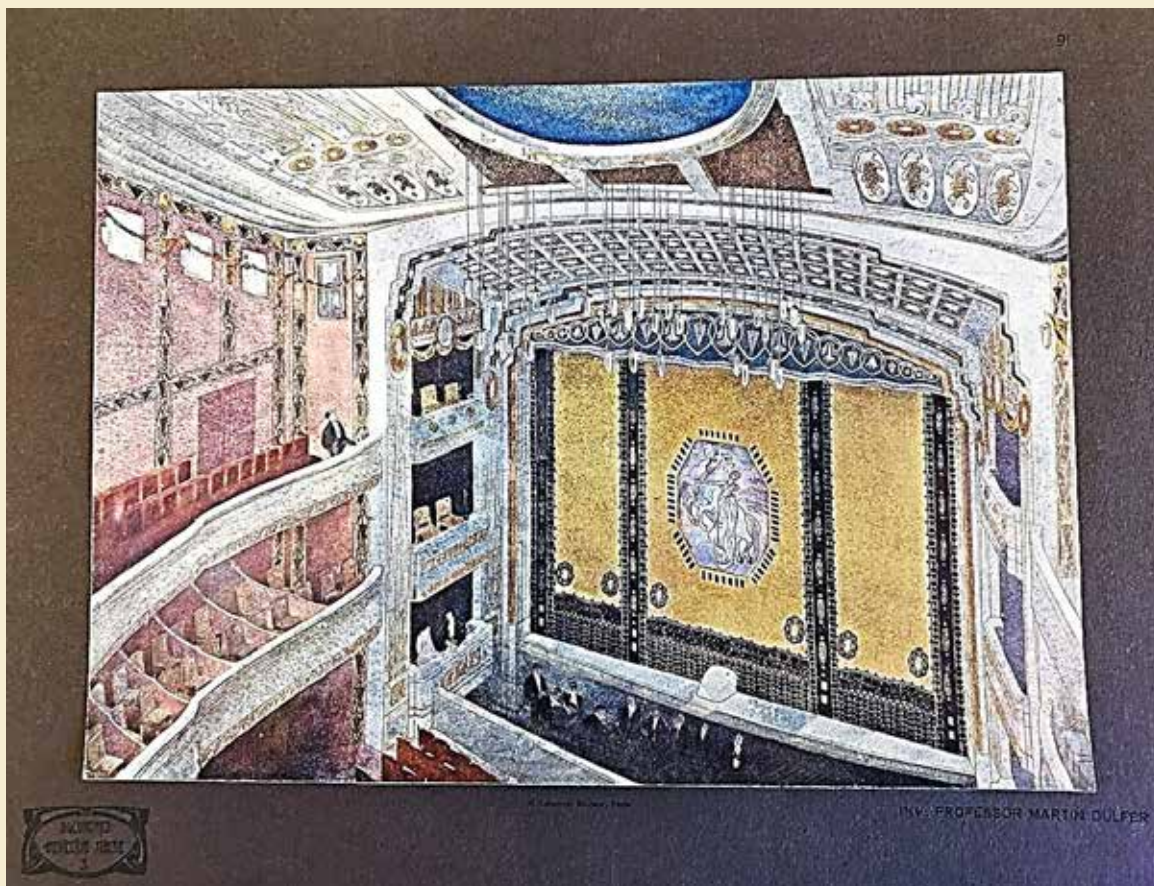
Year 2, Plate 53. M.J. Gradl, Stuttgart. "Bank lobby."



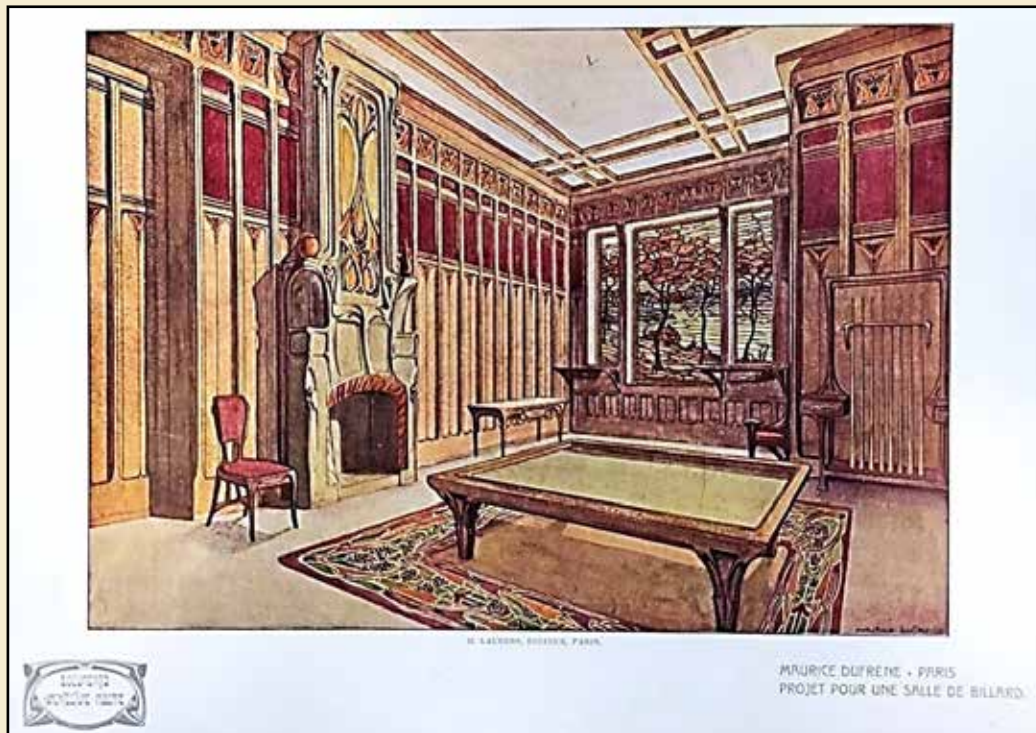
Year 3, Plate 6. A. Jessop Hardwick, Kingston-upon-Thames. "Country house in Wolves Newton, Monmouthshire, England." (plans on reverse)



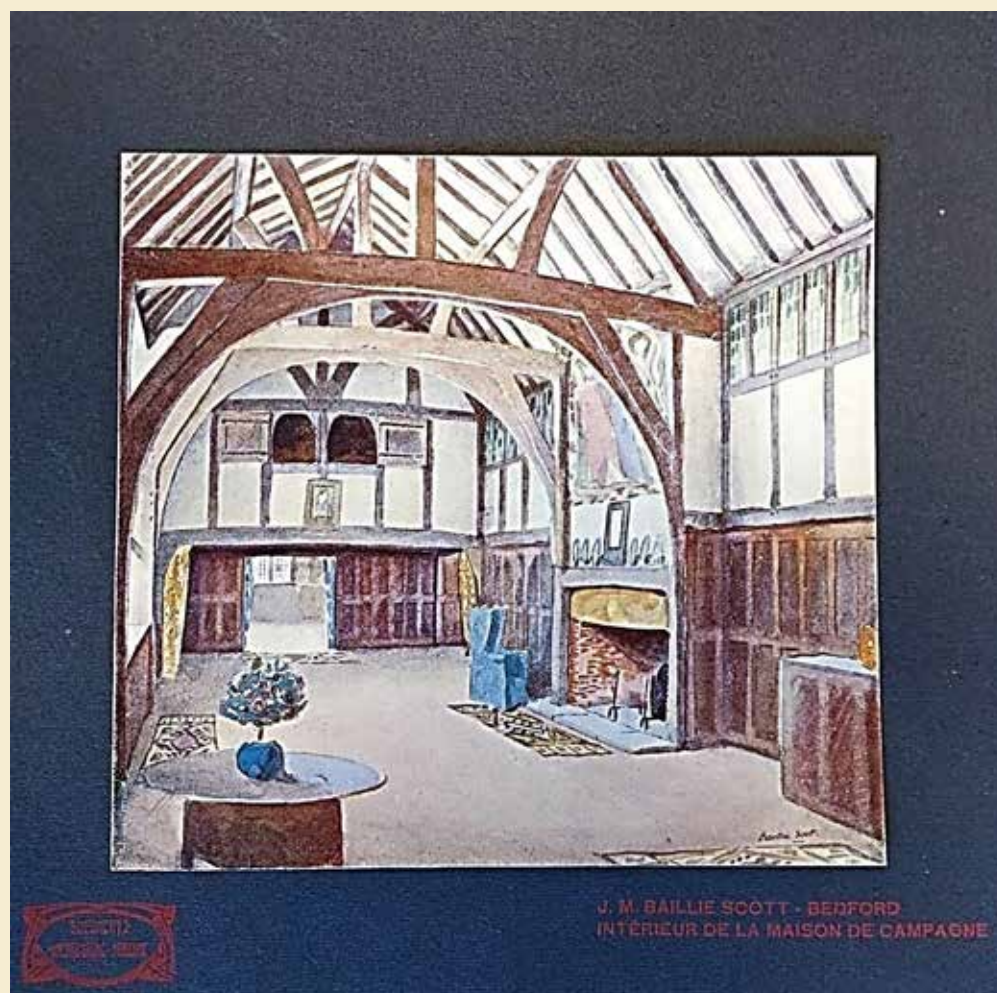
Year 3, Plate 28. Edgar Wood, Manchester. "The execution of this interior would be in matt ash wood embellished with some marquetry and engraved ornaments."



Year 3, Plate 91. Martin Dülfer, Munich. "New theater, Dortmund."



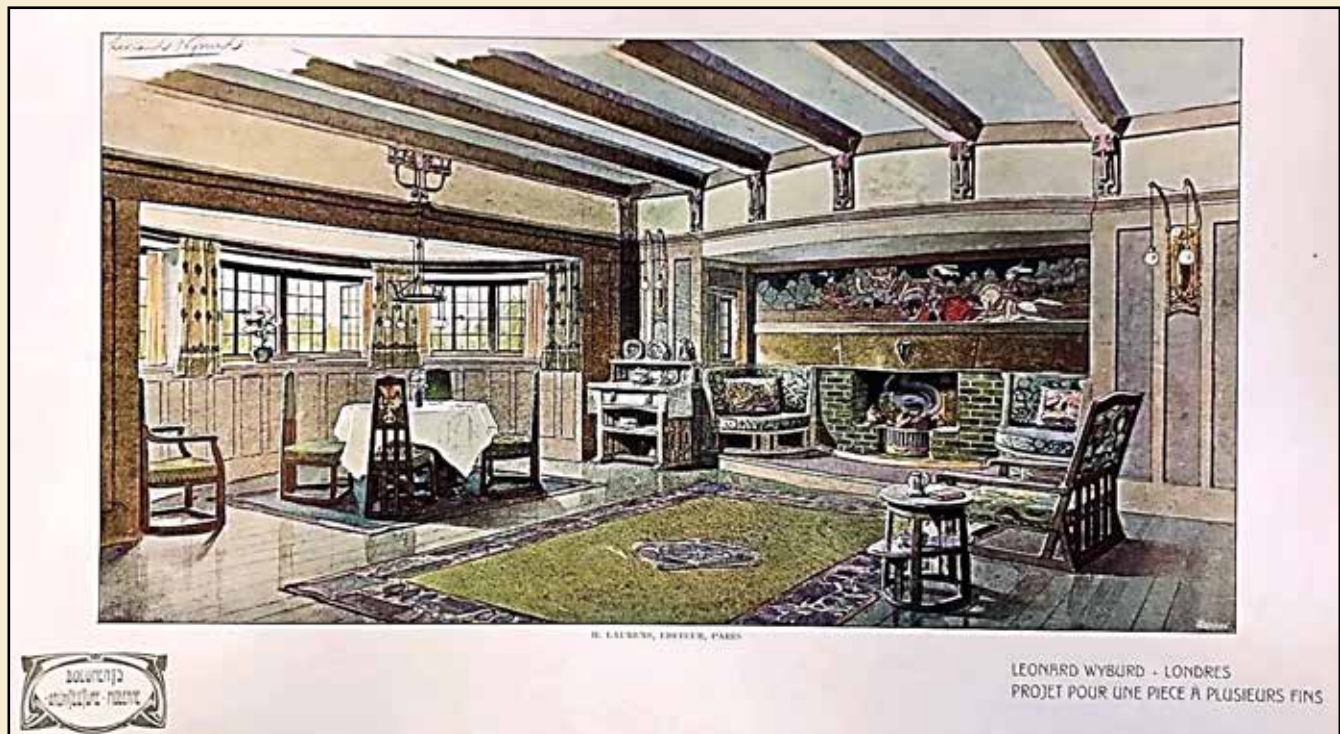
Year 4, Plate 6. Maurice Dufrene, Paris. "Billiard Hall."



Year 4, Plate 24. J.M. Baille Scott, Bedford. "Hall in a country house."



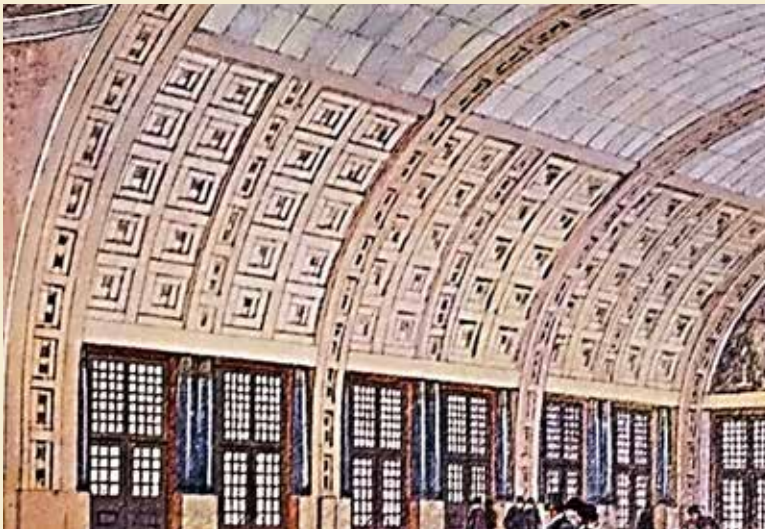
Year 4, Plate 40. Curjel & Moser, Karlsruhe. "Competition for the railway station at Karlsruhe. Ticket counters."



Year 4, Plate 55. Leonard Wyburd, London. "Multi-purpose room."



Year 4, Plate 77. Edgar Wood, Manchester. "Concept for an attic."



Detail from Year 4, Plate 40. Curjel & Moser, Karlsruhe. "Competition for the railway station at Karlsruhe. Ticket counters."



Detail. East entrance to the Samuel T. Busey Memorial/Urbana Free Library (1918), which Joseph W. Royer designed. Was he inspired by the Karlsruhe station drawing, at left?

Royer, Ramey and the Champaign Elks Auditorium

By Brian Adams

Urbana architect Joseph William Royer was a member of the Urbana Elks Lodge No. 991, so it's no wonder he was hired to design the new auditorium for the Champaign Lodge No. 398 in 1902.

The Elks have engaged J.W. Royer of Urbana to draw up plans for their new club house and to have charge of its construction. The new building committee is composed of C.H. Baddeley, J.W. Stipes and C.B. Hatch. (Champaign Daily News, March 10, 1902; Champaign County News, March 12, 1902)

The new building was to be located on West Hill Street in Champaign, but first an existing house on the proposed site had to be removed from the desired lot.

TAKING A JOURNEY

The main portion of the old Shattuck residence at 108 West Hill Street was moved Monday from the lot on which it stood, and it is now on the journey to its new location on South Randolph Street. The remaining portion of the structure will also be moved within a few days, and then work can begin on the new Elks clubhouse as soon as the contract is let. (Champaign Daily News, March 25, 1902)

The house removed from the lot was the former residence of Samuel W. Shattuck, a professor of mathematics at the Uni-

versity of Illinois. He sold the house to Romeo Roberts, who had it moved and renovated at 202 W. Green St. (*Champaign Daily News*, April 24, 1902).

By May 1902, the board of directors of the Elks Club began reviewing bids from contractors to construct the new auditorium. However, after reviewing the initial round of bids the committee rejected them all as too high (*Champaign County News*, May 3, 1902).

Eventually the job was awarded to Valentine Jobst and Sons Construction Company of Peoria, who staked the site and began excavation work on Saturday, June 21, 1902 (*Champaign County News*, June 25, 1902). The building cost \$20,000 to construct. By July 1902, foundation work on the building had begun (*Champaign Daily News*, July 8, 1902).

On Sept. 27, 1902, the *Champaign County News* announced the Twin City Social Dancing club would open the new auditorium with a "grand ball" on Nov. 5. The ball would be held on Monday, Nov. 10, 1902, when the building was opened, though it was not entirely finished (*Champaign Daily News*, Nov. 10, 1902; *Champaign County News*, Nov. 12, 1902).

While the club had moved into the new building by Dec. 3, 1902, the official opening wouldn't occur until Feb. 1903 (*Champaign County News*, Dec. 3, 1902; *Champaign Daily News*, Feb. 26, 1903).

The new building is of brick construction. The south-facing façade is dominated by a

triangular pediment with a central ocular window flanked by decorative garlands and supported by paired Ionic columns. This is reminiscent of Royer's Neoclassical residence for Gus and Alice Freeman on West Elm Street in Urbana, also built in 1902/03 (Adams 2011).

The façade also features a second floor balcony. The east elevation contains a one-story porch. There was a hall on the first floor and lodge rooms on the second floor.

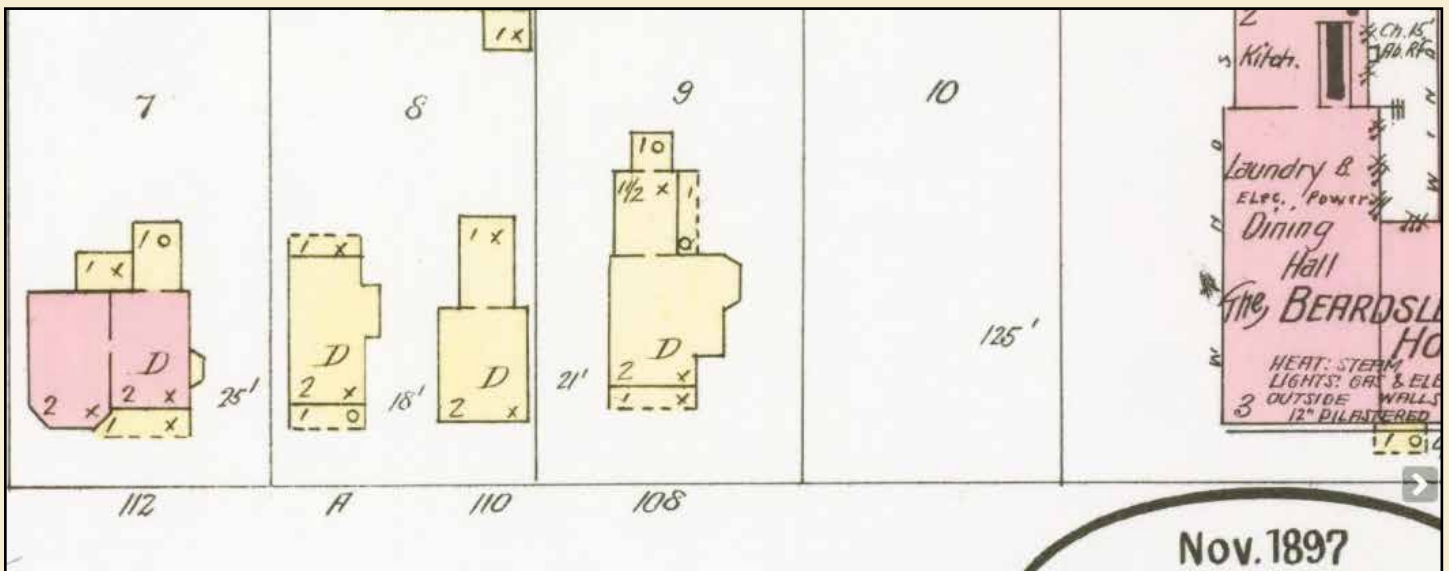
The formal opening of the new auditorium was big event in the city:

*ELKS' FORMAL OPENING
Fully Four Hundred Guests
Present at Auditorium
Wednesday Evening*

The formal opening of the Elks' auditorium took place Wednesday evening when Champaign's lodge of the "Best People on Earth" were "at home" to fully 400 guests.

The beauty of the spacious and elaborately furnished club rooms was greatly enhanced by palms and flowers artistically arranged, while the effect of the whole was heightened by the presence of the flower of Champaign's youth and beauty.

From the parlor emanated strains from an orchestra, while another in the ball room contributed the musical numbers for the dance program. Ices and cakes were served throughout the evening. Carriages were



Section from the 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the Shattuck house at 108 W. Hill St. It is a two-story frame dwelling with a front porch and outbuilding on the north side of the lot.

ordered at 12 ... The affair was one of the social events of the season.... (Champaign Daily News, February 26, 1903)

In addition to the Elks, the building was to be occupied by soldiers of Company M, who would relocate after five years in the post office building (Champaign Daily News, Jan. 7, 1903). The building's basement was to become an armory with lockers and "every convenience." In addition:

Drill will be held every Monday evening in the spacious ball room, the floor of which will be covered with padded canvas, while the butts of guns will be fitted with rubber caps, which will obviate any possible damage to the floor's polished surface.

George Erwin Ramey and the renovation of 1919-20

About two decades after Royer's building opened, the Elks were ready to renovate and expand their Champaign headquarters (Champaign Daily News, Sept. 26, 1919a, b). Expected to cost \$100,000, the plans and specifications were prepared by George Ra-



View of Royer's new Champaign Elks Auditorium, built 1902-03. The view is to the northwest. (Baker and Miller 1993, p. 36).

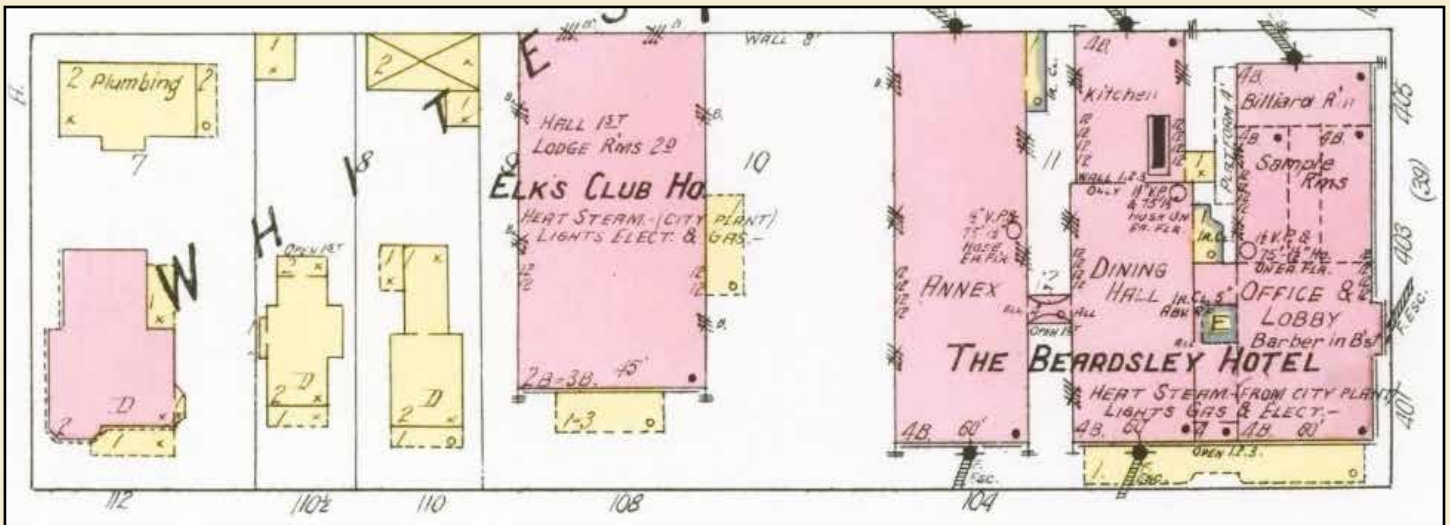
me's architectural office:

Plans and specifications for the Elk hall are rapidly being completed by the Ramey Architect office. They will be in the hands of the contractors next week. (Champaign Daily News, Sept. 26, 1919b)

The present building will be used as far as possible and an entire new front coming out to Hill Street will be constructed. This will be 70 feet wide, running east and west

the width of the lot. It will be three stories and the present building will be made the same height. The plans call for reenforced concrete construction and the building when completed will be 70x130 feet. (Champaign Daily News, Sept. 26, 1919a)

George E. Ramey was born in 1889 in Paxton, Ill. (Champaign News Gazette 1961). His family moved to Urbana-Champaign in 1900, and he eventually would study at the University



Section from the 1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the plan of the completed Elks Club building.



View of the building's façade, undated photo.

of Illinois, graduating in 1912 with a degree in architecture.

Ramey began his career in Chicago with the firm Zimmerman and Saxe, later establishing his own firm in Champaign. According to city directories, Ramey worked as a draftsman

for the Champaign architectural firm of Spencer & Temple in 1914, and by 1916 he is listed as an architect with offices in the Robeson Building, downtown Champaign.

During World War I, Ramey served in the Army, return-

ing to his architectural practice when back in Champaign around 1919. His firm continued to have office space in the Robeson Building until about 1940. Afterwards, city directories place his firm at various locations in Champaign.

During the war, Ramey served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Engineer Corps and served as a reserve officer for 20 years. In 1942 he was assigned to General Eisenhower's staff at Supreme Allied Command in London as the transportation officer, supervising work on English harbor facilities in preparation for the influx of U.S. troops and equipment. By the end of the war, Ramey was a Colonel.

Among Ramey's significant local architectural projects were Robeson's Department Store, the Champaign City Building, Champaign Central High School, numerous University of Illinois fraternity and sorority houses, and a new wing at Burnham City Hospital (Thompson 2003). Ramey was also the supervising architect for Champaign's Virginia Theater (1921).

By the end of May 1920, carpentry work was almost finished on the third floor, plasterers were finishing up the second floor, and it was anticipated that the building

would be finished and ready for occupancy within 60 days (*Urbana Daily Courier*, May 27, 1920). However, progress was delayed for one month while awaiting the arrival of workers to install the terrazzo floors (*Urbana Daily Courier*, Sept. 9, 1920).

The first meeting in the newly remodeled building was attended by a crowd of 200 on Oct. 27, 1920 (*Urbana Daily Courier*, Oct. 28, 1920). However, it was hardly a formal event:

Tonight an "overall" party has been planned, when every Elk reporting is expected to wear overalls and bring a good broom ... The principal object of the party is to clean up the new quarters, which have been occupied by carpenters, plasterers, painters and other craftsmen for several months. (Urbana Daily Courier, Oct. 28, 1920)

While Royer chose to design the original building in the Neoclassical style in 1902, Ramey's 1920 renovation is an example of the Tudor Revival style that was popular at the time. The remodeled structure featured a stucco and half-timbered façade, a recessed central entry, a side-gabled roof with slate shingles, windows with decorative spandrels, and attic gable roof dormers (Lambert 1984).

In 1965 a one-story addition of cement block construction was added to the west side of the building. This addition included an open bracketed eave that extended east across the main façade's west windows. In June 1997, the slate roof was replaced with asphalt shingles.

The Champaign Elks Lodge on West Hill Street was in use until the 1980s, when the organization merged with the Urbana Lodge, and the combined lodges moved to the current building in Savoy. It next



The building prior to recent renovations. The view is to the northeast.

housed the Prairie Center for Substance Abuse/Rosecrance Addiction Center until 2018.

In February 2020, the building was the recipient of a PACA Heritage Award (Oehlschlaeger-Garvey 2020). Brian Kesler of Architectural Expressions was given the award for his respectful renovation and expansion of the historic building as part of its transformation into a beautiful "neo-Tudor" apartment building. The Tudor appearance of Ramey's original façade has been preserved and extended to the west, increasing the one-story 1965 addition to three stories.

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1902c. New Elks' Auditorium. Building Opened With a Ball Monday Night. Nov. 12, 1902.

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1903b. Elks' Formal Opening. Fully Four Hundred Guests Present at Auditorium Wednesday Evening. Feb. 26, 1903.

1919a. Elk Building to Be Started Soon. Sept. 26, 1919, p. 1.

1919b. "Champaign." Sept. 26, 1919, p. 8.

Champaign News Gazette. 1961. George Ramey, 71, Architect, Dies Sunday. Aug. 7, 1961.

Lambert, Michael A. 1984. Preservation and Conservation Association Historic Property Inventory form for the Champaign Elks Club,



Above and below, the building following recent renovations. Below is the entrance, façade



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1920b. Work on Elks' Home Is In Progress Again. Sept. 9, 1920.

1920c. Elks Will Open New Quarters Wednesday Night. *Urbana Daily Courier*. Oct. 26, 1920, p. 5.

1920d. Champaign Elks in New Home. Oct. 28, 1920, p. 1.

PRESERVATION MATTERS

The newsletter of the



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44 E. Washington St.
Champaign, IL 61820

Summer 2024

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Hours: Tuesday — Friday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Telephone: 217-359-PACA (7222)

Web: <http://www.pacacc.org>

Email: pacaexdir@gmail.com



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

44 E. Washington St., Champaign, IL 61820

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

☐ New ☐ Renewal

NAME: _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

ADDRESS: _____

☐ Adult \$25

☐ Student \$15

☐ Senior Citizen \$15

☐ Family \$40

PHONE: _____

☐ Corporate

E-MAIL: _____

☐ Bronze \$250

☐ Silver \$500

☐ Gold \$1000

☐ Platinum \$2000

☐ I wish to make an additional
contribution: \$ _____

PACA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of our natural and built
environment. Offices are located at our salvage warehouse:

44 E. Washington St., Champaign, IL 61820

217-359-7222 * www.pacacc.org