

Ralph S. Baker House
1226 Ashland Avenue
Wilmette
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1097

HABS
ILL,
16-WILM,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
801 - 19th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.

RALPH S. BAKER HOUSE

HABS
ILL,
16-WILM,1-

Location: 1226 Ashland Avenue, Wilmette, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner: Donald F. Duncan, Jr.

Present Use: Single-family dwelling.

Statement of Significance: This single-family dwelling is an excellent example of the work of the Prairie School architect, William Drummond. It was built in 1913 in Wilmette, a suburb of Chicago.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: East 75 feet of lot 7 block 11 of section 28, township 42 north, range 13 east, Gage's addition to Wilmette:

The following is based on the chain of title recorded in book 250, page 249 in the Cook County Recorder's Office:

The property was purchased by Ralph S. Baker from Antionette Gage on March 14, 1912 (Document 4938660). The property remained in the Baker family until September 4, 1952, at which time it was sold to Selin Tideman (Document 15554784). Tideman sold the property to the present owner, Donald F. Duncan, Jr. on October 16, 1961 (Document 18317173).

2. Date of erection: 1913.
3. Architect: Guenzel and Drummond (with William Drummond responsible for the design).
4. Original plans and construction, etc.: No original drawings or prints have been located. The building is two full floors in height plus a full basement and partial third floor. In plan the building approximates a cross.
5. Alterations and additions: There have been very few alterations and no additions to the structure. See the Architectural Information for the minor alterations which have been made.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

No information concerning the original owner has been located. The present owner comes from a family which has shown a preference for Prairie School Architecture. Mrs. Duncan is the daughter of Mrs. E. J. Mann who owns and occupies the William Drummond house in River Forest, Illinois. She is also a descendant of W. E. Martin who commissioned a house in Oak Park from Frank Lloyd Wright in 1902.

C. Bibliography:

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School. The American Spirit in Midwestern Residential Architecture - 1893-1916. Evanston, Ill.: unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Art, Northwestern University, 1957.

Condit, Carl W. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964. pp. 208-210.

"Guenzel & Drummond," The Prairie School Review. Vol. I, No. 2 (Second Quarter, 1964).

Entire issue devoted to the work of the firm with photographs of the Baker house on page 18.

Peisch, Mark. The Chicago School of Architecture. New York: Random House, 1964.

"The Work of Guenzel and Drummond," The Western Architect. Vol. 21 (February 1915). pp. 11-15; fig. 1-20; pl. 18-19, exterior and interior views.

Article by William Drummond entitled "On Things of Common Concern."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This house represents one of the most successful designs of the architect, William Drummond. Certain features, such as the central fireplace, two-story living room, and windows with leaded geometric designs, are typical of the Prairie School of architecture, while the articulation of the geometric trim is characteristic of Drummond's work.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 57'-6" by 53'-6", three stories, cross-shaped.
2. Wall construction: The walls of cream-colored stucco originally had dark brown wood trim. The trim is now (1965) painted dark green.
3. Structural system: Balloon frame.
4. Porches, stoops, etc.: There are concrete entrance stoops on the north and south sides of the east wing. There is a large, enclosed porch on the south side of the house.
5. Chimneys: A large chimney mass penetrates the center of the house. At the third floor level the flues separate and flank the windows which open into the third floor bedroom area.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance vestibule is located in the projecting east wing of the house; the main entrance is on the south wall, and a secondary entrance on the north wall. A service entrance to the basement is located under the stoop of the door on the north wall of the vestibule. A service entrance to the kitchen is located in the center of the north (rear) wall of the house. An entrance to the enclosed front porch is located on the west wall of the porch.
 - b. Windows: All windows are casement.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat, built-up.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Wide overhangs with wooden fascia and plaster soffits.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The third floor is much smaller than the two floors below and has the appearance of a monitor roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Basement: The house has a full basement with storage, laundry, mechanical equipment, and recreation rooms.

- b. First floor: The two-story living room is centrally located on the first floor. The enclosed porch opens off of it to the south. To the east, is a vestibule with closet and added powder room. To the north are the stairwell, servant's quarters and kitchen. To the west is the dining room.
 - c. Second floor: There are balconies on the north, east and west sides of the living room at the second floor level. Clerestory windows occupy the south wall above the entrance to the enclosed porch. The balconies on the east and west walls open onto outdoor balconies on the front of the house. The remainder of the floor consists of two bathrooms, three bedrooms, and a sewing room.
 - d. Third floor: One bedroom.
2. Stairways: The house has one stair which runs from first floor to third floor on the north side of the fireplace mass. It is walled on both sides. At the second floor level, there is a cabinet set into the fireplace mass.
 3. Flooring: There is 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ " oak strip flooring in the dining room. The floors in the rest of the house are covered with asphalt tile or carpeting.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster.
 5. Doorways and doors: The doors opening from the living room into the dining room and the enclosed porch have 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ " stiles and top rail and an eight inch bottom rail surrounding glass panels with leaded geometric designs. Other interior doors have a single recessed panel with 5- $\frac{1}{2}$ " stiles and top rail and twelve inch bottom rail. Most of them have been painted white.
 6. Decorative features and trim: On the west wall of the dining room is a built-in oak buffet. This unit has tall cabinets on either end with low cabinets under a serving top between them. All the doors which open to the front have panels with geometric designs similar to those in the doors which open off of the living room. There are windows with leaded geometric designs on the east wall of the living room, between the living room and vestibule.
 7. Lighting: Electrical. Numerous fixtures which were originally designed for the house still exist. They are geometric in form combining the square, cube and sphere or hemisphere. They are all wall-mounted fixtures.
 8. Heating: Central.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south on Ashland Avenue in an area of well-maintained, single-family homes.
2. Outbuildings: A small octagonal "gazebo" is located on the northwest part of the property. A garage is located at the northeast edge of the property and is reached from the north via an alley. The garage appears to have been designed by Drummond, but the "gazebo" does not.
3. Landscaping, walks and enclosures: The site has many very large trees. In addition there are a large number of coniferous bushes with heavy foliage along the front (south) of the house. A walk at the east edge of the property leads to the main entrance and to the rear of the property.

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
September 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The records and measured drawings of this structure were made during the 1965 Chicago III Project. This was the third in a series of four summer projects designed to record the significant architecture of the Chicago area. Special attention was given to the Chicago and Prairie Schools of Architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The project was sponsored by Mr. Earl A. Reed, FAIA. He was assisted by a Finance committee composed of John Fugard, FAIA; William E. Hartmann, FAIA; Alfred Shaw, FAIA; and a Selection committee consisting of James Arkin, AIA; Ruth Schoneman, Art Institute of Chicago; and J. Carson Webster, Northwestern University. Organizations cooperating with HABS in this project were the City of Chicago, the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and its Foundation, the Society of Architectural Historians, the Garrick Salvage Fund, and the Women's Architectural League of Chicago. The University of Illinois provided office space.

Professor J. William Rudd, then of the University of Cincinnati, served as the project supervisor. Other members of the summer team were assistant supervisor and Historian, Larry Homolka, Harvard University; photographers, Harold Allen and Richard Nickel; secretary, Mrs. Bert P. Schloss, and student architects, Gary Burk, Texas Technological College; Charles Gregersen, Illinois Institute of Technology; Edward Popko, University of Florida; and Thomas Ross, University of Illinois, Urbana.

Photographic work was done by Richard Nickel in 1967.