



CITY OF PARK RIDGE

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PARK RIDGE, IL 60068

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URL: <http://www.parkridge.us>

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Date: September 29, 2011
To: Historic Preservation Commission
From: Jon Branham, City Planner *JB*
Subject: Historic Landmark Designation, Case: LD-11-03
808 Park Plaine Avenue

Introduction

Shel Newman, applicant, requests a review for historic landmark designation for 808 Park Plaine Avenue, in accordance with the landmark designation review provisions in Article 23 of the Municipal Code.

The application was prepared by the owner of the property. The owner has also provided consent.

Notification requirements for this application have been satisfied. A legal notice was published in the *Park Ridge Herald-Advocate*.

Information Submitted by the Applicant

The applicant requests historic landmark designation for 808 Park Plaine Avenue. The applicant submitted materials that satisfy the minimum filing requirements for landmark designation (Section 23-2-1 of the Municipal Code), including a statement on how the nomination would satisfy the landmark designation standards.

According to research provided, 808 Park Plaine Avenue is significant in respect to an architectural style, a notable architect, and artistic heritage of Park Ridge. The architect was Bruce Goff, noted as one of the 20th century's visionary architects. Goff designed several buildings in the Chicago area between 1934 and 1942. Goff was rooted in the Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan schools of architectural theory, but developed his own distinctive style later in his career. The home, known as the Helen Unseth House, was one of Goff's first independent commissions. Helen Unseth was a colleague of Goff's and a local art teacher at Taft High School in Edison Park. Goff was also tied to local sculptor and artist Alfonso Iannelli, whom Goff worked with in the 1930s.

The single family home was constructed in 1940. The one-story frame home includes a triangular floor plan and a flat roof. The home offers a resolution between privacy and openness on the suburban lot. A unique characteristic of Goff's is the concealed front entry at the residence. Goff's touch was also reflected in his closing the house off from street view and adjacent properties, but opening them up to the side and rear yards. The triangular plan of the house achieved this idea without sacrificing personal privacy. The peak of the triangular plan faced the front street view, with the house expanding towards the rear of the property. Angled windows were placed high in the walls to minimize views of the interior from the street and adjacent properties, yet allowed the interior of the house to be open to ample sunlight.

and ventilation. Rhythmic use of angled forms was utilized throughout the house, which can be noted especially in the exterior diagonal wooden boarding patterns. Another key feature of the house is a majestic fireplace located at the rear of the structure framed by a beautifully arranged sky light.

After his time in Chicago, Goff designed many more significant homes throughout the country and spent time as the chairman of the architecture department at the University of Oklahoma.

The Helen Unseth House at 808 Park Plaine Avenue is a unique architectural gem and adds to the rich and diverse artistic history of Park Ridge.

Staff Analysis

Landmark Designation Review

The applicant appears to meet several criteria of the landmark designation standards (Section 23-3-1 of the Municipal Code), which include:

- The site's significance with respect to the historical, cultural, artistic, social, ethnic or other heritage of the nation, state or community.
- The site's significance as it may be representative of an architectural or engineering type lending itself to the study of a style, period, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.
- The site's association with an important person or event in national, state, or local history.
- The site's identity as a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual genius has influenced an era.
- The site's identity as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.
- Criteria promulgated by the U.S. Department of the Interior for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The preference of the owner.
- The economic and functional potentials of the site.

The applicant has provided a statement of landmark designation and historical background information. Staff is satisfied that the applicant meets the designation standards. The Commission should consider the landmark designation standards and determine if it is satisfied with the application.

Commission Action

If the Commission decides to recommend approval of the historic landmark designation, the proposed motion would be as follows:

Recommend City Council approval of historic landmark designation for 808 Park Plaine Avenue, Case Number LD-11-03, as submitted.

The Commission shall make a decision in writing and shall include findings of fact (Section 23-2-4-B-1).

Attachments



Landmark Designation Application

City of Park Ridge

Community Preservation and Development Department . 505 Butler Place . Park Ridge, IL . 60068
Phone: (847) 318-5291 . Fax: (847) 318-6411 . www.parkridge.us

Case Number: LD-11-03

Subject Property Information:

Address: 808 PARK PLAIN

Zoning District: R-2

Legal Description (can attach separate sheet): _____

ATTACHED

Applicant Information:

Name: SHEL NEWMAN

Phone: 847-823-7438

Address: 808 PARK PLAIN

E-mail: SHEL.NEWMAN@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Owner of Record Information:

Name: SHEL NEWMAN

Phone: 847-823-7438

Address: 808 PARK PLAIN

Summary of Nomination (may attached additional pages) : _____

ATTACHED

I hereby certify, as the undersigned applicant, that the above statements and attached documentation are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

SHEL NEWMAN
Signature of Applicant

9/8/11
Date

Applicant Disclosure Statement (Section 2-24-1)

Name of Applicant: SHEL NEWMAN

Subject Property Information:
Address: 808 PARK PLANE

P.I.N.: 09-27-114-032-000

Name and business address of any and all current holders of legal or beneficial title to the subject property (attach additional sheets if necessary):

If there is a pending contract for the sale of the subject property, list the purchasing party's name:
NO

List any entities, other than a natural person, that hold legal or beneficial title and that have a greater than 3% interest in the entity:
NONE

For each entity listed above that, list every director, officer and manager of the entity:
—

For each entity listed above that is a limited partnership or limited liability company, list the name of every limited or general partner or member:
—

For each limited partner or general partner that is a corporate entity, list the name of every person who holds a greater than 3% interest in the corporation:
—

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the requirements of Article 2, Chapter 24 of the Park Ridge Municipal Code ("Code"). I understand that as the applicant, I am required to keep all of the information on this form current and updated until the City Council takes final action on my request. I also understand that if I fail to comply with this requirement, the City Council may declare the action it has taken with respect to my request null and void. In addition, the City Council may direct the initiation of legal action for a violation of the Code and may seek the penalties set forth in Section 2-24-4 of the Code, including daily monetary fines. I understand that this disclosure statement will be open for public inspection and posted on the City's website prior to any meeting when my request will be acted upon. I understand that if the subject property is assigned, transferred or if an agreement is entered into to transfer any right, interest, or permit within one year of the City Council's final action, there will be a rebuttable presumption that the assignee or transferee had constructive control of the subject property at the time of my application. The penalty discussed above will be imposed for any failure to disclose any such assignee or transferee.

I, the undersigned applicant, hereby certify that above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

SHEL NEWMAN
Signature of Applicant

9/1/11
Date

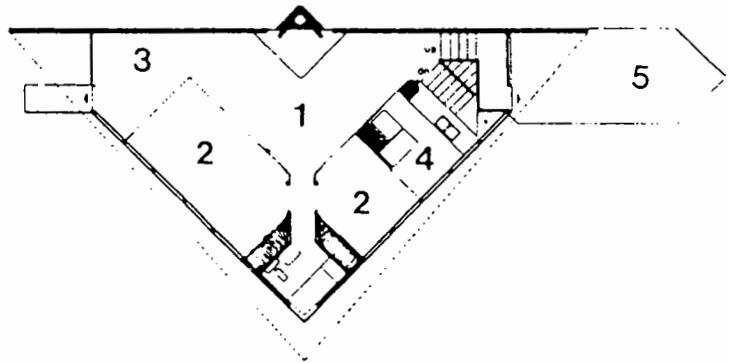
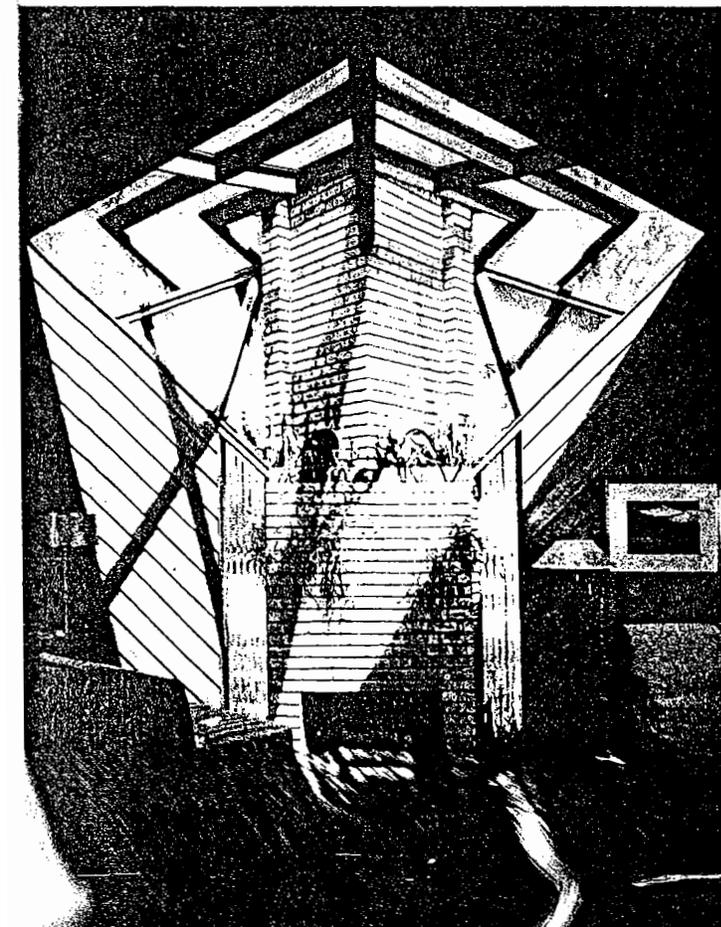
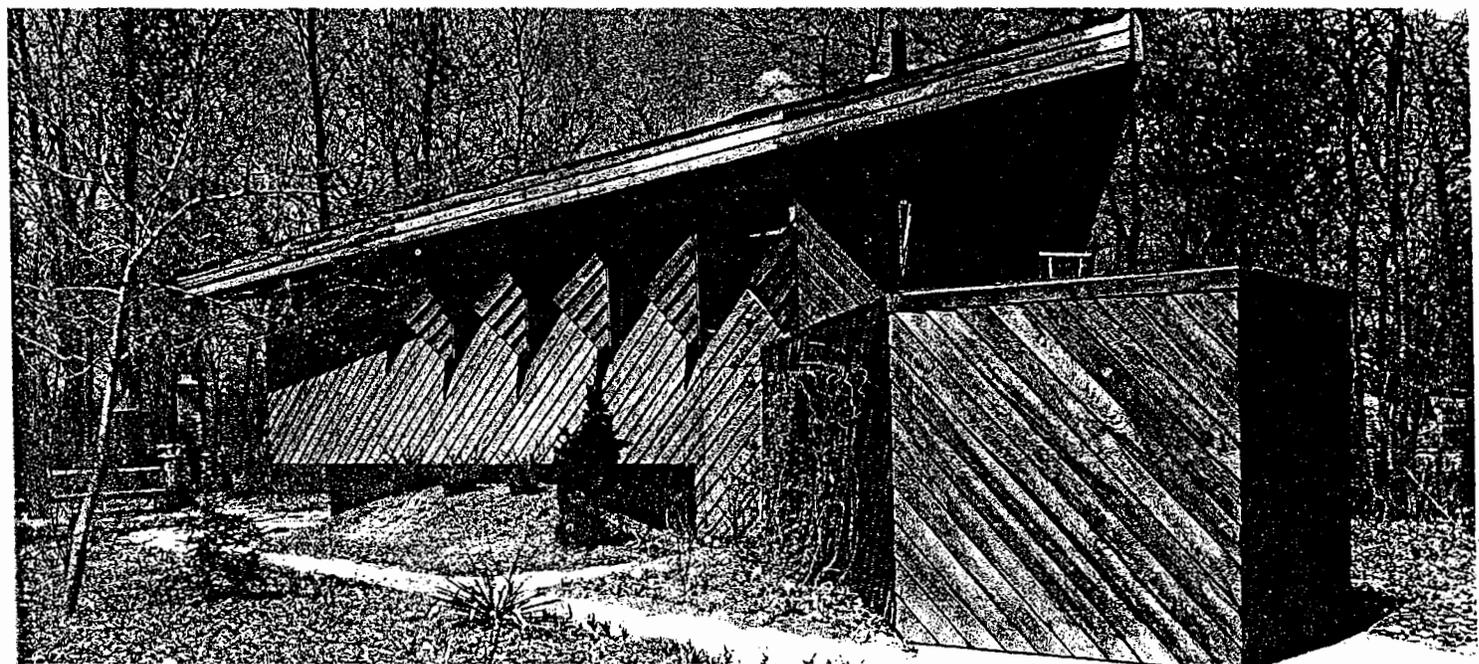
The attached documentation supports that Bruce Goff's "Helen Unseth House" (1940) located at 808 Park Plaine Avenue in Park Ridge, should be considered a local landmark due to it's significance with respect to the site's identity as a notable work of a master architect and representative of an architectural style. The site also has significance with respect to the artistic heritage of the community of Park Ridge.

Jnseth House/ Illinois/ 1941

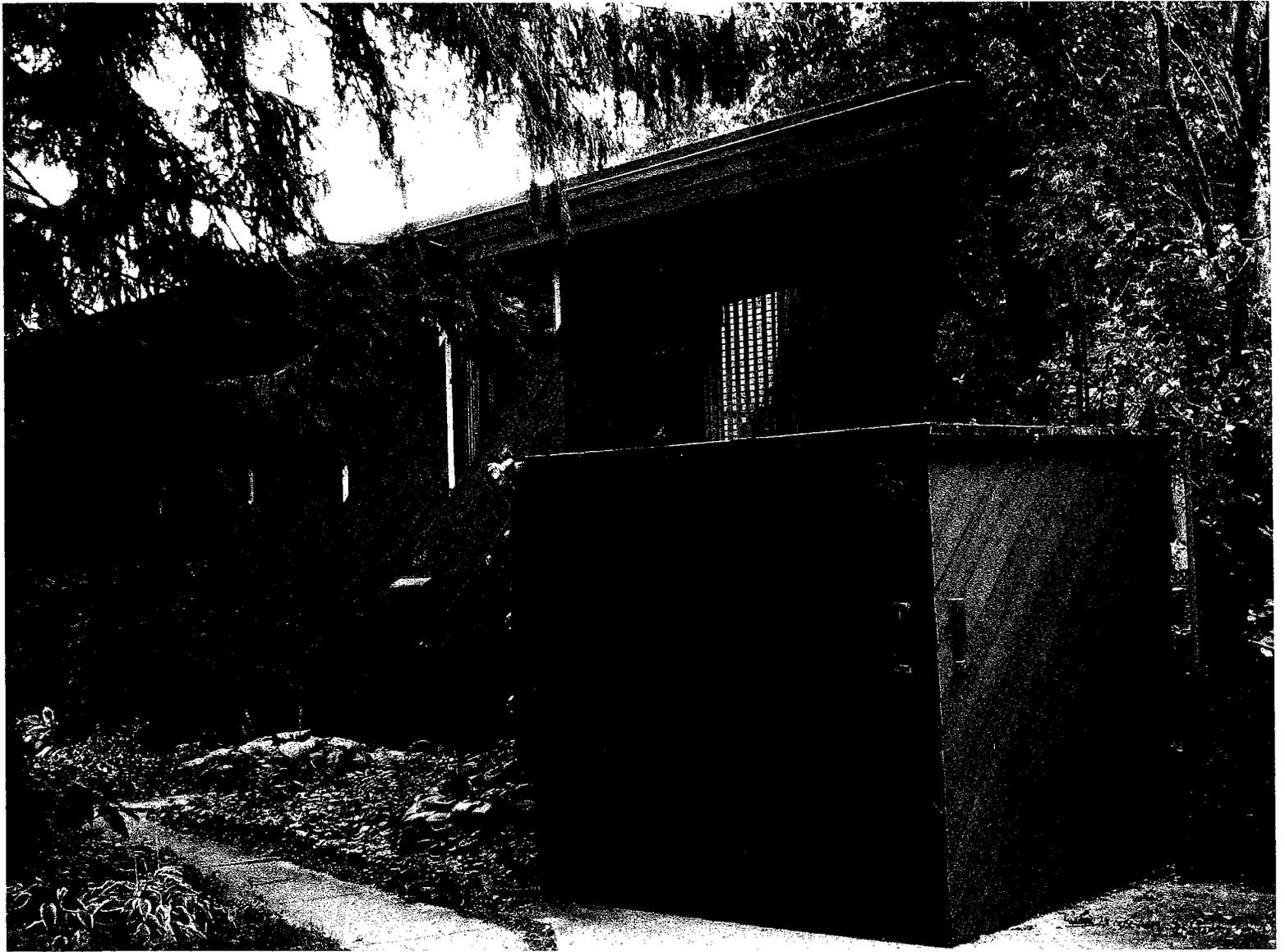
Jnseth House, Park Ridge, Illinois (1939)
 In 1934 when Goff was 30, with some 18 years of professional experience behind him, he moved from Tulsa to establish a practice in Chicago. At first he worked for Lanelli as one of several designers in Lanelli's industrial design studio. After a year he took up part-time teaching at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, and in his free time ran a small practice (with no work) from Park Ridge. After a short interlude as chief designer for the

Libbey-Owen-Ford company – manufacturers of 'Vitrolite', an opaque coloured glass – in Toledo, he returned to Park Ridge, and, in 1937, received the first independent commissions of his career. By 1939, David De Long records, Goff's work was beginning to demonstrate a stylistic independence. The Jnseth house was redesigned when the first design came in at \$10 500, \$3 000 over the budget. In the new scheme Goff retained the triangular form of the plan, but reduced its size. This plan

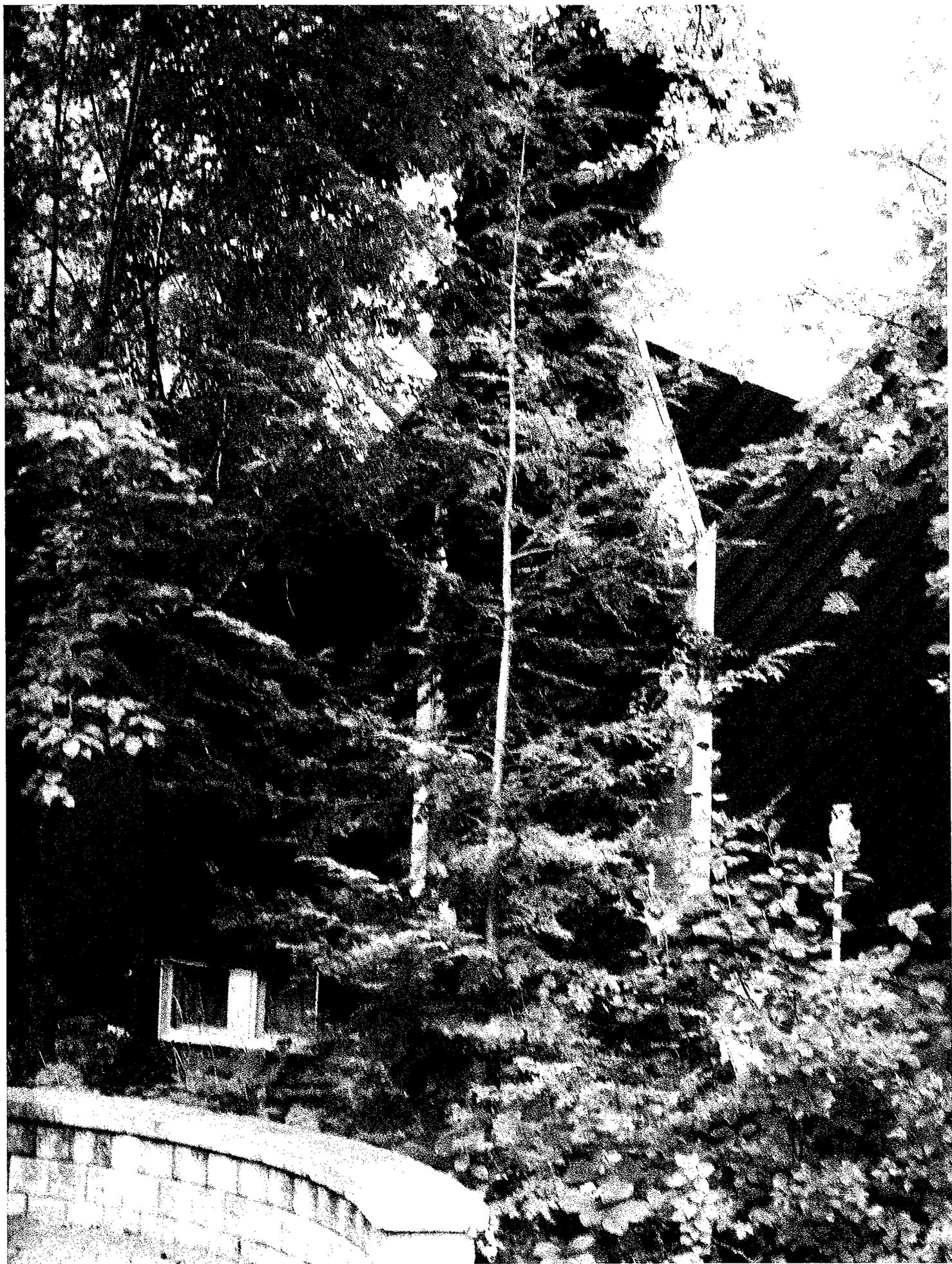
form, and the use of diagonal boarding, though evident in earlier designs are the first instances where these concepts were realised. The line of the boarding emphasises the saw-tooth shape of the continuous bands of windows on the two angled walls, and correspond with the boarded triangular ventilation shutters. Inside, within the small living area, a massive fireplace rises through a prismatically-framed sky-light.



- Key:
- 1: living room
 - 2: bedroom
 - 3: studio
 - 4: kitchen
 - 5: garage

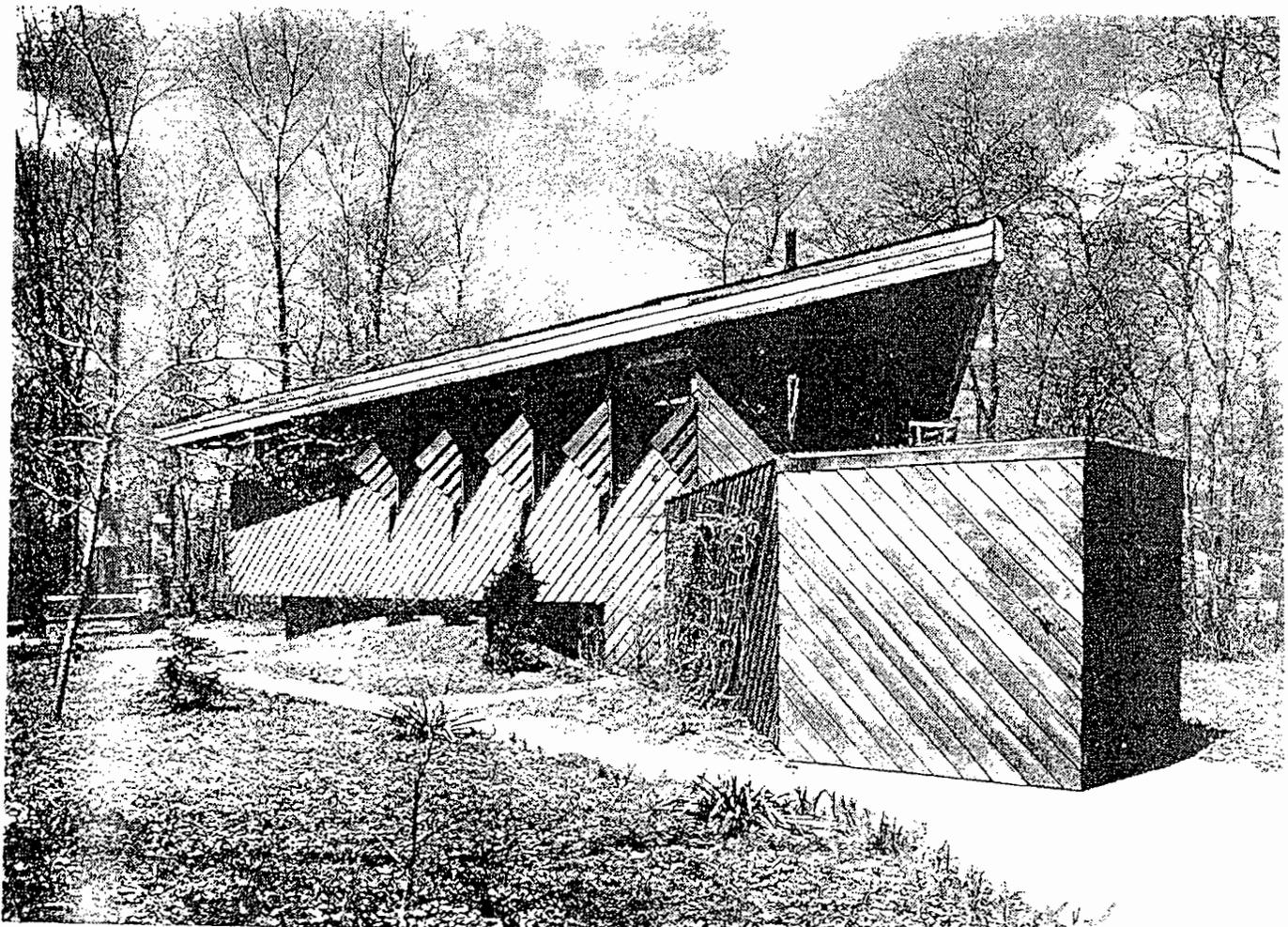


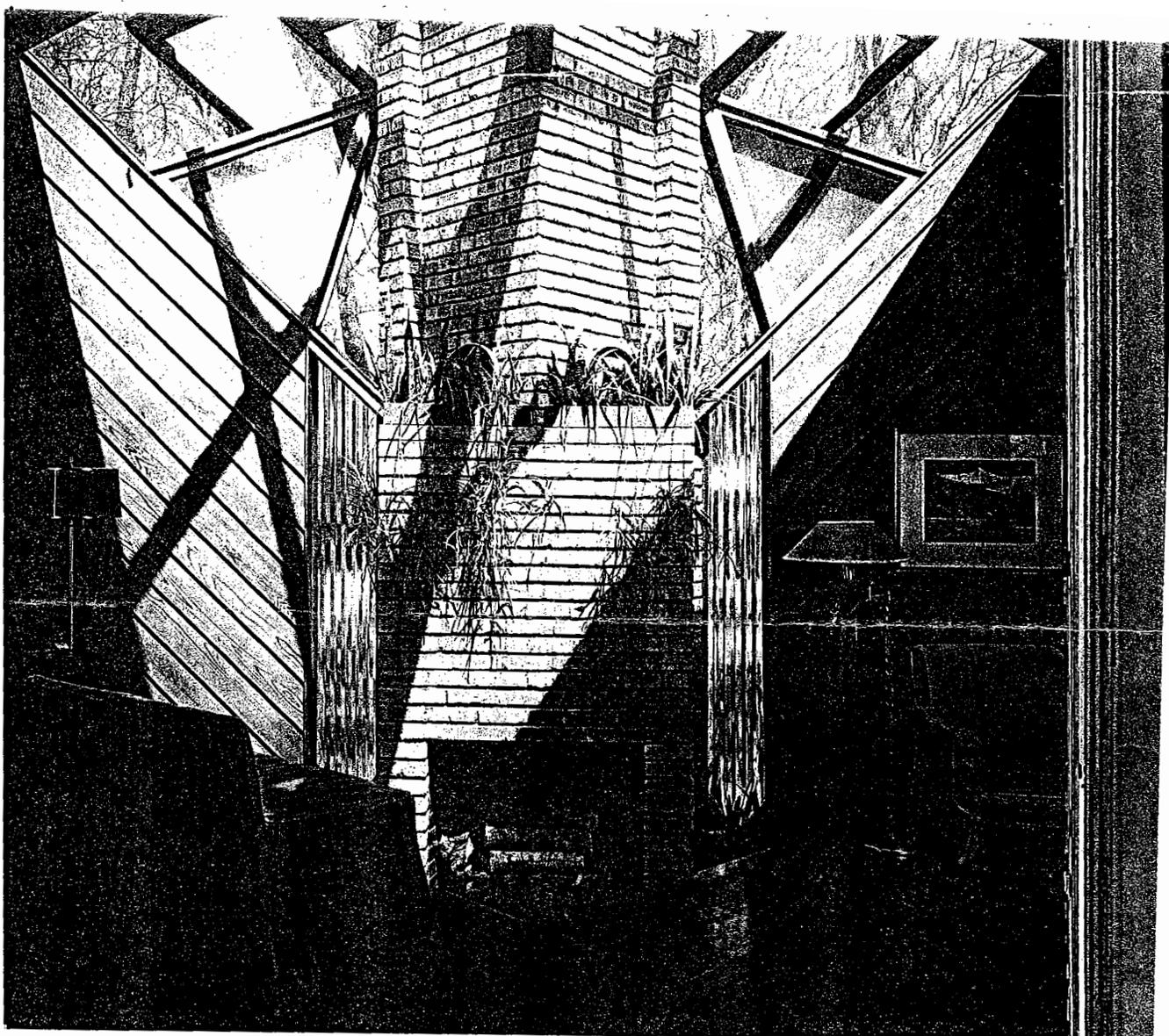




Helen Unseth house – 1940 (Bruce Goff)

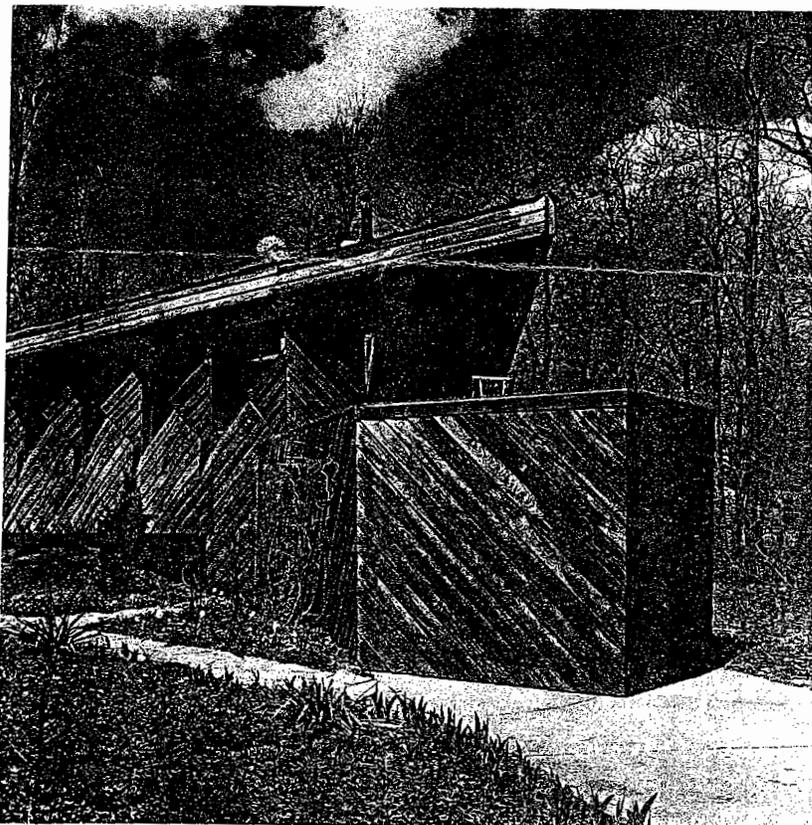
Current	Owner Mr. Shel Newman
Address	808 Parkplaine, Park Ridge
Description	One-story frame structure with flat roof. Triangular plan includes a living room, two bedrooms, studio, kitchen, and garage.
Alterations Since Construction	Some changes of function (i.e., bedroom converted to dining room, former studio space into bedroom, etc.), but the integrity of the overall design has not been compromised.
Comments	Mr. Newman is the fifth owner (the original client owned the house until the early 70's). This house, although small, is a real gem and a must-see. It is one of the first buildings after Goff assimilated all of his influences and came into his own as a mature designer. It is chock-full of innovations and interesting details.



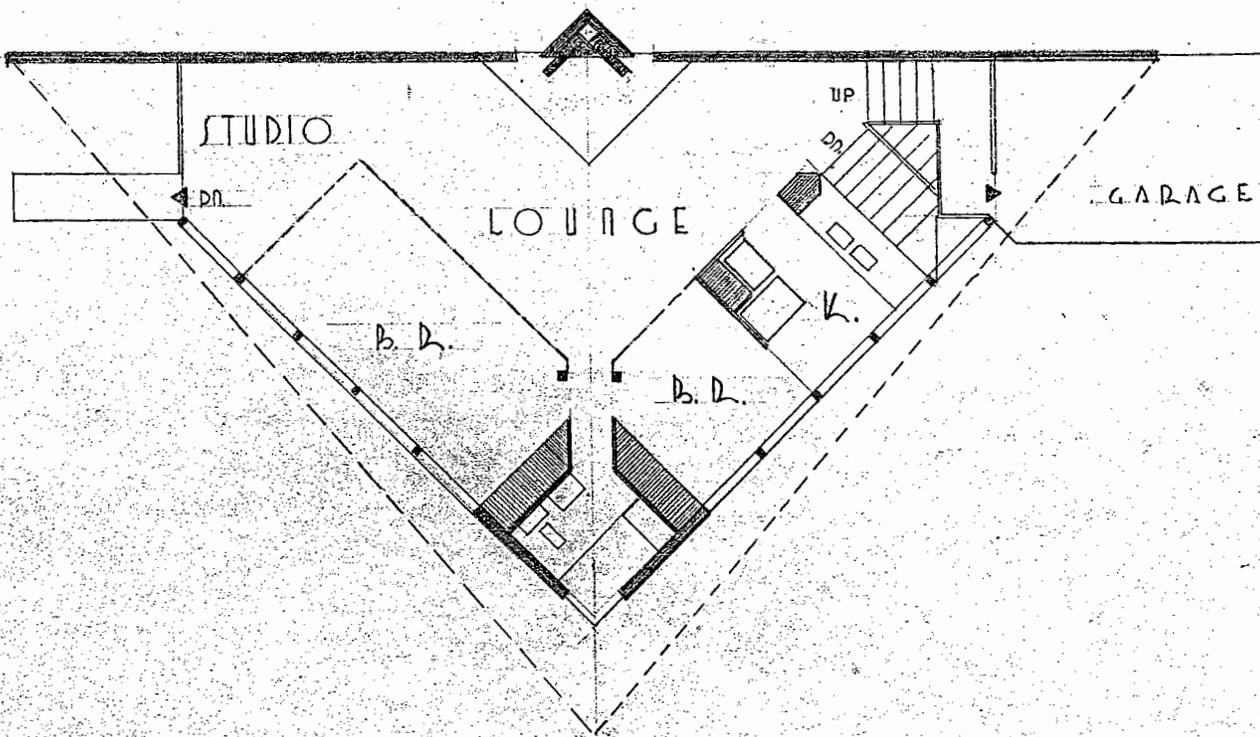


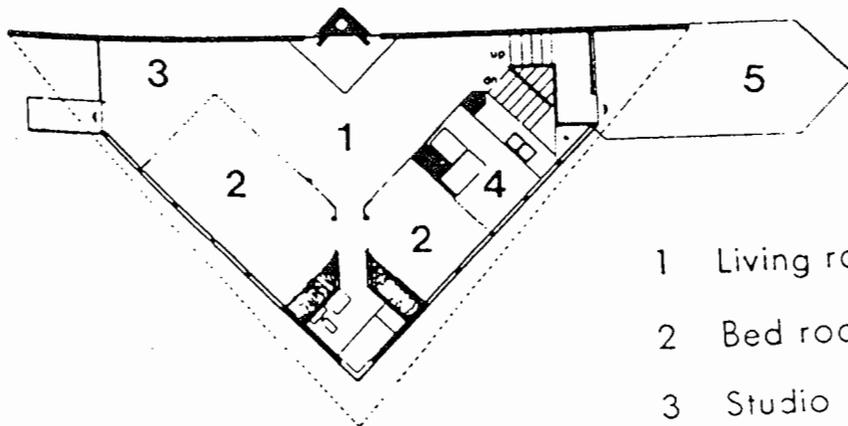
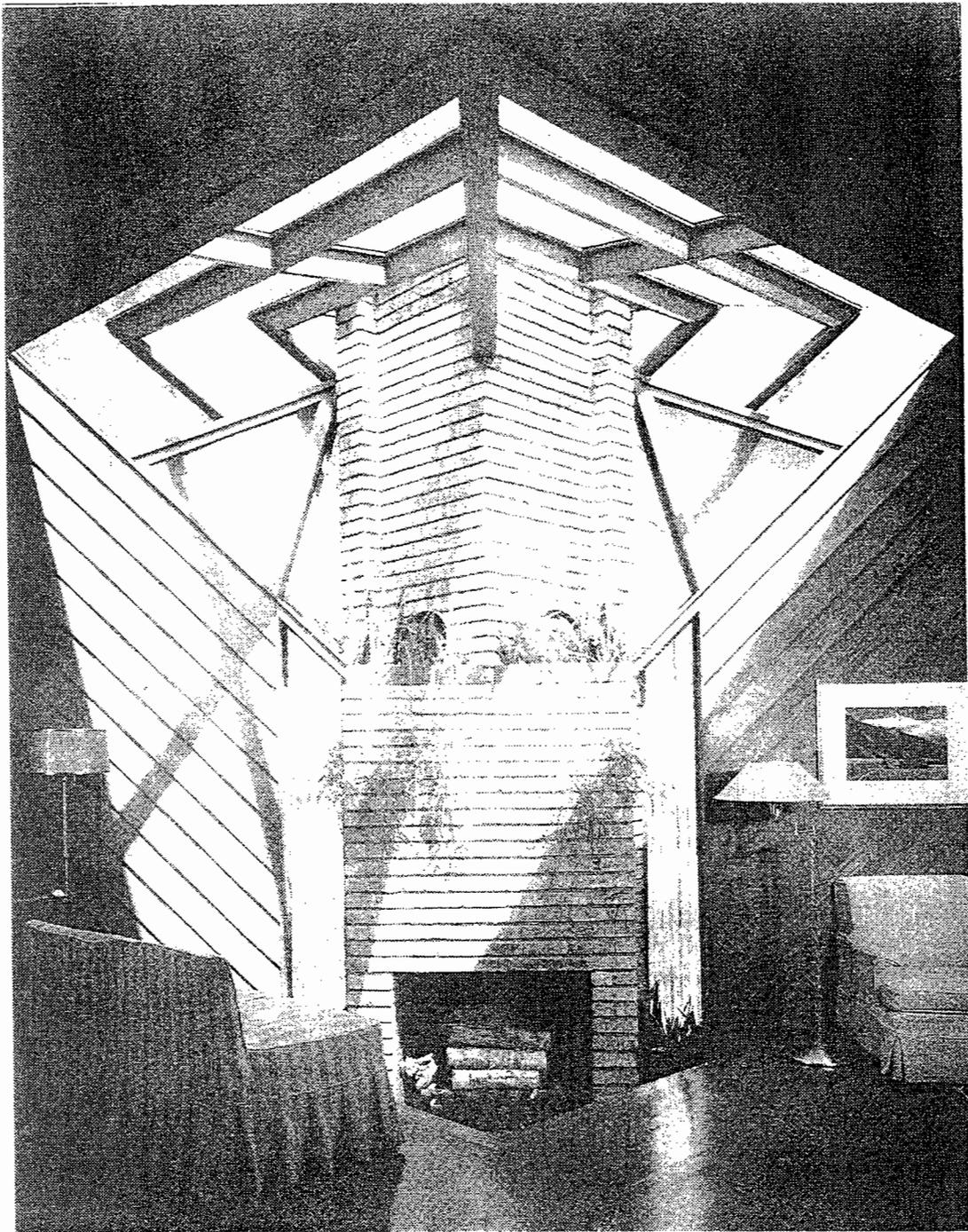
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- 1 Living room
- 2 Bed room
- 3 Studio
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Garage



UNSETH HOUSE PARK RIDGE, ILLINOIS 1940





- 1 Living room
- 2 Bed room
- 3 Studio
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Garage

artist Charles Turzak (figs. 4–5), who had known Goff while doing commercial artwork for Libbey-Owens-Ford. On August 27, 1938, Charles and Florence Turzak purchased a 50 by 100-foot corner lot in the Edison Park neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago, and within two months they had applied for a permit to build a \$6,500 Goff-designed residence.

Goff's job files for the Turzak project include a preliminary design of unadorned flat planes faced in what appears to be modular Cemesto panels, fenestrated on the second level by a ribbon of hopper windows. No correspondence survives to document this early design or the reasons for its ultimate re-

placement with an entirely new design of common brick with wood trim, a change that paralleled the development of the Rant and Elin houses.

To make use of an existing foundation on the site, the main body of the two-story Turzak House is almost a perfect square. Its cubelike massing is visually offset on the exterior by the wrapping of Turzak's one-story studio around the corner and by the introduction of transitional wood balconies, trellises, and overhangs that provide ever-changing interplays of light and shadow on the building and grounds. Rigid corners are diminished by wraparound windows, which combine fixed lights, casements, and hopper windows for flexibility of light and ventilation. As in the Elin and Rant houses, Goff gave the common brick a horizontal emphasis by recessing the horizontal joints and pointing the vertical joints flush.

During construction, the Turzak House alarmed neighborhood residents who feared that its common brick walls and large-scale windows were for some sort of inexpensive retail building. The house became an accepted feature of the neighborhood as elements like its projecting balconies, covered carport, and corner windows became part of the architectural mainstream in the decades following its completion.

Two of Goff's major Chicago-area commissions came from northwest suburban Park Ridge, where he had lived and worked while associated with Iannelli's studio. The first to be erected was the 1939 residence for Frank Cole (fig. 8; pl. 7), publisher of a local newspaper. Despite the client's standing in the community, the unconventional character of Goff's wood-frame

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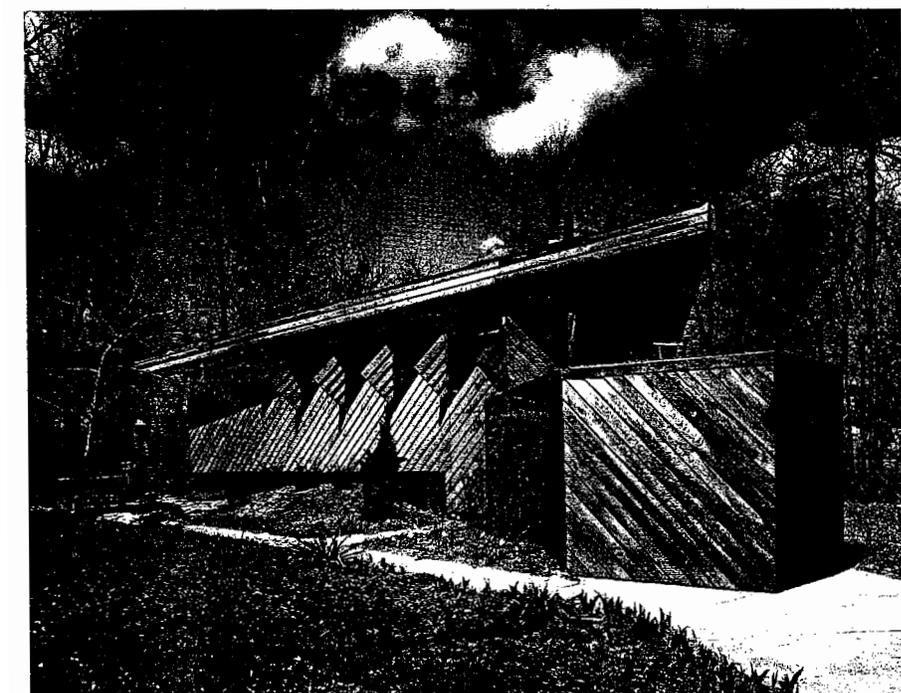
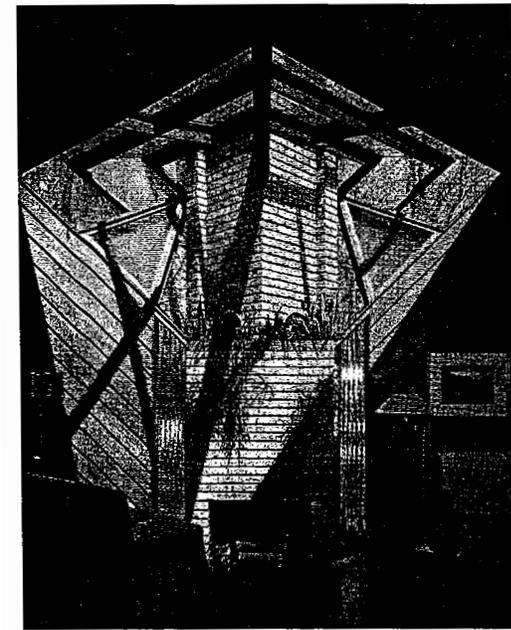
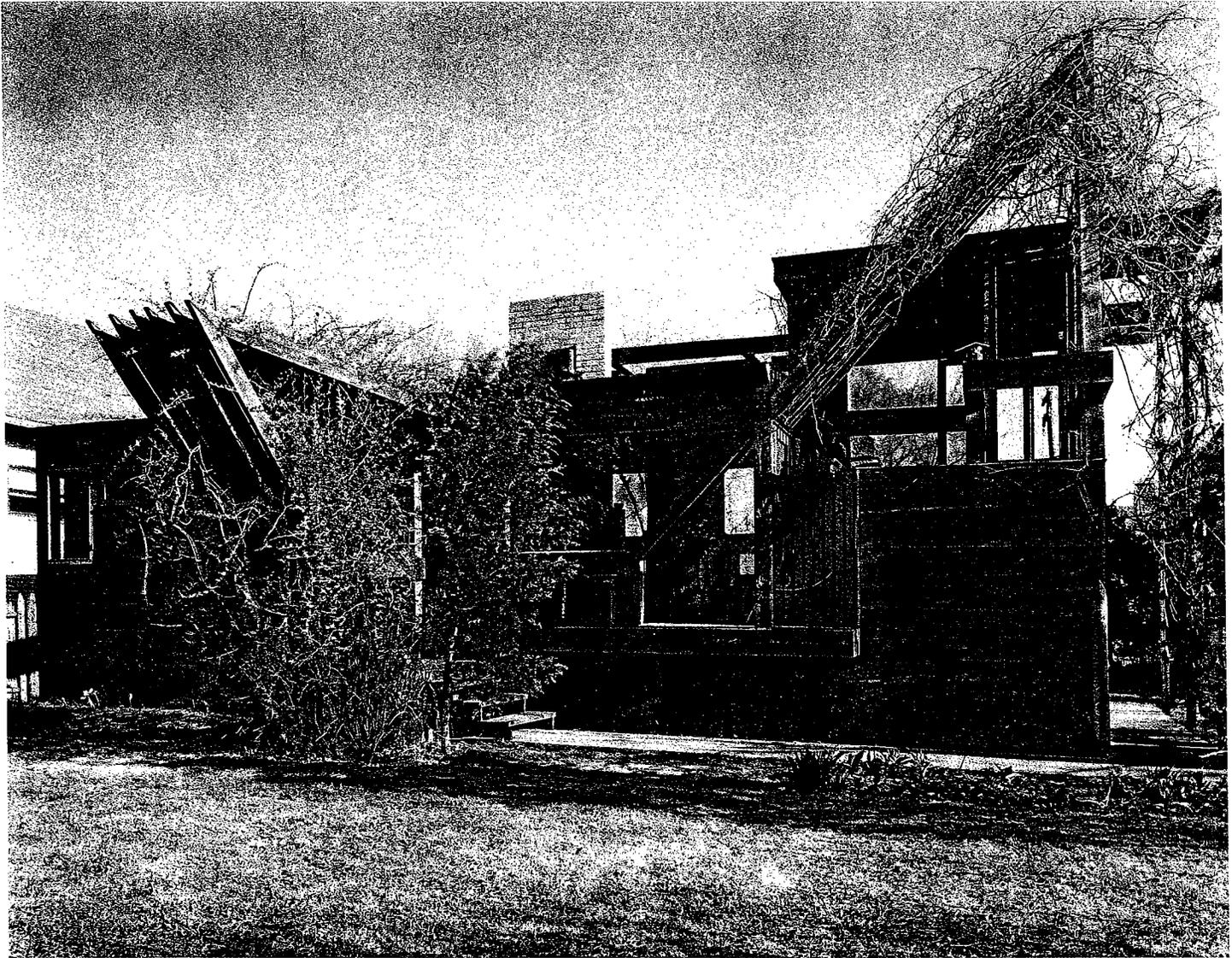


Fig. 6 Helen Unseth House (second of two designs), Park Ridge, Illinois, 1940; interior view. Photograph by Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of Chicago Historical Society.

Fig. 7 Helen Unseth House (second of two designs), Park Ridge, Illinois, 1940. Photograph by Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of Chicago Historical Society.

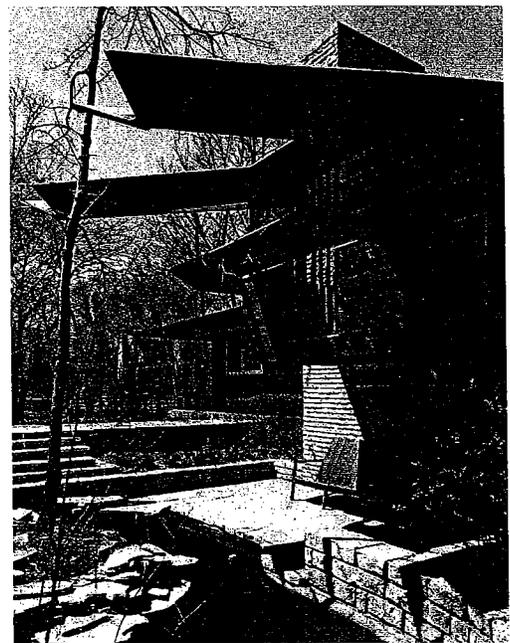


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Fig. 8 Frank Cole House (second of two designs), Park Ridge, Illinois, 1939; rear view. Photograph by Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of Chicago Historical Society.

residence met with local resistance, prompting city officials to initially refuse to issue a building permit.

With a projected budget of \$5,000, the Cole House was one of Goff's least expensive Chicago-area projects. Its low cost necessitated the use of wood-frame construction, but the effective use of natural materials resulted in a highly original composition that belies its modest origins. Unadorned wood planks defined the entire composition, ranging from the simple horizontal emphasis of the street front to the complex multilevel configuration of the side and rear elevations. Because the house was situated on a standard suburban lot near adjoining houses, its street front was relatively simple, with flat surfaces defined by horizontal planking. Placement of large, irregularly configured windows above a raised planter box afforded privacy yet allowed ample light to penetrate the spaces within. In contrast to the closed-in character of the street front, the glass-filled rear elevation opened the interiors to the backyard with complex



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Fig. 9 Paul Colmorgan House (second of two designs), Glenview, Illinois, 1940; side view. Photograph by Hedrich-Blessing, courtesy of Chicago Historical Society.

changes of levels, and wood planks were extended to create dramatic angled trellises. The use of simple planking extended throughout the interiors, imbuing the composition as a whole with warmth and unity.

The second Park Ridge project was the 1940 commission for the Helen Unseth House (figs. 6–7), which offered an unusual solution to the conflicts between privacy and openness on a typical suburban lot. Unlike the Cole House, in which the interiors were largely screened from the street and opened to the backyard, the triangular plan of the Unseth House opened the entire house to its lot without sacrificing privacy. The apex of the triangular plan fronted the street, with the house expanding in width to the rear. Angled windows placed high in the walls prevented clear views of the interior from the street and adjoining properties yet opened the interiors to maximum sunlight and ventilation. A rhythmic use of angled forms was sustained throughout the plan and detailing of the house, which was executed largely in unpainted wood. Goff continued to experiment with triangular forms in the 1941 Irma Bartman House in the Fern Creek area of Louisville, Kentucky (see De Long, figs. 8–9) which was the first executed out-of-town commission of Goff's Chicago practice and an important forerunner of his later open-plan residential designs.

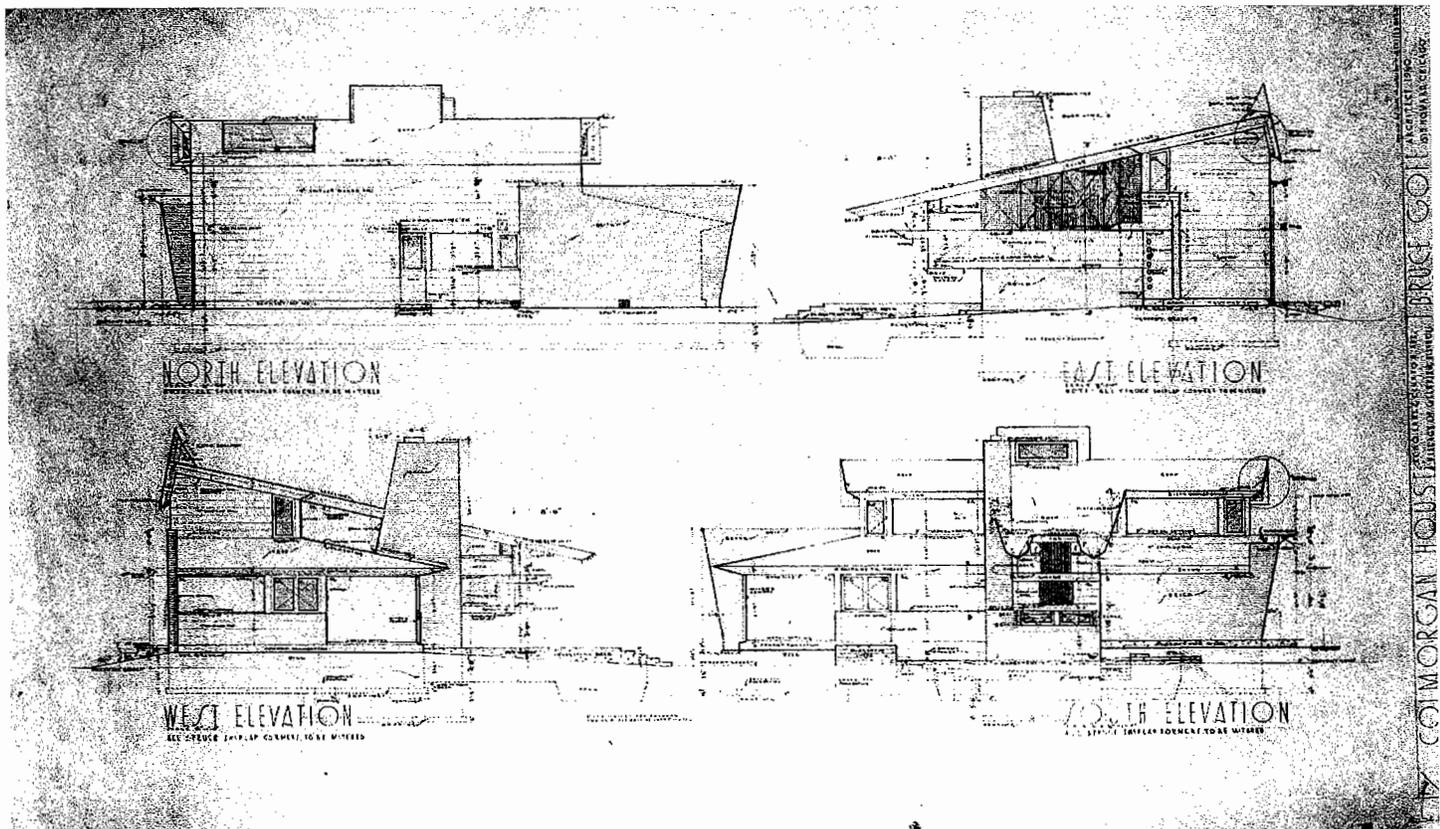
A remarkable example of Goff's ability to achieve maximum effect at minimum cost is demon-

strated in the 1940 house and studio designed for commercial artist Paul Colmorgan in northwest suburban Glenview (figs. 9–10). The complex, multilevel house was executed in wood and brick at a cost of \$3,200, a figure far lower than the cost of the average city bungalow of the period.

Goff's enlistment in the Navy in August 1942 marked the end of his Chicago architectural practice. Giving up his Howard Street studio, he spent the next three years designing military-related buildings, many of which displayed the same degree of creativity and resourcefulness that characterized his civilian projects (see De Long, figs. 11–12). In 1946, Goff relocated to Norman, Oklahoma. While practicing there, he received two additional commissions in the Chicago area. In 1947, Myron Bachman, a Chicago recording engineer, engaged Goff to remodel an existing frame house on the city's north side into a combined studio and family residence (figs. 11–12). Adapting the technologies of Quonset huts that he had learned in the Navy, Goff covered the modest house with a gleaming skin of corrugated aluminum sheets and reworked the windows and other details into an abstract composition that stood out boldly from the modest wood houses that surrounded it.

Connections established during Goff's prewar years in Chicago led to one of his most famous residential commissions, the Ruth Ford House in Aurora, Illinois (fig. 13; pls. 11–13). In 1947, Goff was contacted

Fig. 10 Paul Colmorgan House (second of two designs), Glenview, Illinois, 1940; north, east, west, south elevations. Delineated by Jack Chamberlin. Graphite on tracing paper; 53 x 91 cm (1990.818.9).



ARCHITECTURE OPEN HOUSE

Check out the Helen Unseth House (designed by Bruce Goff) at 808 Park Plaine during the block party.



Bruce Goff (1904-1982) was one of America's visionary 20th century architects. Early in his career, Goff was inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, but in the 1940s and 1950s, he developed a highly personal style characterized by an enthusiastic use of geometric form. This distinctive American architect practiced in Chicago between 1934 and 1942. Goff designed several significant public buildings and residences in both the city and suburbs, including Northfield, Glenview, and Park Ridge.

A common characteristic found in Goff's designs is the concealed front entry. Goff's solitary nature was reflected in his closing houses off from the streets and adjoining properties while opening them up to the side or rear yards.

Two important Goff residences were built in Park Ridge. The first was a wood-frame structure, the design of which met with such resistance from neighbors that city officials initially refused to issue a building permit. This house, built in 1939 for publisher Frank Cole, is no longer standing. The street facade of the Cole house was relatively simple while the glass-filled rear elevation opened the interiors to the yard with complex levels of wood planks and dramatic angled trellises.

The second Park Ridge project was the 1940 Helen Unseth commission, which offered a solution to the privacy vs. openness conflict. The triangular plan of the Unseth house, which is located at 808 Park Plaine, opened the entire house to its lot without sacrificing privacy. The apex of the triangle fronted the street, with the house expanding in width to the rear.

Goff's enlistment in the Navy in 1942 marked the end of his Chicago practice. After the war he became the chairman of the architecture department at the University of Oklahoma.



BRUCE GOFF



Helen Unseth
Taft High School 1940



Jens K. Doe

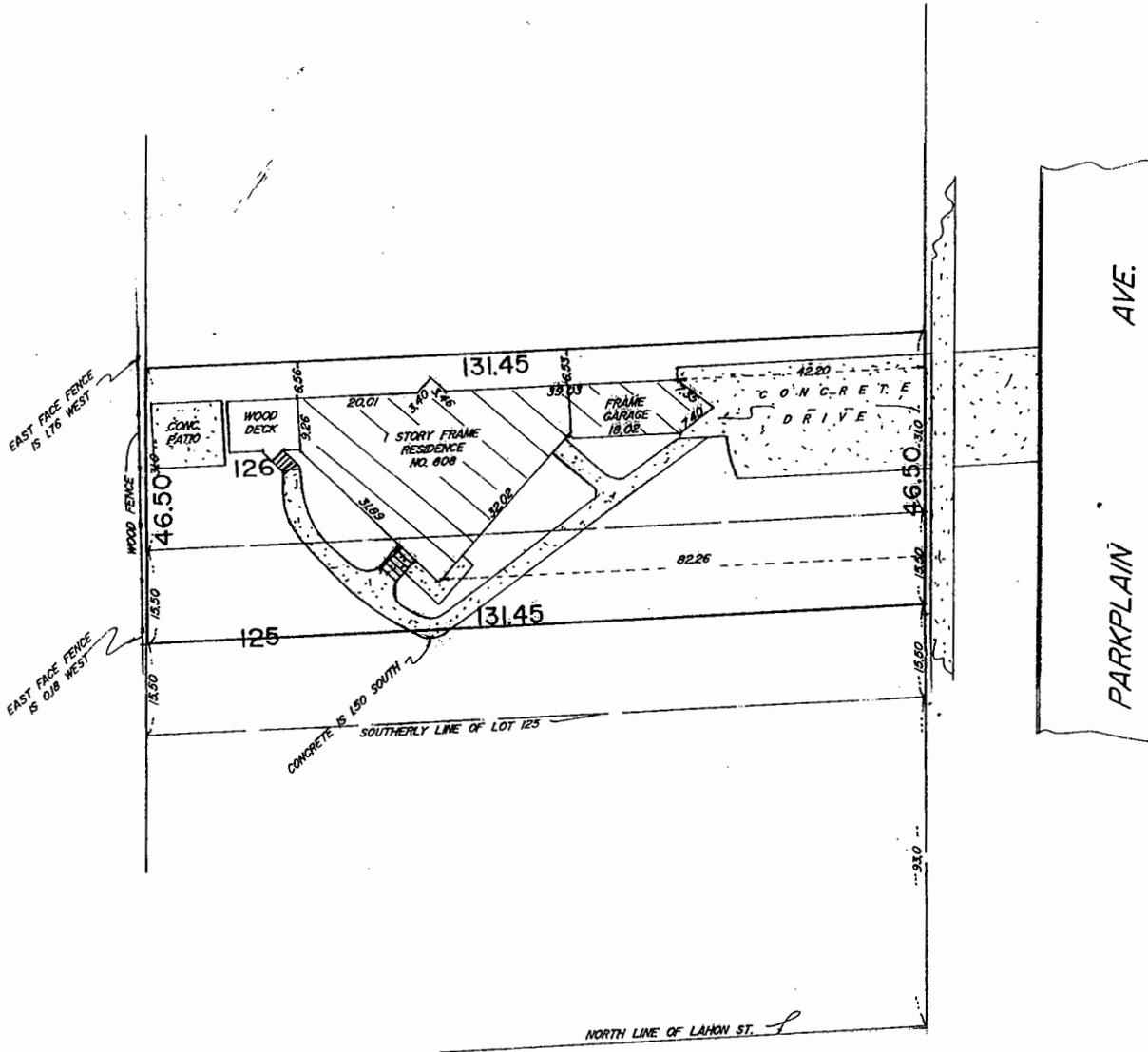
SURVEY SERVICE, INC.
Registered Land Surveyors

ORDER NO.
94876

PLAT OF SURVEY

of

Lot 126 and the North 1/4 of Lot 125 in Oakton Manor being a Subdivision of the West 1/2 of the North East 1/4 of the North West 1/4 of Section 27, Township 41 North, Range 12 East of the Third Principal Meridian, (except streets and highways heretofore dedicated and except right of way of the Illinois and Wisconsin Railroad) according to the Plat thereof recorded October 17, 1923 as Document Number 8148221, in Cook County, Illinois.



NOTE

Dimensions are not to be assumed or scaled.

The legal Description noted on this plat is a copy of the order and for accuracy MUST be compared with Deed. For building restrictions refer to your Abstract, Deed or Contract

State of Illinois }
County of Cook }

JENS K. DOE SURVEY SERVICE, INC. does hereby certify that a survey has been made under its direction, by a Registered Illinois Land Surveyor of the property described hereon and that the plat hereon drawn is a correct representation of said survey.

Chicago, Illinois Dated 22ND day of JUNE 1994.

JENS K. DOE SURVEY SERVICE, INC.

THOMAS J. FOPKE, President
(Illinois Registered Land Surveyor No. 1375)

