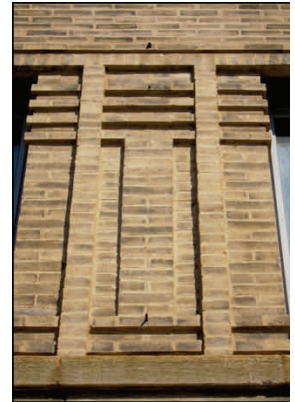


LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building
1323 S. Michigan Ave.

Final Landmark Recommendation adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, August 7, 2014



CITY OF CHICAGO
Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Andrew J. Mooney, Commissioner

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within a designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

WHOLESALE FURNITURE EXPOSITION BUILDING

1323 S. MICHIGAN AVE.

BUILT: 1904
ARCHITECTS: HUGH M.G. GARDEN,
WORKING FOR RICHARD E. SCHMIDT

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is a seven-story commercial loft building built in the Chicago School architectural style with Prairie-style brick details. It was commissioned as an expansion to already-existing furniture showroom buildings at the heart of “Furniture Row,” the furniture manufacturing and exhibition area located on Chicago’s Near South Side in the early 20th century. The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building exemplifies the development history of this portion of South Michigan Avenue, which by 1900 was transitioning from a fashionable residential neighborhood of mansions, apartment buildings and clubs to a more densely built-up precinct of commercial buildings devoted to a variety of uses, especially automobile and wholesale furniture sales. Constructed using the existing structure of an 1894 apartment building built near the end of the neighborhood's residential development, the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building remains as a rare surviving building associated with wholesale furniture showrooms in “Furniture Row.”

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is also significant as a Chicago School commercial loft building designed by Hugh Garden, one of Chicago's most significant progressive architects of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In this building, Garden combined the clear visual expression of interior structure with Prairie-style brick decoration. From the mid-1890s into the 1920s, Garden worked with architect Richard E. Schmidt, first as

his chief designer, then as full partner. Schmidt's office was a prolific architectural firm whose work includes significant Chicago buildings from the early twentieth century, such as the Schoenhofen Brewery Powerhouse, Humboldt Park Boathouse, Madlener House and Montgomery Ward Warehouse (all designated Chicago Landmarks). As chief designer of the firm, Hugh Garden was largely responsible for the firm's distinctive buildings that combined both the Chicago School and the Prairie style.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE, 1890-1910

The years immediately following the Chicago Fire of 1871 saw a tremendous building boom in the area south of the Loop, from Roosevelt Road to 26th Street. This portion of the city was easily accessible to the downtown area, and it soon became a fashionable residential area centered on Prairie Avenue, the city's most fashionable street lined by the mansions of such prominent Chicago families as the Fields, Pullmans, and Armours. South Michigan Avenue became the finest roadway in the city, being paved in the 1880s with white macadam. A number of substantial homes lined the street, interspersed with churches and elegant clubhouses. By 1893, at the time of the World's Columbian Exposition, it was nationally prominent, and additional housing, including a new apartment building designed by Flanders and Zimmerman and built at 1323 S. Michigan Ave., sprung up in the area.

By the early 1900s many of the neighborhood's wealthy were moving either farther south to Kenwood and other fashionable south-side neighborhoods, or north to the Gold Coast, to avoid increased traffic and pollution and the encroachment of commercial interests that were drawn by the proximity to downtown businesses. These commercial interests included printers and publishers, the newly burgeoning automobile sales and service industry, and furniture wholesalers, who established showrooms in the area. Michigan Avenue rapidly transformed as a majority of its residences were replaced by commercial buildings. For example, automobile pioneer Henry Ford operated an early automobile showroom at 1444 S. Michigan Ave., built in 1905, and the Buick Automobile Co. occupied a showroom at 1454 S. Michigan in 1907. By the 1920s, dozens of other automobile-related buildings were erected along the mile-and-a-half-long corridor between Roosevelt Rd. and 26th Street, creating the city's new "Motor Row." It was comprised of buildings housing automobile dealers and related businesses that were drawn to the street's fine paving (considered excellent for test drives) and its convenient location between Loop businesses and the remaining upper-income residential neighborhoods on the South Side.

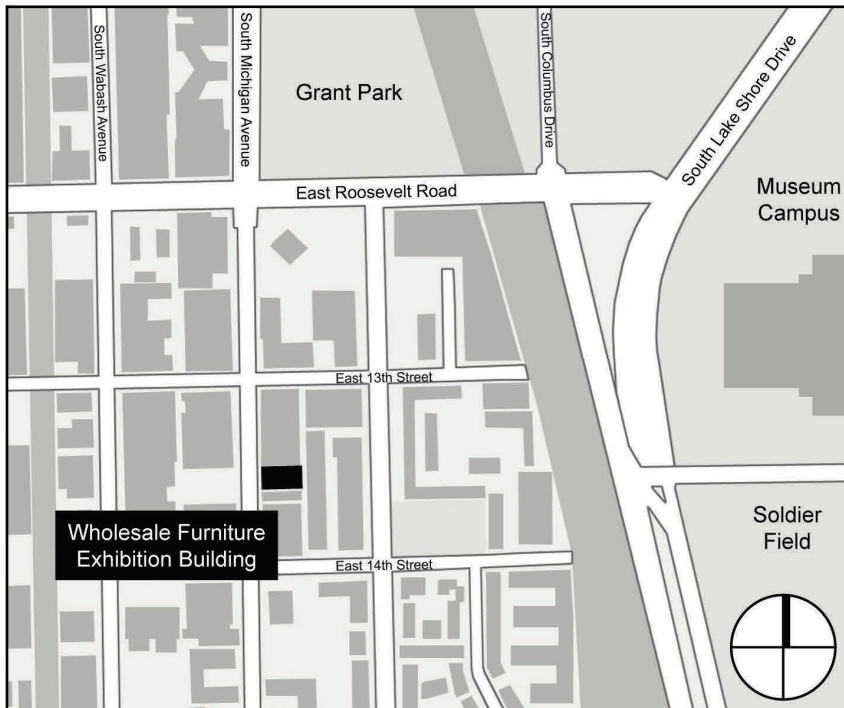
The Rise of "Furniture Row"

Besides automobiles, the Near South Side also became the city's center of wholesale furniture showrooms. Furniture manufacture, like many other industries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, benefitted from having easy access to raw materials, a labor pool, good transportation, and finance. The Great Lakes and Chicago River gave Chicago early access to lumber from the north woods of the Midwest, and as the railroads expanded they provided access to markets.

In the mid-nineteenth century, many furniture manufactures were located along the Chicago



The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is located at 1323-25 S. Michigan Ave. It is a Chicago School-style building with Prairie-style raised brick details. Designed by significant architect Hugh Garden, working for Richard Schmidt, the building was early used for wholesale furniture showrooms and associated uses, and exemplifies the “Furniture Row” of furniture showroom buildings that existed in this part of the Near South Side in the early 20th century.



River, near the lumber yards that supplied them, and within easy reach of the meatpacking byproducts such as leather, hair and glue that were also of use. In Chicago, a large supply of skilled immigrant craftsmen were able to produce a wide variety of goods in relatively small batches, which led to a dense concentration of modest-sized furniture plants that could be innovative and respond easily to market demand. In the 1880s, for example, one firm advertised several thousand varieties of chairs, rockers and cradles. Some of these skilled workers – many of them German immigrants – founded the first local union of what became a national American furniture workers' union.

By 1890, Chicago was recognized as the leading center of both the lumber trade and furniture manufacturing in the United States. By the early twentieth century, however, the structure of the industry had changed significantly. The severe depression of the 1890s destroyed many smaller shops and resulted in the mergers of others, leading to the expansion of the city's larger companies and their increased influence on the furniture trade. Still, by 1900 there were more than 100 furniture manufacturing plants in Chicago.

With consolidation, the Chicago furniture industry continued to grow and remain a thriving and important aspect of Chicago commerce. The Manufacturers Exhibition Building Company, which was located in part in the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building at 1323 S. Michigan Ave., had the largest of several large furniture showroom buildings constructed during the late 1890s and early 1900s to offer exhibition space for wholesalers. As Chicago furniture companies and speculative builders began constructing new commercial loft buildings for the furniture industry, the area immediately south of Roosevelt Road along Michigan, Indiana and Wabash avenues became a vibrant commercial district of wholesale furniture showrooms. Thus "Furniture Row" was created and pushed out some of the already-existing automobile businesses.

Because furniture wholesalers assumed the costs of marketing the furniture to retailers, most wholesale operations maintained offices and display space in a central location in close proximity to others in the trade. By 1910, this district of large exhibition halls that constituted "Furniture Row" included, in addition to the Manufacturer's Exhibition Building at 1319 S. Wabash Ave. and 1304-1324 S. Indiana Ave. (both demolished), the Furniture Exposition Complex at 1406-1412 S. Indiana Ave (demolished), the Central Market Furniture Building at 1414 S. Wabash Ave. (demolished), and the Manufacturers' Furniture Exchange at 1353-1355 S. Wabash Ave. This concentration of exhibition halls served as the first, central furniture market in the city, providing manufacturers with a centralized site where they could display their range of furniture types and styles and bypass the various factories scattered through the city. By this time, Chicago had over 200 furniture manufacturers employing a total workforce of 10,000.

Chicago's geographic location at the center of the American railroad network had fueled the growth of the city's wholesale furniture trade, and the continued expansion of the railroad system along with population growth created a more integrated national market. Chicago's furniture exhibitors became innovative leaders in national marketing by arranging exhibitions, publishing catalogs, initiating installment purchases, and selling through Chicago's preeminent mail-order houses.

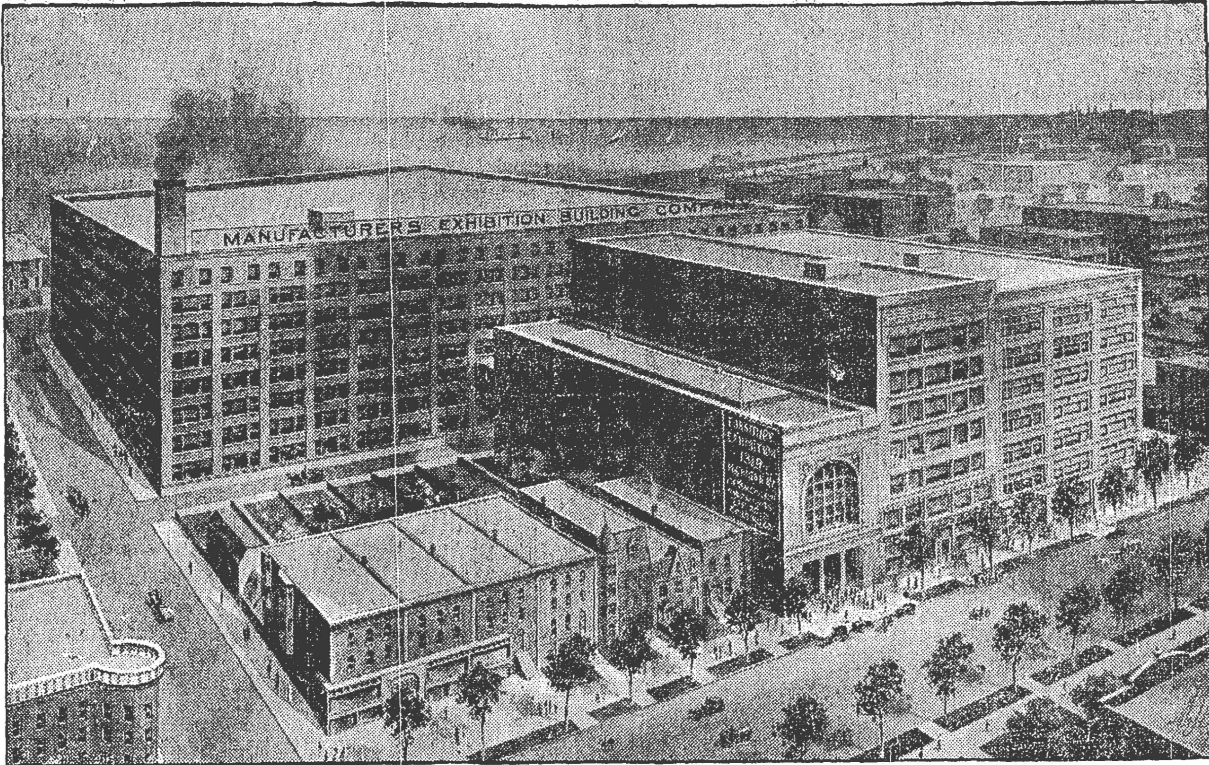
All Hail! Chicago, the World's Greatest Furniture Market!

THIRTEEN NINETEEN—THE BIG BUILDING

The World's Greatest Furniture Exhibition Building

390,650 square feet of floor space covered with the world's best furniture products in staple and special lines. | The best possible values in high grade, medium and low priced furniture of every conceivable classification.

200 attractive lines shown all year, and offering the best possible inducements, and 10,000 dealers come every year to inspect and buy them.



By 1900, the part of the Near South Side centered on South Michigan Avenue south of Roosevelt Road was transitioning from fashionable residential buildings to more densely-built-up commercial buildings built by businesses drawn by the proximity to downtown, including automobile sales and service and wholesale furniture businesses.

This area quickly became the center of Chicago's wholesale furniture showrooms and related businesses. By 1910, a district of showroom buildings had grown up along Indiana, Michigan, and Wabash Avenues. This concentration of furniture showroom buildings served as the first central "furniture mart" in the city, providing manufacturers with a centralized site where they could display their range of furniture types and styles, allowing their retail customers to bypass far-flung furniture factories dispersed across the city.

One of the largest concentrations of these buildings, the Manufacturer's Exhibition Building complex on S. Indiana and Michigan avenues, which included the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building at 1323 S. Michigan Ave., is shown in this rendering published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. (Of this group, only the 1323 S. Michigan Ave. still exists.)

Propelled by the housing boom of the 1920s, furniture-related buildings continued to be built and to thrive in the Near South Side area until 1924, when Chicago's importance in the industry was underscored by the completion of the first phase of construction for the mammoth American Furniture Mart building in the Near North Side Streeterville neighborhood. Described by the *AIA Guide to Chicago* as "a lavishly ornamented monument to the wholesale furniture trade," the building, prominently located on North Lake Shore Drive, covered an entire city block offering 34 acres of rentable space and could handle more than 350 carloads of furniture in a week. Later furniture exhibition buildings were constructed near the new mart. Like the smaller exhibition halls that it supplanted, the Furniture Mart was open only to wholesale buyers, preserving the method of distribution that required that goods flow from manufacturer to wholesaler to retailer.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

The development and construction of the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building in 1904 exemplifies the early 20th century redevelopment of S. Michigan Ave., first as a street of fine residential buildings, then as a commercial street associated with both "Motor Row" and "Furniture Row." A decade earlier, in 1894, a year after the World's Columbian Exposition, the six-story Fairfax Apartments was erected at 1323 S. Michigan Ave. The building contained thirteen spacious apartments of eight rooms each and was described in the press as having a roman-brick facade, with "tooth chiseled stone" and "Venetian" carving. According to the building permit issued by the city, the building was 46 feet wide, extending across the full width of the building lot, and about 86 feet in depth, leaving a substantial back yard. This apartment building was designed by noted Chicago architects Flanders and Zimmerman for Jonathan Clark & Sons, also the contractor for the building's construction. John Flanders had previously worked for William Boyington and the office of Burling and Adler. After an earlier partnership with Charles Furst, in 1886 he joined with William Zimmerman in a partnership that lasted until 1896. William Carby's Zimmerman came to Chicago in 1880 after architecture studies at MIT, and became the junior partner at the firm. Interestingly, Hugh Garden worked in this office in his early years.

In early 1902, an article in the *American Carpet and Upholstery Journal* reported that the headquarters of the Manufacturers Exhibition Company opened with its main building fronting on Indiana Ave., extending north to E. 13th St. and with an entrance through a smaller structure at 1319 S. Michigan, the total offering 350,000 square feet of floor space, "all of which has been taken and is now in use for the exhibition of manufacturers' samples of furniture." The article goes on to report that the smaller building is used for social features and includes a dining hall and parlors where the exhibitors can entertain their customers. It also declares that the company managers, with Joseph S. Meyer as president, have "determined to erect another building," due to the success of the company.

In January 1904, a City of Chicago building permit was issued to Mrs. Cornelia M. Houghton for the rebuilding and expansion of the Fairfax Apartments into a larger commercial loft structure. The Houghton family had been landowners in the area for some time, and had



2

MICHIGAN ARTISAN

The Wholesale Furniture Exhibition Building

1323-25 Michigan Avenue, Chicago

The building where the "MID-SEASON" business ALONE is paying the rent for the Manufacturers exhibiting therein.

LET US send you the evidence (in booklet form) entitled "WHAT OTHERS THINK"

A FEW POINTS

- Direct entrance on Michigan Ave.
- No crossing of bridges or alleys.
- All floors face Michigan Ave.
- Located midway between two Exhibition Buildings.
- Well lighted and ventilated.

The only EXHIBITION BUILDING IN CHICAGO where ALL LINES are kept intact and SALESMEN IN CHARGE every day of the year.

Only a limited amount of space left for July. Manufacturers who are interested should write IMMEDIATELY, giving amount of space desired. List of lines given upon request.

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO

GEO. D. WILLIAMS COMPANY

The development and construction of the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building in 1904 exemplifies the early 20th century redevelopment of South Michigan Avenue from a residential to commercial street. In 1904, an already-existing six-story apartment building, built only a decade before in 1894, was completely redesigned and expanded into the seven-story Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building.

Top: The 1300-block of S. Michigan Ave. looking north, May 27, 1912.

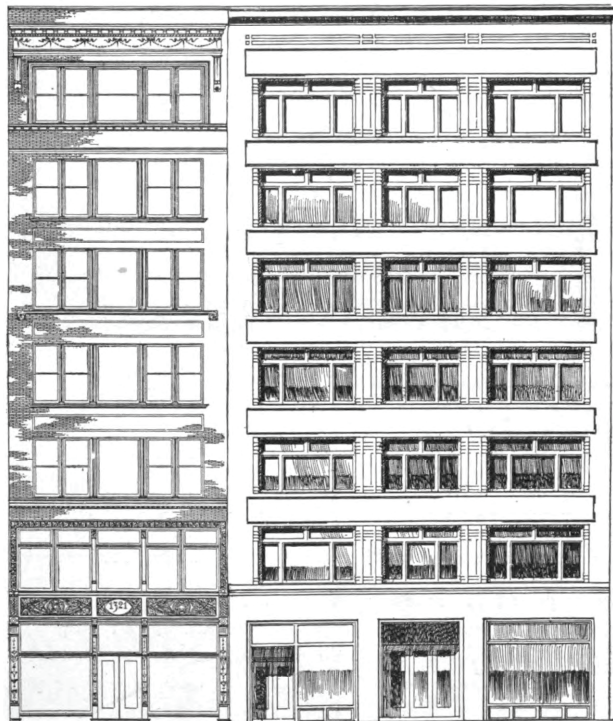
Bottom: The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building, as published in *Michigan Artisan*, May 25, 1905.

"THE CHICAGO EXHIBITION"

"THE BIG BUILDING"

1319 Michigan Avenue

Chicago



ADDITIONAL Floor Space Now Ready. New Building Adjoining Our Old Entrance Building, at 1321-1323-1325 Michigan Avenue, Being Leased for January Occupancy. Size of Floors, 78x130. Diagrams for the asking.

THE MANUFACTURERS EXHIBITION BUILDING COMPANY

1319 Michigan Avenue, Chicago

A 1904 advertisement for leasing space at the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building (*The Furniture Journal*, Vol. 21 October 10, 1904).



A view of the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building, circa 1920.

purchased the 1323 South Michigan Avenue building in 1903. This rebuilt and expanded building was the new extension for the Manufacturers Exhibition Building Company, known as the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building, and helped to make the larger complex the largest group of furniture exhibition buildings in the United States during the early twentieth century. This new building was described in an advertisement after its completion as “the only exhibition building in Chicago where all (furniture) lines are kept intact and salesman in charge every day of the year.”

The new Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building at 1323 S. Michigan was a complete rebuilding and expansion of the older apartment building on the site. Also constructed of brick, architect Hugh Garden, working for Richard Schmidt, increased the height of the existing building by another floor, to a total seven stories, and extended the building all the way to the alley with a forty foot rear addition. Garden redesigned the façade with Chicago School windows and Prairie-style details, removing several feet from the front for reconstruction and a new facade, and dropping the first floor deck to street level. He also redesigned much of the interior structure, which included the removal of interior bearing walls and replacing them with new columns. The rebuilding resulted in the total transformation of the building from a late nineteenth century apartment house into an early twentieth century modern commercial structure.

The contractor for the rebuilding was the William Adams Company, noted for having constructed numerous buildings for prominent Chicago School and Prairie School architects, including several residences designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, one of which was Adams’s own home in the Beverly neighborhood (a designated Chicago Landmark). The Adams Co. also was the builder for the Chapin and Gore Building, designed by Garden and Schmidt in 1904.

According to the *Furniture Journal* in late 1904, the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building was announced as intended ready for occupancy in January 1905. By 1906, historic photographs indicate it was occupied by showrooms for various furniture manufacturing companies.

Building Description

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is a seven-story commercial loft building with a Chicago School- and Prairie-style exterior and an internal wood-frame and iron structure. It is clad with tan iron-spotted brick laid in running bond on its street-facing (west) facade, with Chicago common brick used for side party-wall elevations to the north and south, and for the building's alley elevation on the east. The building is rectangular in plan, 46 feet wide and approximately 120 feet deep.

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building's Michigan Avenue façade is three structural bays wide, with brick ornament concentrated on the piers and spandrels to present a clearly-articulated cellular design of both vertical and horizontal elements. The central bay is three feet narrower than the two flanking bays, emphasizing the vertical proportions of the building. The ground floor is faced in flat, grooved ashlar limestone, and is separated from the building's upper-floor brick facade by a projecting stone cornice that forms the second floor window sills. Above that, window sills are cast iron. The three openings of the ground floor – the central

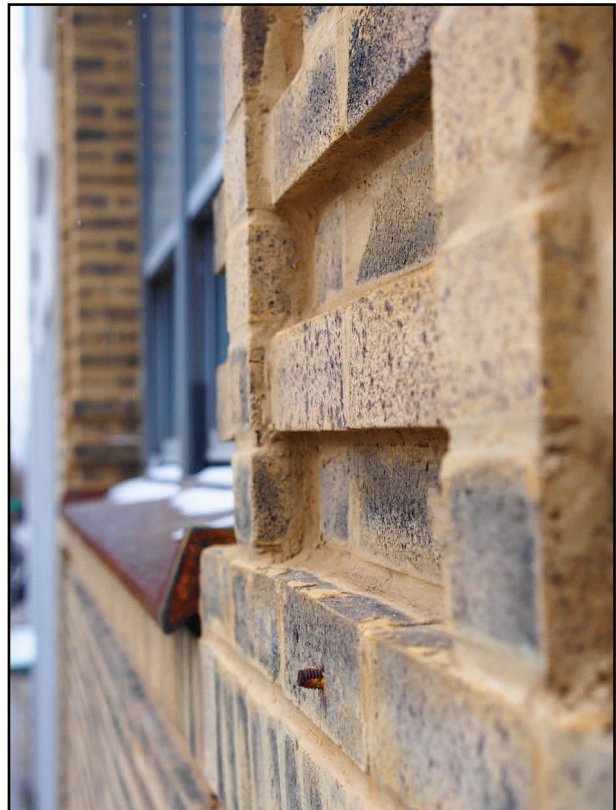


The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is a seven-story loft building with a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The building also features an internal wood-frame and iron structure. The larger furniture wholesale complex to which it was originally adjoined has been demolished.

The building's primary Michigan Avenue-facing west façade (above) features ashlar limestone on the ground level with tan iron-spotted brick laid in a running bond on the upper stories.



Architect Hugh Garden's design for the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building features patterned brickwork consisting of horizontal bands of projecting courses. These horizontal masonry bands are interwoven with vertical columns of projecting brick courses to create a Prairie-style geometric design.



entrance and large storefronts on either side – have limestone surrounds. The inner surround of the entrance retains original “tooth-chiseled” stone decorative ornament.

The building's upper-floor window openings are proportioned in the Chicago School manner, filling the space from vertical pier to pier, and horizontal spandrel to spandrel. Building piers feature the detailing most telling of Hugh Garden's design, with patterned brickwork consisting of horizontal bands of projecting courses. In this case the horizontal bands are interwoven with vertical columns of projecting brick courses to create a Prairie-influenced geometric design. Rather than using continuous piers as often seen on Chicago School buildings, Garden emphasized the cellular proportions of this building by outlining each of the spandrels with a recessed brick course, and extending the outline beyond the outer windows. At the top of the building, Garden again used recessed brick in a double layered course to create a horizontal pattern just below a simply-detailed decorative-metal cornice.

Side and rear elevations are common brick and utilitarian in design, with simple punched-opening windows. The building's rooftop contains a water tank documented as part of the City's historic water-tank survey. The interior was historically open in plan and plainly detailed. Furniture exhibitors would have brought in their samples, some of which were displayed in the first floor windows. Current plans for the building call for a conversion to first-floor commercial and upper-floor rental apartments.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL AND PRAIRIE SCHOOL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building exemplifies the Chicago School, an early modern style of commercial architecture that blossomed as the city was rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1871. It also has ornamentation based on the Prairie style, a progressive style developed in Chicago by architect Frank Lloyd Wright and architects associated with him. As such, this modest commercial loft building exemplifies two of the architectural themes of greatest importance in the history of Chicago.

By the late 19th century, American architects increasingly learned their professions in architecture schools. The most prominent ones, including the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, taught students to design complex modern buildings while cloaking them in historic architectural styles, especially Classicism. By the 1880s and 1890s, however, some architects began to explore modern styles emancipated from tradition and consistent with new structural materials and utilitarian demands, including the Chicago School.

Chicago's booming economy in the late 1880s and '90s led to soaring real estate prices in Chicago's downtown and nearby commercial areas. To take maximum advantage of expensive land, Chicago architects perfected the tall Chicago School commercial building by adopting and advancing new building technologies such the elevator, plate glass, the floating and caisson foundation, and, most importantly, the metal (first iron, then steel) structural frame. Such buildings emphasized clearly-expressed structure through the form and detailing of facades,

creating a rational connection between building exterior and interior. As such, the Chicago School was an important early modern style.

As Hugh Garden, the architect for the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building, noted in an article that he wrote in the Illinois Society of Architects *Monthly Bulletin* in 1939, “Thus the invention of the skyscraper furnished the spring from which the Chicago School flowed as the nucleus of a stream of modern art expression.” Early Chicago School architects, including Daniel Burnham, William Holabird, William LeBaron Jenney, Martin Roche, John Root, and Louis Sullivan, found themselves pioneers of modern architecture. They were among the first to promote the new technologies of skeletal-frame construction in commercial buildings, and they developed a visual aesthetic that embraced and celebrated such construction.

In 1904, critic Arthur David wrote in *Architectural Record*, “It is true, nevertheless, that there is a group of western architects, resident chiefly in Chicago, who are (sic) departing from the allegiance to the strict European tradition which prevails in the East.” These architects derived momentum and inspiration chiefly from the work of both Louis Sullivan (1856 – 1924) and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867 – 1959). The influence of Sullivan’s buildings and his manner of skyscraper design, in particular, was so great that it attracted a group of younger architects who continued and expanded the design precepts of what would eventually be called the “Chicago School.”

The name “Chicago School” first appeared, according to the remembrance of Hugh Garden, in the architectural press of the day, probably coined by one of the eastern architectural writers or critics. Typically characterized by cellular grid elevations with wide three-part Chicago windows set between continuous piers and simple spandrels, Chicago School buildings depended on careful proportions and craftsmanship to create the visual harmony of a building. Contemporary publications also used the phrase “commercial style” to describe the innovative tall buildings of the era. The term was used, as with Chicago School, for buildings primarily seen as less the result of conscious application of style as the result of the requirements of commerce and business principles. Usually calculated for high floor loads, building structural systems were typically column and beam framing in traditional timber, iron, steel or concrete, creating the characteristic articulated cellular wall. Facades tend to be symmetrical, with often a somewhat formal tripartite treatment of base, shaft and top, with ornament concentrated at the base and top and simpler treatment of the shaft. Variations in commercial structures are usually derived from different styles of brickwork used, different treatments of piers and spandrels, and the type of ornament used, whether traditional or innovative.

In Chicago, commercial buildings were often embellished with Prairie-style brick work. Such visually-innovative detailing was derived from the modern houses and small flat buildings created by Frank Lloyd Wright and other young architects such as George Maher and William Drummond in the early 20th century. Wright had worked for Louis Sullivan as a young man, but his architecture diverged from Sullivan's and formed the basis for the Prairie School.

Similar to the Chicago School, the Prairie School-style was based on the reduction of architectural masses, shapes and details to their most essential forms. The Prairie style is also characterized by horizontal lines, flat or hipped roofs with broad overhanging eaves, windows

grouped in horizontal bands, integration with the landscape, good craftsmanship, and discipline in the use of ornament. Horizontal lines were thought to evoke and relate to the native prairie landscape, along with stylized images from nature in the Midwest such as wheat and sumac. Applied ornament was typically rectilinear and geometric, without basis in historic styles.

Like “Chicago School”, the term Prairie School” was not actually used by these architects to describe themselves, but was coined by H. Allen Brooks, one of the first architectural historians to write extensively about these architects and their work. The creative, non-traditional architecture of the Chicago School and the Prairie School retained their vigor until only about 1910 when stylistic revivalism again became popular.

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building exemplifies the blending of these two important schools of architectural thought that arose in Chicago. In the reduction to its essential form expressed in the articulated cellular grid, with a flat roof, wide Chicago window openings and detailed but restrained Prairie-style brickwork, the building demonstrates how aspects of these two related schools were sometimes successfully combined.

ARCHITECTS HUGH M. G. GARDEN AND RICHARD E. SCHMIDT

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building was designed by Hugh Garden as chief designer for the architectural firm of Richard E. Schmidt. **Richard Ernest Schmidt (1865–1958)**, a near-contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright and a follower of Louis Sullivan, was described as a member of the younger generation of the Chicago School. He was born in Bavaria, Germany, but his family moved to Chicago following the Civil War. He studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and worked for a number of architects, including Charles Sumner Frost, before starting his own practice in 1887. By the mid-1890s, **Hugh Mackie Gordon Garden (1873-1961)** began working for Schmidt as the firm's chief designer, while occasionally working on design and renderings for other architectural firms.

A native of Toronto, Canada, Hugh Garden had moved to Chicago as a very young man in the late 1880s, apprenticing with several architectural firms including Flanders & Zimmerman, Henry Ives Cobb, and Shepley, Ruten & Coolidge, though he had no formal architectural training. During the recession that began in 1893, he began to do freelance design and rendering for Howard Van Doren Shaw, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and other prominent architects, which led to his meeting Richard Schmidt. In about 1895 Schmidt asked Garden to join his firm as chief of design

While Schmidt brought business acumen and social connections to the partnership, Garden brought the imagination, inventiveness, and sensitivity of a creative designer. Garden, in particular, helped evolve the firm's progressive approach to design, much in the way that his older contemporaries, Sullivan and Wright, had done. The style and details of Garden's architectural designs were so unique and distinctive that they are often referred to as "Gardenesque."

Garden is known to have been the chief designer of the tower of the Montgomery Ward



Top left: Hugh M.G. Garden (seen in this photo from circa 1893) was the architect of the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building, working on behalf of Richard Schmidt. Garden was a prominent progressive architect in Chicago in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, designing buildings in a personal mix of Chicago School and Prairie styles. Garden worked as the chief designer in Schmidt's office from the mid-1890s until 1906, when their professional partnership was formalized with the establishment of the firm of Schmidt, Garden & Martin.

Top right: Architect Richard E. Schmidt (photo circa 1888).



Architects (left to right) Carl Erickson, Hugh M.G. Garden, and Richard E. Schmidt celebrating Schmidt's birthday in Chicago (c.1955).



Working for Richard Schmidt, Hugh Garden designed a number of Chicago buildings that are individually-designated Chicago Landmarks.

Top: The Madlener House, 4 W. Burton Place, constructed in 1902.

Bottom: The Humboldt Park Boathouse Pavilion, 1301 N. Humboldt Blvd., completed in 1907.



Two additional buildings designed by Garden, working with Schmidt, that are individually-designated Chicago Landmarks are: (top and right) the Schoenhoefen Brewery Powerhouse, 1770 S. Canalport St., built in 1902; and (bottom) the Montgomery Ward & Co. Catalog House, 618 W. Chicago Ave., built 1907-1908.



building (6 N. Michigan, tower demolished) in 1898 – a traditional design that, however, points to the influence of Louis Sullivan. Other buildings designed by Garden, working for Schmidt, include the Madlener House (4 W. Burton Pl.) from 1899, a masterly modern residential design with horizontal emphasis, and the Schoenhofen Brewery Powerhouse (18th St. and Canalport) from the same year, which institutes Prairie-style details on a functional design. All of these buildings are Chicago Landmarks.

In 1906, the Schmidt-Garden partnership was formalized under the name of Richard E. Schmidt, Garden & Martin, which was shortened a few years later to just Schmidt, Garden and Martin. The third partner was Edgar D. Martin (1871-1951), a skilled structural engineer who was able to solve technical problems associated with large industrial buildings and modern materials, which enabled the firm to design the Montgomery Ward & Co. Warehouse (1906-08; 600 W. Chicago Ave., a designated Chicago Landmark), one of the first large buildings to be constructed of reinforced concrete, and Chicago's fullest expression of the material to that time.

Schmidt, Garden and Martin also designed residential buildings, more than 300 hospitals, and public structures such as the Prairie-style Humboldt Park Boathouse (1301 N. Humboldt Blvd., 1907, a designated Chicago Landmark). The Dwight Building from 1911 marks the end of Hugh Garden's distinctive Chicago School style, though he went on to work with Richard Schmidt until the end of their careers.

LATER HISTORY

Within a few years, changes in the use of the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building reflected the rapid transformation and growth that Chicago was experiencing as a center of commerce in the early 20th century. Mrs. Houghton owned the building until 1909. Then, no longer used for the furniture industry, it became part of "Motor Row" and the still-burgeoning automobile-related businesses that lined much of South Michigan Avenue to Cermak Road and beyond. Tenants in the building between 1909 and 1912 included a number of automobile-related companies, including Grabowsky Power Wagons, Dahl Punctureless Tire Company, and the temporary headquarters of the E.R. Thomas Motor Branch Company. Later it was used for automobile exhibitions for manufacturers such as REO Motor Car Company, the Matheson Company, and Thomas Flyer, and according to a sign on the building in a period photograph, it appears to have at one time housed an office for the American Automobile Association, founded in 1902.

Photographs of the street from the 1920s illustrate that automobile companies were still the primary occupants at that time, but gradually they moved away and miscellaneous commercial tenants moved in. In recent years, with the redevelopment of Prairie Avenue and the development of Central Station and Museum Park as residential areas, much of the Near South Side, including South Michigan Avenue, has seen new residential high-rise buildings and older buildings rehabilitated for residential or retail use. Of the furniture-related buildings that were centered in this area before 1920, the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is one of only two remaining. All the other buildings of the Manufacturer's Exhibition Building Company complex, of which it was a part, have been replaced by new construction. The only other

known wholesale furniture showroom building still extant, The Manufacturers' Furniture Exchange Building located at 1353 S. Wabash, is an eight-story red-brick Renaissance Revival-style structure that was constructed in 1906. It is currently occupied by a storage company. Currently empty, plans are for the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building to be rehabilitated for rental apartments and first-floor commercial use.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Section 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a final recommendation of landmark designation for an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art or other object with the City of Chicago if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of historic integrity to convey its significance.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois or the United States.

- The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is one of the last extant structures that were built as part of Chicago's "Furniture Row," comprised of buildings built for Chicago's wholesale furniture trade in the early 20th century. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, furniture was produced on a large scale in Chicago due to its position as a commercial and transportation crossroads. Wholesale showroom buildings such as this were an important part of the furniture industry.
- The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building exemplifies the history of the development of South Michigan Avenue from early residential to commercial uses in the early 20th century. The building originally housed wholesale furniture showrooms as part of "Furniture Row," the cluster of such properties in this area in the early 20th century. Later in its history, the building was the location of automobile-related companies as part of the "Motor Row" that was also a significant aspect of the city's early 20th-century history.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building is an excellent example of a Chicago School-style commercial loft building with Prairie-style details, exemplifying two early modern architectural styles of great significance to the history of Chicago. The building's design exemplifies fine craftsmanship in brick.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- Hugh M.G. Garden, working for Richard E. Schmidt, was an important early 20th-century progressive architect in Chicago. Working for Schmidt, first as the firm's chief designer and then as partner, Garden designed numerous significant buildings that exemplify the city's important role as a center of innovative architectural design in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Hugh Garden and Richard Schmidt designed some of Chicago's most significant Chicago School buildings, including (among others) the Madlener House, Schoenhofen Brewery Powerhouse, Humboldt Park Boathouse, and Montgomery Ward Warehouse, all designated Chicago Landmarks.
- The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building exemplifies Garden's combination of the Chicago School and Prairie styles, with a facade visually expressing the building's underlying structure and geometric brick detailing.

Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building retains good physical integrity on its exterior, displayed through its historic location, overall design, historic materials, details and ornamentation. The building retains good architectural integrity in its exterior design and the structural elements of both the exterior and interior. The building's overall historic massing is intact. The primary west façade retains its original proportions and cellular articulation with bay-wide window openings. In addition, virtually all of its original detailing, including projecting horizontal bands interlaced with vertical elements, the horizontal outlines of the spandrels, and the decorative brick cornice band remain intact. First-floor limestone cladding, including some of the detailing, remains.

Changes to the exterior of the building include replacement windows and storefronts, plus deteriorated first-floor limestone where a later, non-historic applied panel system (now removed) was attached to the storefronts. Current plans for the rehabilitation of the building are to install historically-compatible storefronts and windows and to repair, and if necessary replace in kind, first-floor limestone.

Despite these changes, the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building retains its ability to express its architectural and historical values as a significant Chicago School-style commercial loft building with Prairie-style details, designed by significant architect Hugh Garden working for Richard Schmidt, and exemplifying the historic importance of the city's "Furniture Row" and "Motor Row" to Chicago. The building's historic integrity is preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express such values.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the “significant historical and architectural features” of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its evaluation of the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building, the Commission recommends that the significant historical and architectural features of the Building be identified as:

- All elevations, including rooflines, of the building.

For the purpose of Commission building permit review, the building's north, south, and east common-brick walls are considered secondary elevations.

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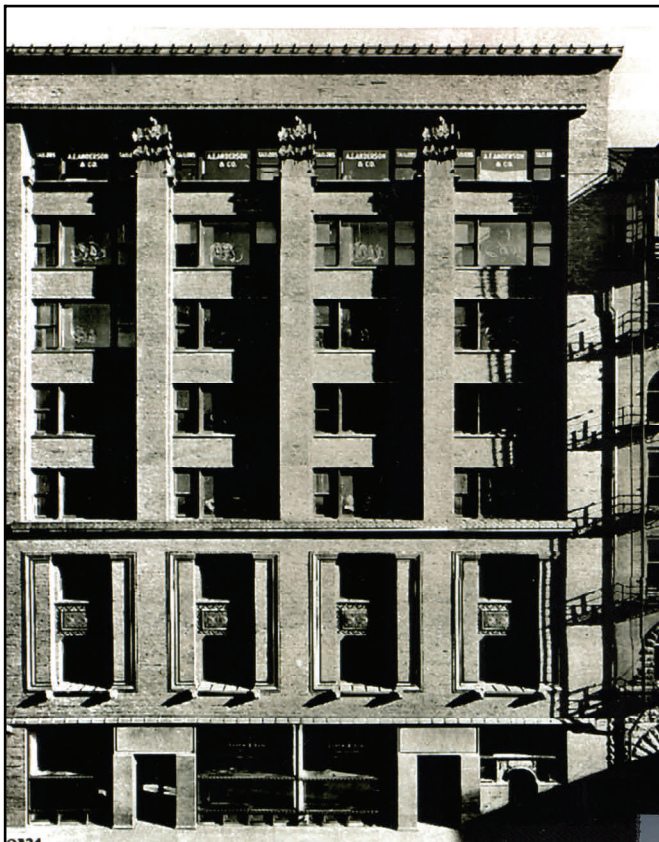
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The contractor for the Wholesale Furniture Company Building was the William Adams Company, noted for constructing numerous buildings for prominent Chicago School and Prairie School architects. Adams Co. projects included the Chapin and Gore Building, 63 E. Adams St. , designed in 1904 by Garden and Schmidt, and Adams' own Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house at 9326 S. Pleasant Ave. (both designated Chicago Landmarks).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Illustrations

MacRostie Historic Advisors: cover (left, top right, bottom right), pp. 5, 13, & 14.

Chicago History Museum: cover (top middle), p.9 (bottom) & 11.

Chicago Daily Tribune, February 7, 1909: p. 7.

Michigan Artisan, May 25, 1906: p. 9 (top) & 27.

The Furniture Journal, October 10, 1904: p. 10.

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(top left & top right).

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An advertisement, published in 1921 in the *Automobile Trade Directory*, vol. 19, no. 2, for the Zinke Company, an automobile parts and equipment company located in the Wholesale Furniture Exposition Building.

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Printed June 2014; revised and reprinted August 2014.