

decoration combined with influences from the Sullivanesque school which had been developing in Chicago during Bourgeois' time there. After completing his contract in San Francisco, Bourgeois moved to Los Angeles, California, where he designed residences and commercial buildings. He also worked on the design for the house of the well-known painter of flowers, Paul deLongpre.

Bourgeois married deLongpre's daughter, Alice, in New York in 1901, and for the following seven years he worked as head designer for a New York firm. Thereafter he worked freelance in New York and the Northeast United States, except for a two-and-a-half year period of employment with another firm.

After the choice of his design for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar in 1920, Bourgeois moved first to Chicago and subsequently to the suburb of Wilmette. Apart from his continued work on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, he designed a studio for himself and a caretaker's house adjacent to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar site. He also designed a house in nearby Glencoe, and submitted a joint design with two others for the Tribune Building competition in Chicago which received an honorable mention.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkar

In 1905, Bourgeois submitted a design for the League of Nations Peace Palace competition at The Hague which he had produced with Paul Blumenstein. Alice Bourgeois had also worked on the presentation drawings. The main part of this design was for an eight-sided building.

In the early 1900s, Bourgeois and his wife had come into association with the Bahá'í Faith through Marie Watson and Mary Hanford Ford. He later came to know Roy Wilhelm for whom he designed a house in 1908. In 1907, Wilhelm was going to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha and Bourgeois asked him to take with him a copy of the Peace Palace design along with a photograph of some ornament from the deLongpre house. According to Wilhelm, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's only comment on the items was that the Bahá'í Temple should have nine sides.

Bourgeois reworked the design and submitted it to the newly formed Bahai Temple Unity Executive Board in 1909 when that body was reviewing designs by a number of people. He thoroughly revised this design in 1917-18, and during this period built a plaster model of it with the assistance of several artist friends including the sculptor J. A. Meliodon, Alice Bourgeois' uncle. This model was viewed by numbers of people between 1918 and its exhibition at the Bahai Temple Unity Convention in New York in 1920 at which time it was chosen as the basic design for the proposed Mashriqu'l-Adhkar in Wilmette.

After the selection of his design in 1920, Bourgeois continued to refine it, in part because of the changed proportions required by scaling down the design to fit the site. He reworked the designs for the exterior in a loft borrowed from Holabird and Roche in the downtown Loop district of Chicago in the early 1920s, and later completed his interior designs in his studio in Wilmette in 1928.

Bourgeois' final design envisioned an exterior which shaded from granite-gray steps to a pure white dome and featured elaborate cast-bronze window grills and

entrance doors. His final interior design called for an intricately patterned inlaid floor, marble skirtings, pietra-dura wall panels, and high-relief stucco ceilings pierced by shallow stained glass domes in the bays around the first floor. The rotunda was to rise upward in tiers of elaborate cast-glass arches alternating with mosaic panels and filled with gilded, cast-bronze grills to a soaring dome of colored Tiffany glass.

Bourgeois died in August 1930, leaving a large body of drawings some of which were used as the basis for the completion of the Wilmette building during the following decades. The erection of the exterior proceeded under the supervision of Allen McDaniel and the interior is principally the work of Alfred Shaw.

Although having a remarkable facility for pencil drawing, Bourgeois was not a trained architect in the modern sense. (Formal professional education for architects only developed in the United States when Bourgeois was already in his middle years.) He was primarily a designer who had an extraordinary ability to draw ornament with pencil. He could not draw with pen and ink, nor could he paint. The well-known colored perspectives of his Wilmette design that circulated in the 1920s and later are by artists who were hired to paint them from Bourgeois' drawings. The level of Bourgeois' skill and his intentions are best appreciated from his many superbly handled drawings of ornamental detail.

Bibliography

The most important sources on Bourgeois' work generally and specifically on the Wilmette design are in the National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois. Relevant collections include the Bourgeois Papers; Marie Watson Papers; Roy Wilhelm Papers; and the Records of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

There are many periodical articles from the 1920s that are of use but most need to be used with care. The principal source for family details is Françoise Gaudet-Smet. n.d. "Jean-Baptiste Louis Bourgeois: Mon Oncle" in Louis Bourgeois; *Un Homme et Son Oeuvre*. n.p. On the Wilmette design, the principal published discussions are in: Allen B. McDaniel. 1951. *The Spell of the Temple*. New York: Vantage Press; Bruce W. Whitmore. 1984. *The Dawning Place: The Building of a Temple, the Forging of the North American Bahá'í Community*. American Bahá'í Community. Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust; and, R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram. 1987. *Studies in Babi and Bahá'í History, Volume Four: Music, Devotions, and Mashriqu'l-Adhkar*. Los Angeles: Kalimat Press.

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