

WARFIELD HOUSE

1624 MAINE STREET, QUINCY, ILLINOIS

J. L. SILSBEE, ARCHITECT, 1886

ROMANESQUE REVIVAL STYLE

In 1885-86, the prominent Chicago architect, Joseph L. Silsbee, designed and built one of Quincy's major residences--the Richardsonian Romanesque pink quarry-faced Kasota stone house, along with a stone barn, for the well-known Quincy merchant and banker, William S. Warfield. The cost was \$40,000, a large sum for that time. The elaborate terra-cotta exterior trimmings, intricate carved stone, and red slate roof add to the picturesque quality of the monumental residence, with its elements of Queen Anne style in the use of dormers and gables. With its irregular massing of exterior elements, it is an excellent and urbane example of the style of architecture so popular at the time. (Silsbee was the first employer of Frank Lloyd Wright in 1887-88).

The interior of the residence originally was finished naturally in a variety of fine woods. Cherry is used extensively, along with red oak, sycamore, and Georgia pine. Originally, the stairway, with its classical balusters, extended three stories in height and was designed as a vertical extension of the space of the central living hall, terminating at the entrance of the third floor ballroom. In spite of changes, the interior is still impressive in its complex but generally open plan of rooms, laid out around the large central living hall, which is dominated by a massive stone fireplace. The two-light wall sconces on the first floor and the five-light wall sconce on the landing are reproductions of sconces from H. H. Richardson's famous Glessner House in Chicago, built in the same year. The large 17th Century crystal chandelier hanging in the stairway is a recent addition.

The west room was originally the library, with elaborate carved bookcases (now destroyed), natural cherry woodwork, rich yellow-green painted plaster walls with deep blue and brick red stenciling. Original stencils on the plaster have been reproduced on the present wall covering, but colors have been lightened. The brass and crystal chandelier in this room, and in the adjacent parlor, were formerly located in a mid-19th Century Adams County residence, and are believed to be by the Coronelious Lamp Company, c. 1850. The parlor reflects the architect's eclectic taste in interior design, with its Gothic ornamental plaster ceiling. An elaborate metal fireplace liner, still intact, is an exact duplicate of one used a few years later by Louis Sullivan in his world-famous Auditorium Theatre in Chicago. The wall covering approaches the style of the original, which had a small flocked pattern in a soft gold color.

The dining room has been restored as much as possible to the original. In this room, Silsbee's ingenious interior shutters have been reproduced at two windows. The iridescent green fireplace face tile, with brass fittings, is the only original tile left in the home. The signed low relief insert tile would indicate that it is a design of Arthur Osborne, chief designer of the J. & J. G. Low Art Tile Works, Chelsea, Massachusetts. Original stencils found on the plastered walls have been repainted in original colors on a new canvas surface, preserving the originals underneath. The Tiffany ceiling fixture is a recent addition. The morning room, overlooking the porch, was undoubtedly an impressive room when it still contained its elaborate fireplace and flanking glass front display cases. This filled the entire east wall. One of the major decorative features which has remained intact over the years is the unusual stained glass--in the double doors of the living hall, on the stair landing, and in two of the five second floor bedrooms.