

**LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**



# **Dr. Philip Weintraub House**

**3252 W. Victoria St.**

---

**Final Landmark recommendation adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks,  
September 3, 2009.**



**CITY OF CHICAGO**  
**Richard M. Daley, Mayor**

**Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning**  
**Patricia A. Scudiero, Commissioner**

## **Cover**

**Top: The Philip Weintraub House. Left bottom: Looking down into the living room from the two-story stairhall. Bottom right: The Edgar Miller-designed sculpture over the living room fireplace.**

*The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose ten 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 the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.*

# **Dr. Philip Weintraub House**

**3252 W. Victoria St.**

**Built: 1940-41**  
**Architect: Andrew N. Rebori**  
**Artist: Edgar Miller**

The Dr. Philip Weintraub House is a significant and important house in the history of early modern single-family houses in Chicago. It exemplifies the first wave of modern houses built in the decade before World War II that would influence post-World War II middle-class house design in the Chicago area and beyond. Both inside and out, the Weintraub House combines the International Style and Art Moderne Style, with its rectilinear, asymmetrical forms and composition, flat roofs, open-air rooftop porch, lack of historical detailing, “porthole” window, built-in cabinetry, curved moldings and recessed cove lighting. Its modestly-sized interior has a dramatic sense of spatial expansiveness, with the living room opening upwards into a two-story window-walled stairwell in front and a corresponding rear window wall, both allowing transparency and view of the outdoors.

The building is the work of Andrew N. Rebori, one of Chicago’s most unusual and idiosyncratic architects of the twentieth century, and exemplifies his innovations in early modern design and spatial planning. Rebori also designed the Fisher Studio Homes at 1209 N. State Pkwy. in 1936 and the Madonna della Strada Chapel at Loyola University Chicago in 1939 (both Chicago Landmarks). The interior has three handsome artworks by Chicago artist Edgar Miller, whose other significant work includes that for Rebori’s Fisher Studio Homes, the Trustee System Service Building by Thielbar & Fugard (also a Chicago Landmark), and a number of artist studio apartments in the Old Town and Mid-North neighborhoods.

## **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND DESCRIPTION**

The Dr. Philip Weintraub House is located in the Hollywood Park neighborhood, within the larger North Park community area on Chicago's Northwest Side. The area was annexed to Chicago in 1889, but remained largely undeveloped until the years after World War I when it burgeoned as a predominantly residential neighborhood of single-family houses, two- and three-flats, and larger corner and courtyard apartment buildings.

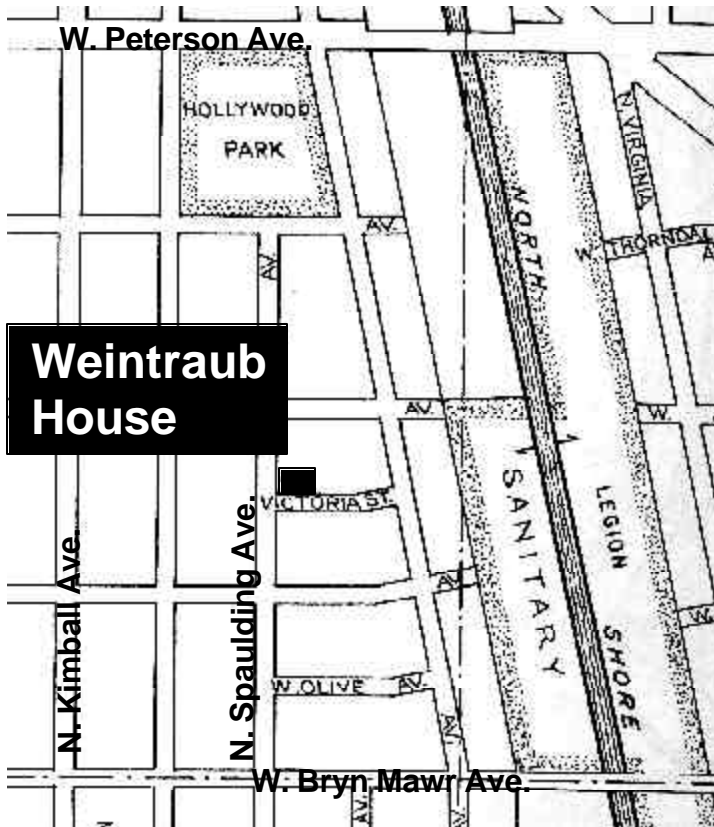
In 1940, Dr. Philip Weintraub, a young dentist who lived and worked in the North Lawndale neighborhood on Chicago's West Side, bought a large corner lot on the northeast corner of W. Victoria St. and N. Spaulding Ave. He hired architect Andrew N. Rebori and artist Edgar Miller to design a small inexpensive house for his family. The house was designed to also house a small office for Dr. Weintraub's dental practice.

In the context of the neighborhood, the Weintraub House has substantial front, side and rear yards, occupying only roughly 40 percent of the lot. The building is cubic in overall form and rectilinear in most details, with plainly-detailed flat common-brick walls and flat roofs. Its overall composition is asymmetrical, with a "zig-zag" plan that creates a front-elevation recess for the front door and a large corner window wall lighting a two-story stairwell, while a corresponding recess on the rear elevation physically and visually shelters a patio from Spaulding. A roughly five-foot-high brick wall extends the western wall plane of the building to the north lot line, providing additional back-yard privacy. On the eastern end is a one-story wooden garage topped by a second-story covered porch.

The house is built of common brick, which provides a rougher texture than face brick. A brown stained wood is used for the garage and rooftop deck. Windows in a variety of shapes and configurations are used, including the large, multi-paned corner "window wall" which lights the two-story stair well, rectangular casement windows, and a small, multi-paned round window to the left of the front door.

Exterior applied decoration is almost non-existent. The building's decorative character is dependent upon overall composition in terms of massing and fenestration and the color and texture of the brick walls. Some simple decorative brick work is found at the rooftop parapet. In addition, the garage wing has vertical board-and-batten planks with flat-headed scalloped edges.

Inside, the Weintraub House is relatively modest in size. A small entrance vestibule provides access to both an inner hallway leading to the first-floor living room and to a space originally used as Dr. Weintraub's dental office (now converted to other uses). The living room has a sparsely-detailed fireplace with rounded edges but no decorative surround or mantel. A rear wall of small glass panes set in fixed metal sash provides views of the back yard and patio. A small kitchen at the rear of the house provides access to the patio.



The Dr. Philip Weintraub House, built in 1940-41, is located in the Hollywood Park neighborhood on Chicago's Northwest Side.



The Weintraub House was designed by Rebori in a personal and evolving modern architectural style that combined the rectilinear, boxy forms, unadorned wall surfaces, flat roofs, and rooftop decks of the International Style with a few touches of Art Moderne, including a round “porthole” window next to the front entrance of the house. The large multi-paned, wrap around window lights a spatially-dramatic interior stairwell connecting the first-floor living room and second-floor corridor.





**Top:** A view from the stairwell landing looking down into the living room. The rear multi-paned window wall looks out onto a small patio. **Bottom:** The living room is ornamented by a low-relief sculpture by artist Edgar Miller above a sparsely-detailed, round-edged fireplace.

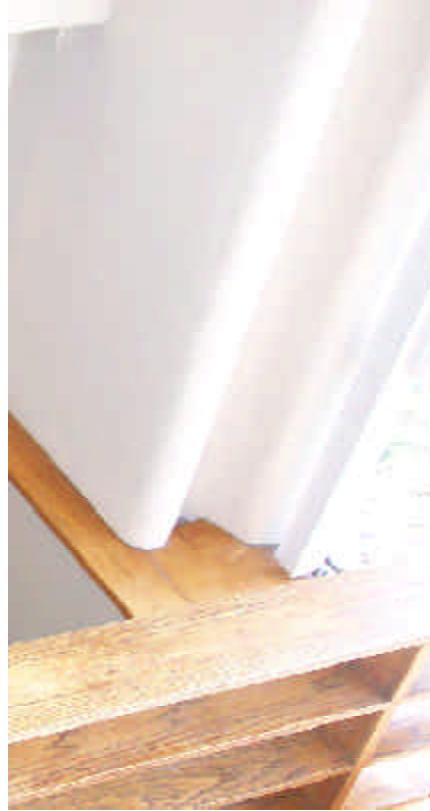


**Top: A view looking down on the living room fireplace from the second-floor corridor, which connects two bedrooms and a bathroom. Bottom: A view from the living room looking up to the stairwell window wall and landing, with its built-in wood window seat.**





**Two views of the stairwell from the second-floor corridor: (top) looking out towards the intersection of Victoria and Spaulding; and (bottom) down onto the window seat.**



The interior of the Weintraub House has Art Moderne - style details in rounded edges of the walls and the living room fireplace, as well as recessed cove lighting around the stairwell window wall. Built-in cabinets and vanities provide storage.



Art works by Edgar Miller created for the Weintraub House: (top) an Art Deco-style low-relief sculpture located over the living-room fireplace; (bottom left) a large decorative tile showing an idealized female figure on a beach; and (bottom right) a decorative door pull on the second-floor corridor closet.

The living room extends spatially upwards into a two-story stairwell that is lighted with a wall of windows that wraps around a corner of the building facing the intersection of Victoria and Spaulding. A stair landing is outfitted with a simply-designed wooden window seat. The stair leads to an open second-floor corridor that provides access to a bathroom and two bedrooms, one of which opens onto a second-floor covered porch atop the garage.

Although modestly scaled, the interior of the Weintraub House has handsome details influenced by both Art Moderne and the International Style. The living-room window wall provides a sense of transparency and visual connection to the outside that reflects International Style precepts. Ceiling and wall edges are often rounded in a manner typical of Art Moderne to provide a sense of visual “softness.” Concealed cove lighting accents the stairwell and its built-in window seat. Built-in cabinets original to the house are found in the second-floor bedrooms, bathroom, and corridor. The bathroom also has a glass-block wall, also typical of the Art Moderne, separating the bathtub from a built-in dressing table.

Edgar Miller provided small-scale art works for the house interior. These include an Art Deco-influenced low-relief sculpture of an idealized “goddess,” found over the living room’s rounded-corner fireplace; a small recessed glazed tile of an idealized female nude on a beach, found in the bathroom; and a metal door pull on a built-in cabinet on the second-floor corridor, just outside the bathroom.

The Dr. Phillip Weintraub House was rated “orange” in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey.

## **MODERN SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE ARCHITECTURE IN CHICAGO BEFORE WORLD WAR II**

The Dr. Philip Weintraub House is a significant early modern house, combining elements of the International Style, Art Moderne, and Rebori’s own interest in common brick and spatially-dramatic, yet intimate, interiors. The building has the rectilinear forms and lack of applied historic ornament associated with the International Style, plus a round window and interior details typical of Art Moderne-style houses. Inside, the house combines an ingenious use of space with finely crafted architectural details and art work to provide a sense of “style-on-a-budget.” The Weintraub House reflects the beginning interest among Chicagoans for modern-styled and –planned houses before World War II.

The history of single-family-house architecture in the United States in general, and Chicago in particular, in the early years of the twentieth century combined both innovation and tradition. For example, in the decade prior to World War I, progressively-designed single-family houses were being designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, along with followers and imitators, that today are collectively known as the “Prairie School.” Prairie-style houses such as the Robie House on Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood (built by Wright in 1909 and designated a Chicago Landmark in 1971) or the Miller House in

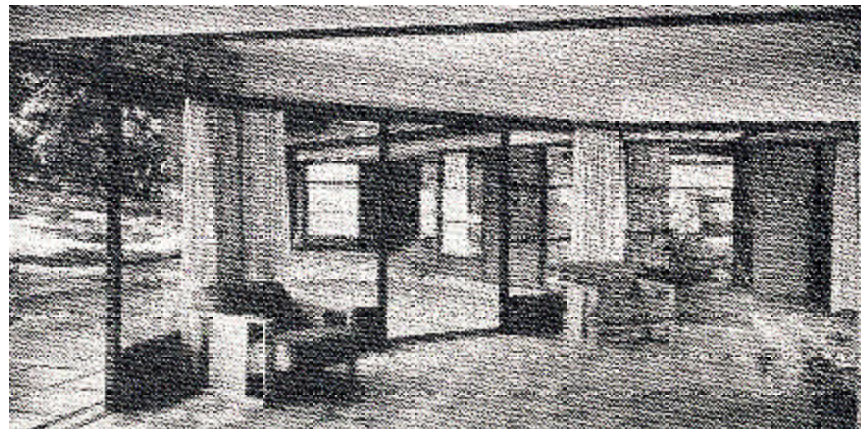
the South Shore neighborhood (designed by John Van Bergen in 1915 and designated in 1993) were horizontal in proportion and design, built of either stucco or brick, had overhanging hip roofs, and were detailed with restrained non-historic ornament, typically found in decorative-window sash or masonry work. Inside, Prairie houses typically had flowing interiors that created a sense of expansiveness.

Despite the prominence and importance of Prairie-style houses in the narrative of American architectural history, by far the majority of single-family houses built in Chicago in the first four decades of the 1900s were designed in historic architectural styles. Classical and Tudor revival styles were the most common, although Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial revival styles achieved popularity by the end of the 1920s, encouraged by Hollywood images of movie sets and movie stars' houses. Chicago bungalows, with Prairie-influenced forms often combined with historical detailing around doors and in decorative windows, were a popular middle- and working-class building type that combined both traditional and progressive architectural influences. These houses might use these styles in an "academically-correct" manner, or they might be quite eclectic or only loosely based on historic styles, but they reflected the common tastes of Chicagoans in the years between 1900 and 1930.

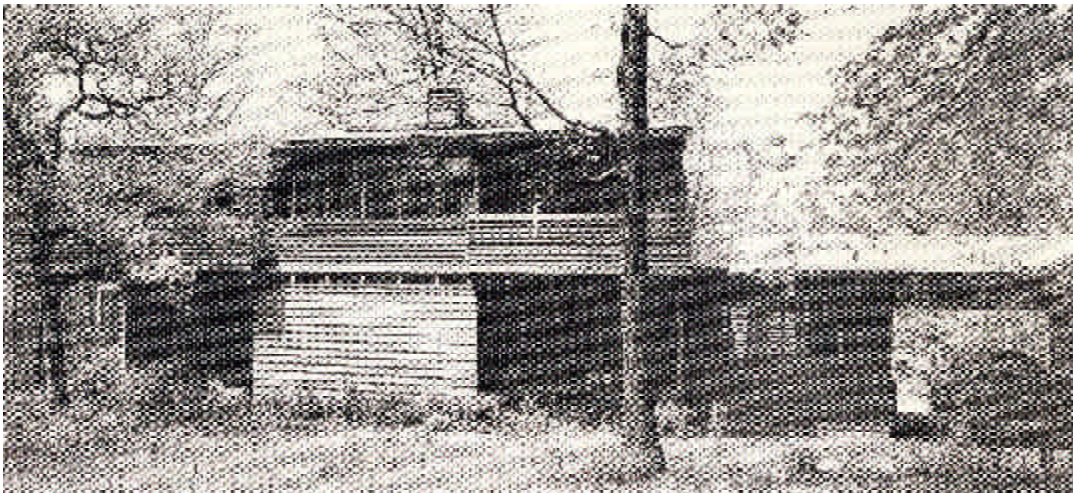
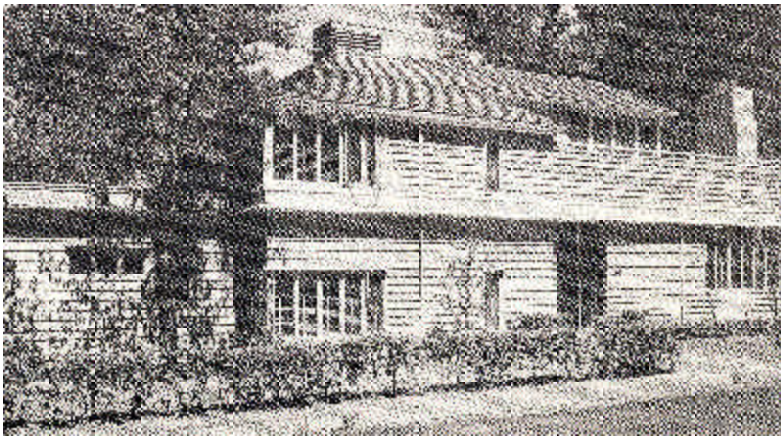
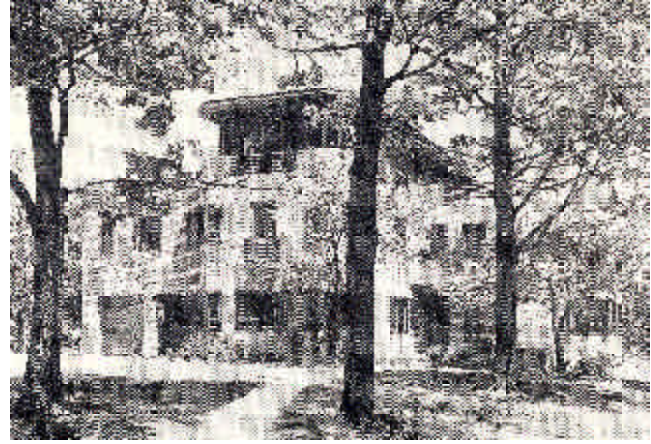
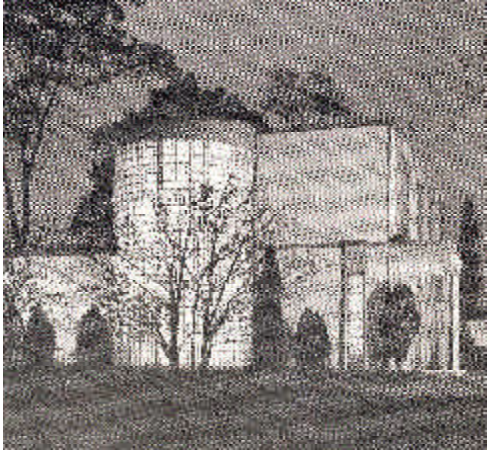
One commonality to most Chicago houses built in the years between World War I and II is the use of brick. In the aftermath of the Chicago Fire of 1871, which devastated much of the city as it existed then, the Chicago City Council had enacted strict fire codes in 1875 that eliminated wooden structures within a "fire limits" boundary that took in most of what was then Chicago. Most outlying Chicago neighborhoods, including Hollywood Park, were annexed in 1889 and after, and they remained outside this "masonry-only" area. Yet Chicago builders and home owners tended to prefer brick houses, and these predominated even where fire codes allowed wood-frame construction.

The use of brick, and the availability of a variety of brick colors and textures, encouraged Chicago architects to utilize the inherent physical qualities of brick as decorative accents to buildings. This reflected the ongoing influence of the Arts-and-Crafts movement, a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century architectural and artistic movement that encouraged "honest" construction and use of materials while discouraging applied historic ornament. Buildings should be constructed in a manner that could be easily understood visually, while building materials should provide all or most of the decorative quality for a building through color and texture.

It was not until the 1930s that "modern" houses, largely unornamented with historic architectural forms and ornament, began to appear in the United States with any frequency, and such houses remained relatively uncommon compared with the continuing appeal of historical styles such as the Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival. Modernism as it applied to American single-family houses expressed more than one strain of sources. Exceedingly rare were houses designed in the "pure" International Style, which was conceived in the 1910s and 1920s as the visual expression of machine aesthetics in building design by a number of architects, almost all European. This style remained unnamed until a Museum of Modern Art exhibit in 1934, where the curators, Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, perceived common visual and spatial



The 1920s and 1930s saw relatively few houses designed in modern styles. Top left: Rudolf Schindler's Lovell Beach House in Newport Beach, California (1924), was an early American example of the International Style designed by a European-born architect. Top right: The Mandell House (1934) was designed outside New York City by Edward Durrell Stone, who embraced the International Style early in his career. Middle left: The Jacobs House, designed in 1936, is Frank Lloyd Wright's first "Usonian" house, conceived as an inexpensive, modern house for middle-income families. Middle right: The Sutor House, built near Portland, Oregon, in 1938, exemplifies Pietro Belluschi's efforts to create modern house designs from local Pacific Coast vernacular architecture. Bottom: The Bauer House, also designed in 1938 by architect H. H. Harris, reflects an effort among California architects to use "ranch" architecture as a prototype for modern house designs.



**In the Chicago suburbs, local architects designed a number of cutting-edge modern houses. Among these are: (top left) the Bruning House by Keck & Keck, built in 1935 in Wilmette; (top right) a brick house in Wilmette built in 1929 by Howard Fisher for himself; (middle) a wood-sided house in Evanston designed by Philip Will for himself in 1937; and the Rinaldo House by Paul Schweikher, built in 1940 in Downers Grove.**

elements among the designs of these architects. These elements included asymmetrical compositions, smooth undecorated walls (often made of stucco), bands of windows, and free-flowing interior spaces. Flat roofs were often designed as outdoor rooftop terraces and decks.

Arguably, the most significant of these early International Style houses were designed by European-born architects Richard Neutra and Rudolf Schindler, who came to the United States in the World War I period and settled in the Los Angeles area, where they designed a number of starkly modern, International Style houses. Two of the best known of these were designed for health and fitness “guru” Philip Lovell and include a hillside-perched house of many levels designed by Neutra in 1928-29 and a concrete beach house on stilts designed by Schindler in 1925-26. Another is the Walter Gropius House in Lincoln, Massachusetts, designed by the architect for himself in 1936.

By the mid-1930s there were American-born architects who were working in the International Style, including Edward Durrell Stone and Gregory Ain. Stone designed an expansive house for the Mandell family in Bedford Hills, New York, in 1933-34, while Ain’s clients included A. O. Beckman, who commissioned a Los Angeles house in 1938.

Also in the 1930s, other forms of modernism conceived by American architects and builders began to be embraced. These include the Art Moderne, the Usonian houses of Frank Lloyd Wright, and early examples of “ranch” houses built on the West Coast, predominantly in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas of California and in Portland, Oregon, and its suburbs.

The Art Moderne was a style based on smooth wall surfaces, curved bays and walls, and “streamlined” ornament that gave a visual sense of motion. Flat roofs provided spaces for outdoor terraces as with the International Style. Rectangular casement windows predominated, although round “porthole” windows were used as well.

Frank Lloyd Wright, after a relatively inactive period in the 1920s and early 1930s, regained popular prominence with Fallingwater, a dramatically-designed and –sited country house outside of Pittsburgh, as well as for the development of the Usonian house. Conceived as affordable, practical, small-scale houses suitable for mid-century family life, Usonian houses were one-story in height, built of modest materials, predominantly with brick and wood siding, had modern, free-flowing interiors with built-in furniture, cabinets and other accessories. Lacking even the applied ornament of decorative-glass windows of Wright’s Prairie-style houses, Usonian houses anticipated the low-rise suburban range houses of post-World War II America.

At roughly the same time as Wright’s first Usonian houses in the late 1930s, West Coast architects such as William Wurster and Pietro Belluschi began to design visually unostentatious houses that utilized simple building materials such as wood siding, combined with forms that reflected local Oregon and California vernacular architecture, including farm and ranch houses and sheds. Although visually less-dramatically



“modern” than other modern styles of the period, these houses exemplified an informality of design and living that would become very popular in the 1950s and 1960s.

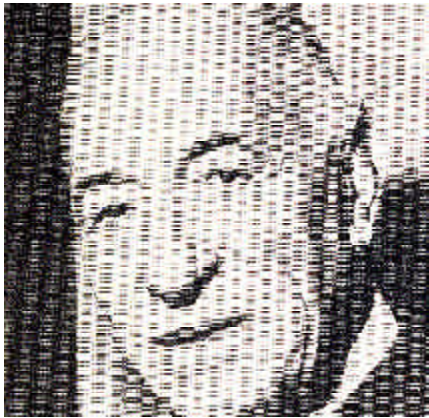
These pre-World War II strains of single-family house modernism had relatively little impact on single-family house design in Chicago itself, although Chicago’s suburbs saw more such designs. Relatively few Chicago houses were designed in non-historical styles during this pre-war period, although often the use of historical styles, whether based in classicism or medieval precedents, was often greatly “watered down.” In addition, Chicago was largely built up by the 1930s, and relatively few neighborhoods with single-family houses saw construction during the decade of the Great Depression. Those that did, including Sauganash and Edgebrook on the north and Beverly and Morgan Park on the south, typically saw either historical styles or simple, unadorned, relatively nondescript designs used for houses.

In the Chicago area, a significant International Style architect was Paul Schweikher, who designed the modestly-scaled Third Unitarian Church Building at 301 N. Mayfield in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood in 1936. The church building (a designated Chicago Landmark), with its fine proportions, spare brick walls and lack of historic ornament, exemplify European influences on American modernism, especially that of Scandinavian-born architect Eliel Saarinen. The simple rectilinearity of the Francis House in the Jackson Park Highlands Chicago Landmark District, designed by Schweikher in 1936, also reflects the influence of the International Style on Schweiker’s work. His Rinaldo House, built in Downers Grove in 1940, reflect the use of wood and brick construction and siding that was an American adaptation of International Style principles.

Other Chicago-based architects working in the International Style include Keck & Keck, Henry Dubin, Philip Will, and William Deknatel. Most of their single-family house designs in the pre-World War II period were built in Chicago suburbs rather than the City itself. They include Keck & Keck’s Bruning House, built in Wilmette in 1936; Philip Will’s own house in Evanston from 1937, and Deknatel’s Kohler House in Wisconsin, also from 1937. Although not a single-family house, the Kecks designed a small apartment building for themselves in 1937 on S. University Ave. near the University of Chicago. (The Keck-Gottschalk-Keck Apartment Building is a designated Chicago Landmark.)

## **ARCHITECT ANDREW N. REBORI**

The Dr. Philip Weintraub House, with its asymmetrical design, plain common-brick walls, and dramatically interior, reflects the personal and evolving style of modernism favored in the 1930s by **Andrew Nicholas Rebori (1886-1966)**, one of Chicago’s most individualistic 20<sup>th</sup>-century architects. His career was wide-ranging, from finely detailed Georgian Revival-style homes and apartment buildings to starkly ornamented, expressionistic Art Deco-style buildings such as Madonna della Strada Chapel. The Weintraub House, with its exterior which melded an appreciation of Chicago common brick, International Style forms and composition, and Art Moderne-style window details; and its compact yet dramatic interior, with its two-story,



**(Top left) Andrew N. Rebori, the architect of the Weintraub House. Rebori's *oeuvre* is wide-ranging in building type and style, from the Italian Renaissance Revival style of (bottom) the Racquet Club of Chicago, built in 1923 and located at Schiller and Dearborn in the Gold Coast neighborhood, to (top right) the Madonna della Strada Chapel at Loyola University Chicago, designed in 1939 in a visually-dramatic style that combines a stripped-down Classicism with Art Deco.**

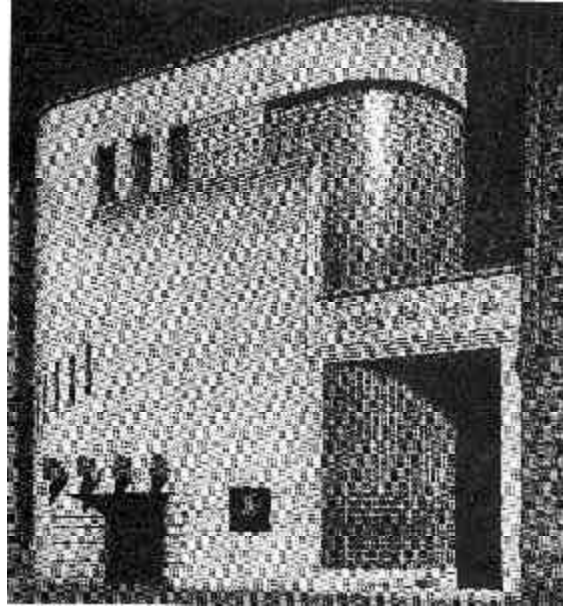
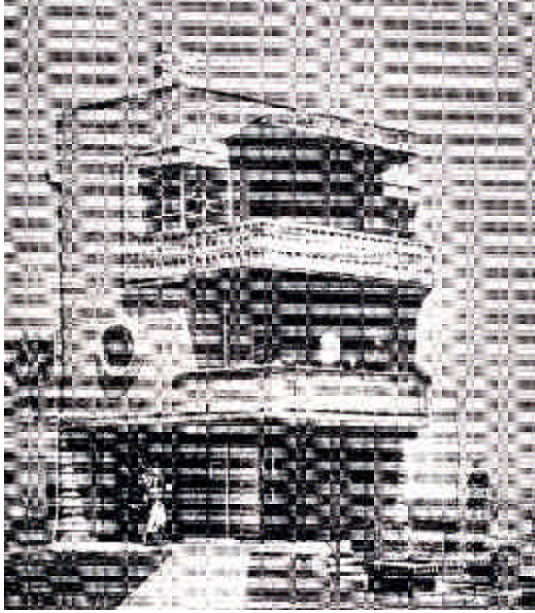
window-walled stairwell, Edgar Miller ornament, concealed lighting, curved plaster coves, and built-in cabinets, summed up Rebori's own embrace of 1930s modernism. Throughout his career, Rebori strove to create graceful and distinctive buildings for modern living.

Rebori was born on the Lower East Side of New York. His father Paul, an Italian-born engineer, was killed in an accident when young Andrew was three, and the family suffered poverty throughout the boy's childhood. Andrew worked in several New York architectural offices during his teen years while attending night school, showing sufficient design promise that he was admitted to the architecture program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—the United States' oldest such program. Upon graduation, he was awarded a scholarship to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the American Academy in Rome, spending one year of study abroad.

Upon his return to the United States in 1910, Rebori worked briefly for architect Cass Gilbert in New York before moving to Chicago to teach architecture at the Armour Institute of Technology. After a brief period also working in private practice with local Chicago architect Jarvis Hunt, Rebori opened his own firm, which became (in the early years of the 1920s) Rebori, Wentworth, Dewey, and McCormick. One of his earliest commissions was the Classical redesign of the Studebaker Theater within the Fine Arts Building in 1917.

The 1920s was a period of great activity for Rebori. Having married into a collateral branch of the well-to-do McCormick family, and with partners John Wentworth and Leander McCormick providing access to Chicago's society families, Rebori designed a number of buildings for wealthy clients on Chicago's Near North Side and North Shore suburbs. Among his most prominent 1920s designs are the Racquet Club, an exclusive athletic and social club at Dearborn and Shiller; chic cooperative apartment buildings at 40-50 W. Schiller St., 1325 N. Astor St., and 2430 N. Lake View Ave.; the LaSalle-Wacker Building, an Art Deco-style office skyscraper designed in association with Holabird and Root; and the Elizabeth M. Cudahy Library for Loyola University, funded by the meat-packing family that was one of Rebori's earliest and most loyal clients. Especially distinctive was the 737 North Michigan Avenue Building, a low-rise limestone-clad building commissioned by the then-owner of the Fine Arts Building as a Near North Side artists-studio and exclusive boutique building. Handsomely detailed in the Art Deco style, this limestone-clad building (demolished in the early 1970s) was topped by a penthouse apartment complete with corner astronomical observatory for one of the owner's three sons.

Economic troubles brought on by the Great Depression forced Rebori to disband his architectural partnership and work solo during the 1930s. Individual projects of note include the Streets of Paris concession and Common Brick Model House at the 1933-34 Century of Progress Exposition; the Fisher Studio Homes at 1209 N. State St. (designated a Chicago Landmark); and a striking, Art Moderne-style brick-and-glass-block pair of houses at 1328 N. State St. that Rebori designed for himself and his son.



In the 1930s, Rebori began to design ever-more modern residential buildings using common brick. (Top left) The first of these was a model house commissioned by the Common Brick Manufacturers Association for the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition held in Chicago. (Top right) Businessman Frank Fisher commissioned the Fisher Studio Homes in 1936, which was designed by Rebori in collaboration with artist Edgar Miller in an expressionistic Art Deco style with white-painted common brick and curved glass block. (Right) In 1938, Rebori designed a common-brick “double house” for himself and his adult son that was similar to the Fisher Studio Homes, but without painted common brick walls. One house faced N. State while a second faced the alley. (Bottom) With the Weintraub House, Rebori used common brick in a more rectilinear, International Style-influenced way.



It was the Common Brick Model House commission that set the stage for the later design of the Weintraub House. The Model House was one of nine houses displayed at the fair when it opened in 1933. All were meant to display different aspects of modern building materials, spatial planning, and household appliances. Commissioned by the Common Brick Manufacturers' Association, this three-story house (demolished after the fair closed in 1934) was polygonal in overall form and punctuated with second- and third-floor balconies and a rooftop terrace.

Rebore continued to use common brick for buildings he designed later in the 1930s, including the Fisher Studio Homes, built at 1209 N. State Pkwy. in 1936 and the double house, built at 1324 N. State Pkwy. in 1938. Both were designed with plain walls and flat roofs. The Fisher building was ornamented both inside and out with small sculptures designed by artist Edgar Miller, while the double house depended upon the contrasting textures of brick and glass block and carved-wood spandrels for ornamental appeal.

Both the Fisher Studio Homes and the State St. double house also used two-story spaces to enliven interiors that were modest in square footage. Rebore's interest in such "studio" spaces for his buildings dates at least to 1923 and a cooperative apartment building he designed at Schiller and Dearborn in the Gold Coast neighborhood. Although in a style that combined historical elements from both classicism and medievalism, the building contained a number of apartments with two-story living rooms overlooked by balconies. It may be that Rebore's interest in such spaces dates from his early residence, soon after arriving in Chicago circa 1911, in one of the apartments in the Tree Studios annex facing Ontario.

In addition, Rebore served as a consulting architect and advisor to property owner and renovator Sol Kogan and artist Edgar Miller during their initial conversions of older apartment buildings into idiosyncratically-designed artist studios on W. Burton Pl. on the eastern edge of the Old Town neighborhood in the 1920s. Listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places, these dramatic building reconstructions utilized common brick and casement windows to enclose and light apartments that often utilized two-story stair wells and living spaces. The Weintraub House's use of a two-story stair well lighted by floor-to-ceiling windows, providing free-flowing space between the first and second floors, reflects these earlier precedents in Rebore's life and career.

During World War II, Rebore worked on United States defense projects such as the design and construction of the U.S. Army weapons manufacturing plant at McAlester, Oklahoma. In the post-war years, he worked for DeLeuw Cather & Co., a large engineering firm, designing such buildings as a Chicago & North Western Railroad diesel shop located in Chicago's West Garfield Park neighborhood.

## ARTIST EDGAR MILLER

**Edgar Miller (1899-1993)** designed three small-scale artworks for the Weintraub House, including a low-relief sculpture over the living room fireplace, a decorative beach-scene tile in the second-floor bathroom, and a drawer pull for second-floor corridor cabinets. Born in Idaho, he enrolled at age 17 in the School of The Art Institute of Chicago. He then spent four years as an apprentice to artist Alfonso Iannelli, best known for his collaborations with architect Frank Lloyd Wright, including sculptures for Wright's Home and Studio in Oak Park and Midway Gardens in Chicago.

Miller worked in a variety of mediums, including carved wood and stone, ceramics, mural painting and stained and etched glass. He collaborated with a number of significant architects, including Andrew Rebori, Howard Van Doren Shaw, Barry Byrne, Thomas Tallmadge, and Holabird & Root. During the 1920s, he also regularly exhibited at The Art Institute while operating his own art gallery. In 1933-34, he was art director for the Streets of Paris concession at the Century of Progress Exposition.

Miller was an eclectic artist, taking inspiration from a variety of sources, including medieval art and regional artistic traditions as far flung as Scandinavian and Polynesian. In the August 1932 issue of the national publication *Architecture*, Chicago architect Earl H. Reed, Jr., wrote about Miller's art:

Through the modern pattern of Miller's art expression runs threads of things seen in the South Seas, Central American, and our own West and Southwest. Often a fugitive medievalism or a primitive classic spirit predominates. The influence of Iannelli can be seen in his Prairie-influenced stained glass and his love of bas-relief sculpture. Carved wood panels, woodcuts and other stained glass windows, however, reveal an interest in folk art, mythology and the Gothic traditions. Animals, especially birds, horses and antelopes, were used as subjects frequently by Miller who felt that figurative art was more meaningful to the average person than abstract art.

His best-known works include ornamental windows, ceramic tiles, and carved wood figures (some of which were damaged in a 2000 conversion to condominiums) for the Fisher Studio Houses, 1209 N. State Pkwy. (1936, with Andrew Rebori), a designated Chicago Landmark; and the redesign and embellishment with Sol Kogan in the 1920s and 1930s of several brick buildings in the Old Town neighborhood. He also designed a set of sand-blasted glass panels depicting the Roman goddess Diana which originally ornamented the Diana Court Building, 540 N. Michigan (1928, Holabird & Root, demolished) and the so-called "Animal Court"—a plaza designed as a children's wading pool with sprinklers and ornamented with stone sculptures that included a bear, an elephant, a bighorn sheep, and a musk ox—in the Jane Addams public housing project on Chicago's Near West Side. Miller also designed murals for the Tavern Club, located in Holabird & Root's 333 N. Michigan Ave. Building (1928), bronze sculpture for the North Dakota State Capitol in Bismark (1934), and various sculptures for Northwestern University's Technological Institute in Evanston (1942).



(Top left) A portrait of artist Edgar Miller, who created several art works for the Weintraub House. He is known today for his works in decorative glass, plaster, ceramics, metal, and wood that eclectically take visual cues from a variety of sources, including classical mythology, medievalism, and folk art. Examples of Miller's work include: (top right) a woodcut study for a stained-glass window; (bottom left) etched-glass panels for the Diana Court Building on N. Michigan Ave. (demolished); and (bottom right) a low-relief sculpture for the Punch and Judy Theater on W. Van Buren (demolished).

## CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a final recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated “criteria for designation,” as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Dr. Phillip Weintraub House 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, State of Illinois, or the United States.*

- The Dr. Phillip Weintraub House epitomizes the historically important theme of early and evolving pre-World War II modernism in the economic and architectural history of mid-twentieth-century Chicago and the United States.
- The Weintraub House is an early, pre-World War II example of a middle-class house designed in a modern architectural style and with non-traditional use of space and details, and it reflects the burgeoning of affordable middle-class housing in the years following the war.

### ***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 Dr. Phillip Weintraub House is a handsome and innovative example of a “first-generation” modern house in Chicago; and is an early significant and important example in the history of Chicago’s neighborhoods.
- The Weintraub House combines elements of the International Style and Art Moderne style with Rebori’s ongoing interest in common brick; and is an unusual and rare example of a Chicago architect’s personal and evolving adaptation of modernism in the pre-World War II period.
- The Weintraub House’s interior is an early and unusual example of a small-scale, yet visually-spacious interior, combining such innovations as a window-walled, two-story stairwell, concealed lighting, curved plaster coves, and built-in furniture and cabinets.



- The Weintraub House contains excellent and representative examples, including a living-room low-relief sculpture and a large decorative tile in the second-floor bathroom, of the art work of Edgar Miller, an important artist in twentieth-century Chicago history who worked in an expressionistic style influenced by medieval and folk art.

### ***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, State of Illinois, or the United States.*

- Andrew N. Rebori, the designer of the Dr. Philip Weintraub House, is one of Chicago's most unusual and idiosyncratic architects of the twentieth century, and the house exemplifies Rebori's innovations in early modern design and spatial planning. Rebori designed, among other significant buildings, the Fisher Studio Homes on N. State Pkwy. and the Madonna della Strada Chapel at Loyola University Chicago, both designated Chicago Landmarks.
- The Weintraub House is also identified with the career of artist Edgar Miller, one of Chicago's most important twentieth-century artists, with its small-scale sculptures and tilework designed for the house's interior. Miller designed, among other significant works, art works for the Fisher Studio Homes and Trustees System Service Building (both Chicago Landmarks), and the demolished Diana Court Building on N. Michigan Ave., designed by Holabird & Root. Miller's best-known works were created for a series of residential buildings remodeled largely in the 1920s and 1930s as artist studios in the Old Town and Mid-North neighborhoods, with the largest concentration on W. Burton Pl.

### ***Integrity Criteria***

*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 Dr. Phillip Weintraub House possesses excellent exterior physical integrity, displaying through its siting, scale, setbacks and overall design its historic relationship to the North Park community area. It retains its historic overall exterior form and almost all historic exterior walls, materials and detailing.

The house's interior also retains excellent physical integrity, including its important historic spatial configurations and details that epitomize the design vision of both Rebori and Miller. The flowing spatial relationship of the living room, two-story stair-well, second-floor corridor and bedrooms remains intact. Curved ceiling and wall edges remain, as do concealed cove lighting. Original built-in furniture and cabinetry remain, including a built-in staircase window seat, bedroom wall cabinets, and bathroom vanity. Miller's low-relief sculpture over the living room fireplace, decorative bathroom tile, and second-floor corridor cabinet drawer pull, also remain.

Changes to the building's exterior include the replacement of original windows with newer casement windows similar in overall configuration to the original. The front door has also been replaced. The house's kitchen has been remodeled, while Dr. Weintraub's former dental office has been reconfigured for other uses. With these rather minor changes, the Weintraub House is remarkably well-preserved in terms of its exterior and interior appearance.

## **SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district 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 the most important to preserve the historic and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its preliminary evaluation of the Dr. Phillip Weintraub House, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building; and
- The overall floor plan and spatial volumes of the first and second floors, including, but not limited to, historic interior details such as plaster wall finishes, curved ceiling and wall edges, concealed cove lighting, fireplace, staircase, railings, and built-in original cabinetry; and
- the three Edgar Miller-designed art works: the low-relief sculpture over the living-room fireplace, the decorative beach-scene tile in the second-floor bathroom, and the decorative cabinet pull on the second-floor corridor built-in cabinet.

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt, 1994.
- Chicago Fact Book Consortium, ed. *Local Community Fact Book, Chicago Metropolitan Area*. Chicago: Chicago Fact Book Consortium, 1982.
- Cohen, Stuart E. *Chicago Architects*. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1976.
- Draper, Joan, and Raymond T. Tatum. "The Buildings of Andrew Nicholas Rebori." *Chicago Architectural Journal*, vol. 4 (1984), pp. 14-24.
- Foley, Mary Mix. *The American House*. New York, Harper & Row, 1980.
- Ford, James, and Katherine Morrow Ford. *Classic Modern Homes of the Thirties: 64 Designs by Neutra, Gropius, Breuer, Stone and Others*. New York: Dover 1989. Unabridged reprint of *The Modern House in America*, originally published the the Architectural Book Publishing Co. in 1940.
- Frampton, Kenneth, and David Larkin. *American Masterworks: The Twentieth-Century House*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2002.

- Grossman, James R., Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Howe, Jeffery, general ed. *The Houses We Live In*. London: PRC Publishing, 2002.
- McAlester, Virginia, and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
- Schrenk, Lisa D. *Building a Century of Progress: The Architecture of Chicago's 1933-34 World's Fair*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Tatum, Terry. "Frank F. Fisher, Jr. Apartments." Preliminary Summary of Information. Chicago: Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 1991.
- Tatum, Terry. "Trustees System Service Building." Preliminary Summary of Information. Chicago: Commission on Chicago Landmarks, 2003.
- Tatum, Terry. Interview with Dr. Philip Weintraub, August 1984.
- Walker, Lester. *American Shelter: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Home*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1981.



**A view of the rear wood-sided garage and open-air roof deck of the Weintraub House.**

## Acknowledgements

### CITY OF CHICAGO

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

### Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning

Patricia A. Scudiero, Commissioner

Brian Goeken, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

### Project Staff

Terry Tatum, research, writing, photography and layout

Brian Goeken, editing

Special thanks to Barbara and Frank Kruesi, the owners of the Weintraub House, for their support and encouragement of this Chicago Landmark designation.

### Illustrations

Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning: pp. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16 (top right), 18 (bottom), 25.

From Howe, *The Houses We Live In*: pp. 12 (top left, top right, middle left),

From Ford and Ford, *Classic Modern Homes of the Thirties*: pp. 12 (middle right, bottom), 13 (top left).

From Cohen, *Chicago Architects*: pp. 13 (top right, middle, bottom), 16 (top left)

Chicago Historic Resources Survey: p. 16 (bottom), 18 (middle).

From Schrenk, *Building a Century of Progress*: p. 18 (top left)

From *Chicago Architectural Journal*: p. 18 (top right).

From Tatum, "Trustees System Service Building:" p. 21.

## **COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

David Mosena, Chairman  
John W. Baird, Secretary  
Phyllis Ellin  
Yvette LeGrand  
Chris Raguso  
Christopher R. Reed  
Patricia A. Scudiero  
Edward I. Torrez  
Ben Weese  
Ernest C. Wong

The Commission is staffed by the  
Chicago Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning  
Historic Preservation Division  
33 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60602

312-744-3200; 744-2958 (TTY)  
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>

*Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved May 7, 2009; Report revised and Reprinted September 2009.*