

111 Burnham Place
Daniel H. Burnham
Owner and Architect
1909

Kris Hartzell, December 2025

The original structure that now constitutes the eastern section of the residence at 111 Burnham Place is highly significant as it is the only known structure designed by Daniel H. Burnham for himself. It also represents his work on the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, his experiences in Japan when travelling to the Philippines for his work in Manila and Baguio, and his personal life in Evanston.

It was designed by Burnham in 1909 per Evanston building permits #3600 and #3637, dated April 21, 1909, shown on pages 2-4 following. The original permit lists the address as 232 Dempster Street, the Burnham main house, as this was a secondary structure on the property. A 1948 addition to the west façade by Harry N. Johnson for R. C. Raymond may have been the reason the property was not designated as an Evanston Landmark. However, Burnham's original structure remains intact.

Known as the "tea house" by the Burnham family, the structure reflects the Japanese tea house and Ho-O-Den located on Wooded Island in Jackson Park on the Exposition grounds, a project facilitated and supported by Burnham.

Photographs of the tea house from the Burnham family photo album are archived in the Ryerson & Burnham Art and Architecture Archives at the Art Institute of Chicago. Copies of the photographs, c. 1910, are on pages 5 and 6. They show the tea house, berm, terrace and grounds.

This documentation proves the significance of the building and should be given full consideration when reviewing the proposed demolition.

Application

Building Permit

No. 3637

No. 3800

Granted to A H Beorubian

To erect a one Story frame shelter house

of one Rooms

19 feet front 30 feet deep 11 feet high

At No. 732 Dempster Situated on

Lot _____ Block _____

Stockmans Resub

Cost of Building Complete, \$ 500-

Plans Approved 4/21/09

PERMIT FEES

To THE CITY OF EVANSTON.

DR.

| | | | |
|---|------------|--|------------|
| Water Permit, No | | | |
| Sewer Permit, No | | | |
| Street Permit, No | | | |
| Bldg. Permit, No | <u>100</u> | | |
| Fees for use of Water on Building Materials. | | | |
| <u>None</u> M. Brick at 10 cts. per thousand, | | | |
| " Cu. yds. Stone @ 10 cts. per Cu. yd., | | | |
| " Cu. yds. Concrete @ 10 cts. per Cu. yd., | | | |
| <u>150</u> Sq. yds. Plastering @ 20 cts. hd. sq. yds. | <u>30</u> | | |
| Total, | | | <u>130</u> |

Building Permit Application dated 4/21/09

Evanston History Center Archives

Evanston, Ill., 4-21-1909

Permit No. 3600

Building Commissioner:
 The undersigned applies for a permit for the construction
 of a 1 story, frame shelter
house

to be located on Lot _____ Block 1
 Sub. Stockholm

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| Width, or Front | <u>19</u> | M. Brick | |
| Length, or Depth | <u>30</u> | Cu. yd. Concrete | |
| Elevation, or Height | <u>11</u> | Sq. yd. Plaster | <u>150</u> |
| Total Cost of Building | <u>\$500</u> | Cu. yd. Stone | |
| | | Tile | |
| | | Cement Block | |

Address 232 Dempster

Owner D. H. Burnham Phone _____
 Address _____

Architect " " Phone _____
 Address _____

Mason Meiling & Walter Phone _____
 Address _____

Carpenter _____ Phone _____
 Address _____

Signed by Meiling & Walter
 Address _____

Application No. 3637

Building Permit Application indicating Daniel H. Burnham as Architect

"Frame Shelter House, April 21, 1909"

Evanston History Center Archives

No. 3637

Building Permit No. 3600

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT.

Evanston, Ill., 4/21 1904

TO THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS:

The undersigned herewith applies for a permit to build a one Story, Basement and Attic same shell house and hereby agrees upon issuance of said permit to conform to and comply with the conditions of the same and the ordinances of the City of Evanston, so far as they may apply to any work set forth in this application.

Same to be located and built in strict accordance with accompanying description, plans and specifications, which are hereby submitted for your approval.

DESCRIPTION

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>737 Dempster</u> | LOT | BLOCK <u>1</u> |
| <u>Stockham Place</u> | | |
| On <u>Dempster</u> | Street, Avenue, between <u>Forest</u> | Street, Avenue, and <u>Lake</u> |

| MATERIALS AND COST. | DIMENSIONS. | FURNISHINGS. | NO. | SERVICE. |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| No. Cu. yds. Stone <u>None</u> | Width or Front <u>19</u> | Water Closets <u>None</u> | | Heated by _____ |
| No. Thousands of Brick <u>11</u> | Length or Depth <u>30</u> | Sinks <u>11</u> | | Lighted by _____ |
| No. Cu. Yards Concrete <u>1</u> | Elevation or Height <u>11</u> | Bath Tubs <u>11</u> | | Ventilated by _____ |
| No. Sq. Yards Plastering <u>150</u> | Rooms _____ | Laundry Tubs <u>11</u> | | |
| Total Cost of Building <u>500</u> | Fire Escapes _____ | Urinals <u>11</u> | | |

B.H. Burnham Owner Meiling & Walker Mason _____ Sewer Builder _____
 Plumber _____ Carpenter _____ Electrician _____

Heating and Ventilation _____
Owner Architect. Signed by Meiling & Walker Builder.

Detailed Building Permit Application

Evanston History Center Archives





The Burnham Family Enjoying the Tea House and Terrace, c. 1910
Ryerson & Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago

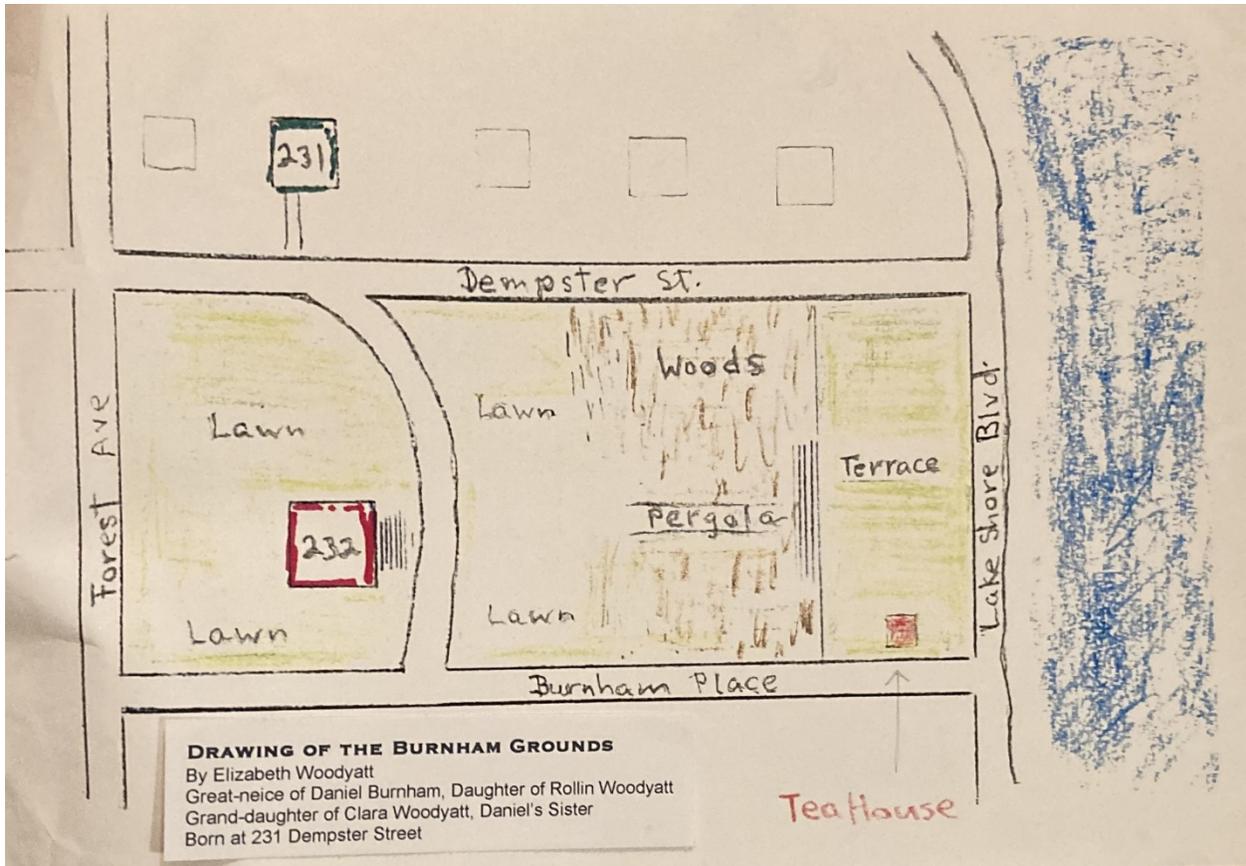


The View Looking West from the Terrace



Photograph of the Tea House c. 1910

Ryerson & Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago

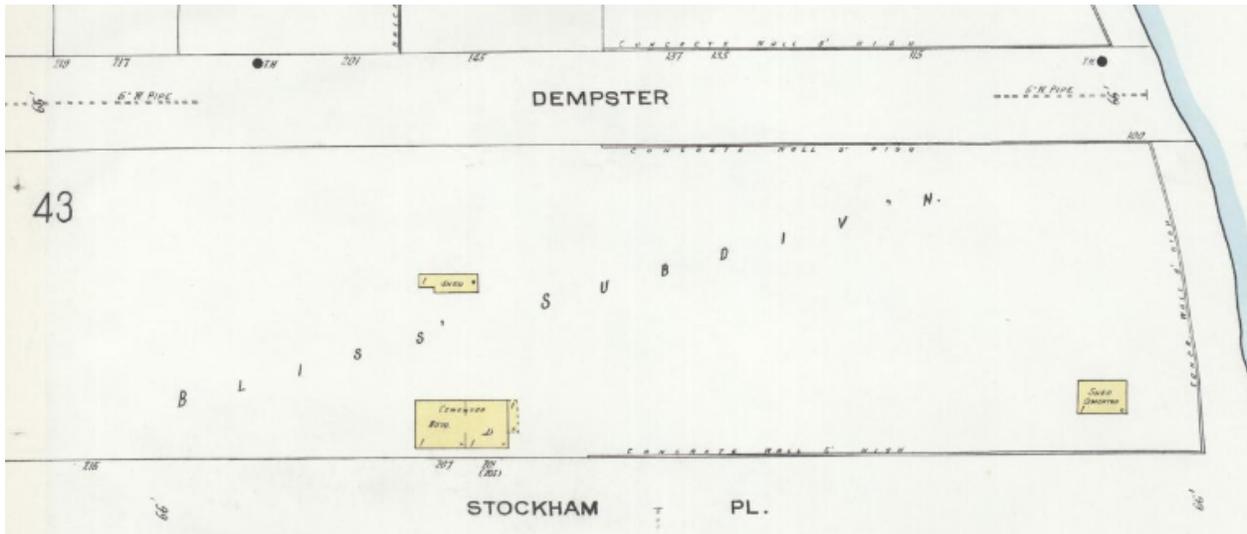


Drawing done in 2009 by Burnham's Great Niece Elizabeth Woodyatt showing the location of the building, naming it as the Tea House

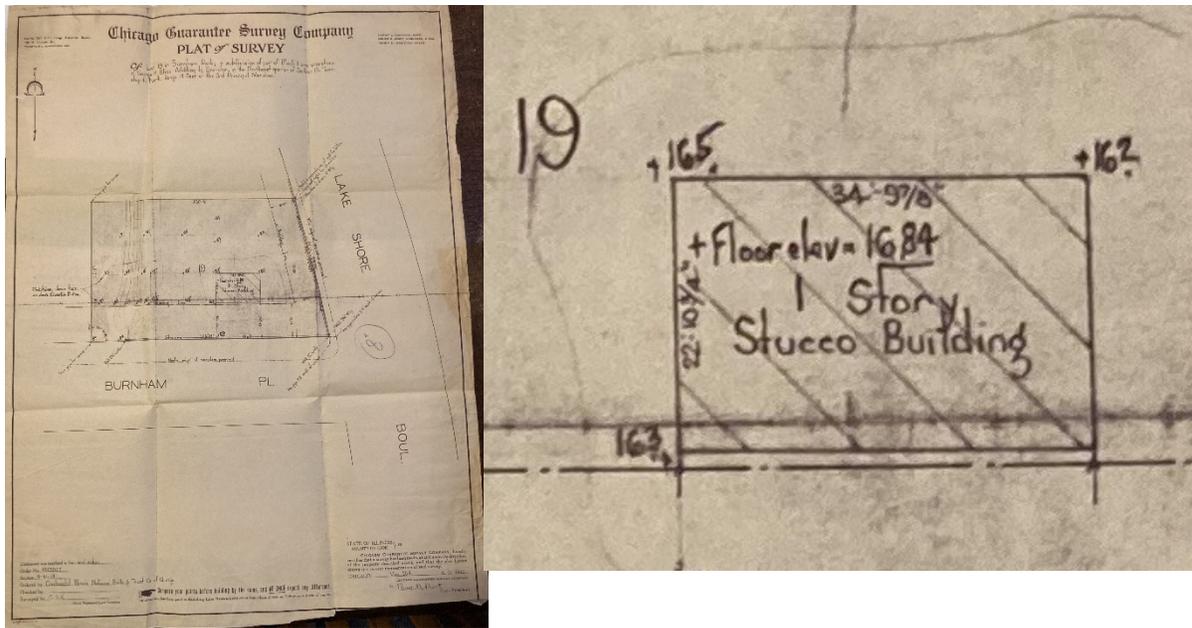
Evanston History Center Archives



1914 Sanborn Map Cuts off at dotted line before the location of the tea house



1920 Sanborn Map shows the tea house



1945 Plat of Survey for 111 Burnham
Evanston History Center Archives

Daniel Burnham and the Japanese Ho-O-Den at the Exposition

As the Director of Works at the 1893 Fair, Burnham supervised all the planning decisions. He worked with Frederick Law Olmsted to create the idea of an island for quiet reflection and then worked with the Japanese government and architect Masamichi Kuru to allow for the Ho-O-Den and tea house to be built there, as it enhanced the idea of quiet contemplation, relationship to nature, and socialization. The memory of this would have informed his choice to design and build the tea house on his property overlooking the lake.

“The role of the Wooded Island, as designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), America’s foremost landscape architect and the chief of the exhibition’s landscape design, was to provide exposition visitors a quiet sylvan setting, unencumbered by buildings, in which to escape the hustle and bustle of the exposition. In February 1892, following lengthy negotiations between the Japanese and exposition officials, Daniel Burnham (1846-1912), the exhibition’s chief of construction, enthusiastically wrote to Olmsted to explain that the Japanese “propose to do the most exquisitely beautiful things...and desire to leave the buildings as a gift of Chicago.” Shortly thereafter, the Japanese Commission was granted permission to build on two acres at the northern portion of the fifteen-acre Wooded Island.”

Robert W. Karr, Jr., The Garden of the Phoenix: the 120th Anniversary of the Japanese Garden in Chicago, North American Japanese Garden Association Journal, <https://www.umiimu.com/karreport/gotp-article-2013>



View of Japanese Tea Garden from Lagoon. From Official Views Of The World's Columbian Exposition, 1893. <https://www.jbachrach.com/blog/2022/10/28/the-fascinating-story-of-the-japanese-garden-on-jackson-parks-wooded-island>

Concept of Tea House

“Tea houses embody the cultural values of East Asian societies by promoting relaxation, social interaction, and appreciation for nature. The serene environment encourages mindfulness and conversation, which are vital aspects of community bonding in these cultures. Additionally, tea houses often serve as venues for artistic expression and cultural practices, such as performances or tea ceremonies, showcasing the importance of tradition in daily life.

In modern East Asian society, tea houses continue to play a significant role as social gathering spaces but have also adapted to contemporary trends by incorporating modern aesthetics and diverse beverage options. Historically, they served as critical venues for cultural exchange and community bonding, fostering social ties through shared experiences around tea. Today, while they still retain this communal aspect, tea houses also cater to younger generations by offering innovative menus and events that blend traditional practices with contemporary lifestyles.”

<https://fiveable.me/key-terms/introduction-art/tea-house>

Burnham Visits Japan Before Traveling to the Philippines, 1904

In 1904, Burnham travelled to Manila and Baguio to design urban plans for both Philippine cities. He stopped in Japan on route and visited lakes, gardens and temples in Yokohama and Tokyo, according to his biographer Charles Moore. These experiences in Japan would have refreshed and reinforced his memories of the tea house in the Exposition a decade earlier.

Burnham's 1907 Field House and Relation to This Structure

In 1907, Burnham designed a field house for Sherman Park in Chicago, named after his father-in-law, John Sherman. The plan reflected the Ho-O-Den from the Exposition, with its main central building and two smaller flanking sections. Its classic design under a tiled hipped roof demonstrates Burnham's further synthesizing the design concept of a tea house, and his work on smaller structures, culminating in his design of this structure built on his property two years later.

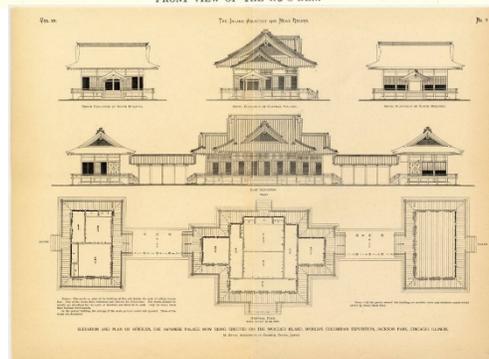


Photo and Drawings of Ho-O-Den – for comparison to Sherman Park Field House and Burnham Tea House. <https://x.com/architext14/status/1613040135129407489>



Field house of Sherman Park, Chicago, Illinois, 1907.

(Photo by Walter E Lagerquist/Chicago History Museum/Getty Images)

“Though Burnham increasingly concentrated on larger buildings, he occasionally produced charming residences and smaller structures. The pleasantly “modern” design of some of his small and simple buildings for the Chicago park system elicited frequent praise from local citizens and out of town critics.”

Thomas S. Hines, Burnham of Chicago, p. 308

Burnham in 1909

Burnham was busy working on the completion of his masterwork, the *Plan of Chicago* in 1909. Its emphasis on the importance of the lakefront may have influenced him as he renovated and upgraded the landscaping on his property. He built the concrete wall that surrounds the eastern perimeter. He created a raised berm behind the wall so the lake could be visible over the wall, and he built the tea house.



“There the family lived until 1886, when Mr. Burnham bought the Evanston property, comprising two city blocks, on the shore of Lake Michigan. This estate is the home of the Burnhams. It was an ideal place for bringing up a family of children. A coal dock furnished a recreation pier, the sandy beach, which then covered the space now occupied by the broad terrace, supplied opportunities for swimming; in the thicket of woods that stretched across the property...”

Charles Moore, Daniel Burnham, 1921, p. 94

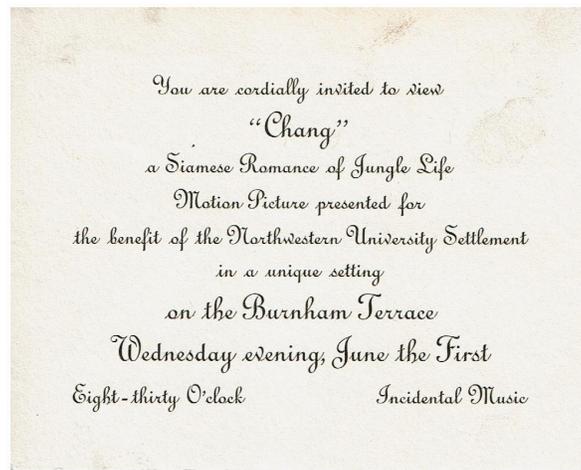


Ryerson & Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago



Daniel Burnham sketching on the beach

Ryerson & Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago



Invitation to Burnham Event on the Terrace c. 1910

Evanston History Center Archives

“Burnham loved to entertain grandly and lavishly but he took equal pleasure in simple occasions...Burnham took even greater delight in being with his family, strolling and playing on the lawn with his children and taking long walks and swims with them along the lake. He loved the huge, old farmhouse he had bought in the 1880s, delighting in constant changes and improvements in its design and decoration.”

Charles Moore, Daniel H. Burnham, p. 135

“There will be much to tell our friends in the East of the princely hospitality you extended to us. We talk of it constantly – to the smallest detail. Camp Burnham on the lake was indeed a rounded experience.

Architect Charles McKim to Burnham, 1905, Charles Moore, p. 94



Charles Moore, Daniel Burnham

The structure known as the tea house was integral to Burnham’s home life. It enhanced his enjoyment of the lake and nature, it provided a place to entertain friends, and to relax with his family. It demonstrated concepts contained in his City Beautiful movement, such as the importance of siting buildings while retaining the natural environment. This was likely the last structure he designed before his death and represents a culmination of his life’s work and adds a dimensionality to his remarkable legacy.