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**Burnham Comment - Meeting TODAY, Tues, 1/20 @ 7pm**

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**Carl S Smith** <csmith@northwestern.edu>

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I now spend the winter months away from the Chicago area, and I regret I can't speak tonight in person regarding Daniel H. Burnham's "Tea House." But I am familiar with the "Tea House" from researching and writing my book, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Making of the American City*, which was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2006 and three years later was the Chicago Public Library's Fall 2009 selection in its "One Book, One Chicago Program."

Burnham built the teahouse on its current site, at the southeastern end of the enormous rectangular property he owned (which his sons sold in the 1930s and now has close to twenty houses), near the wall he also built, which is also still there. As I recall, he built up the land at the east end of the property so that there was a view of the lake.

If I were to speak, I would strongly advocate the preservation of the "Tea House" as the last direct link to a place where Burnham lived. He (or he and John Wellborn Root) designed other buildings that still stand, as you know, including a frame house to the north of his property, but this is the only one in which he in any sense lived. He loved Evanston, from which he commuted into the city from the time he moved there in the 1880s until his death in 1912. What I cannot say is that I am familiar with the exact design of the original structure since I've never seen it over the wall or seen any plans until now. As I recall, there is a more modern house to the north. But, if the current structure is the one that Burnham designed and used, it is a one-of-a-kind building by a world-famous and historically significant architect and city planner who closely identified with Evanston.

In my opinion it is the kind of thing Evanston, of which I was a proud resident for over thirty years, should honor and preserve as responsibility to its present and future as well as its past.

Respectfully,

Carl Smith

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