



The Raymond-Demots House – Queen Anne Style

446 State Street, Adrian, Michigan

By Amy G. Garno

All photography by Amy G. Garno

This historic Queen Anne Style home, located at 446 State Street, on the block between Michigan Avenue and Union Streets in Adrian, is referred to as the Raymond-Demots House. The architect, F. E. Smith, built the house in 1900 for

Leslie Robertson and his wife Bertha Page Robertson.¹ (See Smith's original elevations and plans at the end of this essay.) The Raymond family lived in this house for much of the early 20th century. The Demots purchased the house in 1978 and moved in just before the "Blizzard of '78."² They still reside in the house today. Before the Demots purchased the house, it was commonly referred to as the "Raymond" house.

House Exterior

The Demots house definitely stands out on the block because of its large three-story structure, vivid shades of turquoise paint, and beautiful surrounding landscape. The curved glass windows distinctively follow the curve of the turret with large, triple, inset windows on the front gable and double hung windows with small pattern of square panes above the larger, single lower pane. This small squared pattern in the windows is carried throughout the upper floor windows, architecturally tying them together despite their different designs and placement. The triple window in the gable also ties together the curve of the turret and the windows with their curved shingled borders.

At the front of the house stands a double-decker porch with Tuscan- style columns. The lower part of the porch originally wrapped around the north side of the house. Due to its poor foundation, previous owners removed the wrap around portion of the porch. The Demots hired a builder who literally rebuilt the

¹ Charles Lindquist, "The Work of Lenawee's Master Craftsman, Ferdinand Thieme, in the Robertson-Raymond House," *Lenawee Reflections*, June 17, 1989, 88 (Lenawee County Historical Museum).

² Lois Demots, Interview, 1 December, 2010.

foundation of the porch “stone by numbered stone.”³ There is a round, three-story turret on the northwest corner of the house, decorated with hexagon shaped shingles. These same shaped shingles border the triple window in the front peak of the gable. The bulk of the house is sided with clapboard and decorated with light yellow trim, which wraps around most of the structure, including the porch, turret and bay window. Most of the windows are tall and narrow, have the original float glass, and are framed in light yellow with a burgundy border inside.

At the back of the house is a sunroom that the Demots added. It is framed with glass and decorated with columns and lots of spindle work that the Demots designed themselves. The same yellow and burgundy colors from the façade of the house are carried throughout. They go beautifully with the deck and carefully laid out gardens, which are very similar to a formal English garden. A dormer with a double window is directly above the sunroom, repeating the pattern of the roof.

The exterior of the Raymond-Demots House is typical of a subtype of the Queen Anne style known as the Free Classic. Virginia and Lee McAlester, in their *Field Guide to American Houses*, describe a variety of features common to all subtypes of the Queen Anne, including “large panes of glass bounded by smaller panes, patterned masonry chimneys.”⁴ Other features that they identify include a:

steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, usually with dominant front-facing gable; patterned shingles, cutaway bay windows, and other devices used to avoid a smooth-walled appearance; asymmetrical façade with partial or full-width porch, which is usually one story high and extended along one or both side walls.⁵

³ Lois Demots, Interview, 26 September, 2010.

⁴ Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984, 265.

⁵ Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide To American Houses*, 263.

Similarly, in Lawrence Grow's book, *Old House Plans*, he says that the Queen Anne Style is known for being asymmetrical with steep gables, high chimneys, and a rich mixture of construction materials such as wood, brick, stone, and shingling.⁶ Grow goes on to say that there are often iron finials and cresting at critical peaks, and that other common features include a turret or tower tucked into the side, as well as bay windows and a wrap-around porches. Also distinctive of this style are the beveled cut glass windows in the foyer and a finial on the peak of the turret.⁷



South Elevation, photograph by Amy Garno, 2010

⁶ Lawrence Grow, *Old House Plans: Two Centuries of American Domestic Architecture*, New York City: Universe Books, 1978, 63.

⁷ Idem.

The Raymond-Demots House has all of these features except for a patterned masonry chimney. More specifically, however, the house features architectural details more commonly associated with a subtype of the Queen Anne known as the Free Classic as well as a roof more commonly associated with the Colonial Revival style. Typical of the Free Classic subtype of the Queen Anne are the shallow rectangular windows over the main windows, bay windows, Palladian windows, dentals and columns on the porch. In addition, the gambrel roof on the Raymond-Demots House, which is very similar to a barn roof, is more commonly associated with the Dutch Colonial style.⁸



View from the northwest corner showing the variety of surface materials, the Palladian window, the bay window, and the rebuilt double-decker porch with Ionic and Tuscan columns. Photograph by Amy Garno, 2010.

The complex history of the Queen Anne style has been recounted in a number of books on American architecture, including those by Virginia & Lee McAlester, Lester Walker and Rachel Carley. These historians agree that the origin of Queen

⁸ John Milnes Baker, *American House Styles-A Concise Guide*, New York, N.Y.: W.W Norton & Company, 1994, 122.

Anne Style of architecture in America dates back to the British Pavilion of the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, where American designers discovered the work of an English architect named Richard Norman Shaw.⁹ At the time Shaw and his colleagues were specializing in half-timbered medieval architecture that was said at the time to have originated in the early 18th century, during the reign of Queen Anne.¹⁰ It was later discovered that the style originated instead in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. However, by the late 1870s, the name for the style was firmly established: "Queen Anne." By 1880, the Queen Anne style spread quickly throughout the United States due to pattern books and the first architectural magazine, *The American Architect and Building News*. It remained popular until shortly after the turn of the century when less elaborate foursquare style houses with Colonial and Classical features prevailed. By the turn of the century, when the Raymond-Demots House was built, people seemed to be tired all the frills of the Queen Anne style and wanted to get back to basics.

Interior

The inside of the Raymond-Demots house is just as impressive as the outside with all of the fine woodwork and details. Historian of Adrian Charles Lindquist dedicated one of his many Reflections to the story of its interior.¹¹ He recounted how Leslie and Bertha Robertson hired Ferdinand Thieme, who had a furniture and

⁹ Lester Walker, *American Shelter*, New York: The Overlook Press, 1986, 152.

¹⁰ Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide To American Houses*, 268.

¹¹ Charles Lindquist, "The Work of Lenawee's Master Craftsman, Ferdinand Thieme, in the Robertson-Raymond House," *Lenawee Reflections*, June 17, 1989, 88 (Lenawee County Historical Museum).

wood carving shop in the Old Turner Hall in Adrian, at the corner of Croswell and Hunt Streets. Mr. Theme was well known around the nation for his fine interior woodwork. It was reported that, “When the mansion of L.B. Robertson is finished, it will be the finest residence in southern Michigan, fit for a king.” Indeed it still is.



Details showing the inlaid floor of the vestibule on the left and the pendant lamp and Thieme's woodwork ceiling.
Photographs by Amy Garno, 2010

Entering through the front double doors into the vestibule, one sees the beautiful marquetry floor in an inlaid diamond pattern made of bird's-eye maple and mahogany wood. Proceeding into the house there is elegant, hand carved oak paneling in the entrance vestibule. To the right is a built-in bench made of dark mahogany. This matches the mahogany paneled ceiling and carved pendant boss for an electric light. Over the bench is a beveled glass window that is half-moon shaped, made up of individual bevel-cut glass squares. The other side of the bench is faced by another beveled glass window of intricate design. A commanding staircase with rectilinear Arts and Crafts detailing leads upstairs. Both the paneled doors and the wainscoting are made of solid oak faced with matching veneer.

The dining room boasts an elegant built-in butler's cabinet with extraordinary craftsmanship. Made of African mahogany, it repeats in the design on the paneled wainscoting. The dark wood stain matches the narrow cut oak plank floor, consistent throughout the room despite variations in the wood. There is a sliding glass door in the center of the butler's cabinet hiding its function as a way to unobtrusively pass food from the kitchen to the dining room. Under the large oak dining room table is a servants' call button that could be tapped with the foot when service was needed.



View from the Parlor into the Sitting Room showing Thieme's carvings. Photograph by Amy Garno, 2010.

The parlor is directly off the dining room, with an entrance of dark golden oak. Carved in low relief, in the frieze, above the doorways, one can find a repeating

decoration of carved flower-shaped bosses surrounded symmetrically with wings of long palm fronds inter-set with small, round berries. This same design is carried into the entrance. The parlor is connected to a sitting room that the ladies would go into to chat and drink tea, while the men would go into the den to smoke, have whiskey, and discuss the day's events. There are two large wooden ionic columns with an egg-and-dart echinus separating the parlor from the sitting room. This has a grand effect. Also impressive is the large curved window in the turret space of the parlor, which provides light as well as an airy feel.

The living room, flanked by the parlor and the den, has a beautiful stained glass window designed by the Demots and consistent with the house style. This room also has a fireplace with mottled green tiles on the sides, bordered by tiles having a repeating grape leaf and vine pattern.

To the right of the parlor is the den designed for Mr. Robertson.¹² It is a small cozy room with a stone fireplace similar to the stone pattern of the porch's foundation. Above this fireplace is a substantial mantle, shouldered by hand carved decorative scrolls, and crowned by a funnel-shaped flue piece that echoes the room's paneling. On the opposite wall are two bookcases flanking a diamond leaded glass window. The room throughout is finished with a stain as dark as black India ink.



Fireplace in the Den. Photograph by Garno, 2010

¹² Lois Demots, interview with the author, 28 November, 2010.



Views of the Kitchen redone by the Demots showing the Tuscan columns that they found in the basement, tin ceiling and the inlaid floor with labyrinth. Photographs by Amy Garno, 2010.

The kitchen was remodeled by the Demots. They installed a sliding glass double door, which opens onto the back deck. A commercial tin ceiling was added, typical of the time period the house. Decorative arches supported by columns (that a previous owner had salvaged and stored in the basement) replace walls that, in Smith's original plans for the home, separated the kitchen from a food pantry, a separate butler's pantry, and a china cupboard. The columns do not match the other columns in the house, but are consistent in terms of mirroring the decorative style and elements. Inspired by a labyrinth at the Cathedral of Chartres, France, Mrs. Demots designed a labyrinth made from her kitchen tiles for the center of her kitchen floor. The family worked together in cutting and laying out the tiles to make this wonderful work of art. On the west side of the kitchen is a butler's pantry, which was enlarged and fitted with cabinets.

The carpeting of the oak staircase leading from the entrance vestibule to the second floor is the same turquoise color as the outside of the house. A red-patterned wallpaper adorns the foyer, stairwells, and some of the hallways. A border cut from the same paper continues the decor throughout other hallways.

This paper was purchased from Earl Solomon, who owned the Decor Center in Adrian. It is a 1920's wallpaper that Mr. Solomon found stored in his basement.¹³ Mr. Demots put the wallpaper up in 1995.

Directly upstairs is Dr. Demots' library, a small cozy room decorated in an art nouveau style. The fireplace, doors and trim are made of bird's-eye maple. The sun nicely lights up the bedroom across the hall. The floor is oak and the woodwork is hickory. The hallway narrows toward the back where the servants' quarters were. There are two bedrooms and a bathroom in this area. A laundry shoot is in front of the stairway leading to the kitchen.



The laundry shoot in the second story hallway leads down to the kitchen, below. Photograph by Amy Garno, 2010.

The third story contains a billiard room. It is painted a muted green to match the tiles in the fireplace. A focal point in the room is a round oak table with built-in benches in the turret area. There are 3" pieces of wood trimming the

top of the benches. Because of the large open space and the fireplace for heat, this room was probably used a great deal for entertaining guests.

¹³ Lois Demots, interview with the author, 28 November, 2010.

The Neighborhood

On Dennis Street, the next street north of State Street, there are many other historical Queen Anne houses. The house at 529 Dennis Street is similar to the Raymond-Demots house in that it is a large three-story with a stone porch foundation, a double-decker porch with Tuscan columns, bay windows and multi-angled roof. It is not as elaborate as the Demots' house, lacking some features such as decorative shingles, a turret, dental trim and various window styles. There are some more elaborate looking houses on Dennis Street but the Demots' house has an understated elegance. The house at 414 Dennis Street has decorative trim around the porch that looks fanciful. Across the street is a large, rose-colored three-story house that looks even more fanciful. Both of these houses are embellished with intricate spindle work, column combinations, and multiple moldings and carved decorations over the porches.

Historical Context

The legacy of the Raymond-Demots house is its connection to the history and development of the Adrian area. The early 1900s was a time when the city of Adrian was prospering from various industries and the Queen Anne style was coming to an end. People were getting rid of all the frills and embellishments of this style. This gave way to a simpler, less elaborate architecture with classic lines and balanced proportions, as can be found in styles such as the Colonial Revival and

Neoclassical.¹⁴ At the same time, Adrian was growing due to the development of the railroads and Page Fence Company, of which Mr. Robertson was Treasurer. This process attracted young inventors, such as Mr. Samuel Raymond. This growth and development also caught the interest of more influential innovators and manufacturers, such as Henry Ford.

Leslie Robertson, for whom the house was built, was of Scottish decent, and grew up in Ogden Township, near Adrian.¹⁵ In 1891 he graduated with a law degree from the University of Michigan. At the age of 27, Leslie Robertson married Bertha Page, who was the daughter of J. Wallace Page, also known as “JW,” the richest man in Adrian at that time. Mr. Page was the founder of Page Woven Wire Fence Company and held the patent for wire fence that would make Adrian “The Fence Capital of the World.” He invented this fence because of his desire to create a structure that would “bounce back” even if a bull ran into it.¹⁶ In 1901, Leslie left his lucrative law practice to become Treasurer of his father-in-law’s company. JW lived just a few houses down the street at 510 State Street, in the 1893 Queen Anne house designed by Christian Frederick Matthes, now referred to as the Ladd-Page House.

In the decade the followed the construction of the Raymond-Demots House, Adrian continued to expand rapidly. The first manufacturer of automobiles, under the management of Walter Clement had begun, and McConnell’s was one of the most

¹⁴ John Milnes Baker, *American House Styles- A Concise Guide*, New York, N.Y. : W.W. Norton & Company, 1994, 120-123.

¹⁵ For Leslie Robertson’s biography, see *Memoirs of Lenawee County, Michigan, Volume II*, Richard Illenden Bonner ed., Madison, Wisconsin: Western Historical Association, 1909, 339.

¹⁶ Charles Lindquist, *Lenawee County: A Harvest of Pride and Promise*, Chatsworth, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1990, 51.

important department stores in town. The Lenawee County Savings Bank constructed a very grand Classical Revival building on Maumee Street. The colossal columns on its façade, designed by local architect Christian Frederick Matthes has made this one of the most distinguished buildings in Adrian history.

In 1916, after the death of J. Wallace Page, and the sale of the business to a firm in Detroit, the Robertsons left their beautiful home in Adrian and took up residency in Detroit, Michigan, where Mr. Robertson accepted a job as President of Gray's Furniture Company.¹⁷ The new residents at 446 State Street, Samuel and Kate Raymond, would eclipse the Robertsons' substantial presence and influence in Adrian.

Samuel W. Raymond and his wife, Kate Bryant Raymond, then moved from Detroit to the house on State Street. Both Samuel Raymond and Henry Ford married sisters in the Bryant family.¹⁸ Samuel Raymond established a Ford garage, which became the first Ford dealership in Michigan. Mr. Raymond developed, manufactured, and sold an inexpensive farm tractor in 1921 that became popular with local farmers. He also designed various attachments to go on the tractor. After 1925, Mr. Raymond sold his patents to the John Deere and Oliver Companies.¹⁹

Mr. Raymond and his wife Kate kept close ties with Henry Ford. Mr. Ford would often spend time with the Raymond family at their home. According to the

¹⁷ Charles Lindquist, "The Work of Lenawee's Master Craftsman, Ferdinand Thieme, in the Robertson-Raymond House," *Lenawee Reflections*, June 17, 1989, 90.

¹⁸ Charles, Lindquist, *Adrian, the City That Worked*, Adrian, Michigan: Lenawee Historical Museum, 2004, 148.

¹⁹ Gerald McFarland, "Samuel W. Raymond—teacher, farmer, inventor, car dealer, businessman, philosopher, and a relative of Henry Ford," *The Vintage Ford*, vol. 29, no. 5 (September-October 1994), 26.

Demots, his favorite spot in the house was the billiard room on the 3rd floor. He would play cards at the circular built-in table in the turret and play pool on the large wooden table at the center of the room. The Raymonds lived in the house until they both passed away in 1949; Mr. Raymond passed away first, then Mrs. Raymond passed away five months later.²⁰



Henry Ford would play cards at this circular, built-in table on the third floor, in the turret. Photo by Garno, 2010.

Stepping into the Demots' house is like stepping back into another era in time, a time of rich elegance, when industrialists accumulated substantial resources and could indulge in the finer things in life. The house has an architectural style that is unique, inside and out. It is striking with its complex textures and special features, exotic hand-carved woods, architectural details and warm colors. In addition to the aesthetic qualities, the Demots house is rich in the history of the time of Adrian's development and association with notable people such as Wallace Page

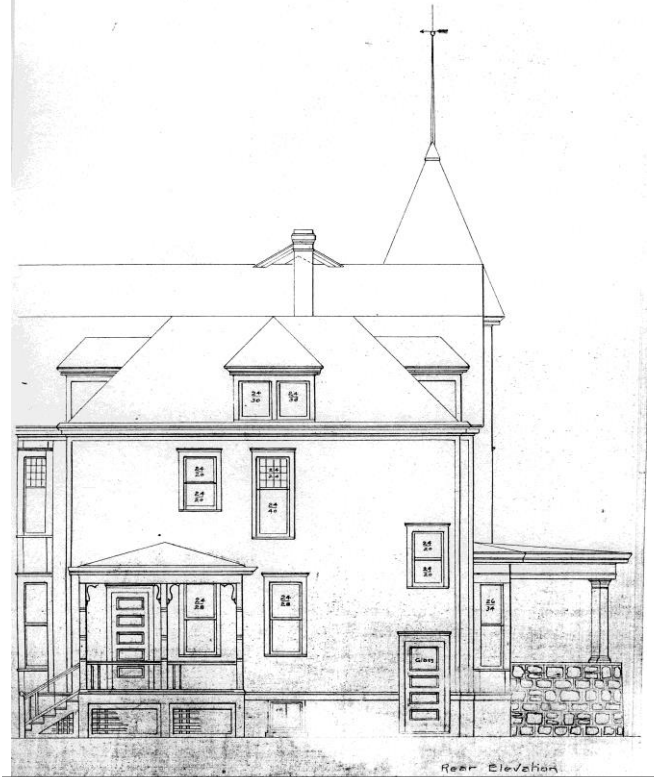
²⁰ Gerald McFarland, "Samuel W. Raymond..." *The Vintage Ford*, vol. 29, no. 5 (September-October 1994), 26.

and Henry Ford. The Demots have kept the house in such nice condition and have enjoyed sharing its heritage with the community.

Original Elevation Drawings from 1900



F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, Façade.



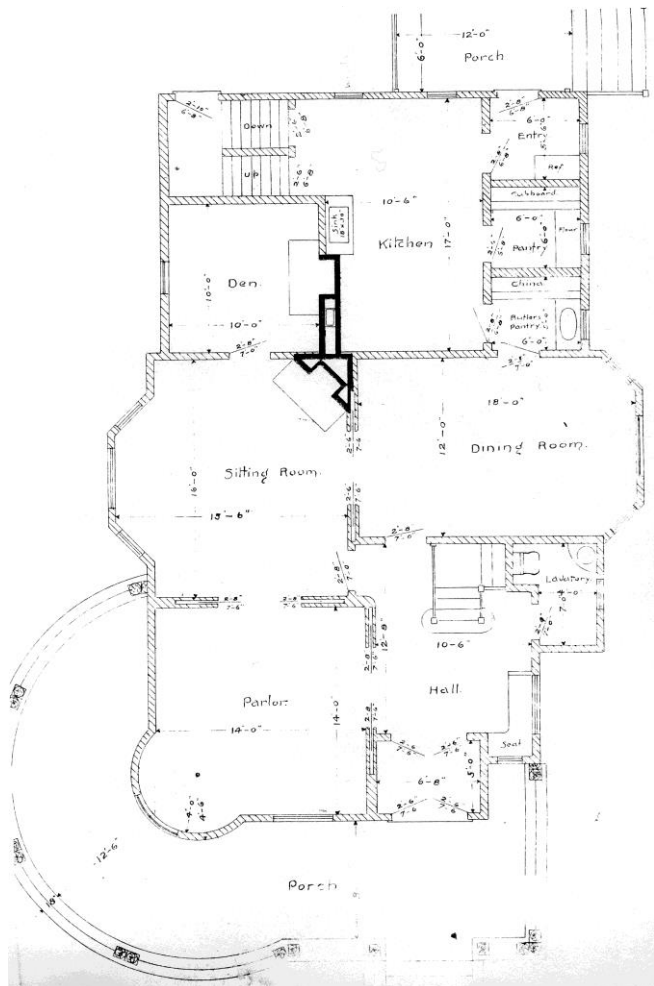
F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, Rear Elevation.



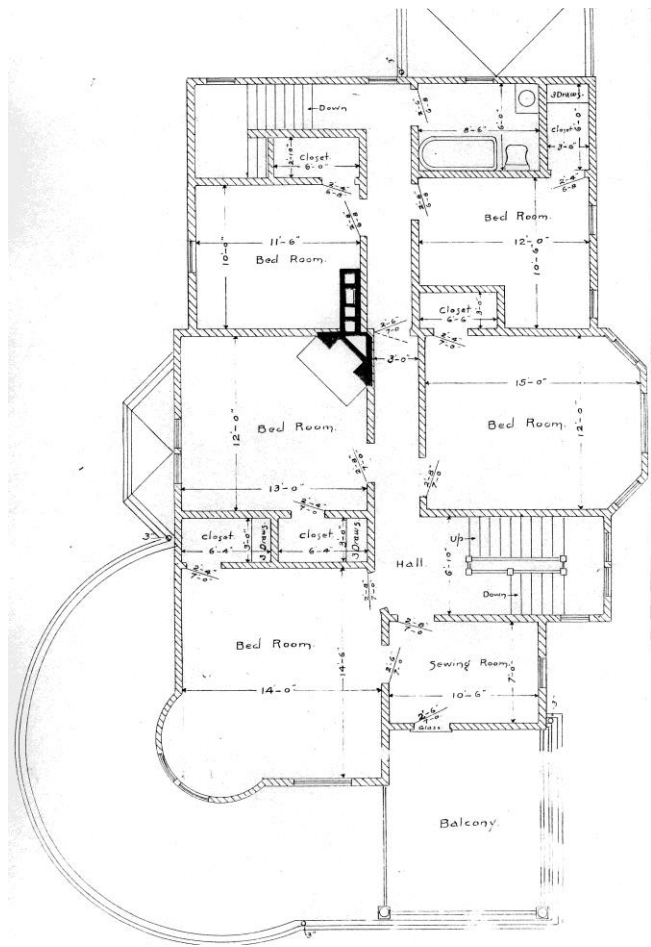
F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, North Elevation.



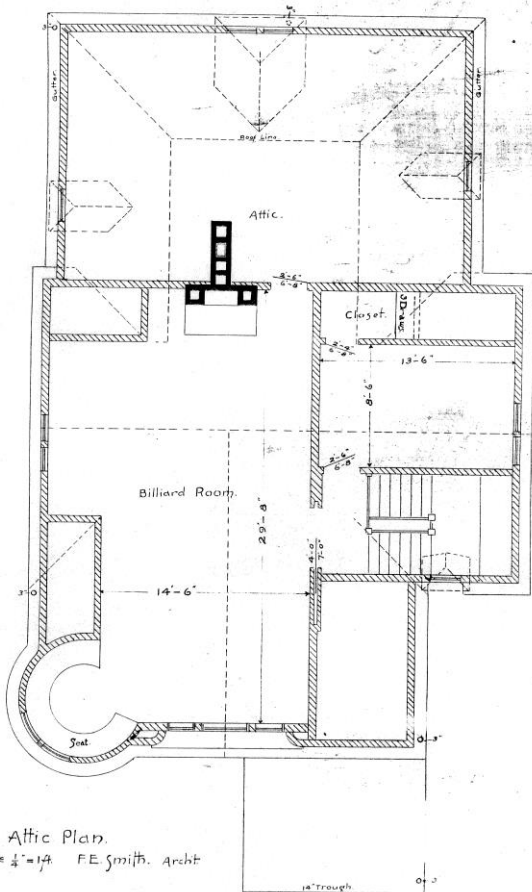
F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, South Elevation.



F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, First Floor Plan.

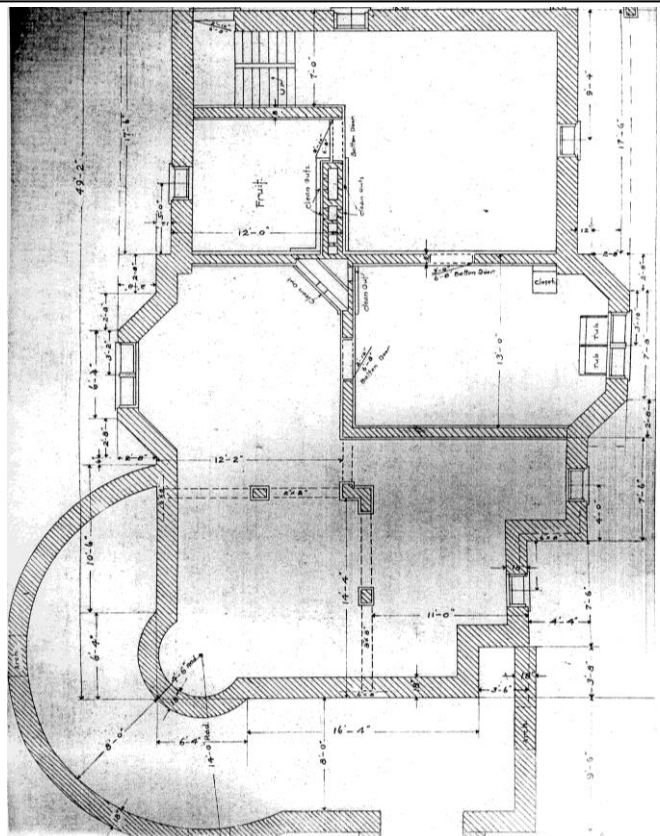


F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, Second Floor Plan.



Attic Plan.
Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0''$ F. E. Smith, Archt.

F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, Attic Plan.



F. E. Smith, Architect, L. B. Robertson House, 1900, Basement Plan.

Works Cited

Baker, Milnes. *American House Styles: A Concise Guide*. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986.

Grow, Lawrence. *Old House Plans: Two Centuries of American Domestic Architecture*. New York City: Universe Books, 1978.

Lindquist, Charles. *Adrian, the City That Worked*. Adrian, Michigan: Lenawee Historical Museum, 2004.

_____, *Lenawee County: A Harvest of Pride and Promise*, Chatsworth, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1990, 51.

_____, "The Work of Lenawee's Master Craftsman, Ferdinand Thieme, in the Robertson-Raymond House." *Lenawee Reflections*, June 17, 1989. (Lenawee County Historical Museum Archives).

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide To American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

McFarland, Gerald. "Samuel W. Raymond—teacher, farmer, inventor, car dealer, businessman, philosopher, and a relative of Henry Ford." *The Vintage Ford*, vol. 29, no. 5 (September-October 1994), 24-26.

Memoirs of Lenawee County, Michigan, Volume II. Richard Illenden Bonner, ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Western Historical Association, 1909.

Walker, Lester. *American Shelter*. New York: The Overlook Press, 1986.

Interviews

Demots, Lois. Interview with the author, 28 November 2010.

Baker-Korth, Sarah. Interview with the author, 18 September 2010.

Baker, Jeanne, Interview with the author, 22 September 2010.