

ROLLIN M. GERSTACKER FOUNDATION

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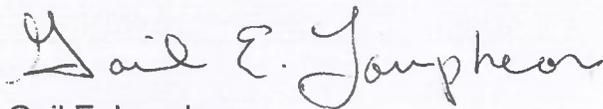
The Pardee House on Midland, Michigan's Main Street is one of Alden B. Dow's finest designs, and has contributed to significant family life, philanthropy and community stewardship throughout its history.

James T. and Elsa U. Pardee moved into the house in 1937. It provided a new modern approach to architecture that was still being developed in the 1930s. This speaks volumes about the Pardee's confidence in the architect and the future.

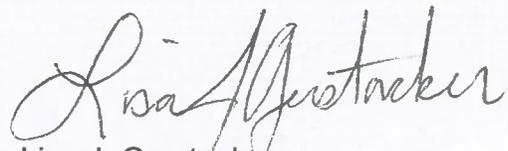
Although the Pardees lived only seven years in the home, its name memorializes their lives and their contributions to the community. Today, the home is a hub of philanthropic activity, housing four local foundations, all seeking to better the Midland community.

Tawny Ryan Nelb, archivist and historian, is the author of this brilliantly crafted booklet. She has researched and written this account based on previously unknown original documents from the Gerstacker, Pardee and Alden B. Dow Papers, including many images to tell the story of this treasured landmark.

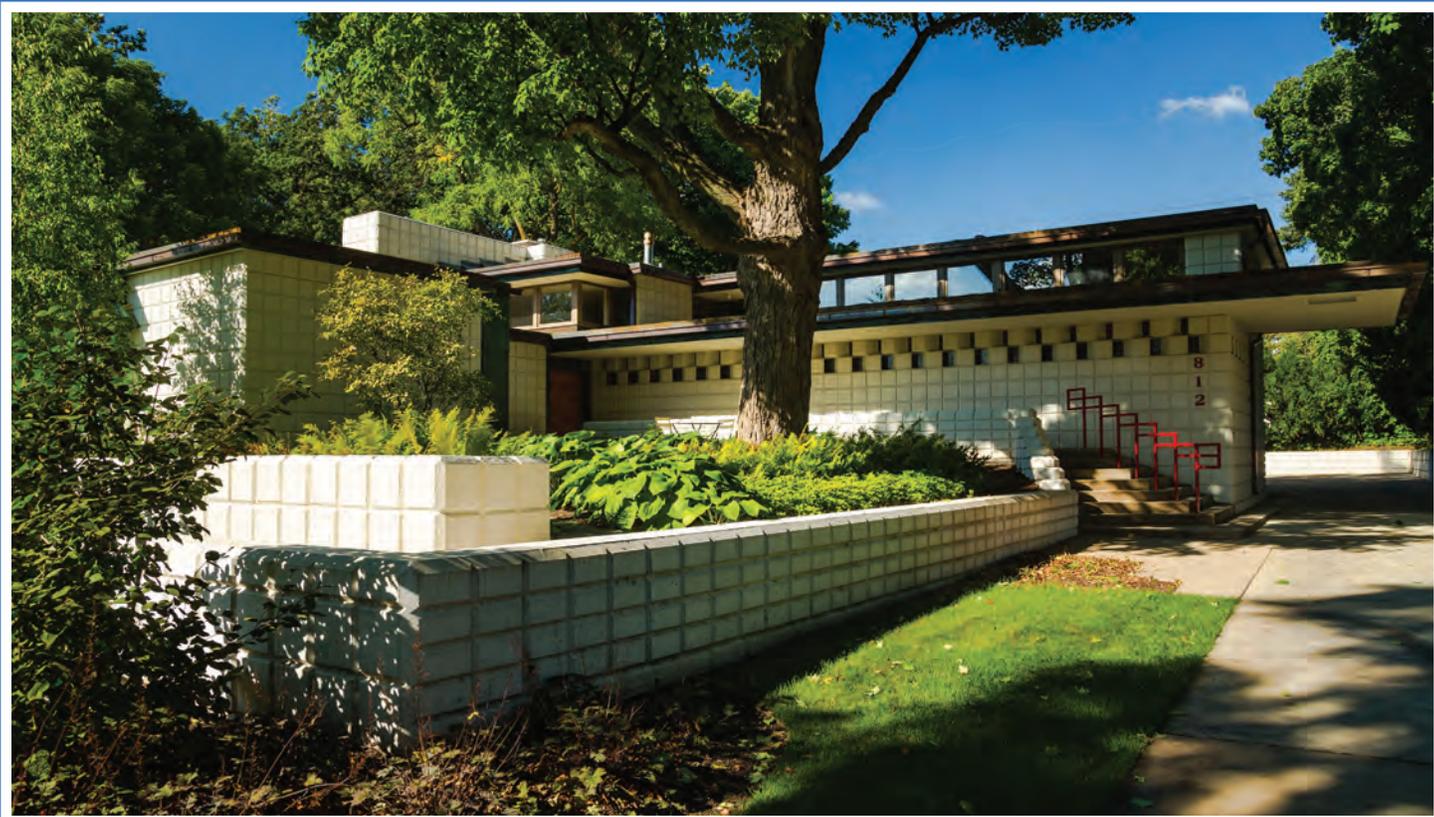
We hope that you enjoy this publication.



Gail E. Lanphear
President
Elsa U. Pardee Foundation



Lisa J. Gerstacker
President & CEO
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation



The History of the Pardee House

A Home for Philanthropy

By Tawny Ryan Nelb
2023
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation
Midland, Michigan

Front cover: Main Street view of the James T. and Elsa U. Pardee House, 2016, courtesy William Lauderbach

The History of the Pardee House: A Home for Philanthropy

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Acknowledgements

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Tawny Ryan Nelb
August 2023

Introduction

The James T. and Elsa U. Pardee House on Main Street is one of architect Alden B. Dow's finest designs, and it has contributed to significant family life, philanthropy, and community stewardship throughout its history. The Pardees commissioned the house in 1935 and moved into it in 1937, 86 years ago. The Pardee's willingness to allow Alden Dow to provide a new approach to architecture with open spaces, lots of windows, and a home that fit into the landscape when modern architecture was still being developed speaks volumes to their confidence in the architect and the future. As a child, the house was one of my favorite places because it meant a visit with my great aunt Elsa.

Although the Pardees only lived in the home for seven years, the home's name memorializes their lives and their contributions to the community. While others lived in the home, including the Carl Gerstacker family and successive Memorial Presbyterian Church pastors Dr. Theodore Marvin Greenhoe and Dr. Kirk Hudson and their families, it was eventually converted to offices by the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation in 1986. The home became a cultivator for philanthropy as the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Charles J. Strosacker Foundation, Elsa U. Pardee Foundation, Midland Foundation (now Midland Area Community Foundation), and Allen Foundation all moved in to continue their work for the betterment of our community.

The author, archivist/historian Tawny Ryan Nelb, has researched and written this account based on previously unknown original documents from the Gerstacker, Pardee, and Alden B. Dow Papers including many images to tell the story of this treasured landmark.

Gail Lanphear
August 2023

James Thomas Pardee and Elsa Uhinck Pardee in Midland



1. Elsa and James Pardee, ca. 1940, courtesy Pardee Papers

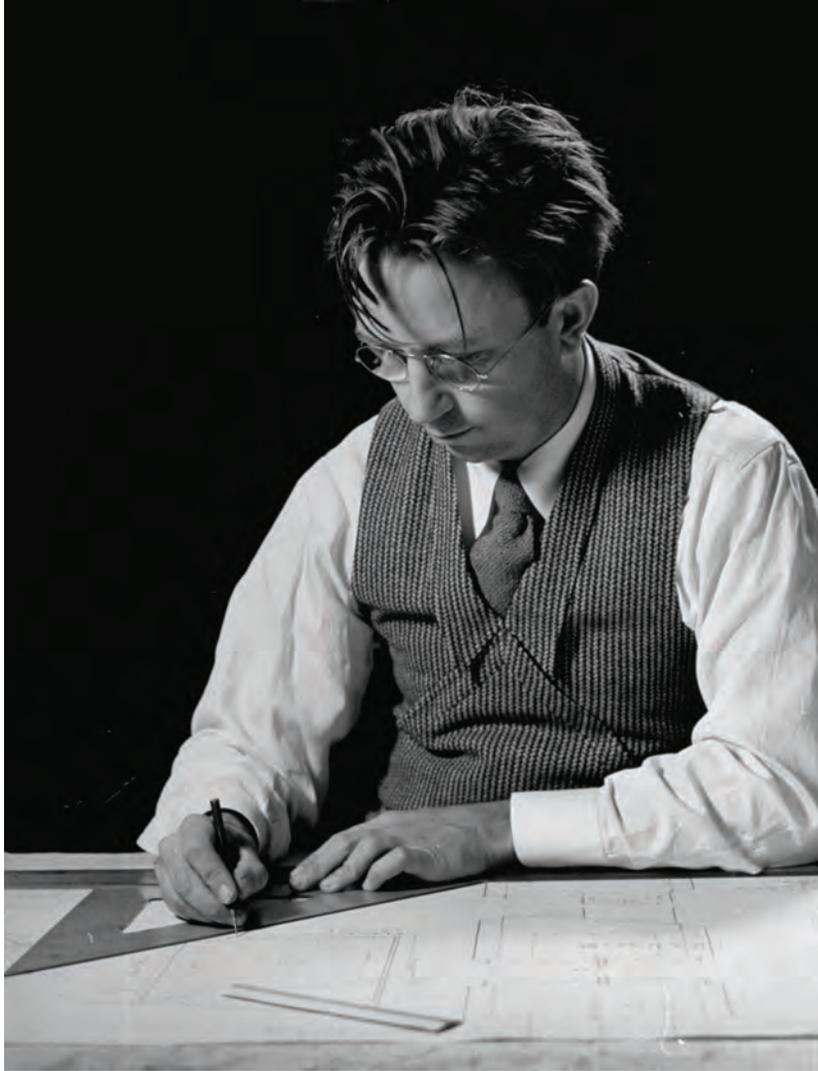
Cleveland-born James Thomas Pardee often came to Midland to fulfill his duties as a member of The Dow Chemical Board of Directors and subsequent work as Vice President (1901-1941) and Secretary (1916-1935) of the company. A friend of Herbert H. Dow since high school and college, Pardee had invested heavily and became a director in The Dow Chemical Company, its 1895 predecessor company, the Dow Process Company in Navarre, Ohio, and later in the second Midland Chemical Company.¹ In the early days, he would stay with the Dow family in their Main Street home on his business trips to Midland.²

On February 21, 1914, Pardee married Elsa Uhinck from Parma, Ohio, and later Cleveland. In 1918, the couple bought a permanent home, the 1890 R. J. Waldron house,³ at the southwest corner of Main and Revere Streets in Midland, Michigan, and they spent their summers here and their winters in Cleveland. James Pardee was elected Chairman of The Dow Chemical Board of Directors in April 1935,⁴ and he and Elsa decided to replace their Midland summer house with a more modern home. For more on the lives and contributions of James and Elsa Pardee see: Tawny Ryan Nelb, *James Thomas Pardee and Elsa Uhinck Pardee: Community Builders* (Midland, MI: Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, 2023).

2. Original Main Street house built in 1890, courtesy Pardee Papers



Alden B. Dow Architect



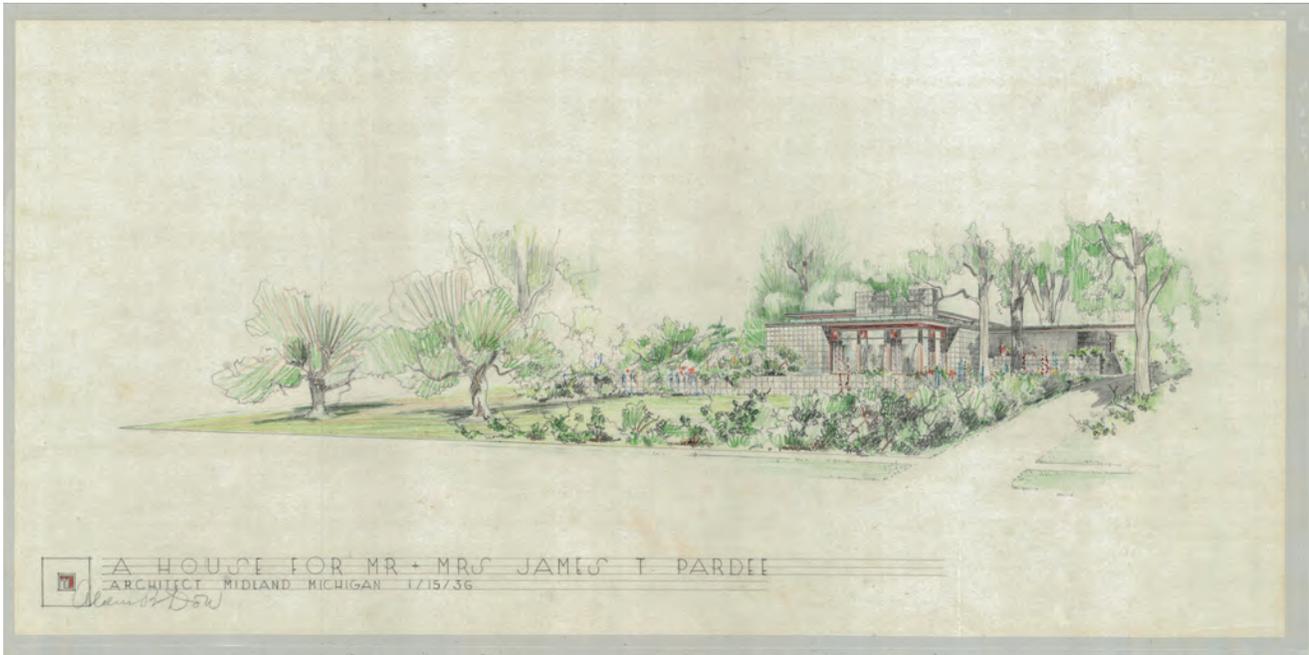
3. Alden B. Dow, 1937, photographer William Vandivert, courtesy Life Magazine and Alden B. Dow Archives

The choice of an architect to design their new home was obvious. By 1935, Alden B. Dow, the son of Pardee's close family friend, Herbert H. Dow, was firmly established, and he was designing homes in the Midland area. Alden had studied engineering at the University of Michigan and then switched to architecture, graduating from Columbia University in 1931 after receiving Beaux Arts training.⁵ Two years after graduation, he studied with the well-known Prairie School modernist architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, for six months in 1933 at the Taliesin Fellowship in Spring Green, Wisconsin where the focus was not on studying architecture in books but rather "learn by doing." The apprentice architects would design something new and build it at the Wright's home and farm complex, work on their own projects, and took turns at kitchen duty or farm work as part of their training.⁶

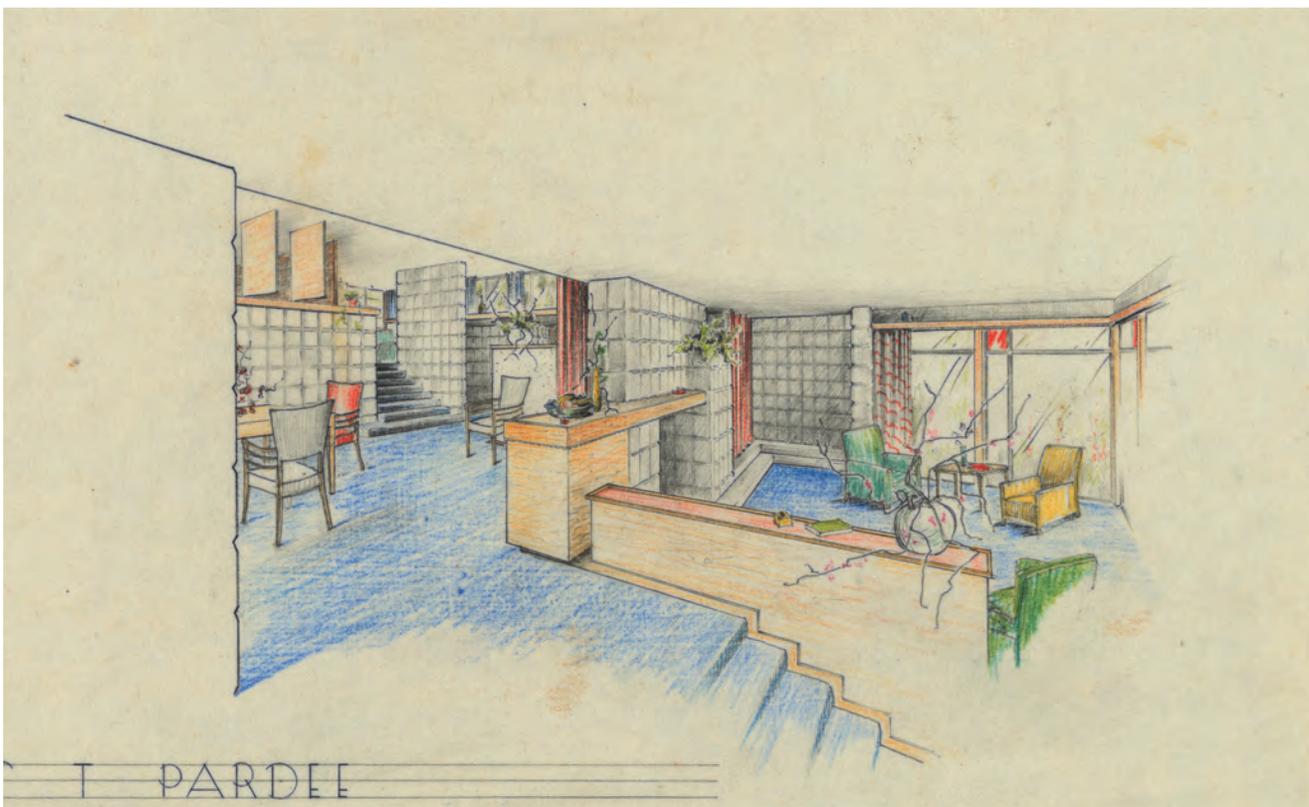
By 1935, Alden B. Dow had already built several homes in Midland, most notably, the Earl Stein house northeast of Revere Park, just a hundred yards from the Pardee's old Main Street house. The Pardees were to be thorough and attentive clients. This worked well with Dow's approach of making "painstaking study of the needs and personalities of the family" that would occupy his homes.⁷ His focus was for each home to offer "privacy and family space on the lot mixed with a public space that is open and bright and draws people to it."⁸

House Design 1935-1936

The extraordinary design resulting from Dow's observations must have been intriguing to the Pardees at a time when modern architecture was still in its infancy. Setting the house on the lot, it seemed to grow out of the landscape, reflecting Dow's philosophy that "gardens never end, and buildings never begin."⁹ Alden tried to save as many existing trees on the property as possible, which even meant an initial design where the house literally wrapped around a big oak tree in the backyard.¹⁰



4. Presentation drawing of initial design, front perspective rendering, January 15, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives



5. Presentation drawing of initial design, interior perspective rendering, January 15, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

Alden B. Dow had the first sketches of a T-shaped home completed by January 13, 1936.¹¹ He was proud of the design, writing to Elsa Pardee, “I hope you will like this house because personally I am very much taken with it, and I know it would make a beautiful home to live in.”¹²

By February 20, 1936, Dow had made some changes to the design responding to the Pardee’s input about traffic flow from the service wing and his own rethinking of the spaces. This scheme was closer to the final design one recognizes today. He changed the window placement in the front to offer more privacy, shielding it from the adjacent Edwin and Florence Barstow House and allowing a view of Revere Park, turned the fireplace chimney ninety degrees, added glass block, lights, and decorative screening block to the wall along the covered front door walkway, moved the dining room to the back of the house closer to the kitchen, changed a porch to a sunroom, moved the house down the hill slightly to save the big oak tree in the back yard, and lowered the service wing so it was on the same level as the kitchen and the garage.¹³ Several weeks later he commented in a letter, “...I think we have a very swell house.”¹⁴ The Pardee home was to become a classic of organic architecture where the home’s interior merges with the surrounding natural terrain.¹⁵

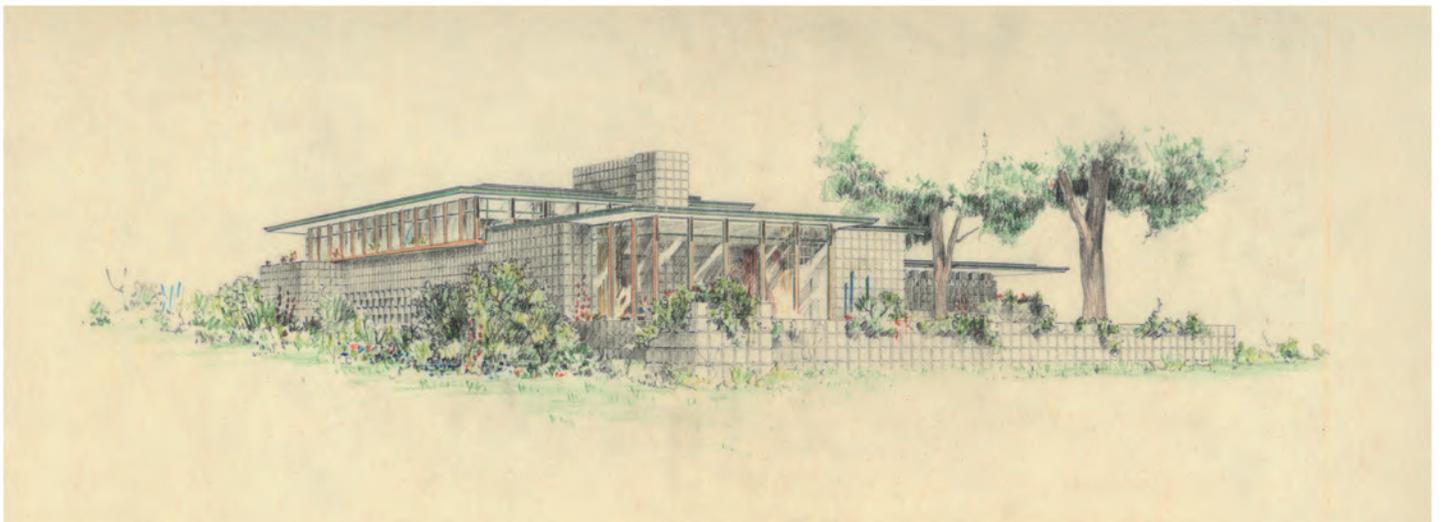
6. Presentation drawing of initial design, rear perspective rendering, January 15, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives
Note: The initial design had the house wrap around an oak tree.



7. Glass block, lights, and screening Unit Blocks under entry walkway, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



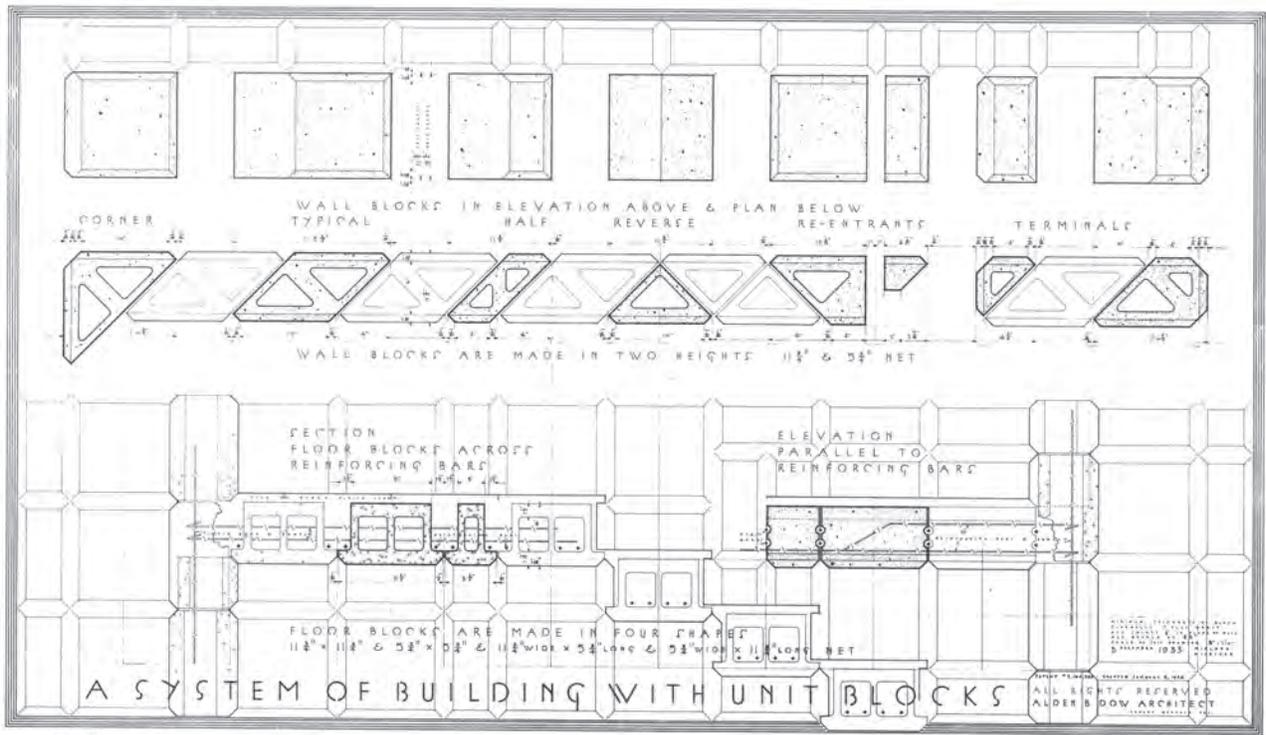
8. Presentation drawing of the final scheme, front perspective rendering, February 20, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives



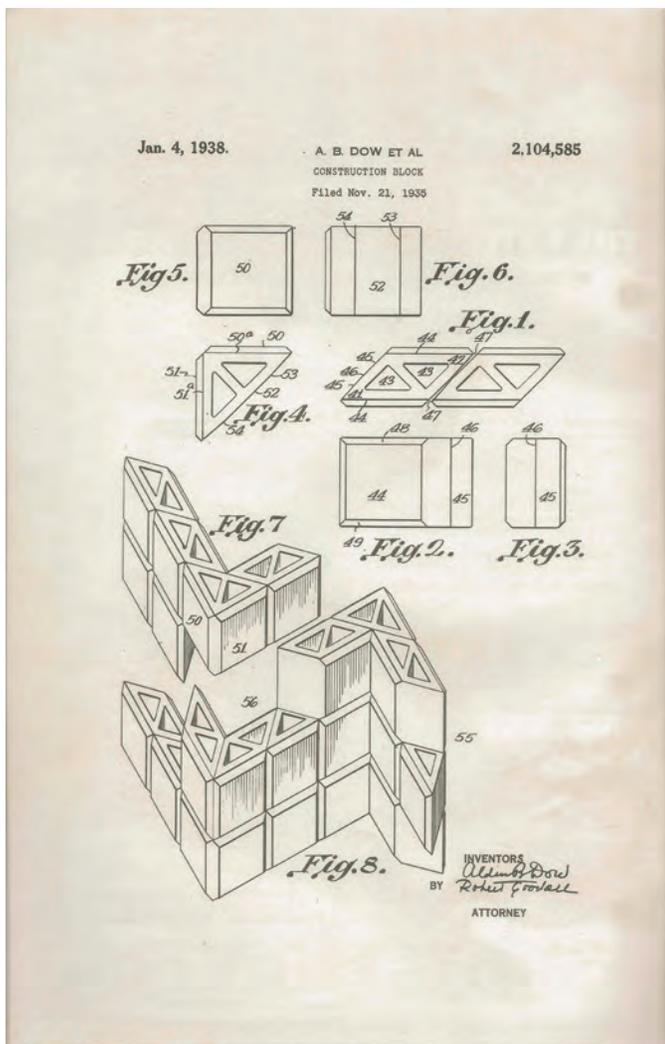
9. Presentation drawing of the final scheme, front perspective rendering, February 20, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

But these January and February drawings were simply the beginning of the design process, and there was much more work to do. Architecture is a process of give and take. The client determines what they want and specifies their needs (called “the program”) to the architect who sees his/her role as solving this problem. Lots of discussions take place to make sure every detail is specified, and changes are inevitable, especially as certain equipment or finishes aren’t available or the architect’s and client’s visions differ. The Pardee House is certainly an example of this. Elsa Pardee, who worked closely with Alden on the house,¹⁶ had originally envisioned a brick house in keeping with the design sensibilities of her social milieu and perhaps because Alden’s nearby Stein House design was made of brick.¹⁷

Alden Dow wanted to use his new cinder Unit Block for construction. He had designed and had applied in 1935 to patent these handmade molded blocks¹⁸ made from cinder ash residue from The Dow Chemical Company coal furnaces and bound together with concrete.¹⁹ The blocks had been co-designed by colleague and Chief Draftsman Robert Goodall, who had come to Midland with Dow from the Frank Lloyd Wright Taliesin Fellowship. Unit Blocks were available in sixteen shapes, and Dow had already used them on the 1934 Heath House, the 1934 Hanson House, the 1934 Whitman House, the 1935 Ball House, and the 1935 Goodall House.²⁰ These were the first of thirteen homes to be constructed of Unit Block.²¹



10. Unit Blocks drawing, 1933, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives



11. Approved Unit Block patent, 1938, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

The rhomboid shapes made a strong structure since the blocks were laid out with one course running to the left and the next to the right. They also had triangular shaped hollows or voids in the middle so structural steel, piping, and wire conduits could be fit through the center, and the air pocket created natural insulation.²² An infinite number of geometric shapes could be made with the diversely shaped blocks, creating an artistic and functional design. In a concrete masonry publication at the time, Alden commented the block made it easier to create a “neat and organized-looking wall,” and it was inexpensive and fireproof.²³

In his argument for the use of the blocks to Elsa Pardee, he commented the Unit Blocks:

have a much quieter feeling and create a continuity that is very difficult to get with the bricks because the bricks do not work into any geometric pattern conforming with window openings and the like. As far as the structural member is concerned, it is just as desirable as brick and has the added feature of being a fair insulator as well as sound absorber.²⁴

Although Elsa had been expecting brick, it did not take much to convince her, since by the end of February, Elsa commented to Alden Dow that she had already told her society friends she liked concrete block too.²⁵



12. Living room, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers

here with the work...”²⁷ Their detailed correspondence continued throughout design and construction, and compromises by both were a necessary part of the process.²⁸

There is significant correspondence (including telegrams) between the Pardees and Alden B. Dow about the house project because the Pardees lived mostly in Cleveland during the winter. Elsa even suggested they meet in Detroit (halfway between Cleveland and Midland) to discuss the myriad details of the design and how it would work with their lifestyle and needs.²⁶ Elsa researched the equipment needed for the house by visiting showrooms, attending a lecture about lighting, and by thorough study, even learning about the importance of the kitchen sink. She shared her thoughts with Alden as part of the design process which she said were, “in my effort to help

The Pardees wanted to retain the prime Revere and Main Street corner site, with its Tittabawassee River and Revere Park views, described as the southwest 50 feet of Lots 3 and 4, and entire Lots 5 and 6 of Block 82

of the original plat of Midland.²⁹ The old house was to be torn down, but instead, it was partially disassembled and moved near the end of May 1936, with the use of horses and logs to a new site two blocks away at 803 Ellsworth Street. It is still in use today as a residence.³⁰ After the house was moved and during the new house construction, the Pardees lived mostly in their Cleveland house, but on their frequent trips to Midland, they would sometimes stay at the 1932 Alden B. Dow-designed Midland Country Club.³¹



13. Pardee’s first home moved to Ellsworth Street, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



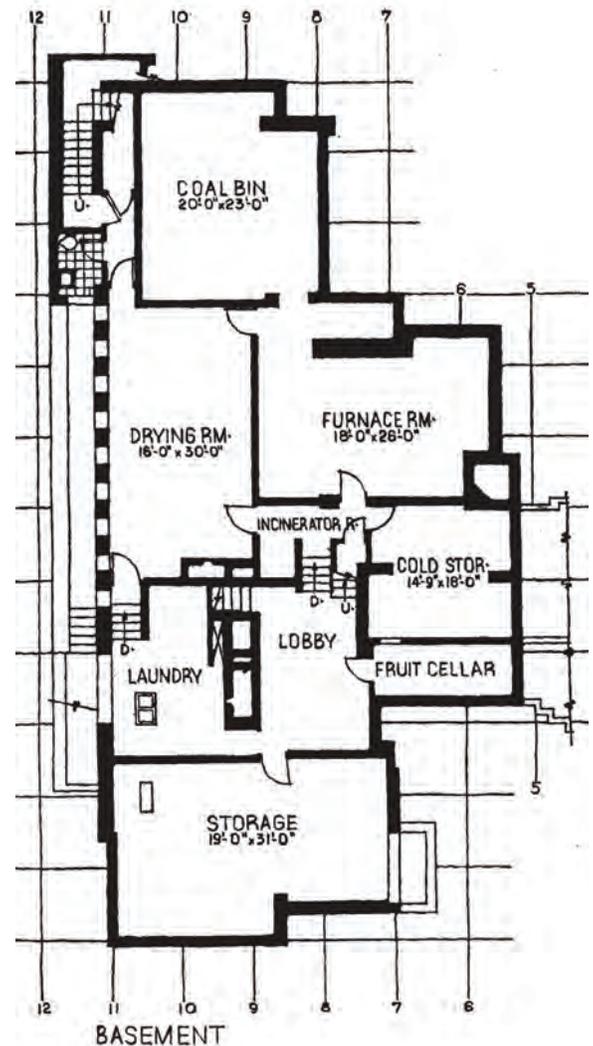
14. Completed Pardee House, late 1930s, courtesy Pardee Papers

Descriptions of the House

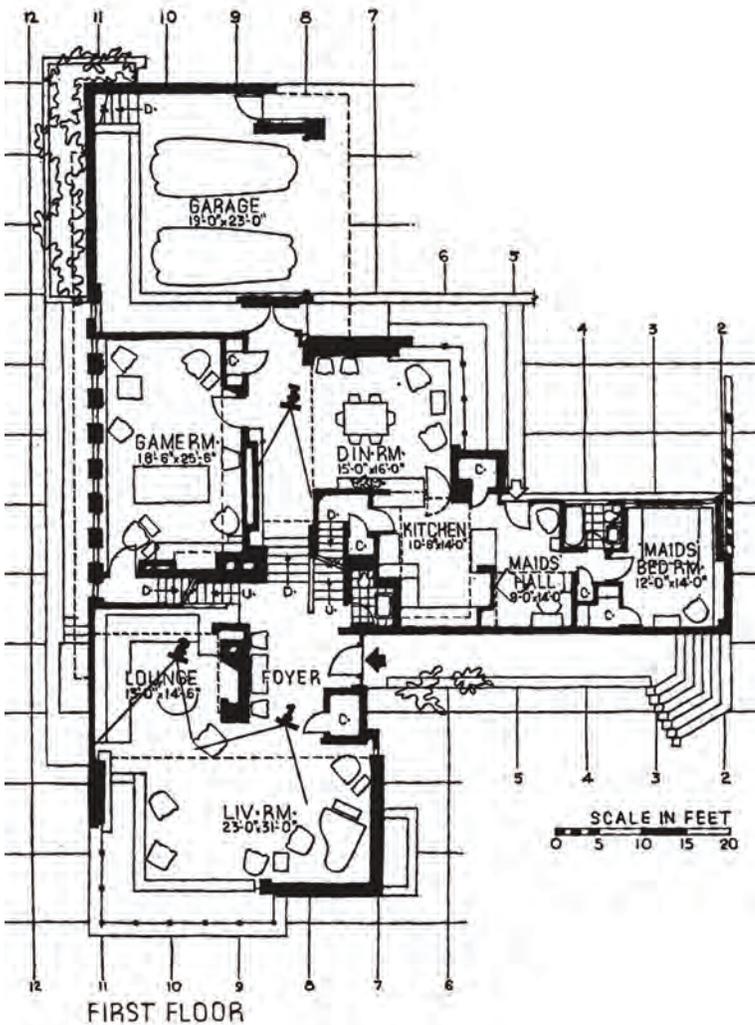
The Pardee home is tucked into a slight hill, so it rises from the ground as if it is part of the landscape. Historian Dr. Robert G. Waite's 1986 National Register Nomination for the Pardee House, in recognizing its importance to architectural history, commented that the home is "one of Alden Dow's most powerful expressions of geometric form and his interpretation of the international style."³² The Unit Blocks used for its structure allowed for innovative geometric patterns and provided an open house plan where changes in levels and changes in wall direction offered differentiation and interest between the many rooms.

Basement

The fully finished, two-level basement³³ provided support spaces for the house staff. The lower level had a coal bin under the garage, an adjacent large furnace room, a laundry drying room with windows opening for air circulation into a long window well, and an incinerator room. Four steps up from this lower level and radiating off a central lobby, there were a laundry room, a cold storage room, a fruit cellar, and a large storage room. The bulk of these rooms would have been spaces for the house staff who entered the basement through a stairway off the kitchen or via a circuitous route accessed in the rear of the garage.



15. Basement floor plans, March 1941, courtesy Architectural Forum and Alden B. Dow Archives



16. First floor plan, March 1941, courtesy Architectural Forum and Alden B. Dow Archives



17. Rear courtyard, photographer Elmer Astleford, late 1930s, courtesy Pardee Papers. Note: the maid's quarters on the far-left side and the oak tree saved by moving the house down the hill and leaving the ground around the tree at its original level. The garage is on the right.

First Floor

On the first floor,³⁴ a full, two-car attached garage was built on the northeast side of the house. Although the front door of the house was on Main Street, Dow expected the rear entrance to be the most often used, thus the back was intended as an impressive entrance.³⁵ In fact, as Dow predicted, the family mostly used the back door to enter so the house description begins there.³⁶ The back entrance opened immediately into the family dining room with a button in the floor which connected to a bell to call the house staff.³⁷

The adjacent, but hidden kitchen, was meant to be a hygienic service area. It had metal cabinets, a dishwasher (still an unusual convenience at the time),³⁸ linoleum counters,³⁹ and a pass-through wall opening allowed serving access to the dining room.⁴⁰ Glass blocks brought in natural light from the front walkway on the west side all along the ten-foot-high kitchen ceiling and continued along the ceiling of the adjacent maid's hall or living room and a maid's bedroom. A full bathroom completed the servant's wing.

A recreation or game room (later a favorite place for bridge card games)⁴¹ with a fireplace and floor to ceiling windows was set opposite the dining room and looked out toward Revere Park.

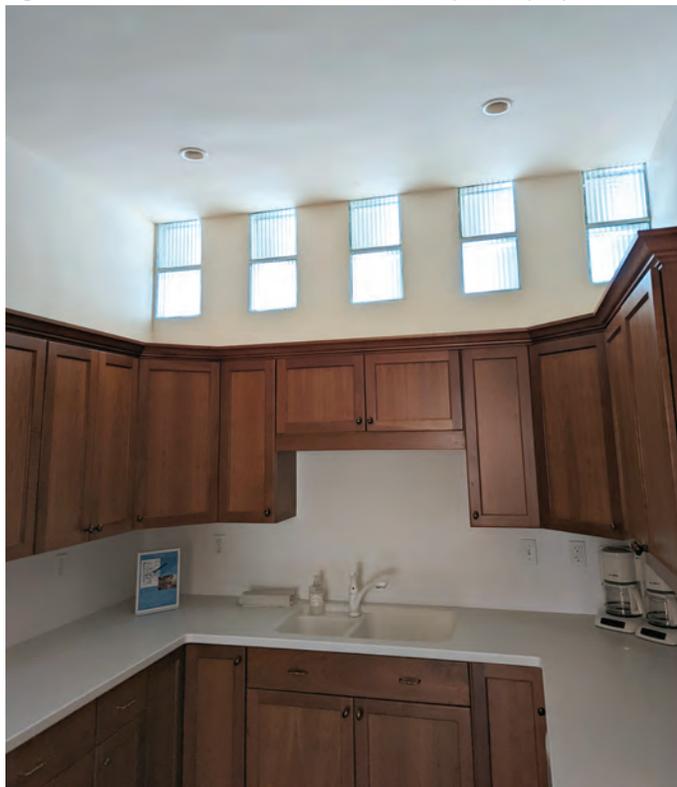
18. Dining room with hidden pass through to the adjacent kitchen, photographer Elmer Astleford, late 1930s, courtesy Pardee Papers



19. Alden B. Dow firm sketch of kitchen, ca. 1936, courtesy Pardee Papers



20. Block glass windows from entrance walkway above brings light to kitchen; shows kitchen after 1986 renovation that replaced the metal cabinets, 2021, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



21. Recreation room, ca. late 1930s, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers



22. Rear entrance hall with steps up to front entrance foyer, late 1930s, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers



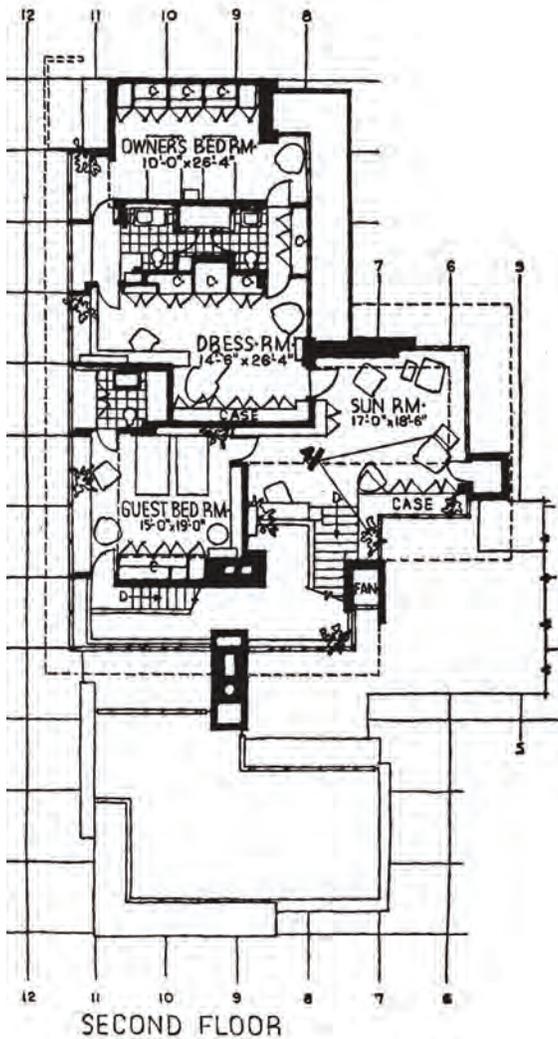
23. Living room, late 1930s, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers



Continuing down the back entrance hall, steps led up to a foyer in the upper part of the first floor (what we would call a split level today) with access to a half-bath and the front door entrance. Passing through the foyer, one entered a large living room with a 23' x 31' space for entertaining. Parallel and a few feet away from the southwest facing exterior walls were low, built-in benches for seating. Behind the benches, the floor was lower by two steps to accommodate 8-foot windows allowing sweeping views of the Tittabawassee River and the park. The lowered floor also helped conceal the heating registers from the main room. Adjacent to the living room is a 13' x 14' 6" lounge area with fireplace, offering a more intimate place for people to gather.



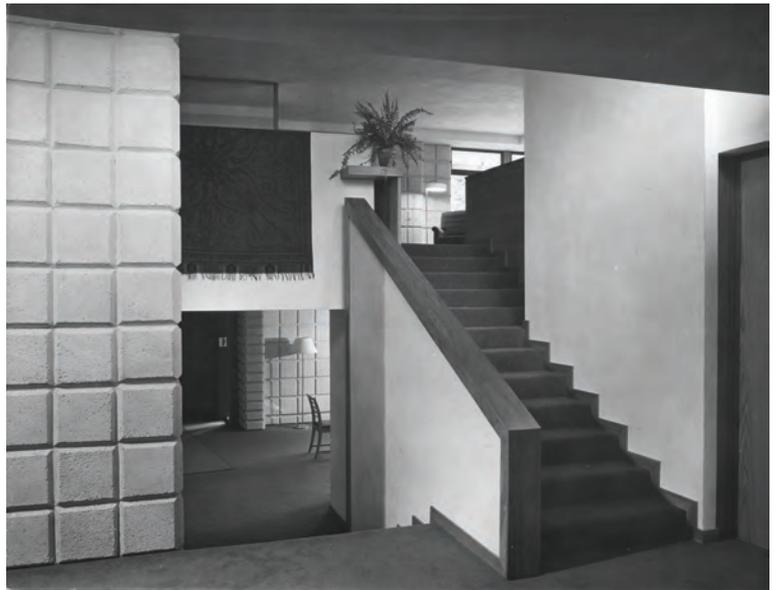
24. Lounge off the living room, late 1930s, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers



25. Second floor plan, March 1941, courtesy Architectural Forum, and Alden B. Dow Archives

Second Floor

From the first-floor foyer, a set of stairs led up to the second floor⁴² where a morning sunroom with corner-meshed windows flooded the space with sunlight. A large owner's bedroom suite included a 10' x 26' sleeping area and a 14' x 26' dressing room, which were separated by a large bathroom with two sinks and toilet areas connected by a shared bathtub. The suite contained ample closet space for clothes and shoes.



26. Foyer and steps up to the second floor, ca. 1938, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers



27. Sunroom, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Gerstacker Papers



28. Owner's dressing room, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers



29. Guest bedroom with mirrored wall and Alden B. Dow-designed beds and end tables, ca. 1938, photographer Elmer Astleford, courtesy Pardee Papers

Since the Pardees had no children, there was just one other bedroom with full bath for guests upstairs. Guests could access the front door and the lower living room area via a stairway leading from the bedroom without having to go through the more private family sunroom.



30. Stairs leading from/to guest bedroom with large windows above to light the area, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb

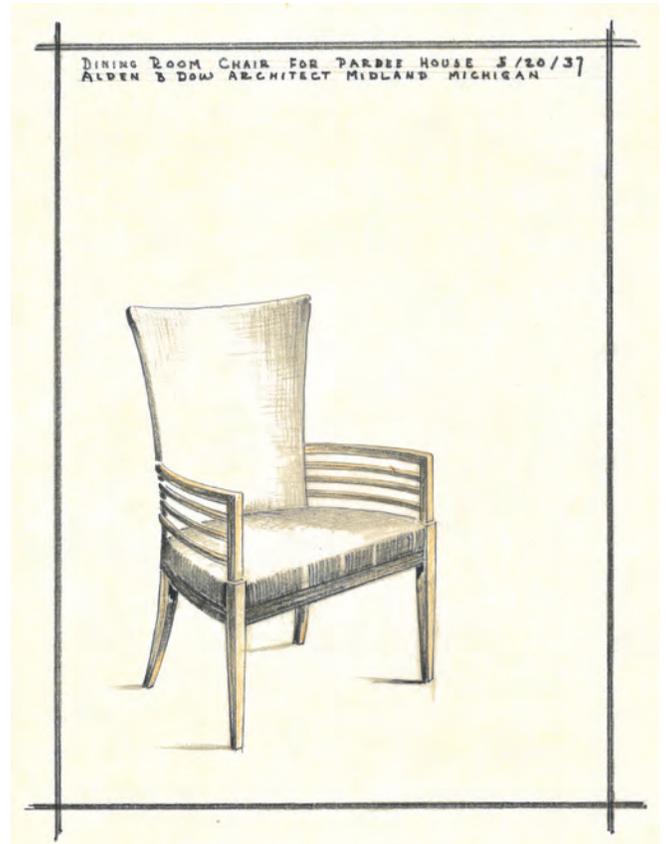
Famed architectural critic, Talbot Hamlin, commented in 1942, that the interior of the house was “significant” and the use of partitions and mirrors upstairs “allows the most fascinating and unusual suggestion of unlimited space superbly divided.”⁴³ Two other key features were the open spaces that flowed one into the other and the amount of light coming in from the abundance of strategically placed windows.⁴⁴ Both the stairways in this part of the house were bathed in light from windows across the front of the upper level, allowing them to be well-lit in daylight, even with the interior lights turned off. Numerous windows also allowed for cooling airflow in the summer months.

The house had modern features including air-conditioning, two fumigating clothing vaults in the owner's bedroom for storing Elsa's furs,⁴⁵ and a radio-controlled, automatic garage door opener (a so-called Mechanical Doorman) that worked from the dashboard of the car.⁴⁶

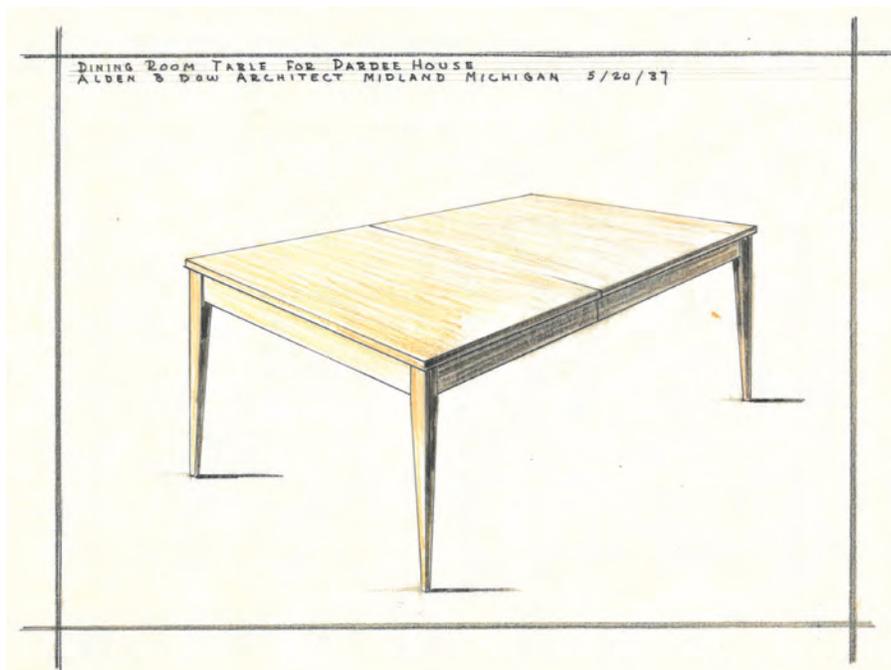
Interior Design

The interior of the home had white walls and natural Louisiana red cypress woodwork. There were cork floors in the kitchen and recreation room⁴⁷ but the bulk of the rooms were carpeted in bright green,⁴⁸ befitting Alden Dow's "use of color" philosophy. He said, "Color used in proper balance is necessary to the well-being of a person every hour of the day, for it creates cheerfulness, inspires superior workmanship in a factory or office, and stimulates a happy outlook in the home."⁴⁹ All of the windows had venetian blinds except for light tan, eight-foot long draperies on the windows in the living room and draperies in the southeast facing sunroom and the dining room below.⁵⁰ Additional interior warmth came from the upholstery fabrics on the modern Herman Miller and Mueller Company chairs⁵¹ with a range of colors including brilliant red, brown, blue, moss green, green stripes, chartreuse, yellow, and white.⁵²

The dining room was furnished with an Alden Dow-designed, pearwood table and eight matching chairs, which were built by Brower Furniture in Grand Rapids, Michigan.⁵³ These pieces are still in use today. Alden also designed Louisiana red cypress twin beds and matching end tables for the guest room that were built by the Bonhard Art Furniture Company of Cleveland, Ohio. These beds continued to be used by multiple families until the home became an office.⁵⁴ The bedspreads in the guest room were white with bright green pillow tops.



31. Pearwood chair, 1937, designed by Alden B. Dow, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives



32. Pear wood table, 1937, designed by Alden B. Dow, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

Exterior and Grounds

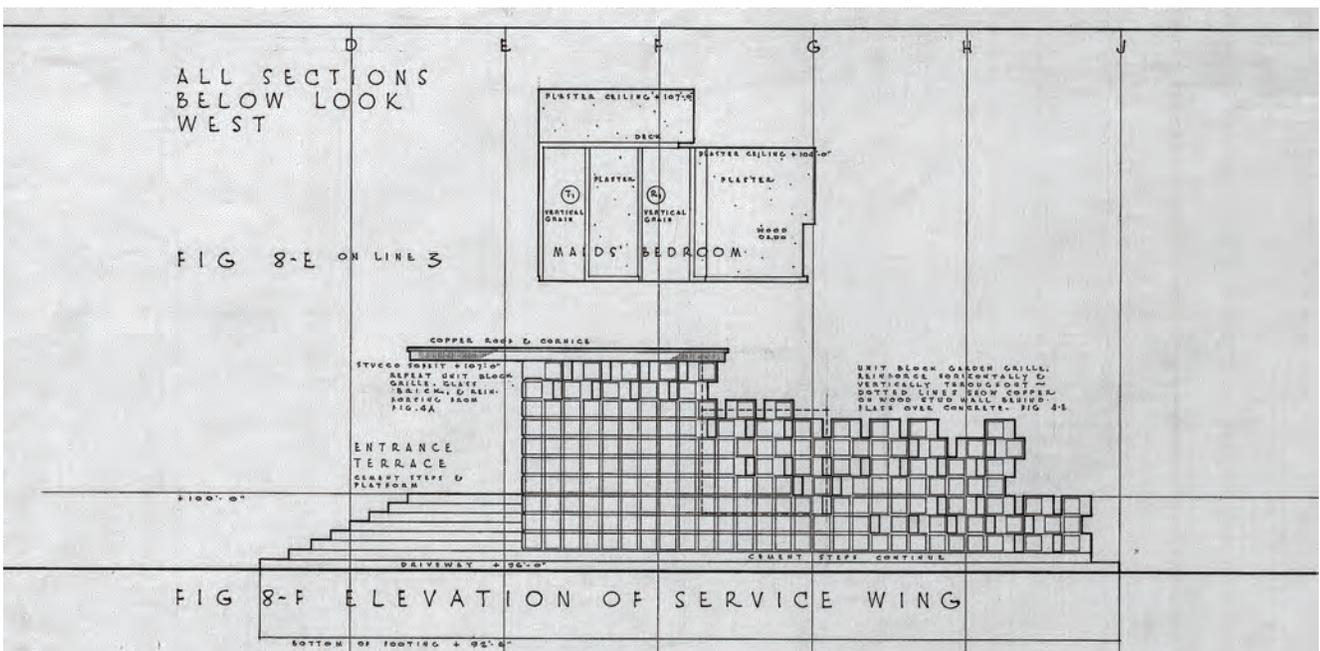
Although the original design⁵⁵ shows that a copper roof may have been intended, by June 1936, the roof had been changed to a pitch and gravel, Barrett-bonded roof with copper gutters.⁵⁶ The Barrett bonding assured a certain level of quality and a 20-year guarantee. The copper gutters give the appearance of a copper roof from the street. An extraordinary copper balcony off the back highlighted the rear of the home, and with the gutters, added color and richness to the overall design by oxidizing into an “organic green patina” that helped merge the home with the natural site.⁵⁷ Once complete, the entire Unit Block exterior was painted with a waterproof sealant which changed the almost 12,000 cinder-made Unit Blocks of various sizes, from their natural very dark grey color (see photo of the Unit Block-constructed Alden B. Dow Home before painting) to basically white with a touch of black in the paint mix.⁵⁸



33. Copper balcony in rear, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



34. Alden B. Dow Home and Studio made of Unit Block just like the Pardee House, 1940, showing the blocks before painting, courtesy Fine Homebuilding and Alden B. Dow Archives



35. Garden grille or trellis for Pardee House, working drawing, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

A playful Unit Block garden grille or trellis (removed in 1953-54) further integrated the home with the landscape as it seemed to dissolve into the ground. It extended from the maid's quarters along the driveway and around to the back of the house, providing privacy from the Barstow's backyard and offered a backdrop for landscape plants. Alden B. Dow later used a somewhat similar trellis by the lower house entrance in his own home.

Exterior landscaping was installed throughout May and June using most of the existing trees (including the big, old oak tree) on the lot. Added were Mugo pines, multiple varieties of junipers, flowering cherry, Nanking cherry, clump birch, shadbush, Russian olives, forsythia, euonymus, Boston ivy, myrtle, delphiniums, hydrangea, rambler roses, petunias, snapdragons, zinnias, and calendulas to complement a lawn on the north and west sides. The lawn had its own sprinkler system.⁵⁹

Maintenance

The home cost \$53,201 to build with the additional costs for the land, landscaping, and furnishings totaling \$75,000 or about \$1.6 million in today's dollars.⁶⁰ The Pardees moved in near the end of July 1937.⁶¹ Although they were pleased with the house, not everything was perfect. Over several months, leaks plagued the maid's quarters, the balcony, and the living room.⁶² There were also leaks in the garage, the basement toilet, and under the living room window.⁶³ Several months after they moved in, Elsa complained about the amount of sun and cold coming through the front living room windows and of the cooking odors being "obnoxious." In addition, cabinets had pulled away in the kitchen and there were leaks in the foundation.⁶⁴ Within two years, the heating system also had several leaks in the lines from improper soldering.⁶⁵ As one sees in problems with any new home, they were attended to over time. For example, a lovely copper awning was added sometime between 1938 and 1953 over the living room windows in the front of the house to help shade the sun's afternoon glare.⁶⁶ But these maintenance issues were also a forecast of the special care the home would require into the future.



36. Similar Alden B. Dow Home trellis by lower house entrance, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb

37. Copper awning added to the living room windows sometime between 1938 and 1953, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



Pardee House as Marketing for Alden B. Dow's Work

The Pardee House quickly became one of the star marketing tools for Alden B. Dow's work, and on November 15, 1937, although the last finishing details weren't completed,⁶⁷ it was featured in *Life Magazine* along with several other examples of Alden B. Dow's modern architecture.⁶⁸ The article comments that, "the conversion of the influential Pardees to his architectural idea was a great conquest for Alden B. Dow. Many Midlanders still reject modernism and build traditional houses. But Dow has stimulated them to want better homes...."⁶⁹ The Pardee House was Alden B. Dow's grandest commission to date and his largest and most expensive Unit Block home.⁷⁰



38-39. *Life Magazine* article about Alden B. Dow includes the Pardee House, 1937, photographers Arthur Griffin and William Vandivert, courtesy *Life Magazine* and *Pardee Papers*

Pardee House Connections to the Gerstacker and Allen Families and Philanthropy

The connections between Jim and Elsa Pardee and the Gerstacker Family ran deep and were a major force in the survival of the Pardee House into the future. Elsa Uhinck Pardee had an identical twin sister, Eda Uhinck, who married Rollin M. Gerstacker in 1911. According to their son, Carl Gerstacker, "his mother and Mrs. Pardee were so much alike that I could not tell their voices apart even when I was an adult! Their personalities were also very much the same."⁷¹ The twins remained close, living only a half block apart when the Pardees were in Cleveland.⁷² Later in 1950, several years after James Pardee's death on January 3, 1944, Elsa Pardee's death on October 2, 1944, and the 1945 death of Eda's husband, Rollin Gerstacker, Eda bought a home in Midland at 508 Lingle Lane.⁷³



40. *Eda and Elsa Gerstacker, Elsa and James Pardee, and Carl Gerstacker, ca. 1928, courtesy Pardee Papers*

Eda and Rollin's two children, Elsa and Carl would spend their summers with their "Unkie" and "Aunty" in Midland beginning in 1921 when the children were ages nine and five.⁷⁴ For Elsa and Carl, it was very much a summer of the Pardees acting "in loco parentis," since they took their role as stand-in parents seriously. They would educate the children in various ways, including having them do chores such as cutting grass, weeding, or other tasks.⁷⁵ Carl commented,

For example, [Unkie] paid me to pick up the fallen apples from the apple trees in his yard [at the old house]. For a cherry basket full I got one penny. I began to negotiate with him. When the apples were big, it didn't take much to fill a cherry basket, but when they were tiny little apples, I had to work awfully hard. I remember really bargaining with him and laughing, I'm sure, on the side, and finally giving in to me. We had a lot of negotiations on things like that, which I later found were very educational.⁷⁶

Jim Pardee was also up early and loved to have the children breakfast with him. But since they were on vacation, they preferred to sleep in. To encourage their morning breakfast with him, he would put a dime under their plates. If they weren't up before he left for the office, he'd pocket the dime!⁷⁷

Years later, Carl Gerstacker commented, "Dr. Pardee was more than an uncle, he was a man I greatly admired and dearly loved.... Uncle Jim was never satisfied with anything short of the best. He was an exact and an exacting man. He required truly maximum performance from himself and from all associates with him."⁷⁸

After the death of James T. Pardee and Elsa U. Pardee in 1944, Elsa's sister, Eda Gerstacker, inherited the bulk of the estate. In addition to smaller bequests to family and charities, a large bequest, 8,000 shares of Dow Chemical stock then worth about \$1 million (\$17 million in today's dollars), was set aside to create the Elsa U. Pardee Foundation for the control and cure of cancer.⁷⁹



41. Dr. Norman C. Yarian of Cleveland's Lutheran Hospital and Mrs. Grace Yarian, friends from Cleveland, Elsa and James Pardee, and Rollin and Carl Gerstacker, 1938, courtesy Pardee Papers



42. Elsa and James Pardee in front of their Clifton Boulevard home in Cleveland, Ohio, 1925, courtesy Pardee Papers

This was to be administered by Elsa Pardee's niece, Elsa Gerstacker Allen, and her nephew, Capt. Carl Gerstacker, then still in the military, and was subsequently incorporated by them and William W. Allen, Eda U. Gerstacker, and Rollin M. Gerstacker.⁸⁰ After taxes,⁸¹ the rest of the estate (20,000 shares of Dow Chemical stock)⁸² went to Eda Gerstacker who, with some of these funds, set up the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation in 1957 in honor of her husband, Rollin.⁸³

Elsa Gerstacker Allen had died in 1957, and the Allen Foundation, which focused on nutrition programs and emergency food, was set up in 1975 from financial resources inherited by Elsa Gerstacker Allen's husband, William Allen, after Eda died in 1975.⁸⁴ Thus, the Pardee's financial resources were the original source for three foundations: the Elsa U. Pardee Foundation (1944), the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation (1957), and the Allen Foundation (1975).⁸⁵ The assets of all three foundations continued to grow from additional resources added by their Trustees and by careful financial investments and management.



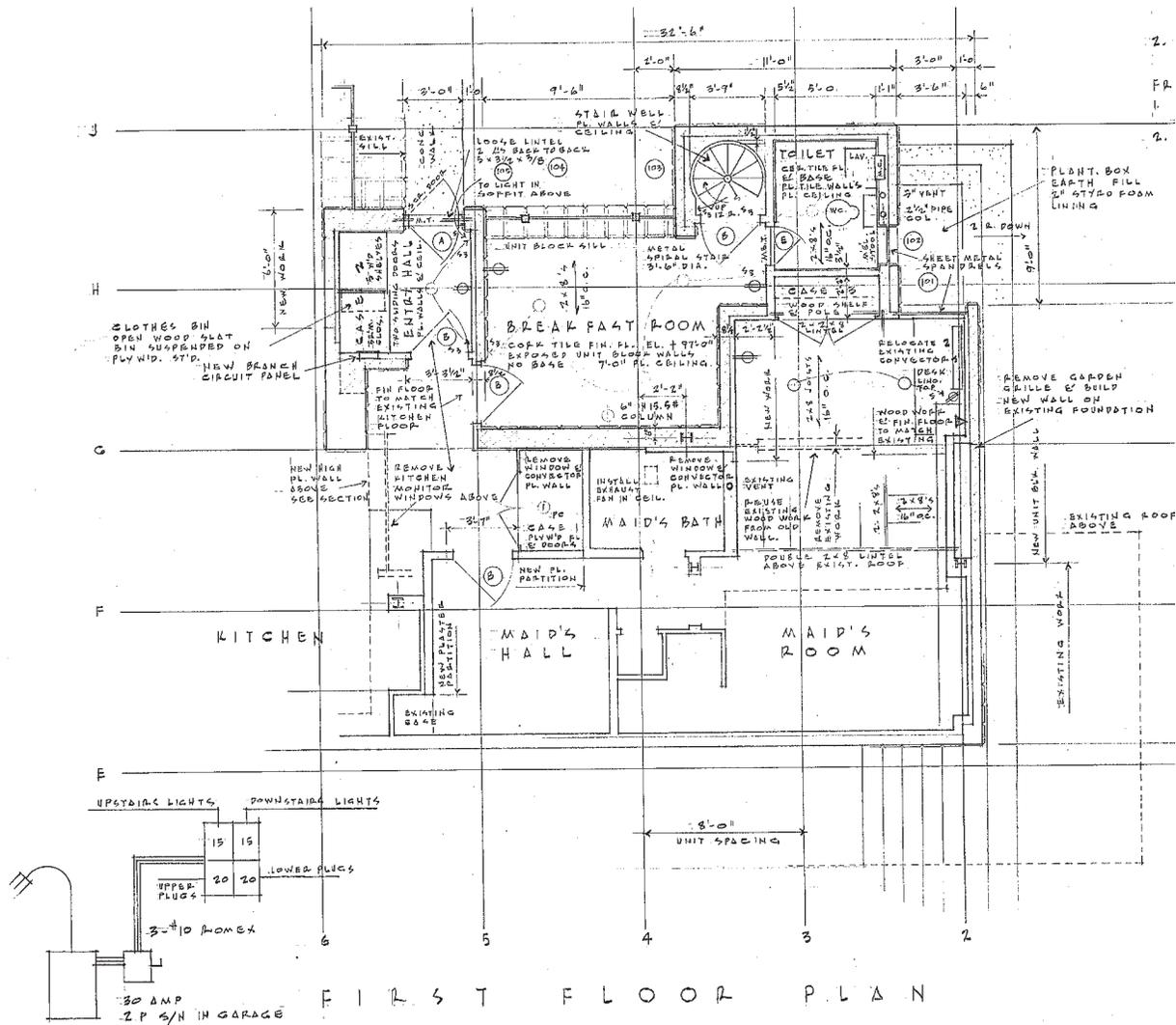
43. Second Lieutenant Carl Gerstacker (later promoted to Captain), 1941, courtesy Sandra Schuette Joys

House Addition 1953-1954

After the death of the Pardees in 1944, the house was officially owned by Eda Gerstacker who still lived in Cleveland, but it was her son Carl's domicile when he was in town.⁸⁶ However, since he was still serving in the military during World War II⁸⁷ and lived out of state for about eighteen more months, it was occupied by the caretaker, J. A. Fluckey.⁸⁸ When Carl Gerstacker came back to Midland after his wartime service around May 1946, he began living in the Pardee House.⁸⁹ He married Jayne Harris Cunningham on October 22, 1950,⁹⁰ and they bought the Pardee house from Eda Gerstacker on November 27, 1950 for \$15,000 (\$187,000 in today's dollars).⁹¹ The Gerstackers had two children, Bette, born in 1951, and Lisa, born in 1955.⁹²



44. Jayne, Lisa, Bette, and Carl Gerstacker in New York City, December 28, 1962, courtesy Lisa Gerstacker

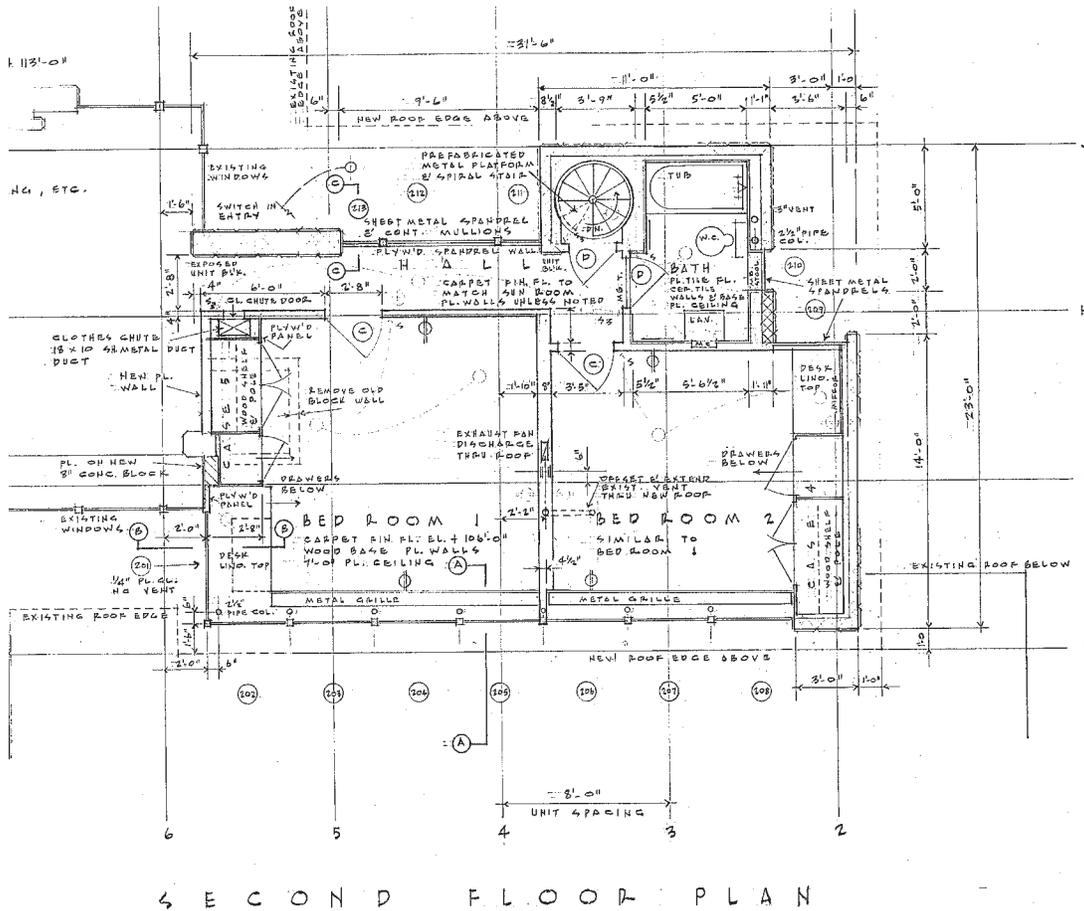


45. First floor plan for 1953-54 addition, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

The original house had only two bedrooms beyond the maid's quarters so, although it had spacious living spaces, the addition of the first Gerstacker child made new bedrooms and another bathroom a critical necessity for the family in 1953-1954. Thus, Alden B. Dow designed changes and additions to meet the needs of the current residents. On the first floor, a new breakfast room was added and furnished with modernist kitchen chairs designed by world renowned designers, Charles and Ray Eames,⁹³ and the maid's quarters were expanded.



46. Breakfast room with modernist Charles and Ray Eames chairs, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers



47. Second floor plan for 1953-54 addition, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

On the second floor, two bedrooms were built above the maid's quarters and the breakfast room addition. This bedroom wing connected to the second-floor sunroom. A spiral stairway/fire escape connecting the bedroom wing and the breakfast room was added for safety and so the children could move privately to and from the kitchen area if there were ongoing events in other parts of the house.⁹⁴

This addition cost \$29,000 or \$324,000 in today's dollars, and it meant the end of that old oak tree Alden wanted to save.⁹⁵ Only a few years later in 1958, the Gerstacker Family moved from the Pardee House to what had been the longtime home of Leland and Ruth Doan at 1018 W. Main Street (now the headquarters for the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation and Dow Gardens) to have access to more lawn and garden area around their home.⁹⁶



48. Pardee House spiral stairway, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb

Bertha E.R. Strosacker Memorial Presbyterian Church Manse



49. Looking toward the living room lounge, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers

With the prospect of having the Pardee House empty in the future, the Gerstackers looked for a new use for the iconic home. Carl Gerstacker was an active member of the Bertha E. R. Strosacker Memorial Presbyterian Church in Midland, Michigan, and as the congregation grew exponentially after World War II, the church needed more housing for its many pastors.⁹⁷ His mother, Eda, had discussed transferring the house to the church in early 1946, but Carl's personal use of the home postponed this decision.⁹⁸ The 1956 arrival in Midland of the new Senior Pastor, Dr. Theodore Marvin Greenhoe and his wife Bessie, pressed this need.

After first considering trading his home to Leland Doan, then president of The Dow Chemical Company, so Doan could donate the Pardee House, Carl and his wife Jayne offered it fully furnished to the church on June 25, 1957. In honor of James and Elsa Pardee, it was to be called the Pardee Manse.⁹⁹ They later offered 100 shares of The Dow Chemical Company stock as the basis of a manse maintenance fund that they added to over the years.¹⁰⁰

The house was accepted by the Trustees of the church on July 19, 1957.¹⁰¹ The Greenhoe's moved into the home in the spring of 1958, and it was dedicated as an official church manse in October.¹⁰² The Gerstackers donated the Pardee House to the church in several fractional deed portions between December 23, 1957 and January 2, 1960.¹⁰³ The house was large enough for the Greenhoe family and their four daughters. Its large open entertainment and meeting spaces could be used for church events, committee meetings, and lay governing Session Board Meetings held at the house usually once a year. It could also accommodate an occasional overnight church guest.¹⁰⁴



50. Kitchen with metal cabinets, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers

Initial renovations were made and paid for by the Gerstackers, including changing part of the maid's quarters into Rev. Greenhoe's soundproof study and the addition of an exterior door to allow private entrance by members of his congregation.¹⁰⁵ The interior design of the home changed over the years, although the date of the interior wall coloration changes documented in the several ca. 1974 manse photos included here is unknown. At some point, perhaps during Dr. Greenhoe's tenure, a curtain was added to the dining room ceiling to allow the eating area to be cordoned off from the rear entrance way, allowing privacy during church events.



51. Part of maid's quarters turned into Rev. Greenhoe's office, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers

After Dr. Greenhoe's long pastorate (1956-1974, 1974-1988 emeritus), new Senior Pastor Dr. Kirk Arthur Hudson, his wife Cally, and their family moved into the home in about late 1975.¹⁰⁶ After several years, the Hudsons felt the home was too large and grand for their tastes,¹⁰⁷ and just as importantly, Rev. Hudson convinced the church's lay governing board, the Session, it was time for the multiple pastors then serving the congregation to be able to build their own equity instead of living in a church-provided manse.¹⁰⁸ The church gave approval to sell the Pardee House on June 4, 1981.¹⁰⁹ The Pardee House was put back on the housing market, and it sat empty for almost three years due to a depressed market for large homes despite a realtor's continuing effort to sell it.¹¹⁰



52. Dining room with curtain added to separate dining room from back entrance hall, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers



53. Recreation room, ca. 1974, courtesy Pardee Papers

Foundations' Headquarters 1986-present

Carl Gerstacker was a member of the church's Session board at this time and a contributor to the maintenance fund, so he was very aware of the status of the Pardee Home even though he had moved out almost thirty years previously. He was also still psychologically tied to the Pardee House and was concerned that, with its considerable maintenance expenses¹¹¹ and without any direct connection to the Pardee and Gerstacker families, the house wouldn't be cared for properly by future owners. He decided to see if the Midland Foundation, now the Midland Area Community Foundation (MACF), would like to have the house for use as a center for multiple foundations.¹¹² The Midland Foundation accepted this idea with the understanding that the building would be rezoned, and they signed an option on the property with the church.¹¹³

Not everything went smoothly in this attempt for a transformation from home to possible office, however. The property was already zoned A-1 Residential, and when the West Main Street Historic District was established in 1979, it was included.¹¹⁴ Carl wanted it moved out of the Historic District designation and rezoned as a Community District.¹¹⁵ This would allow it to be used as an office for community betterment.¹¹⁶ Some neighbors were concerned about any potential zoning changes and began petitioning against the idea¹¹⁷ while others were supportive.¹¹⁸

A public hearing before the City Planning Commission on March 13, 1984, didn't go well.¹¹⁹ Some neighbors were afraid there would be traffic and parking problems, that the offices would impact home values, that office space wouldn't fit into their residential neighborhood, and that it would be precedent-setting for allowing other offices into the neighborhood.¹²⁰ After Jayne and Carl divorced in 1969, Carl married Esther Schuette in 1975. In June 1984, Esther did some proactive marketing about the importance of the proposed owner, the Midland Foundation, to the community in an article in the *Midland Daily News*, which also ran an editorial explaining both sides of the issue.¹²¹ The newspaper was full of pro and con articles and letters.¹²² The Gerstacker Foundation held an open house at 812 Main Street on May 8, 1984, to share their viewpoint with the community and planned to have trustees meet individually with City Council members. But when Carl Gerstacker went to the City Council Meeting on June 4, 1984, he was turned down 4 to 1.¹²³ This surprised Mr. Gerstacker since, as a former Dow Chemical Company Chairman of the Board, he was accustomed to people moving forward on his requests.¹²⁴

A few days after this defeat, local attorney and Gerstacker Foundation counsel, James A. Kendall of Currie and Kendall, suggested the solution was for Carl and Esther Gerstacker to buy the house from the church.¹²⁵ So with his continuing concern over the lack of care for the empty house and his desire for a memorial to the Pardees, Carl bought the home back from the Memorial Presbyterian Church on August 3, 1984 for \$170,000 (\$490,000 in today's dollars).¹²⁶

Kendall also proposed that the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation then buy the home for an office which he felt was no different than the other local foundations that held their meetings in private homes. It would also be a memorial to James and Elsa Pardee and would preserve one of the major architectural designs of Alden B. Dow. But since Carl Gerstacker was a trustee of the Gerstacker Foundation, tax law didn't allow such a purchase, forbidding any action that might benefit a trustee (called self-dealing).¹²⁷ So with the approval of the Gerstacker Foundation Trustees, Carl and Esther Schuette Gerstacker donated the home to the Foundation on February 6, 1985.¹²⁸ The Gerstacker Trustees agreed to an earlier suggestion that the home would also make an ideal headquarters for other foundations and a meeting place for other non-profit boards and committees.¹²⁹ Esther joined the Gerstacker Board of Trustees in June 1985, and quickly started supervising the renovation of the Pardee house and grounds.¹³⁰ The foundation Secretary, Ellis (Ned) N. Brandt, had just retired from The Dow Chemical Company on January 31, 1986, and needing an office, he temporarily moved his office into the Pardee House in February 1986.¹³¹

The Gerstacker Foundation still had the issue of the rezoning of the house to resolve. Since the defeat in 1984, at Gerstacker Foundation Trustee Alan Ott's suggestion, Carl Gerstacker had launched a concerted campaign to change hearts and minds and used the example of community zoning awarded previously to the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation. After numerous conversations with neighbors, the Planning Board, and the City Council, he won them over.¹³² The foundation promised there would be no signs and they would "keep the house and grounds up to the neighborhood's high standards."¹³³ At a July 22, 1986, meeting the City Planning Commission voted 8-0 for the rezone,¹³⁴ and the City Council approved it on September 15, 1986.¹³⁵



54. Carl and Esther Schuette Gerstacker, courtesy Gerstacker Papers



55. The former maid's bedroom, then the Manse office, becomes the Midland Foundation Director's office in 1986, ca. 1990s, courtesy Midland Area Community Foundation (MACF)



56. Back entrance lobby (previously the dining room) with Midland Foundation staff member, Dorothy Smith, at right, ca. 1990s, courtesy MACF



57. New conference room (previously the recreation room), Gene Yehle, Martha Arnold, and Pat McKelvey, ca. 1990s, courtesy MACF

After significant renovations (over \$500,000 in today's dollars) supervised by Esther Schuette Gerstacker to do necessary repairs such as a new heating system and alterations to transform the house into an office, the Gerstacker Foundation's first board meeting was held on December 5, 1986, at the Pardee House instead of at the Gerstacker's personal home on Valley Drive.¹³⁶ The Elsa U. Pardee Foundation, the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation, and the Midland Foundation then moved into their new offices later in December 1986.¹³⁷ The Midland Foundation, with the greatest number of staff, occupied the former dining room, breakfast room, and maid's quarters on the first floor. The Strosacker and the Gerstacker Foundations shared the second floor. A Midland Foundation staff member situated by the main office door off the parking area (formerly the family dining room) welcomed anyone coming into the building and directed them to the appropriate foundation. All the foundations shared the conference room (formally the recreation or game room), kitchen, bathrooms, basement storage, parking, and living room. The living room was maintained with the same structure and function as when it was designed, but the original dining room furniture was moved into the southwest corner. Bedrooms and the maid's quarters from the original structure and the 1953 addition were turned into office spaces, and the original sunroom upstairs became an office lobby.

A “House Council” was created with representatives elected from the resident foundations to confirm “the blessings of domestic tranquility,” to ensure “the house becomes and remains an exemplary neighbor,” and to review general expenses of the Pardee House as the foundations shared the spaces.¹³⁸ Open houses were held for the neighborhood and the community in 1987 to show the foundations would be good neighbors and would take care of the Pardee House.¹³⁹



58. Esther and Carl Gerstacker in the living room lounge, ca. 1990s, courtesy MACF

The home was dedicated on June 6, 1988 with the Gerstacker Foundation, Strosacker Foundation, Pardee Foundation, and the Midland Foundation all in place.¹⁴⁰ The Allen Foundation joined them later in 1988, and they, along with the Gerstacker Foundation, Strosacker Foundation, and Pardee Foundation, continue to reside there to this day.¹⁴¹ The Midland Area Community Foundation moved from the Pardee House in 2001 to temporary quarters and then eventually renovated and moved into the former Community Drug Store Building on Ashman Street at The Circle to have more space.¹⁴² The Strosacker Foundation then moved downstairs into the first floor offices at the Pardee House.



59. Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation Trustees and Staff: from left to right, Heidi C. Schuette, Bill Schuette, Ruth Ann Wright (Grants Administrator), Thomas L. Ludington, William C. Lauderbach, Lisa J. Gerstacker, Paul F. Oreffice, Gail E. Lanphear, Katherine R. Rice, William S. Stavropoulos, Shelley Caufield (Staff Assistant), Howard I. Ungerleider, and Laurie G. Bouwman, 2022, photographer Jeff Glenn, Courtesy Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation

State and National Historic Landmark Designations

In the mid-1980s, concerned that “Alden B. Dow’s work was being largely forgotten by the critics of the present day,”¹⁴³ Alden B. Dow Creativity Center Board member Henry Whiting suggested that a group of 50 plus year old Alden B. Dow homes, including the Pardee House, should be nominated as historic structures.¹⁴⁴ “Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archeological resources.”¹⁴⁵ The structures are owned privately, and the National Register of Historic Places¹⁴⁶ designation encourages owners to preserve them appropriately. With the support of Carol Coppage, Director of the Alden B. Dow Creativity Center at Northwood University, Robert G. Waite wrote the nominations in the summer of 1986 as part of a Creativity Center Fellowship. In March 1987, the Pardee House was listed on the State Register of Historic Places and by December 4, 1989, twelve homes, including the James and Elsa Pardee House, were accepted in the National Register of Historic Places in a thematic nomination focused on Alden B. Dow’s modern architecture.¹⁴⁷

Subsequent Maintenance

As with any structure, the Pardee House has had periodic standard maintenance of the interior and exterior, but in 2012-2013, after more than 25 years of the foundations using the home for offices, a major renovation was due, primarily caused by the impact of water on the house. The exterior retaining wall was repaired and replaced in parts, the concrete in the parking lot and driveways was replaced, new copper gutters were installed, a new underdrain system was installed in the footings of the building, existing drain tile was replaced, exterior walls were waterproofed, and new backfill and landscaping were installed.¹⁴⁸ This was in keeping with the Gerstacker Foundation’s commitment to maintaining the building so it can continue to house the foundations working for the betterment of the community. Today it looks better than ever.



60. Rear entrance lobby, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



61. Conference room, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



62. Living room corner looking out on Main Street and Revere Park, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb



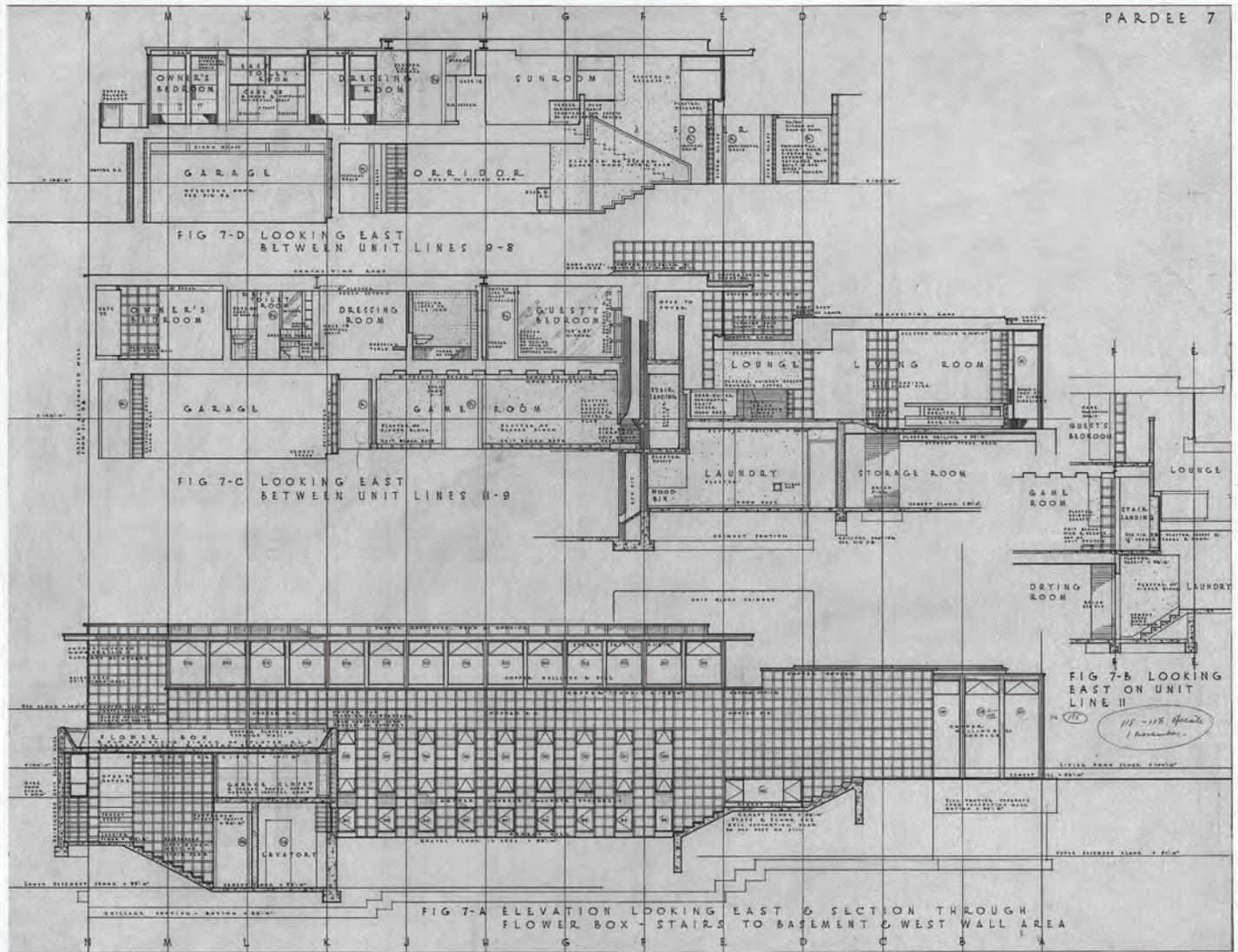
63. Living room lounge, 2022, courtesy Tawny Ryan Nelb

Summary

The Pardee House has served several principal functions since it was built. It was the home of James and Elsa Pardee from 1937-1944 and then the home of their nephew, Carl Gerstacker and his first wife Jayne and their family, until 1957. It served as the Memorial Presbyterian Church manse from 1957 to 1980, housing the Dr. Theodore and Bessie Greenhoe and then the Dr. Kirk and Cally Hudson families. In 1986, it became the headquarters for multiple foundations, many of which had direct familial connections to James and Elsa Pardee, and it continues to be a place where charitable funding impacts our community and our region. This amazing, approximately 6,700 sq. ft. structure¹⁴⁹ has nurtured families and community growth through philanthropy and remains a treasured landmark that honors the memory of James and Elsa Pardee.¹⁵⁰



64. Elsa and James Pardee in front of their new home, 1938, courtesy Pardee Papers



65. Pardee House, working drawings, sections and elevation, 1936, courtesy Alden B. Dow Archives

Pardee House History Timeline

- 1895-1896: James Pardee joins the board of the Dow Process Co. Company. The company moves to Midland, Michigan from Navarre, Ohio in the spring of 1896.
- 1897: A successor company, The Dow Chemical Company, is incorporated. James Pardee continues on their board and visits Midland periodically, especially for board meetings.
- 1911: Rollin M. Gerstacker marries Eda Uhinck.
- 1914: James T. Pardee marries Elsa Uhinck.
- 1918: James and Elsa Pardee buy the old R. J. Waldron Home, built in 1890 at 812 Main Street in Midland, Michigan.
- 1935-1937: The Pardee House is designed and built by Alden B. Dow.
- 1944: James Pardee dies on January 3, and Elsa Pardee dies on October 2.
- 1944: The Elsa U. Pardee Foundation is formed on December 22.
- 1946-1949: Carl Gerstacker lives in the Pardee House following his World War II Army days.
- 1950 October 22-1957: Carl Gerstacker marries Jayne Harris Cunningham and they live in the Pardee House until 1957 with their family.
- 1953-1954: House addition is built by the Carl and Jayne Gerstacker family.
- 1957: Carl Gerstacker moves to 1018 W. Main to have a larger yard.
- 1957-1984: Pardee House becomes a Memorial Presbyterian Church Manse.
1958-1974: Rev. Theodore and Bessie Greenhoe family live in the house.
1975-1980: Rev. Kirk and Cally Hudson family live in the house.
- 1981-1984: The Pardee House is empty but still owned by the Memorial Presbyterian Church.
- 1984-1986: The Pardee House is repurchased by Carl and Esther Gerstacker but remains empty while a rezoning effort is underway.
- 1986: The Pardee House becomes the headquarters and the property of the Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation (founded 1957). The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation (founded 1957), Elsa U. Pardee Foundation (founded 1944), and the Midland Foundation, now the Midland Area Community Foundation (founded 1973), move in at the end of the year.
- 1987: Pardee House is listed in State Register of Historic Places.
- 1988: Allen Foundation (established 1975) moves to the Pardee House.
- 1989: Pardee House is listed on National Register of Historic Places.
- 2001: The Midland Foundation (now Midland Area Community Foundation) moves from the home into larger quarters.
- 2012-2013: The Pardee House has major renovations.

Endnotes:

- ¹ “Midland’s History Alive in Pardee House,” *Midland Daily News*, June 15, 1990, Publications, Box 21, Folder 34, Alden B. Dow Archives; *1895-1900 Ledger Showing Stock Purchases for Dow Process and Dow Chemical Companies*, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, Midland County Historical Society Archives; “The Dow Process Company Reaches for a Tasty Plum,” *Dow Diamond*, Vol. 2, No. 2, December 1938, 11-13, Midland County Historical Society Archives; Ellis N. Brandt, “Mystery Man from Massillon: Herbert Dow,” *Timeline: A Publication of the Ohio Historical Society*, July/August 2003, 24; *Midland Chemical Minutes of Proceedings of Stockholders and Directors*, August 17, 1892 to August 1, 1900, 53, 75, 85, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, Midland County Historical Society Archives.
- ² Ellis N. Brandt, *Growth Company: Dow Chemical’s First Century*, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 53.
- ³ “James T. Pardee has Purchased,” *Midland Sun*, May 9, 1918; A full abstract for the Pardee home is in the Deed Abstract, July 24, 1984, Box 3, Folder 12, James and Elsa Pardee Papers.
- ⁴ “Pardee Looks Back to Dow Firm’s Birthday,” *Midland Daily News*, August 9, 1939, Box 1, Folder 26, James and Elsa Pardee Papers.
- ⁵ Sidney Robinson, *The Architecture of Alden B. Dow* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1983), vii.
- ⁶ “Taliesin Fellowship Application,” December 1933, Frank Lloyd Wright Original Documents, Alden B. Dow Archives; Diane Maddox, *Alden B. Dow Midwestern Modern* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 46; Tobias S. Guggenheimer, *A Taliesin Legacy: The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Apprentices* (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995), 9-10; Edgar Tafel, *Years with Frank Lloyd Wright: Apprentice to Genius* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: General Publishing Company, 1979), 38.
- ⁷ Maddox, 71; “The Architectural Legacy of Alden Dow,” *Reunion Magazine—Communications, Family Credit Union*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1991, Publications, Box 22, Folder 26, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ⁸ Jeff Schrier, “Architect Receives National Recognition,” *Midland Daily News*, June 14, 1990, Publications, Box 21, Folder 32, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ⁹ Maddox, 68.
- ¹⁰ Alden B. Dow Pardee House, Presentation Drawing, Rear Perspective Rendering, January 15, 1936, Pardee Job Drawings, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹¹ Alden B. Dow to Mrs. J. T. Pardee, January 13, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 5, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹² Alden B. Dow to Mrs. J. T. Pardee, January 20, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 5, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹³ Sketch of Trees on the Pardee Property, ca. 1935, Pardee Job Drawings, Alden B. Dow Archives; Alden B. Dow, Pardee House, Presentation Drawings, Front Perspective Renderings, and Floor Plans, February 2, 1936, Pardee Job Drawings, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹⁴ Alden B. Dow to Mrs. J. T. Pardee, February 21, 1936, Pardee Job Files Box 12, Folder 5, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹⁵ “Midwestern Modern,” *House and Garden*, December 1940, Publications, Box 3, Folder 62, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹⁶ Carl Gerstacker Notes on Elsa Pardee at Dedication of Pardee House in 1988, tipped into program “Dedication [of Pardee Hall] at Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio,” May 21, 1957, Pardee Hall, James and Elsa Pardee Papers 2020 Addition.
- ¹⁷ Elsa Pardee to Alden B. Dow, February 25, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 4, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹⁸ Improvement in Construction Blocks [Unit Block] Patent Application, November 18, 1935, Patent Reference Files, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ¹⁹ Maddox, 51.
- ²⁰ Maddox, 52.
- ²¹ Unit Block Houses include Alden B. Dow Home and Studio, Pardee, Whitman, Ball, Health, Hanson, Arbury, Goodall in Midland; the Mary Dow, Hodgkiss, Bachman, Smith, and Robbie Robinson Houses elsewhere in Michigan; and the Duke University President’s House in North Carolina.
- ²² Maddox, 50.
- ²³ Alden B. Dow, “Concrete Masonry in the New Architecture,” *Concrete Products Manufacture News of the Industry*, June 1936, Publications, Box 1, Folder 2, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ²⁴ Alden B. Dow to Mrs. J. T. Pardee, February 21, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 5, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ²⁵ Elsa Pardee to Alden B. Dow, February 25, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 4, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ²⁶ Elsa Pardee to Alden B. Dow, February 29, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 4, Alden B. Dow Archives.
- ²⁷ Elsa Pardee to Alden B. Dow, December 19, 1936, December 26, 1936, Pardee Job Files, Box 12, Folder 4, Alden B. Dow Archives.
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- ¹³⁹ "Community District Zoning: Some Questions & Answers," Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation Board Minutes, July 10, 1986, Book 2, June 26, 1980-December 1986, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation; Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation Board Minutes, March 27, 1987, Book 3, 1987-February 22, 1991, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.
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- ¹⁴¹ Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation Board Minutes, June 12, 1988 and December 3, 1988, Book 3, 1987-February 22, 1991, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation.

¹⁴² “Midland Area Community Foundation ‘Fast Facts,’” ca. 2008, Files for 40th Anniversary Celebration, 2013, Midland Areas Community Foundation; Midland Area Community Foundation Moves,” *Midland Daily News*, January 10, 2008.

¹⁴³ “Architect Receives National Recognition,” *Saginaw News*, June 14, 1990, Publications, Box 21, Folder 32, Alden B. Dow Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Carol Coppage, personal e-mail, August 23, 2021.

¹⁴⁵ James and Elsa Pardee House, National Register of Historic Places, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>, accessed September 29, 2021.

¹⁴⁶ Martha Bigelow, Michigan Historical Commission to M. Gene Arnold, Midland Foundation, March 24, 1987, National Historic Site Nomination, Box 3, Folder 13, James and Elsa Pardee Papers.

¹⁴⁷ Carol Coppage, personal e-mail, August 23, 2021; “Architect Receives National Recognition,” *Midland Daily News*, June 14, 1990.

¹⁴⁸ Ruth Ann Wright, personal email, April 11, 2022.

¹⁴⁹ This square footage number is based on measuring the original 1936 drawings and the 1953-1954 addition. It does not include the 3,100 fully finished basement.

¹⁵⁰ Reeves, Barbara E., “Midland’s History Alive in Pardee House,” *Midland Daily News*, June 15, 1990, Publications, Box 21, Folder 34, Alden B. Dow Archives.

