

***The Art and Craft of Greene & Greene***  
**Wall Panel Text**

**“New and Native”**

Hailed by the American Institute of Architects as “formulators of a new and native architecture,” Charles Sumner Greene (1868–1957) and Henry Mather Greene (1870–1954) designed houses and furnishings a century ago that established a new paradigm for the art of architecture in the United States. Drawing on the skills of outstanding craftsmen, as well as their own polytechnic training, formal architectural education, and natural artistic sensibilities, Greene and Greene created legendary living environments that were both beautiful and functional.

The flowering of the Greenes’ careers together was brief. They produced their most characteristic work between 1906 and 1914, primarily in and around the Los Angeles suburb of Pasadena. Of their fully coordinated houses and interior furnishings, only the Gamble House—preserved since 1966 as a publicly accessible landmark by the University of Southern California School of Architecture—survives intact.

*The Art and Craft of Greene & Greene* presents for the first time a diverse range of the Greenes’ work—conceptual sketches, drawings, furnishings and fixtures long-separated from their houses and from each other—which highlights the component parts essential to appreciating the interdependent beauty of Greene and Greene’s output.

## Student Years

*I had a feeling of keen disappointment. I wanted to be an artist.*

Charles Sumner Greene, recalling his father's plan in 1887 to apprentice him to a St. Louis architect, from his personal papers, about 1943

Charles and Henry Greene were born in Cincinnati in 1868 and 1870, respectively. The boys attended grammar school in St. Louis, where the family had moved in 1874. In 1876 Dr. Greene presented Charles, then eight years old, with a copy of *The Boys' Book of Trades and the Tools Used in Them* (n.d., about 1870). As teenagers the boys attended the Manual Training School (MTS) of Washington University, whose founder, Calvin Milton Woodward, had pioneered the blending of polytechnic courses—such as machine-tool making and technical drawing—with traditional academics. Charles, fifteen months older than Henry, apprenticed to a St. Louis architect while his brother finished at MTS.

Beginning in the fall of 1888 the brothers began formal training in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Henry Greene excelled scholastically and professionally, but Charles continued to resist architectural training. He appreciated his watercolor painting instructor, however, and wrote: “I smile yet when I think of Ross Turner . . . dipping his ebony brush in his big white bowl of water . . . to whisk a circle of divine colors.” Turner's manual, *On the Use of Water Colors for Beginners* (1886) was probably a book that Charles consulted. Receiving their MIT certificates in 1891, the Greenses apprenticed until 1893 in various Boston firms that were influenced by the late Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886), whose inventive use of shingles and other natural materials fueled early interest in Arts and Crafts ideals.

## The Clients

*The perfect bungalow should be designed to fit the needs of a particular owner. . . . The bungalow architect must study carefully the practical conditions of the problem, and the personality of the owner forms one of the most difficult and at the same time most interesting parts of it.*

Charles Greene, in *The Architect*, December 1915

Charles Greene believed that acceding to an owner's wishes too early in the design process meant losing a valuable opportunity to improve the work when construction began. Instead he advocated working "in the real spirit of adventure," constantly changing and improving the design while maintaining a dialog with the client.

Letters and notes survive to document a few of these "adventures" with clients. Mary Gamble and D. L. James peppered their architects with a multitude of questions about details; Adelaide Tichenor insisted that Charles travel to the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis for inspiration; Lucretia Garfield moved walls and windows by letter and involved her architect son in the process. When Charles Pratt complained about costs, Charles responded that he was getting not just a house, but a work of art whose value could never be measured in dollars and cents.

By 1915, with most of the firm's major work behind them, these adventurous collaborations with demanding and artistically inclined clients had produced an outstanding legacy of original and refined dwellings.

## The Blacker House

*I suggested [to Mrs. Blacker that] she place some of the finer pieces in some good museum where students and art lovers could see it.*

Henry Mather Greene, letter to his brother, February 4, 1942

Beginning in the spring of 1907, Charles and Henry Greene, still in their thirties, created with their contractors one of their most spectacular and enduring masterworks. The client, Robert R. Blacker, was a civic-minded patron recently retired from the lumber business. The Blacker house was the first of the Greenses' commissions to make extensive use of exotic hardwoods, thanks perhaps to their client's professional contacts. The Greenses designed more than fifty light fixtures and more than fifty pieces of furniture—many with intricate inlay and joinery—to create a coordinated work of art that established, in California, a new sophistication in the architecture and decorative arts of the American Arts and Crafts movement.

Following Mrs. Blacker's death in 1948, subsequent owners subdivided the gardens and outbuildings and sold the furniture at a yard sale. In the mid-1980s a later owner removed original fixtures from the house and sold many of them to private collectors and institutions. Outraged local citizens and preservation organizations subsequently worked to enact legislation to prohibit future acts of what many saw as cultural vandalism. The current owners of the Blacker house—embracing their unofficial role as stewards of an important work of American architectural art—have restored the house and meticulously re-created the missing fixtures and furnishings.

## Coming to California, Early Commissions

*They are artistic both by instinct and by education.*

*Pasadena Star*, heralding the new practice of Greene and Greene, December 29, 1894

Charles and Henry Greene opened their practice in January 1894 on the corner of Colorado Street and Raymond Avenue in Pasadena. Following the New York Stock Exchange crash of 1893, the brothers had elected to leave Boston—the “Athens of America”— to join their parents in this new Southern California community. By then, Pasadena had become a bustling suburb of 10,000, a popular resort town for wealthy Midwesterners seeking a warmer climate and exotic surroundings. Promotional brochures described its “Spanish breezes, Italian sky and sunsets, Alpine mountains, tropical luxuriance of vegetation,” while its architectural styles were equally diverse, from Moorish to Mission to “Swiss chalet.”

The Greenes’ early commissions were modest (under \$3,000) and came mostly from local residents. The 1896 office building for local land investors Joseph N. Kinney and Bela O. Kendall was the largest commercial commission the brothers received in these years, its structure incorporating recent technological advances.

Stylistically, the early work of Greene and Greene was derivative, as the brothers plumbed the past and then-popular architectural styles for inspiration. Commissions for the homes of James Swan and Winthrop B. Fay demonstrated both a willingness to experiment and to accommodate clients’ desires. From these projects the Greenes learned how to procure and manage clients, amass a list of reliable contractors, and further solidify the partnership that would make for a successful and productive practice.

## **An Enlightened Client**

*The suggestion enclosed in your letter, for the living room, pleased me very much, as I am in thorough sympathy with the Wm Morris movement, in fact the whole inside of the house is influenced by it in design.*

Charles Greene, letter to James Culbertson, October 7, 1902

Charles Greene openly acknowledged his debt to late-nineteenth-century British designer William Morris (1834–1896), a man whose designs and philosophies related to the production and use of the decorative arts had won him just acclaim as the “father” of the Arts and Crafts movement in Great Britain and America.

James Culbertson, perhaps the most significant of the Greenes’ early clients, was a native of Pennsylvania and later a resident of the Chicago area. In 1893, he had commissioned an English-style house from architect Frank Burnham in Kenilworth, a garden suburb of Chicago. Culbertson’s 1902 Pasadena home was also in the popular “Old English” style, one of only a small handful of such houses designed by the Greenes. However, the standardized exterior belied an interior whose design reflected its client’s and architects’ interests in Japanese architecture and the California landscape. The decoration of the house reflected a sympathy with William Morris’s belief that the beautiful should also be purposeful. Pithy mottoes were carved into walls and mantels, and furnishings from Gustav Stickley’s firm, United Crafts, created an interior harmony in wood. Culbertson would continue to engage the Greenes to perform major additions and alterations until his death in 1915, establishing the precedent for their practice of maintaining long and loyal relationships with their clients.

## **A Voyage of Discovery**

*A true architect builds for others; not for himself alone.*

Charles Greene, from his unpublished novel *Thais Thayer*, about 1914

In February 1901, Charles married Alice Gordon White, a young English heiress whose family he had met in Pasadena. Soon the couple departed on a four-month honeymoon tour that included Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Florence, Venice, Paris, London, and the English countryside. Charles recorded their journey in photographs and the occasional watercolor, focusing most often on picturesque ruins and rural landscapes.

He and Alice also made a special trip to Scotland to see Edinburgh and the Glasgow International Exhibition, where they likely encountered the work of architect-designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928). En route back to Pasadena, the couple visited the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, which included a joint exhibit by Gustav Stickley's United Crafts and the Boston-based Grueby Faience Co. This was perhaps Charles Greene's first introduction to Stickley's simple and "honest" oak furniture, examples of which would later appear in several Greene and Greene commissions. The Greenses would also specify Grueby tiles for fireplace surrounds in the Blacker, Irwin, and Cole houses.

Soon after their return, the newlyweds purchased a lot overlooking Pasadena's picturesque dry riverbed, the Arroyo Seco. In just over six years, Charles designed houses for ten properties in the Park Place tract along the scenic arroyo. He continued to expand his own home (called Oakholm) over the next thirteen years to accommodate his growing family. This included the careful planning of brick-and-cobblestone retaining walls, brick sidewalks, and wooden pergolas, elements that integrated house with landscape.

## The New California Aesthetic

*The Style of the house should be as far as possible determined by four conditions: First, Climate; Second, Environment; Third, Kinds of materials available; Fourth, Habits and tastes—i.e., life of the owner.*

Charles Sumner Greene, in *The Western Architect*, July 1908

Late in 1903, the Greenes designed a house for Arturo Bandini, youngest son of the late Don Juan Bandini, a significant political force during Mexican rule in California. The younger Bandini married Helen Elliott, the daughter of Pasadena pioneers, their union symbolizing continuity between the colonial past and a growing Anglo presence. Evoking the romantic ideal of Mexican California, the Greenes designed a single-level, U-shaped structure surrounding an open courtyard—principle characteristics of the hacienda, or *casa de campo*. Rather than implementing traditional adobe construction, however, the architects represented Elliott's midwestern roots in a plain exterior of board-and-batten siding and split-shake roofing. In the years after the house was completed, local and national publications frequently featured the Bandini house as a characteristic example of the modern California bungalow.

Also in 1903, Charles Greene purchased a copy of *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* by Edward S. Morse of Salem, Mass. First published in 1886, it illustrated the rustic simplicity of Japanese domestic architecture and furnishings. Shortly after Charles purchased the book he altered the Bandini drawings in a simple but telling way. Where the Greenes' sketches had shown exterior posts resting directly on a cement porch, the altered version placed the bottoms of the posts on natural stones—a detail illustrated in Morse's book. This was but a harbinger of the exotic influence that would soon permeate their work. As early as 1912, the Greenes' work was illustrated in a prominent Japanese journal of architecture and craft.

## Designing the Environment

*I am anxious to have you use the knowledge you may gain here on my own home. It will be impossible for me to describe to you the effect of the woods - there are things I would like to buy too, but I dare not until I know what you are going to do.*

Adelaide Tichenor, letter to Charles S. Greene, sent from the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, June 10, 1904

In 1903 and 1904, the Greenes undertook two projects in Long Beach, Calif., that characterized their desire to create a new regional architecture. The first was the house for Jennie A. Reeve, which combined the structural expressions typical of wood-building cultures, with the broad, sheltering gable roofs and textured facades of the East-Coast's fashionable shingled homes of the 1880s. It was also the first significant expression of a total design of the living environment: rather than specifying interior furnishings from shops or other designers, the Greenes created their own designs for furniture, lighting fixtures, leaded-glass windows and doors, and garden terraces and walks.

In 1904, the Greenes began designing the oceanfront house for Adelaide Tichenor. The owner's love of Japan, and Charles Greene's own interest in the art and philosophies of Asia, provided inspiration for this exercise in homebuilding as thematic stage set. The quality of the design and construction of the decorative objects for the Tichenor house varied widely from the beginning of the project to its completion. Simple versions of what would later become signature elements in the Greenes' work, such as the curving uplift of line and forms, often referred to as the "cloud lift," are explored in the Tichenor furniture.

## Important Collaborations

*The whole construction was carefully thought out, and there was a reason for every detail. The idea was to eliminate everything unnecessary to make the whole as direct and simple as possible, but always with the beautiful in mind as the final goal.*

Henry Mather Greene, in *The Craftsman*, August 1912

Between 1905 and 1907 the Greenes' work shows a transition from joinery as craft to joinery as aesthetic structure that can be traced directly to the Greenes' collaboration with Peter and John Hall. The Halls had immigrated to the United States from Sweden, changing their name from Jonasson when they arrived. By the 1890s the brothers worked for a Pasadena millwork shop, where Peter (1867–1939) had a reputation as a master stair builder and John (1864–1940) was a fine furniture maker. In 1900 Peter Hall started his own contracting firm, and John began making furniture independently in 1906 for the houses that his younger brother was building.

For Greene and Greene, the collaboration with the Halls heralded an era of superior wood craftsmanship and obsessive detailing. The Henry and Laurabelle Robinson house (1905–06) was Peter Hall's first commission from the Greenes that would include furniture made by his brother. It was also the first to include stained glass by Emil Lange (1866–1934) and Harry Sturdy (1869–about 1915), who would remain as the Greenes' preferred glass artisans. The dawning of the Greenes' greatest achievements had come.

The Robinson dining armchair (1906) shows the Chinese Ming-era humpback stretcher, or "cloud lift," which would become one of the Greenes' signature motifs. The delicately tapered, diamond-shaped and angled spindles of the Bolton hall chair (1907) relate to more orthogonal forms designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and others. A jewel-like curio cabinet and delicately inlaid mantle clock—both designs for Mrs. Belle Barlow Bush—also come from this period and show virtuosity in construction and inlay.

## A Total Work of Art

*All Mr. Green's [sic] woodwork is a delight for the softness of its finish. . . . As for the furniture, I find it very excellent for one or two rooms—such as the hall or dining room especially—but in my opinion it is too light in structure and too hard for living rooms. It is all in keeping with the style of architecture and the wall fittings but there is not a deep, soft chair or sofa in the house.*

Mrs. J. W. Beswick-Purchas, letter to brother William Thorsen regarding recent visit to the Blacker house, December 17, 1909

One of the more distinguishing aspects of the Greenes' designs for the Blacker house is the degree of thoughtful detail devoted to all furnishings and fixtures in a given room. This held true for all rooms on the ground floor—from entry hall to dining room, breakfast room, living room, and guest bedroom and bathroom—as well as for several upstairs bedrooms. The sheer size of the Blacker house (at 12,000 square feet, situated on 5.1 acres) allowed the Greenes ample opportunity to explore the unifying qualities of materials and their decoration. Each room thus became a complete and self-contained environment, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art.

Inspiration for the architecture of the house, as well as for decorative motifs, was taken from the contours of the surrounding landscape and its native plant and wildlife. In the dining and breakfast rooms, floral inlay of abalone on the table tops, legs, and chair backs is set aglow by the wood-framed art-glass chandeliers suspended above. These compositions are framed at frieze level by a band of delicately painted cherry blossoms in the dining room, and enlivened by a stunning transom window of iridized glass in the breakfast room depicting abstract cloud forms.

## **A Loyal Client Returns**

*In short, the complete work of applied art, the true unit of the arts, is a building with all its due ornament and furniture.*

William Morris, in “The Arts and Crafts of Today” lecture, 1889

From the time it was built in 1902 until James Culbertson’s death in 1915, the Pasadena house was a work of art in progress. The Greenes were called back as early as 1903 to design a wall of cobblestone and clinker brick at the sidewalk. A garage was added in 1906 (with Peter Hall as contractor), followed by significant alterations and additions to the house between 1907 and 1910. Greene and Greene added carved redwood panels to the dining and living rooms in 1908, looking once again to Japanese design and landscape for inspiration.

By this time, the Culbertson house had become a bellwether for the Greenes’ evolving aesthetic. Begun as a simple structure in a familiar English style, its later alterations demonstrated the brothers’ growing interest in the design of a complete environment, from house to interiors to surrounding landscape. In 1902 Charles Greene had explained to Culbertson that the “William Morris movement” had only influenced the house interiors, but by 1915 the commission had come to represent Morris’s definition of “the true unit of the arts.”

## A Work of Art Preserved

*Qualities that make material useful rarely make it interesting—the quickened sensibility and imagination of the artist must do that.*

Charles Sumner Greene, from his personal papers, about 1943

In 1907 David B. Gamble, Cincinnati native and son of one of the founders of the Procter & Gamble firm, hired Greene and Greene to design a winter residence for his family in Pasadena. Like the earlier houses for James Culbertson and Charles Greene, the Gamble house was situated to take advantage of the breathtaking views of the Arroyo Seco. It also featured three sleeping porches to catch breezes coming down from the mountains, creating outdoor living spaces shaded by deep overhanging eaves.

The Halls' workshop completed furnishings for the house in 1909–10. Other furnishings included five rugs for the Gamble house living room, the only rugs known to have been designed by Charles Greene. In 1909, he sent off three watercolor sketches to the firm of J. Ginzkey in Maffersdorf, Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic), confident that his designs would be sensitively interpreted. The firm was also known for weaving the designs of other architect-designers of international repute.

Unlike the furnishings in the homes for Robert Blacker, William Thorsen, or later client Charles Pratt, those for the Gamble family home were not overtly decorative. The explicit construction of chair backs and drawer joints was executed with a polish that needed no additional inlay or embellishment. Yet the Greenses called for exquisite inlay of silver wire, ebony, ivory, jade, and wood in the small letter box designed in 1914, which displays the Gamble family crest and motto: *vix ea nostra voco* (scarcely can we call these our own). In 1966, in accordance with this motto, the Gamble family decided to preserve and share their Greene and Greene home, and its original contents, with the public in perpetuity.

## Further Refinements

*I did not always give them what they wanted but always what they liked.*

Charles Sumner Greene, from his personal papers, about 1943

From 1907 through 1909 the Greenes developed new interpretations of earlier furniture forms. For example, a wing-back chair designed for the Freeman A. Ford living room in 1907 had its precursor in a version created for the Adelaide A. Tichenor interior in 1905. As in the Tichenor example, the depth of the Ford chair's broad seat is partly embraced by wide flanking wings to create an intimate enclosure, but the design and execution show both the maturing style of the Greenes and the refinement of John Hall's craftsmanship. The Ford serving table is familiar in form, though broad overhangs and a narrower width give dramatic presence to the piece when compared with earlier examples.

For the Thorsen house in Berkeley, Calif., the Greenes reinterpreted their signature Southern California plans for an urban lot and for the cooler climate of Northern California. Overlooking San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate, the Thorsen house carries a nautical theme that reflects its surroundings as well as Mr. Thorsen's Norwegian seafaring ancestry. Exterior features of the house suggest the prow and bridge of a ship, and a galleon decorates the iron and bronze gate at the entry walk. Owned since 1942 by the California Sigma Phi Society—a college fraternity—the Thorsen house can claim one of the least-altered of Greene and Greene interiors. The fraternity is in the early stages of conserving the house with help from its members and the community at large.

## **The Pinnacle of Materials and Craft**

*There is in wood something that stimulates the imagination. Its petalous [sic] sheen, sinuous grain, delicate shading that age may give even the commonest kind.*

Charles Sumner Greene, from his personal papers, about 1943

The Greenes presented ink-on-cloth drawings for the Charles M. Pratt house in mid-March 1909, two weeks before completing drawings for the William R. Thorsen house. The Thorsen and Pratt commissions would signal the closing days of the firm's great work in wooden architecture.

On February 4, 1911, *The Ojai* newspaper remarked on the arrival by train of dining-room furniture for the recently completed Pratt residence above the town of Nordhoff (later renamed Ojai). Contractor Peter Hall accompanied the delivery and supervised the installation of the pieces. The living-room furniture was designed the following year. The Greenes' drawing for the living-room table states "architect will give directions of grain," indicating that the exquisite fiddle-back mahogany was to be sectioned and oriented so that the opposing directions of grain became a major decorative characteristic of the table top. The intricate, silver-inlay wave pattern in the drawer handles is echoed by wavelike perforations in the lower stretchers, a motif carried into the ladder-back rocking chair and the living-room armchair.

## **Metalwork**

*You may be sure that any decoration is futile . . . when it does not remind you of something beyond itself, of something of which it is but a visible symbol.*

William Morris, in “Some Hints on Pattern Designing,” lecture, 1881

Metalwork played an integral role in the Greenes’ work from their earliest commissions. The range of their metalwork extended from initial designs for gates, structural strap work, and downspouts to exterior and interior lanterns, fireplace furniture, door hardware, and decorative inlay. They employed an equally broad range of materials, including iron, copper, brass, bronze, steel, silver, lead, and nickel, in forms that were cast, wrought, hammered, plated, patinated, and inlaid.

Greene and Greene designed andirons as early as 1906, but it was not until they received the Blacker, Gamble, and Thorsen commissions that they ventured to design fire screens, tools, repoussé copper fireplace hoods, and fenders along with andirons. The attention lavished on pierced details in the Thorsen living- and dining-room fire screens transformed them into works of art, on a par with any of their art-glass lanterns or inlaid mahogany furniture. Produced in 1914 along with their respective andirons, the fire screens represent some of the most sophisticated and artistic works in metal designed by Greene and Greene.

## **D. L. James House**

*The contemplative sensitive mind, altruistic and benevolent, cannot develop amongst the disordered hurry of commercial drive. . . . It must be natural, or rather, spontaneous and free.*

Charles Greene, in "Architecture as a Fine Art," unpublished typescript, 1917

In 1916, Charles Greene moved to Carmel-by-the-Sea, in part to enjoy greater creative freedom. Shortly thereafter, he had the good fortune to meet businessman and writer D. L. James, who owned a parcel of land on a bluff in the Carmel Highlands. Charles produced watercolor sketches two days after viewing the site and spent the next four years personally supervising and designing every detail of the granite house (later called Seaward). He built up the outer walls so that they appear to be growing out of the cliffs, and the meandering plan defied the logic of the usual front, side, and rear elevations.

The wooden aesthetic of the Greenes' Pasadena homes was replaced in the James house with locally quarried sandstone and granite. Designs for its interior decoration reflected sensitivity to the surrounding plant and wildlife in the form of gulls, seaweed, and shells, carved into marble fireplace surrounds. A design for a built-in fall-front desk in white oak demonstrates Charles' keen understanding of the most intimate details of construction, wooden or otherwise.

The house's composition, arched windows, and tiled roof reflect a Mediterranean influence. Yet again Charles personalized the form, adding an archway opening just above a steep drop to the sea, reminiscent of a similar arch he had sketched when visiting Tintagel, along the coast of Cornwall, England, in 1909.

## Gardens

*California, with its climate, so wonderful in possibility, is only beginning to be dreamed of. . . . Where the sands of the desert now idly drift and only the call of the coyote breaks the stillness, there may rest a Villa Lante or a Fukagawa garden.*

Charles Sumner Greene, "California Home Making," *Pasadena Daily News*,  
January 2, 1905

*We were able to do our best design when we could control a complete landscape and then decorate it, as well as the house. This is the only possible way to achieve integration.*

Henry Mather Greene, quoted in *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, July 19, 1953

Charles Greene's evocation of Italian and Japanese gardens as models for California's future presages the Greenses' adaptations from both formal and naturalistic traditions. Henry's ideal of the total integration of landscape, architecture, and interior design was realized most completely in the Blacker estate, while his own independent garden designs for Edward S. Crocker, Theodore Kramer, and others proved him to be a distinguished designer in his own right.

The Greenses chose the most dramatic sites for their houses—at the highest point of the lot or on the brink of a ridge overlooking a canyon—to achieve the best views. Even on nearly flat suburban lots, they employed subtle grading in rolled terraces to ease the vertical transition and conceal outbuildings. Gently curving driveways, paths, and stairways, as well as judiciously placed trees and water elements, manipulated perspective and created sequences of changing views.

The Greenses freely combined elements from different sources, using stones in a Japanese manner, laying Mission-style tiles in brick-edged terraces, and integrating existing orange groves. This synthesis of local and exotic traditions, of the naturalistic and the formal, remains a remarkable achievement in the history of California garden art.

## **Artists and Patrons: The Fleishhacker Commissions**

*Art applied to buildings is structural necessity made beautiful.*

Charles Sumner Greene, from his unpublished novel *Thais Thayer*, about 1914

In 1911 Greene and Greene designed a country house in Woodside, Calif., for the San Francisco businessman Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr. and his wife, beginning a nearly twenty-five-year artist-patron relationship between the Greenses and the Fleishhackers. Following the construction of the Fleishhackers' main house were numerous alterations and additions at Woodside, as well as significant alterations (built and un-built) to the family's home in San Francisco.

Included among the Woodside projects was the conversion of the west porch to an enclosed game room (1923–25), for which Charles Greene designed a suite of furniture with hand-carved decorative details. In 1927 he completed designs for a small dairy house that was also meant to function as a place for Mrs. Fleishhacker to serve tea in the afternoon. While the charming stone structure did become a functioning dairy, it was apparently too distant from the main house to be convenient for entertaining.

The last built design for the Fleishhackers was an Italianate water garden that stretched some 400 feet beyond, and sixty-five feet below, the formal garden behind the house. A stone stairway descends through planting beds to a broad landing before continuing to a long reflecting pool and ending at an elliptical arcade that suggests the ruin of an ancient Roman aqueduct.

## A Tale of Two Clients

*Business, I admit, must be run upon business lines, but this is not business, this art of helping to make living pleasurable and beautiful beyond the merely useful.*

Charles Greene, letter to Mrs. Francis Fleury Prentiss, February 15, 1928

Shortly after submitting the design for the Fleishhacker house, the Greens received the last major commission of their partnership. The client was Cordelia Culbertson, one of three unmarried sisters of James Culbertson, who, at age sixty-one and with a substantial inheritance at her disposal, had purchased a hillside lot in 1911. The two-story residence was clad in Gunite, and capped by a roof of colorful tiles from the Ludowici-Celadon Co. It stood opposite the earlier Blacker house like a challenge to the Greens' previously wood-dominated aesthetic. The Greens also designed the landscape, which included an Italianate hillside water garden complete with fountain and accent tiles from the Grueby Faience Co.; and an upper-level Mission-style courtyard with a Pewabic tile pool. Architect-designed interior decorations aspired to a more refined classical style, with inlaid furniture of dark crotch mahogany, sculpted plaster ceilings, exotic marble fireplaces, and velour-covered walls.

By 1917, the accumulated costs of house and furnishings amounted to \$200,000, a significant sum for home building at the time, and one which prevented the sisters from remaining there. The house was sold to recently widowed Mrs. Dudley P. Allen of Cleveland (the former Elizabeth Severance), who christened it Il Paradiso. Mrs. Allen soon remarried, becoming Mrs. Francis Fleury Prentiss, and under this name would commission twenty-five separate jobs from the Greens over the next two decades. In 1919, she asked Charles Greene to paint a group of scenic panels for the entry hall, and in 1927 she commissioned a three-panel painted boudoir screen and a set of carved plaques for the dining-room walls.

Together, the commissions for these two sets of clients traced the concluding arc of the Greene and Greene firm, just as James Culbertson, Cordelia's brother, had seen its first rise decades before.

## Separation and Independence

*Mr. Fleishhacker's plans are not done yet, but I think I am getting it worked out. It has been the hardest work I have ever done, but I hope to make a success of it if he has the patience to wait for me.*

Charles Sumner Greene, letter to Henry Mather Greene regarding the unbuilt, Gothic project for Mortimer Fleishhacker Sr., December 1, 1930

After Charles had moved to Carmel in 1916, Henry continued to run the Greene and Greene practice, with Dr. Greene assisting his sons as secretary and bookkeeper. Dr. Greene sent weekly letters to Carmel in an attempt to keep Charles engaged in the firm's work. The few commissions from 1918 included designs for decorative elements that were reminiscent of earlier days. The delicate triptych in leaded-glass for Carrie Whitworth features a lyrical flight of birds that compare to the Tichenor windows of 1904–05.

Work continued to be scarce for both brothers during the Great Depression. Charles completed a water garden for the Fleishhackers in 1929 and was working on an elaborate, Gothic addition to the family's San Francisco home. Mr. Fleishhacker called a halt to the work, however, in 1932. During this period Charles also designed alterations to a house near Carmel for the playwright Martin Flavin, including schemes for a garden gate with decorative wrought iron and a redwood-paneled library. Although commissions were few in these years, the quality of work that the brothers produced remained high.

## The Legacy of Greene and Greene

*Architects much honored in your homeland for great contributions to design, sensitive and knowing builders who reflected with grace and craftsmanship emerging values in modern living in the western states, formulators of a new and native architecture.*

American Institute of Architects, award presented to Greene and Greene, 1952

Virtually forgotten by the profession and the press during the 1920s and 1930s, the Greenes' work was rediscovered in the 1940s by a small group of architects and critics who rejected the notion that good modern design could only come from Europe. Indeed, the Greenes' work was newly promoted as a forward-looking inspiration for American modernism. Elizabeth Gordon, editor of *House Beautiful*, championed the Greenes in the pages of her influential magazine alongside younger California architects who also worked in wood, including Harwell Hamilton Harris (1903–1990) and William W. Wurster (1895–1973). In 1947, Maynard Parker, a photographer for *House Beautiful*, documented many of the Greenes' houses while they still retained original furnishings. International recognition of Greene and Greene grew following a special award from the American Institute of Architects in 1952. Since then, designers as seemingly disparate as architect Frank Gehry and woodworker Sam Maloof have looked to Greene and Greene, either for inspiration or to contemplate the native beauty of their work.