

Plano, IL 1951

THE FARNSWORTH HOUSE

Dr. Edith Farnsworth House

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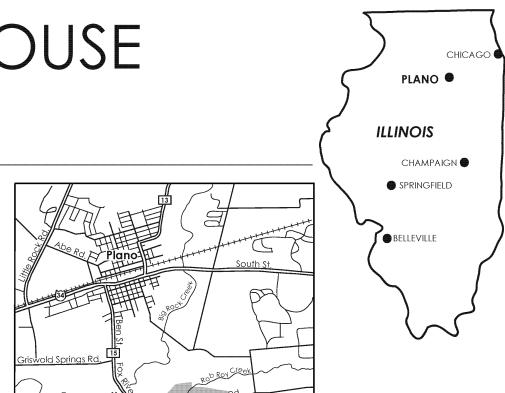
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DESIGNED BY LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE BEGINNING IN 1945-46, AND FINALLY CONSTRUCTED IN 1951, THE FARNSWORTH HOUSE REPRESENTS THE APEX OF MIES' AMERICAN CAREER. BUILT AS A COUNTRY RETREAT FOR A WOMAN SYMPATHETIC TO HIS AESTHETIC AIM, THE HOUSE COMES AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVING MIES' VISION OF "ALMOST NOTHING," REDUCING EVERY ELEMENT TO ITS ESSENCE. MORE TEMPLE THAN HOME, THE HOUSE WAS BUILT ON AN UNDEVELOPED SITE ALONG THE FOX RIVER, THE SUBJECT OF PLANS FOR A RIVERFRONT ESCAPE FROM POLITICAL DICHOTOMY BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE. THE HOUSE'S BUILDING-HORIZONTAL PLANES REACH OUT, ENDOWING WITH THEIR RETRACTED STATE WHILE STARKLY CONTRASTING WITH IT. ALTHOUGH LITTLE CHANGED ITSELF, THE OWNERS OF THE FARNSWORTH HOUSE HAVE TRANSFORMED ITS SETTING, CRITICAL TO SUCH A TRANSPARENT STRUCTURE. MIES LOCATED THE HOUSE BESIDE A MATURE BLACK SUGAR MAPLE, AMIDST THE GRASSES OF THE PRAIRIE RIPARIAN ZONE. OVER TIME, THE THREE OWNERS OF THE SITE ADDED OUTLYING STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT A RESIDENTIAL, AND NOW, A MUSEUM USE, AND THE PRAIRIE GRASSES HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY A HIGH-MOWN LAWN. YEARS BEFORE ITS CONSTRUCTION, THE HOME'S DESIGN SKETCHES AND MODELS GARNERED ACCLAIM AND INSPIRED IMITATORS, AND THE HOUSE HAS CONTINUED TO SERVE AS AN ICON OF INTERNATIONAL STYLE DESIGN, REFERENCED, REVERED OR REVILED, BUT ALWAYS VISITED BY THE MERELY CURIOUS AND THE WORLDWIDE ARCHITECTURE COGNOSCENTI.

PROJECT CREDITS

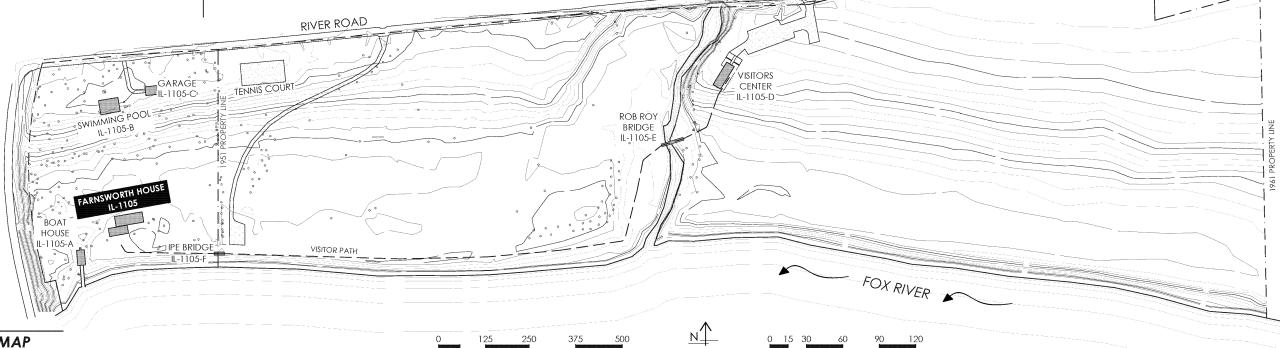
THIS RECORDING PROJECT IS PART OF THE HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY (HABS). A LONG-RANGE PROGRAM TO DOCUMENT HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS IN THE UNITED STATES, THE HABS PROGRAM IS ADMINISTERED BY THE HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY/HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD/HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY (HABS/HAER/HALS) DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE (NPS), UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. FUNDED BY A SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT, THE FARNSWORTH HOUSE RECORDING PROJECT BEGAN IN 2005 AND WAS COMPLETED IN 2009 UNDER THE DIRECTION OF BARBARA CAMPAGNA, GRAHAM GUND ARCHITECT OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION. ELIZABETH MILNARK, ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION SERVED AS THE PROJECT HISTORIAN, AND THE RECORDING TEAM CONSISTED OF JENNA CELINI, ELIZABETH MILNARK AND BRAD ROEDER. LESLIE SCHWARTZ COMPLETED LARGE FORMAT PHOTOGRAPHY.

**SITE LOCATION MAP**

UTM Reference: 16, 4178007N, 899275E
Above Map Adapted from MapQuest Inc.
Map Data, 2009, NAVTEQ 2009.

SITE MAP

Map adapted from the site survey prepared by James M. Olson Associates, Ltd., 30 January 2006.



0 125 250 375 500
FEET
SCALE: 1" = 125'-0"

0 15 30 60 90 120
METERS
SCALE: 1 = 150m

EDITH FARNSWORTH HOUSE
KENDALL COUNTY
ILLINOIS
PLANO

RECORDED BY: JENNA CELINI, ELIZABETH MILNARK, BRAD ROEDER, SUMMER 2009

FARNSWORTH HOUSE RECORDING PROJECT
14250 RIVER ROAD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY: JEFFREY L. KELLEY
MAPS BY: JAMES M. OLSON ASSOCIATES, LTD.

ILLINOIS
CHICAGO
PLANO
SPRINGFIELD
BELLEVILLE

ILLINOIS
CHAMPAIGN

ILLINOIS
KENDALL COUNTY

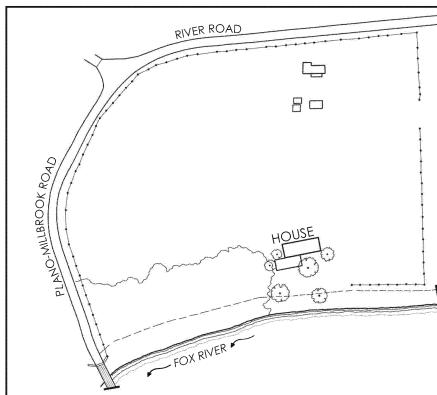
ILLINOIS
PLANO

FEB 2010

1951

- Owner: Edith Farnsworth
- Architect: Mies van der Rohe

Early maps and construction photos indicate the presence of four structures on the northern portion of Farnsworth's nine acre parcel. No reports document the type and function of the structures and no physical evidence has been uncovered. It is assumed that these structures were an earlier farmstead that was removed shortly after the construction of the main house and before the building of Dr. Farnsworth's garage.

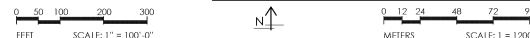


1967

Owner: Edith Farnsworth

The house originally sat at the south end of the site, along the river, and just east of center amidst a broad grassy area. Farnsworth added a garage early in her occupancy, out of view of the house. A short driveway led from River Road to the small wood framed Building. In 1961, Farnsworth purchased the fifty-five acres east of her original property for \$19,950. In 1967, after several years of litigation, the county acquired the western portion of the site to reroute Pano-Billmarch Road (now Fox River Road), lightening Farnsworth's boundaries and bringing the house into closer contact with traffic.

1951 map based on site plan found in the Mies van der Rohe Archive, Museum of Modern Art, 1967, 1995 and 2009 maps adapted from a site survey prepared by James M. Olson Associates, Ltd., 30 January 2006.

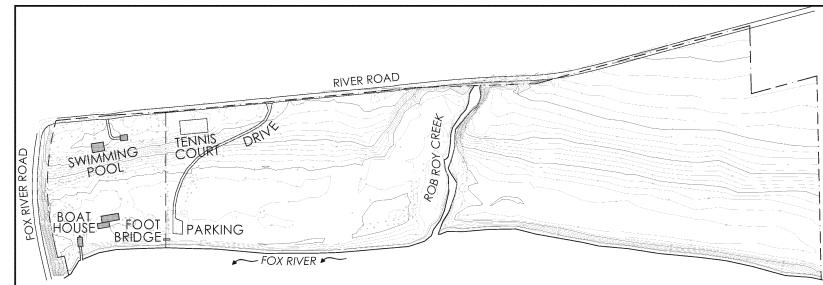


1995

Owner: Lord Peter Palumbo
Architect: Dirk Lohan, of the Office of Mies van der Rohe

Landscape Architect: Lanning Ropes

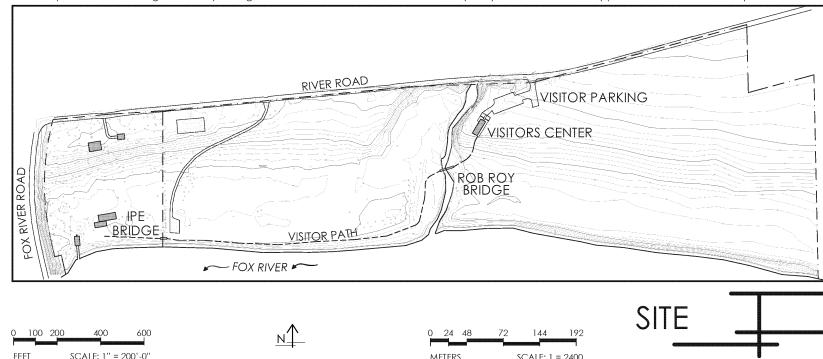
In 1972 Farnsworth sold the property to Peter Palumbo, a British developer and devoted amateur of van der Hehe. He began a twenty-year program to create a vacation residence to fit his needs and requirements. A tall modern driveway led to the original, which ended in a simple parking area next to the house where the original entrance had been. The driveway was paved with large rectangular stones. A rectangular lawn, roughly one acre in size, was laid out in the foreground, sloping down to the Meadow site. The Meadow site, which contained several small ponds, was landscaped with a transparent house. A circuit of large-scale outdoor sculpture were installed north and east of the house. In addition to reshaping the landscape, Palumbo added a bocce court, pool and tennis courts. The original garage included a path leading to the garage and a source. East of the garage, the tennis court is a simple rectangle, bounded by trees from the house and its meadow. The original pond, previously north of the house, is now on the road, this cause the house and is also undetectable. Palumbo's low, shingled boathouse was built within yards of the house but is shielded by a stand of trees.



| 2009

Owner: The National Trust for Historic Preservation

In 1997, Lord Peter Falumbo opened the site as a museum, adding a parking lot and visitors center on the western side of the site. A new bridge over Rob Roy Creek connected the visitors center and main portion of the site. Rather than having visitors climb the uneven lower steps of the house, stairs descended a tiered set of stone walls leading down to the main floor. Peter Falumbo's son, Paul Falumbo, was instrumental in the restoration, and the New York City-based Falumbo Foundation acquired the property. The National Trust became owner of the property and the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois managed the museum. Falumbo donated his outdoor sculpture collection, but left the Mid-designed furniture he purchased for the house. The new owners made interior changes to the Visitors' Center, and replaced the footbridge with the Ice Bridge. The National Trust invited Falumbo's temporary staff and added a support. In the lower former steps of the house



ECONOMIC
INTEGRATION

8

HISTORIC AMERICA
BUILDINGS SURVEY

1105

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

DITH FARNSWORT

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CREATED BY: JENNA CELLINE, ELIZABETH MILLNARIK AND BRAID ROEDER, SUMMER 2009
FARNWORTH HOUSE RECORDING PROJECT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION
1,000 BUDGET DOLLARS

