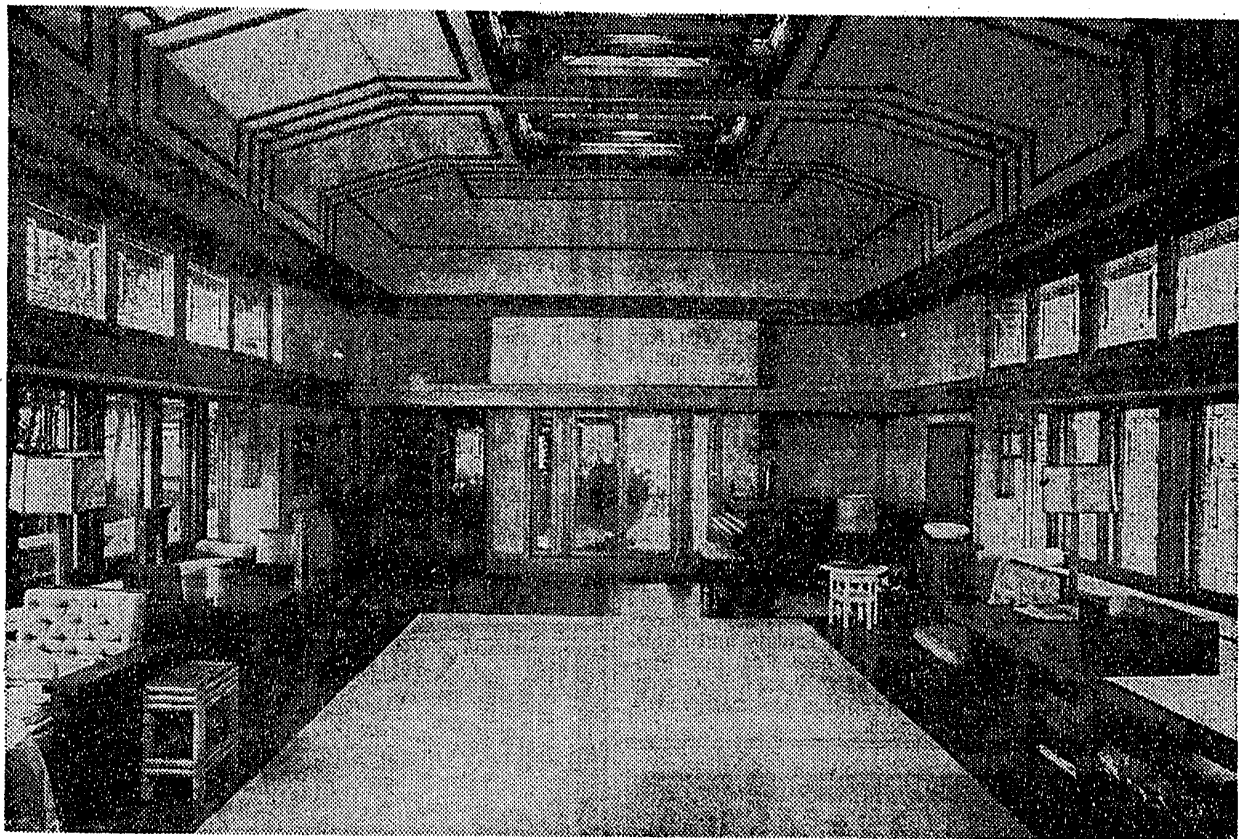


Metropolitan to Set Up Wright Interior



The living room of Wright's Francis W. Little House in Wayzata, Minn., which will be brought to the Metropolitan

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has announced the purchase of Frank Lloyd Wright's Francis W. Little House, built between 1912 and 1915 in Wayzata, Minn., with the intention of installing the 55-foot living room complete with original furnishings in the museum's enlarged American Wing. Plans for the expanded wing are in the study stage.

The Wright interior is considered one of the most important acquisitions in the field of American art by any museum, here or abroad. It is ranked by experts as one of the finest of Wright's interior designs and will be the first museum display of a major, original room to document the work of the American master architect.

The house will be dismantled shortly, and the room brought to New York. The remaining smaller rooms are to be offered by the Metropolitan to other museums at cost.

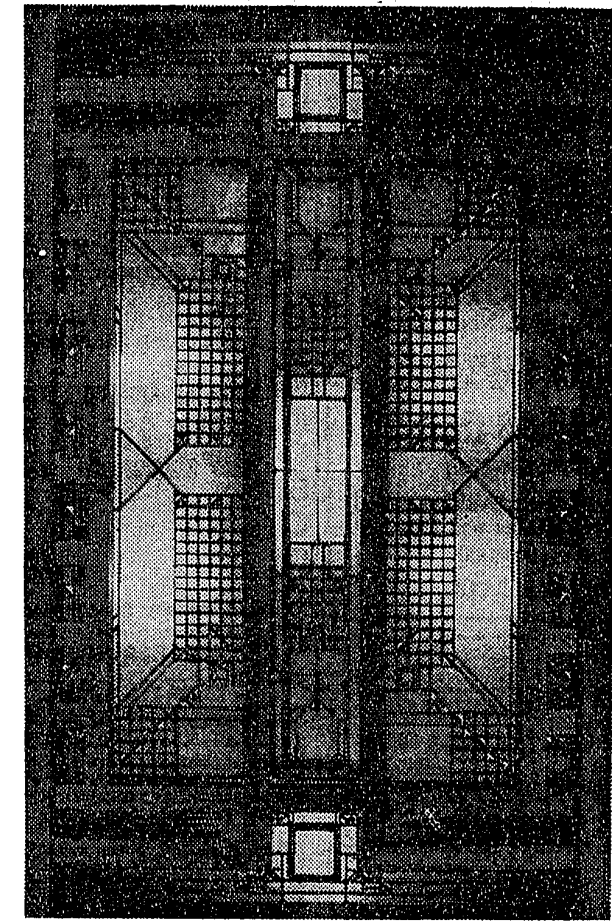
Musical Events Planned

The purchase, for an undisclosed figure, has been made from the funds of the Emily C. Chadbourne estate, but the sum for acquisition, moving and installation is rumored to be about 1/20th of the price of a first-rank painting.

The Metropolitan has also acquired the architect's drawings for the house, and the client-architect correspondence.

The museum intends to use the reinstalled room for meetings and social gatherings, in addition to having it on permanent display.

The Little House is classed with the 1908 Coonley House in Riverside, Ill., and the 1909 Robie House in Chicago as the best of Wright's fa-



The glass ceiling panel in the living room of the house

mous "prairie houses," so characterized for their long, low, earth-following forms and natural materials. They are regarded as a significant development in the history of 20th-century architecture.

The living room of the Little House, according to the distinguished historian, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "is the most spacious domestic interior Wright ever designed."

"It is breathtaking," says Morrison Heckscher, assistant curator of the American Wing, who has been in

charge of the negotiations. "The ceiling seems to float high above the visitor and light floods the room."

The focus of the 35-by-55-foot room, in the 14½-foot high, coved ceiling is a series of five oak-trimmed, leaded-glass skylights of Wright's characteristic geometric design.

There is a large brick fireplace on one end wall and each side wall has continuous banks of leaded glass windows. These windows are so prized by collectors that when they become available

they are usually bought instantly by dealers for piecemeal sales at high prices.

The house was built at the same time as the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, which was demolished recently. It has been owned by Mr. and Mrs. Raymond V. Stevenson. Mrs. Stevenson is the daughter of Francis W. Little, the investment banker for whom it was built.

In recent years, the Stevensons have found the house too large and too difficult to maintain. Rising land values and taxes have also been a factor. They put it up for sale, and are now building a smaller, more "conventional" house, with a French Provincial flavor, immediately adjoining the old one. "We are still traditionalists," Mrs. Stevenson says.

Because of local restrictions, the Stevensons had promised the Zoning Board that if a buyer could not be found for the Wright house, they would demolish it within two years. It would have been destroyed and its artifacts scattered this spring.

'International Importance'

A group of Minnesota architects, buttressed by Frank Lloyd Wright experts, formed a committee to explore ways of saving the house when they heard of the plans. When destruction seemed inevitable, the museum contracted to buy and dismantle the building.

At present, the Metropolitan's American Wing documents American architecture only to 1815. With the acquisition of the Little House, says the museum's director, Thomas P. F. Hoving, "the architectural holdings of the American Wing assume international importance."

The Stevensons will not miss the uninvited visitors who have found their way to the landmark house for years. "Their curiosity never lets up," Mrs. Stevenson said. "It becomes a perfect nuisance."