

Schmidt, Garden, and Martin Biography

Schmidt, Garden, and Martin were established from 1906 to 1926 and located at 104 South Michigan Ave, Chicago. Brought together by Schmidt, the experiences and skills of each of the firm members would establish a division of labor where “Schmidt was the front-office man, Garden the designer, and Martin the engineer”.¹ Although the firm is identifiable from their industrial and commercial buildings, Schmidt, Garden, and Martin created an extensive portfolio of hospitals, including Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee in 1919 (3321 N. Maryland Avenue). Other notable structures from Chicago include the Montgomery Ward and Co. Warehouse (618 W. Chicago Avenue), The Grommes and Ullrich Building in 1901 (114 W Illinois), The Schoenhofen Brewery Powerhouse in 1902 (1770 Canalport Avenue), the Chapin and Gore Building in 1904 (63 E Adams St), and Michael Reese Hospital in 1906 (2929 S Ellis Avenue).²

Richard E. Schmidt (1865-1959) was born in Ebern, Bavaria, and would later immigrate to Chicago with his family when he was young. After apprenticing as a draftsman for Cudell & Blumenthal from 1881-83, Schmidt attended and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology architecture school.³ He would return to Chicago and eventually start his independent firm. Due to having two physicians in his family (his father, Dr. Ernst Schmidt, and his brother Dr. Louis E. Schmidt), Richard’s connections would be beneficial to his future in constructing hospitals. Because of this relationship, “It was through his father...that Schmidt received his first major commission in 1896, the Alexian Brothers Hospital at 1200 West Belden Avenue.”⁴ In a culmination of his background in hospital design, Schmidt would publish the book, *The Modern Hospital* (1914) which was an expansive analysis on the role of architecture and hospital administration.

From 1934-42 Schmidt would serve as the Chicago building commissioner but would be replaced by Paul Gerhardt. This is a reversal of the events in 1913 in which Schmidt replaced Gerhardt as county architect, putting Schmidt in charge of the completion of Cook County Hospital (1835 W. Harrison Street, Chicago). Schmidt’s forced resignation as commissioner came as a result of complaints of his reluctance in issuing permits related to the war housing projects.⁵

Hugh M.G. Garden (1873-1951) was originally from Toronto, Canada, before moving to the US in his teens. After apprenticing under architect William Channing Whitney in Minnesota, Garden

¹ H. Allen Brooks, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 101.

² Montgomery Ward and Company Warehouse, pg 5

³ Schmidt, Garden, Erikson Roster

⁴ Achilles, Rolf, and Tim Wittman. “In Search of A Remedy for St. Anne’s”, *Inland Architect*, Nov-Dec, 1989, 8

⁵ “Schmidt Loses His City Job as Building Chief,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 18, 1942.

would make his way down to Chicago. There, he gained his architectural training by drafting designs for architectural firms such as Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, Henry Ives Cobbs, and Flanders & Zimmerman. Garden would become a notable designer in the “Prairie School” architectural styling where he would make renderings for other members, such as Frank Lloyd Wright. Through his experiences, Garden would hone his skills and develop what would be called the “Gardenesque” style. It was in 1895 that Garden would begin working with Schmidt, and it wasn’t until 1906 that they would formally enter a partnership.

Edgar Martin (1871-1951) was the third member of the architectural firm. Raised in Burlington, Iowa, Martin would study in Paris, France, and go on to become a structural engineer. During his partnership with Schmidt and Garden, Martin would serve as the Illinois State Architect from 1918-1923.⁶ Martin would leave the firm in 1925 to partner and form the Pond and Pond and Edgar Martin firm. He would be replaced with Carl A. Erikson. Applying his experience in building hospitals, Martin, in collaboration with Dr. William Walsh, would publish a paper, “Hospital Planning and Construction: Preliminary Procedures to Assure Economy and Efficiency” (1932).

⁶ Admin, “Edgar D. Martin (1871-1951,)” *Chicago Historic Schools*, February 8, 2013, <https://chicagohistoricschools.wordpress.com/2013/02/08/edgar-d-martin-1871-1951/>