



Chinese Mansion – Jewel of Historic District

1302 North 11th Street

Dubbed “The Chinese Mansion,” the stunning four-story, 18,000 square-foot house is the centerpiece of Temple’s historic north side. Architect Olof Cervin of Rock Island, Illinois, built the 40 room residence from 1914 to 1916 for James Madison and Anna Burbank Woodson. A pagoda-style roof tops the rambling prairie-style house, which reflects Cervin’s association with Frank Lloyd Wright early in his career. The house cost \$35,000 to build, about \$1.38 million in today’s dollars.

Dr. Woodson was an ear, eye, nose, and throat physician and among the first surgeons associated with both King’s Daughters Hospital in 1896 and Scott & White in 1904. His wife was heiress to a New Orleans sugar magnate. A well-educated world traveler, she oversaw design and construction, mixing and matching English, Danish, French, German, Spanish and Egyptian Revival styles. The original four-acre site included an outdoor amphitheater at the corner of West Lamar and 11th Street where many parties and theatrical productions were presented.

The house abounds with points of interest. It’s built around a central atrium with a fountain and fishpond. The grounds were as exotic as the home’s interior. Mrs. Woodson directed the design of the cactus garden, English tea garden, and Oriental garden complete with a Buddha statue. After a succession of owners, the home was bought by husband and wife physicians who restored it to its former glory.