

Text of 1978 proposal for the city by George Cooley, City of Chicago Planning Coordinator and Arthur Traczyk. From Garden of the Phoenix subpage. Used with permission to JPAC by Robert Karr.
Facsimile follows.

Introduction

The Government of Japan constructed a unique exhibit to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World at the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Authentic Japanese buildings, tea houses, and gardens were exhibited on the Wooded Island, now known as the Paul H. Douglas Nature Sanctuary in Jackson Park. The exhibit was called the Ho-o Den Palace and Gardens. Afterwards the buildings were not demolished but instead were left as a permanent structure and donated to the people of the United States and kept in the City of Chicago for the use and pleasure of the public. These buildings were utilized for various cultural-recreational purposes until World War II. Then, in 1945, at the war's end, vandals set the Palace on fire and completely destroyed the structures.

The project herein proposed is to rebuild the Japanese buildings, tea houses, and gardens, and to restore Wooded Island, now the Paul H. Douglas Nature Sanctuary, to its former importance and usefulness in Jackson Park. The proposal anticipates using mostly private funds for this reconstruction effort. This beautiful and useful reminder of the Columbian Exposition was destroyed slightly more than 30 years ago. The Douglas Sanctuary (Wooded Island) and the surrounding lagoons have deteriorated over this period and many valuable elements of the landscape have been lost to the public.

Reconstruction of the Japanese tea houses and buildings, as well as the Japanese gardens, the rose garden and many other features would restore the Island's former beauty and public uses of the area. The restored Ho-o-Den Palace complex could serve greater public purposes today than in its most active prior existence.

Initial research has been gathered on this project and, based on the information already accumulated, a series of tentative steps have been outlined:

1. Continue and complete research effort. Search for the still missing and very important data on the landscaping of the Japanese Gardens.
2. Develop support for the general concept and intent of the project among all private and public interested persons and organizations in Chicago and throughout the metropolitan area.
3. Develop a detailed proposal. Seek public agency and private approval, and determine costs by stages of work. Begin publicity and fund-raising effort for the first stage of development. Approach the Japanese government for invitation.
4. Develop an operational proposal that includes management consideration, safety and anti-vandalism methods, concession requirements and a continuous maintenance, forestry and horticultural program.

Overview

Unique in the United States, the Ho-o Den Palace was a beautiful and serviceable Japanese building complex located the Paul H. Douglas nature Sanctuary (formerly known as the Wooded Island) in Jackson Park. The structure, with its pagoda-like hipped roofs (Yosemune), open air connected corridors (Hisashi) and strict style of layout and detailing, was located in an traditionally laid-out Japanese garden. The Ho-o Den Palace and Garden were constructed to serve as the Japanese Exposition Center at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. It was one of the few buildings of the exposition built as a permanent structure, not just a lovely, temporary exhibit. After the Columbian Exposition closed, the Palace was presented to the United States as a gift in admiration and respect of the Japanese people to the United States.

The United States government then formerly transferred ownership of the entire structure and its contents to the City of Chicago. The South Park District, now merged into the Chicago Park District, undertook the maintenance and operation of the Ho-o Den Palace and Gardens. It was kept open to serve as a tea house and small luncheon facility for visitors to the park. The unique atmosphere of the Japanese tea house was maintained. The Japanese ladies who served tea wore the customary colorful Japanese kimonos. The buildings and grounds remained unchanged and virtually intact. For many years it served as a monument of friendship between the Japanese and the American people.

In about 1935, the Ho-o Den Palace was complete renovated and landscaped to upgrade the quality of service. As part of these improvements, the famed “Torii Gate”, was moved from the site (16th Street and Burnham Park) of the 1933 Century of Progress to the Japanese Gardens in Jackson Park.

When World War II began, the Japanese buildings and grounds of the Douglas Sanctuary (Wooded Island), were vacated and closed. In 1945, at the war’s end, vandals set fire to the structures of the Ho-o Den Palace and destroyed the oldest monument representing Japanese-American ties.

The Ho-o Den complex originally occupied the northern third of the Douglas Sanctuary (Wooded Island). The complex consisted of the Ho-o Den palace, the Nippon Tea House, a second informal tea house and series of gardens and walks. The architecture and landscape of the complex were indigenous to Japanese style.

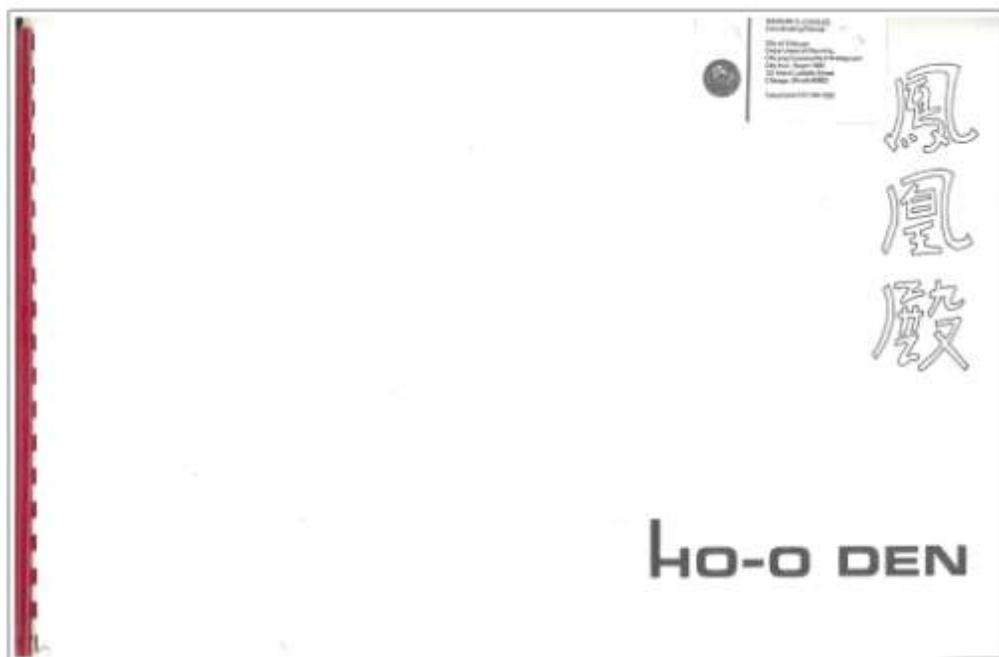
H-o Den

The Ho-o Den Palace was constructed by Japanese craftsmen according to the strict tradition and styling, and using the customary materials, of Japanese architecture. The structural components were constructed, assembled and refined in Japan, then disassembled and shipped to the exposition site. Here a crew of twenty-four Japanese laborers resembled the Ho-o Den Palace.

In keeping with the indigenous architectural methods, the Ho-o Den Palace was assembled by the exact fitting and carving of structural unites. Very little nailing was utilized in traditional Japanese architecture and few nails were to be found in the Ho-o Den Palace.

The Palace measured 200 feet in length and 56 feet in width. It consisted of three separate buildings connected by open air corridors. The exterior of the Palace represented the Yedo Period (1615-1867) of Japanese architecture.

Translation by the Japanese American Association of Chicago: 17 E. Ohio St., Chicago, Ill



HO-O DEN

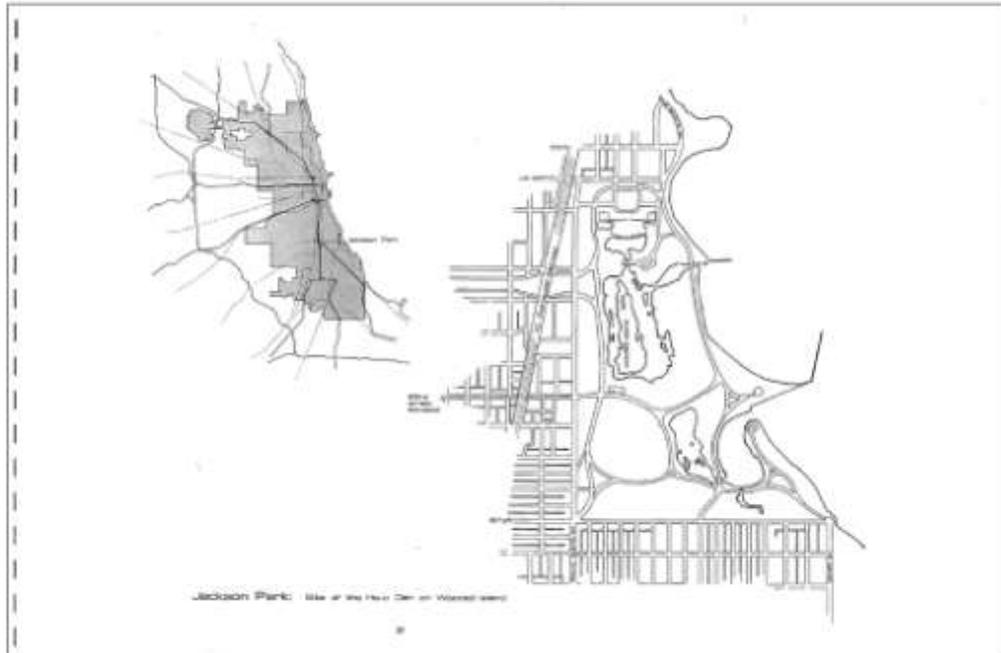


CITY OF CHICAGO
MICHAEL A. BORGES, Mayor
Department of Planning, City and
Community Development
LEAH M. HILL, Commissioner

Prepared by: George S. Cooley and Arthur H. Trevelick
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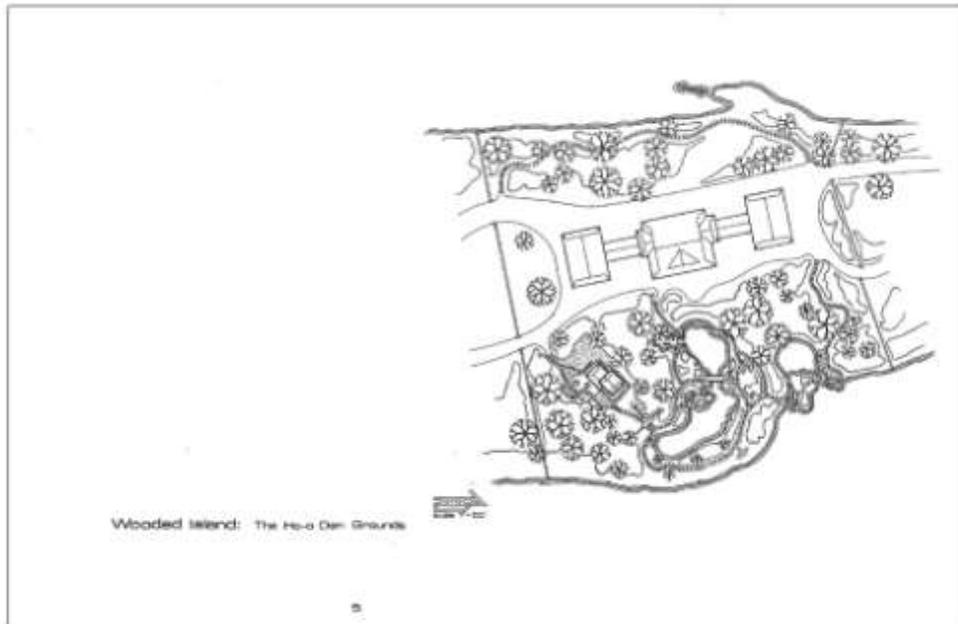
Proposal

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Reconstruction of the Japanese tea houses and buildings, as well as the Japanese gardens, the rose garden and many other features would restore the Island's former beauty and public use of the area. The restored Ho-o Den Palace complex could serve greater public purposes today than in its most active prior existence.

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The United States government then formally transferred ownership of the entire structure and its contents to the City of Chicago. The South Park District, now merged into the Chicago Park District, undertook the maintenance and operation of the Hō-ō Den Palace and Garden. It was kept open to serve as a tea house and social reception facility for visitors to the park. The unique atmosphere of the Japanese

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When World War II began, the Japanese buildings and grounds of the Douglas Sanctuary (Wooded Island), were vacated and closed. In 1945, at the war's end, vehicles were fired to the structure of the Hō-ō Den Palace and destroyed the visible monument representing Japanese-American ties.

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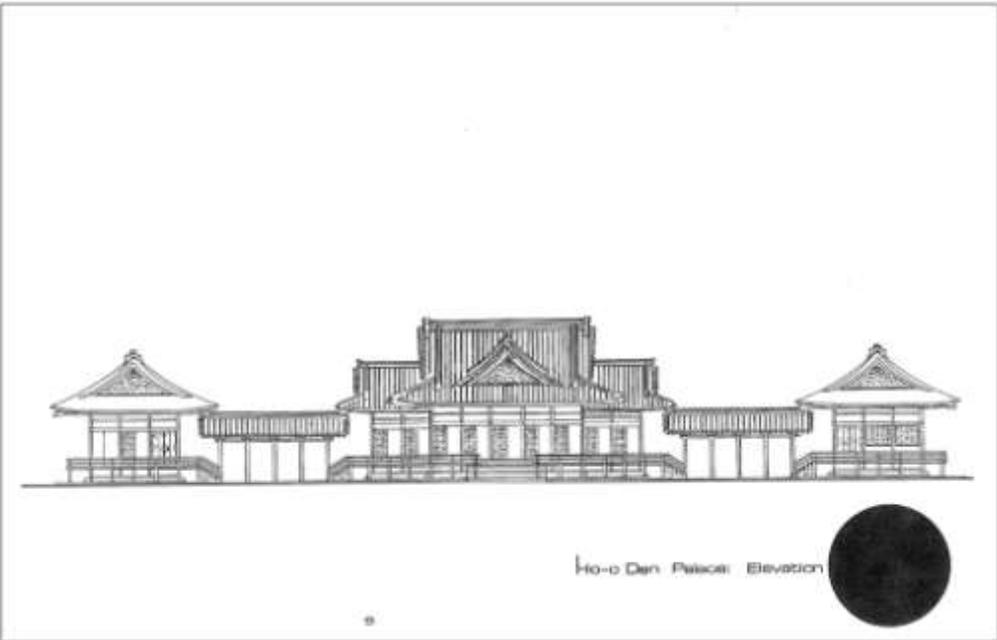
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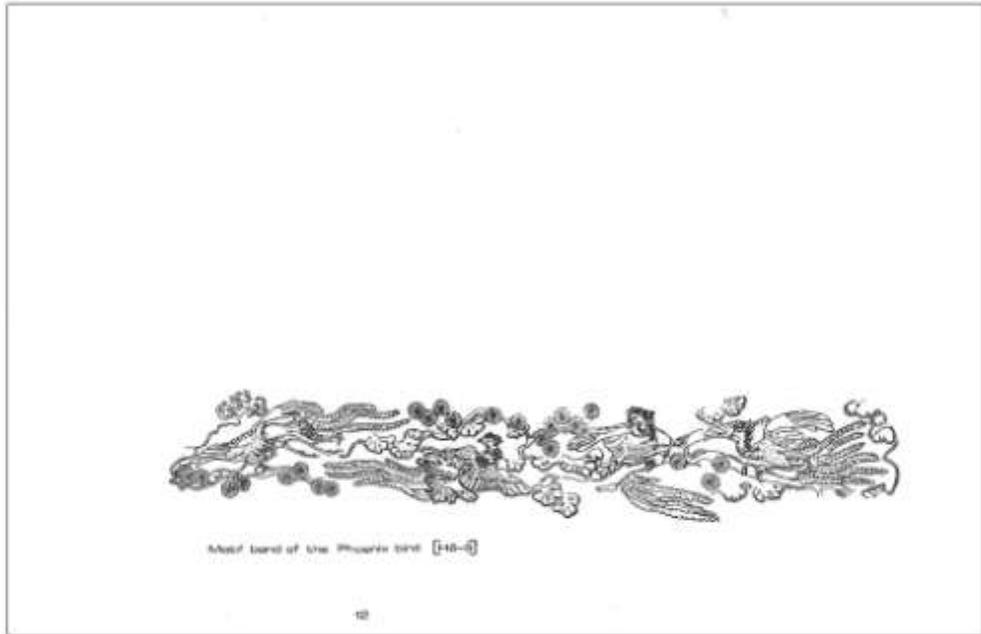
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Ho-o Den Palace Elevation

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Wood block of the Phoenix bird (18-5)

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