



Eliel and Eero Saarinen **HOMES**

PHOTOS **Jari Jetsonen** TEXTS **Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen**
RAKENNUSTIETO • HELSINKI

Contents

8	Untimely Saarinen <i>Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen</i> <i>Assistant Dean and Professor,</i> <i>Yale School of Architecture</i>	20	EARLY YEARS OF COLLABORATION Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen
14	Comfort and Beauty – Settings for Habitation <i>Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen</i>	22	Tallberg Apartment Building Helsinki, Finland 1897–1898
		28	Villa Wuorio Helsinki, Finland 1898–1901
		34	Pulkanranta, Juho and Selma Saarinen’s Villa Mäntyhärju, Finland 1900–1901
		40	Villa W. Karsten Helsinki, Finland 1900–1901
		46	Fabianinkatu 17, “The Doctors’ House” Helsinki, Finland 1900–1901
		54	Olofsborg Apartment Building Helsinki, Finland 1900–1902
		62	Kauppakatu 14 Apartment Building Tampere, Finland 1900–1903
		70	Suur-Merijoki Manor Vyborg, Russia 1900–1904 (demolished)
		82	Villa Miniato Espoo, Finland 1901–1902
		90	Eol Apartment Building Helsinki, Finland 1901–1903
		98	Hvitträsk, Home and Studio Kirkkonummi, Finland 1901–1903
		112	Hvittorp Kirkkonummi, Finland 1901–1904
		120	House for A. and E. Lindberg Vihti, Finland 1903–1905
		126	Tuulentupa Apartment Building Helsinki, Finland 1904–1906

132	VARIATION OF RESIDENTIAL WORKS Eliel Saarinen	214	PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL LIVING Eero Saarinen
134	Haus Remer Alt Ruppın, Germany 1905–1907 (demolished)	216	Entenza House Los Angeles, California, USA 1945–1949
140	Villa G. J. Winter Sortavala, Russia 1908–1912	220	Loja Saarinen House Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, USA 1950–1951
146	Villa Granagård Kauniainen, Finland 1909–1910	224	Miller Cottage Muskoka, Ontario, Canada 1950–1952
154	V. Sjöström's Home and Studio Helsinki, Finland 1909–1910	232	Miller House Columbus, Indiana, USA 1953–1957
160	Paciuksenkaari 7 Power Station Helsinki, Finland 1914–1915	244	Residence Halls, Drake University Des Moines, Iowa, USA 1949–1957
164	Villa Keirkner Helsinki, Finland 1916–1918	248	Emma Hartman Noyes House, Vassar College Poughkeepsie, New York, USA 1955–1958
172	Munkkiniemi Boarding House Helsinki, Finland 1916–1919	256	Hill College House, University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA 1957–1960
180	Row House in Hollantilaisentie Street Helsinki, Finland 1919–1920	262	Samuel F. B. Morse and Ezra Stiles Colleges, Yale University New Haven, Connecticut, USA 1958–1962
186	Saarinen House Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, USA 1928–1930		
198	Koebel House Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, USA 1937–1940		
206	A. C. Wermuth House Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA 1941–1942		
		272	Biographies
		274	Notes and references
		278	Illustration sources
		279	Authors
		280	Saarinen book trilogy

Villa W. Karsten

Helsinki, Finland 1900–1901

Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen

The summer residence, commissioned by pharmacist Walter Karsten (1868–1953), was built in Vuosaari in East Helsinki at the turn of the twentieth century. The construction of summer villas on sea-front properties in Vuosaari had increased at the end of the nineteenth century, when steamboats began to provide regular service to the area.

Although Villa Karsten is of simple form, it reflects the modern spirit of European architecture of its time. The predominant feature of the house is its high-pitched roof with long eaves. While the gently curving line of the eaves seen on the original plans for the building became straighter when realised, there is still a predominantly Art Nouveau spirit to this house with its undersized and small-paned windows and their tapering arches. The tower that is characteristic of many houses by Gesellius, Lindgren, and Saarinen has here been reduced to a small round corner bay. In addition, a pair of rounded bays protrudes from the roof facing the sea. The tapering shape and ornamental ends of the chimneys are also characteristic elements of the Art Nouveau.

The layout of the main floor is divided into private areas for a middle-class family and the

kitchen and servants' room with their own entrances. As the most important space of the house, the living room has a higher ceiling than the other rooms. As typical in villas by Gesellius, Lindgren, and Saarinen, the walls feature panelled surfaces and other wood details. Carpentry was Karsten's pastime, and he made the panelling for his villa. The living room's corner fireplace with fixed furnishings was another characteristic element used in the firm's domestic designs. The round bay seating only a few people and looking out into the surrounding landscape was called a "lantern". The upper floor originally contained two bedrooms and attic space but has since been renovated to add another four bedrooms.

In addition to the main building, there is an older cottage on the site as well as a boat shed and an auxiliary building designed by Saarinen. Located on the shore of a fjord-like bay, the villa was originally surrounded by a large park created by Karsten's son Erik, who introduced, among other species, plants grown from seeds obtained in Tibet. Many of these still survive, and the rock garden planted on the slope of the bedrock still blooms in the summer.¹



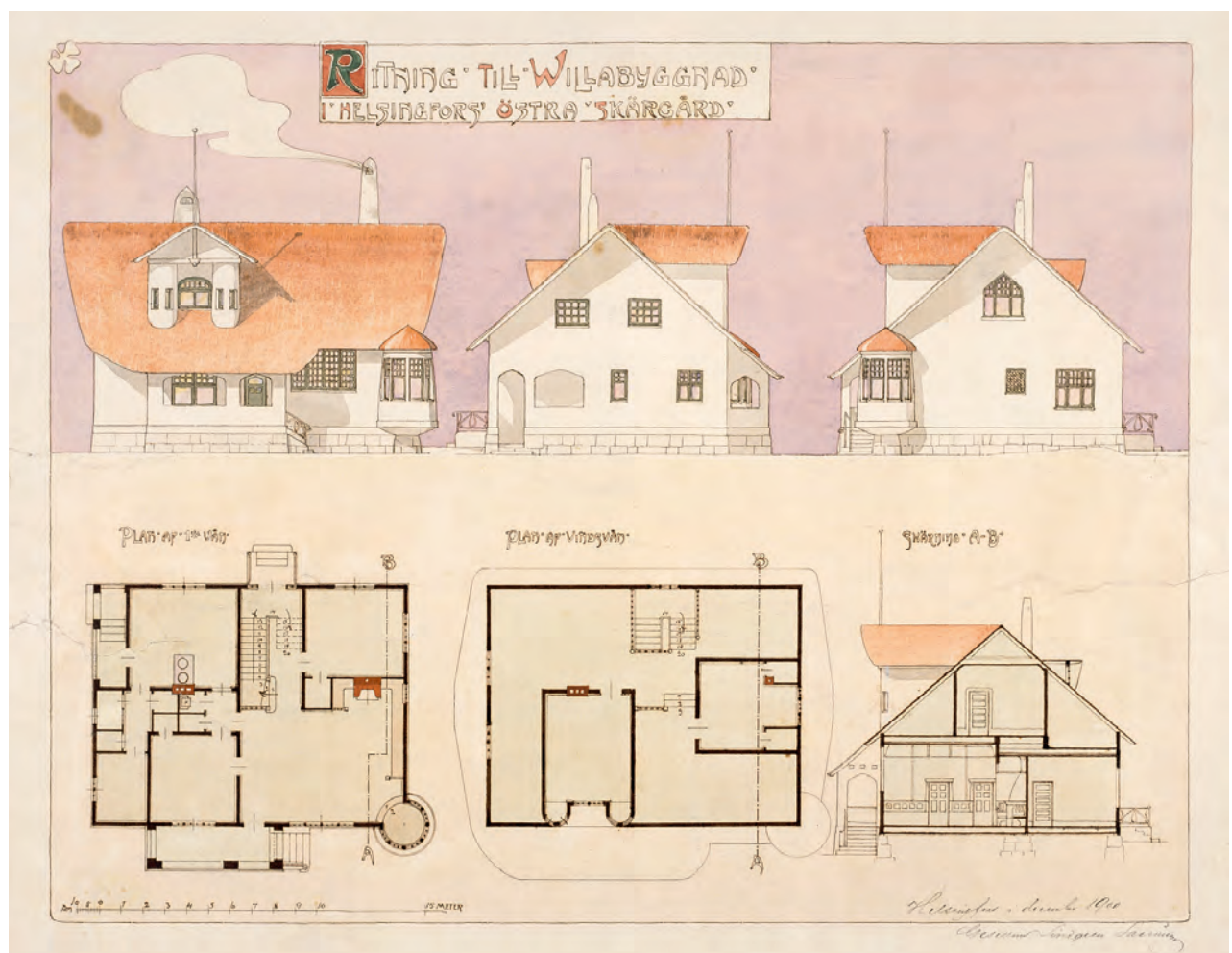


OVERLEAF
Autumn view of Villa
Karsten from the sea.

TOP
Panoramic view of the
landscape, the villa in
the middle, the boat
shed on the right.

LEFT
View from the garden.

OPPOSITE
Façades, plans and
section, 1900.



Fabianinkatu 17, “The Doctors’ House” Helsinki, Finland 1900–1901

Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren, Eliel Saarinen

The first town plan of Helsinki from the 1810s included a suburban area to the south of the city centre, with a planned square at its heart. As the city grew in the 19th century, the low wooden buildings around the square were replaced by taller stone houses. In 1898, the brothers Axel, Georg and Ernst Ehrnrooth¹ established a limited company named Aktiebolaget Fabiansgatan 17 and purchased a two-storey wooden house, together with its plot, in the northeast corner of the square.²

In February 1900, the architectural firm Gesellius-Lindgren-Saarinen was commissioned to design a residential block of flats on the site, and the drawings were ready for the construction decision in March.³ Some of the flats were immediately sold to doctors, hence the building was for a long time referred to as the ‘doctors’ house’.⁴ Among its earliest residents were Dr Henrik Johan Wilhelm Zilliacus, a political activist during the period of Russian oppression, and later the surgeon Richard Faltin, who tried in vain to save the life of Governor-General Nikolay Bobrikov, shot by Eugen Schauman.⁵

The building was divided into two types of residences: a main staircase led to large flats for

the gentry and co-owners, while a rear ‘kitchen staircase’ on the courtyard side provided access to smaller rental units.⁶

The building’s novel architecture attracted attention immediately upon its completion, most notably the smooth façades, unbroken by mouldings. The top-floor balcony, which underlines the horizontal aspect of the building, is set alongside bays and oriels. Windows of different shapes and sizes form a varied yet balanced whole.⁷ The building makes no reference to historical stylistic periods. The restrained ornamentation of the façade includes humorous animal and human figures ‘supporting’ the bays.

In his assessment of the building, architect Bertel Jung discussed the designers’ aims, noting that that Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen had decided to approach the task of designing a tenement house in a new and enthusiastic spirit, starting from the interiors and letting the exterior emerge from within. He wrote:

They struck the word ‘premises’ from their terminology and replaced it with ‘home’, banished the expression ‘the façade demands so’ and





TOP LEFT
Dining room fireplace
and alcove, c. 1901.

TOP RIGHT
Waiting area in the
entrance hall, with a
fireplace and built-in
sofas.

BOTTOM LEFT
A tiled stove in one of
the flats.

BOTTOM RIGHT
Artist Venny Soldan-
Brofeldt painted
stylised nature motifs
on the panelling in
some of the flats.

OPPOSITE
Stairwell with
entrances to two flats.









OPPOSITE
Studio alcove with a
view to the living room.

TOP
View from the studio
to the courtyard.

BOTTOM LEFT
Cosy corner.

BOTTOM RIGHT
View of the studio,
with Saarinen's desk in
the foreground and the
alcove in the back-
ground.



A. C. Wermuth House

Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA 1941–1942

Eliel Saarinen, Eero Saarinen

Albert C. Wermuth (1893–1977), a building contractor active in Bloomfield Hills, commissioned Eliel and Eero Saarinen to design a home for him in the peace and quiet of Indiana's countryside. Wermuth's company had constructed several buildings at Cranbrook, and Eliel had become friends with Wermuth, who as a German-speaker had been an important contact for him during his first years in the United States, when his knowledge of the English language was poor.¹ Around the time they worked on Wermuth's house, the First Christian Church (1939–1942) by Eliel and Eero was under construction in Columbus, Indiana.

The house sits in gently rolling terrain near a stand of forest on the edge of a steep ridge leading to a small brook. It consists of two wings meeting at a slight angle, with one wing containing the living room, dining space, kitchen, and auxiliary rooms and the other the family's bedrooms. A tall, rounded chimney faced with stone creates a stark contrast to the otherwise markedly horizontal building. The garage is joined to the house by a long-covered walkway.

The different character of the two wings is underscored in their façades: the shared rooms are

faced with light-coloured local limestone, while the bedroom wing, which is raised on columns, has wooden cladding painted white, giving it a lighter and more vivid appearance. The bedrooms provide views over the treetops, while the space beneath this wing is used as a sheltered patio. The lounging areas of the main building are open to the green surroundings through a row of tall windows extending the length of the whole wall. Long pentice-like eaves shield this room from the midday sun. A stonewall divides the large space, and a part of this wing is set a few steps lower to provide a more intimate space.

The influences of Eliel and Eero meet in an interesting way in this house. The building is mainly based on Eero's concepts, although Eliel had studied the site in 1939 and proposed a modern design due to its special nature. Mrs. Wermuth, however, originally wanted the house to be of Colonial style with columns.² The site on the brink of a steep slope resembles Hvitträsk to some degree, and the interior contains some of Eliel's favourite themes, such as built-in sofas and wood paneling in the living room. Eero's modern approach is visible in the simplified details and the way the





TOP
Crescent-shaped north
façade of the colleges.

BOTTOM LEFT
Costantino Nivola's
concrete sculpture
above an entrance.

BOTTOM RIGHT
Concrete light fixture.



TOP LEFT
Ezra Stiles College
courtyard.

TOP RIGHT
Folded stones-in-
mortar façades.

BOTTOM
The courtyard is
enlivened by plantings
and a water feature.

