

# THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

## NEWSLETTER

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### FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND MODERN DESIGN: AN APPRAISAL

by R. Craig Miller

*These remarks were first presented at the Frank Lloyd Wright symposium held at the University of Chicago in January, 1979. They were in rebuttal to a lecture given by David Hanks at the symposium, which was subsequently published in The Frank Lloyd Wright Newsletter (Vol. 2, No. 3). Many of the ideas in Mr. Miller's talk were amplified in a subsequent lecture, "Upholstery versus the Machine Aesthetic in the Twentieth-Century Chair," given at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in March 1979; the papers from this conference on historic upholstery will be published by the Decorative Arts Society.*

Frank Lloyd Wright's claim to be America's pre-eminent architect to date would be questioned by few people. His contribution to the field of modern design, however, has received less recognition. David Hanks' 1978 exhibition and accompanying catalogue<sup>1</sup> are thus of real importance for they will, I believe, mark the beginning of a concerted study of the designs of Wright and his American contemporaries.

My rebuttal to Mr. Hanks' talk consists of three observations on Wright as a furniture designer. My remarks will be limited largely to a stylistic critique of his work and are intended more as a cursory retort to stimulate

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discussion rather than a detailed analysis. For visual continuity, I have chosen mostly chairs for my illustrations. The points are:

1. I would like to illustrate Wright's multi-faceted talent as a designer of chairs.
2. I would like to offer an appraisal of Wright's influence on avant-garde design of the last century.
3. And in looking at Wright's nineteenth-century roots, I would suggest yet another source of influence besides the Arts and Crafts movement.

First of all, I would submit that just as Wright disliked the "box" as an architectural space, so he disliked the "traditional four-legged chair" and sought to give it a new, revolutionary form. As Wright himself said:

Yet every chair must eventually be designed for the building it is to be used in. Organic architecture calls for this chair which will not look like an apparatus but instead be seen as a gracious feature of its environment which can only be the building itself.<sup>2</sup>

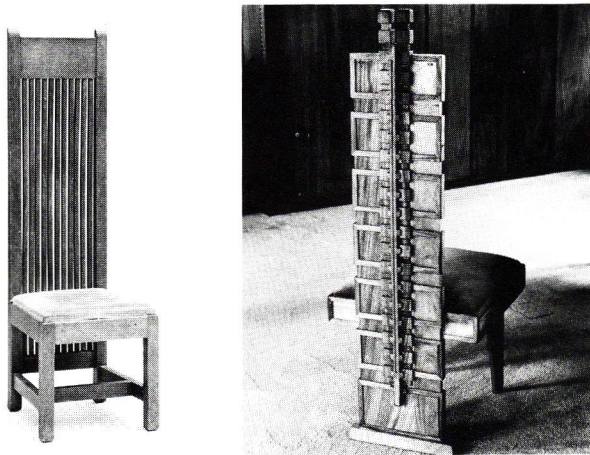
Wright's genius can be seen in the variety of alternative forms he developed for the traditional chair over a period of some six decades. At least eight chair types

<sup>1</sup>David A. Hanks, *The Decorative Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution; cosponsored by the Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, 1977). A book of the same title by Mr. Hanks (New York: E. P. Dutton) appeared in 1979.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, Inc., 1954; reprint ed., New York: New American Library, 1970), p. 173.

can be illustrated, some of which show how the same concept is changed over the years, often in significant ways. The designs also reveal Wright's interest in new materials and technology: laminated woods, aluminum, steel, and wire.

**Tall-Back Chairs.** One of Wright's most important developments was the concept of the tall-back dining room chair as an architectural element to define the space around a table. The tall-back chair was to become a standard Arts and Crafts form. Illustrated here are but two examples: a side chair (fig. 1) from the Ward W. Willits House in Highland Park, Illinois (1902) which is without its original leather upholstery and a dining chair (fig. 2) from the Barnsdall House in Los Angeles, California (ca. 1920). The former is notable for its slightly flared stiles and vertical-slat back, the latter for the stylized hollyhocks on the back panel. Wright continued to use the tall-back chair in numerous variations up into the 1950s.



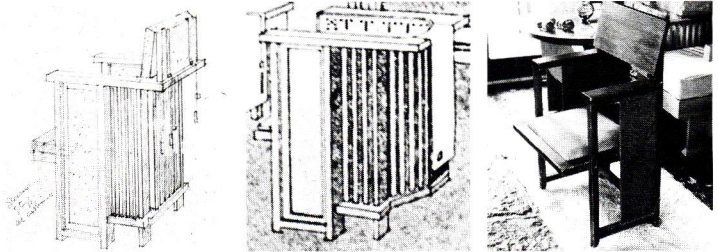
**Fig. 1** (left). Side chair, Ward W. Willits House, Highland Park, Illinois, ca. 1902. The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. David Lubart. Gift: in memory of Katherine J. Lubart. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. **Fig. 2** (right). Side chair, Aline Barnsdall House, Los Angeles, California, ca. 1920. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.

**"Barrel" Chairs.** In this chair form (figs. 3, 4 and 5), Wright expanded his use of vertical slats. The verticals now run from top to bottom rails; in two of the illustrated chairs they have been extended to all three sides. The result is the idea of the armchair as a free-standing sculptural element in the room. Note should also be made that geometric forms—square, octagon, and circle—may already be seen as the basis of Wright's design. The "barrel" chair was to be an important form in the work of Wright's European contemporaries: Baillie Scott, Mackintosh, and Hoffmann.



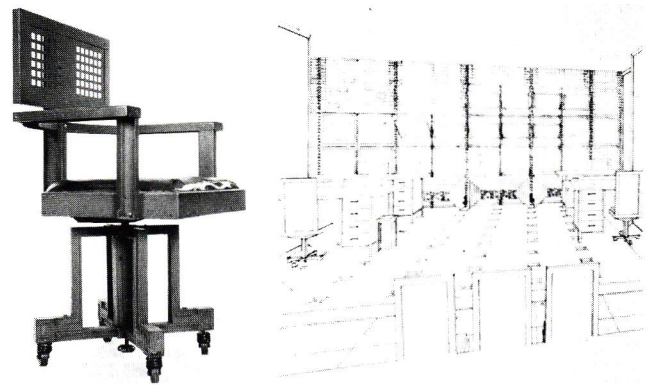
**Fig. 3** (left). Armchair (reproduction), Frank Lloyd Wright Studio, Oak Park, Illinois, ca. 1898–1903. **Fig. 4** (center). Armchair, Susan Lawrence Dana House, Springfield, Illinois, ca. 1904. **Fig. 5** (right). Armchair, Darwin D. Martin House, Buffalo, New York, ca. 1904. Photos courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.

**Chairs with Vertical Slats and Panels.** Yet another variation by Wright was the use of vertical panels with vertical stiles and slats. Figure 6 has previously been dated 1905 but is perhaps contemporary with the sketches for the American System project of 1915 (fig. 7). Likewise, the Taliesin armchair (fig. 8), an example of which is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, should perhaps be dated from Taliesin III (ca. 1925).



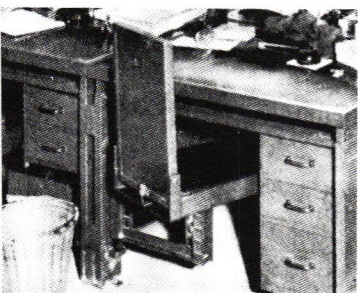
**Fig. 6** (left). Sketch for armchair, probably 1910s. Copyright the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation 1962. Photo courtesy the Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation. **Fig. 7** (center). Sketch for armchair, American System Ready-Cut Duplex Flats Project, ca. 1915. Photo courtesy Henry-Russell Hitchcock. **Fig. 8** (right). Armchair, Taliesin, Spring Green, Wisconsin, ca. 1924. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.

**Pedestal Chairs.** While there certainly had been earlier nineteenth-century designs for pedestal chairs—i. e., patent furniture—the Larkin chairs (fig. 9) represent perhaps one of the earliest such designs (ca. 1904) by a major architect for contract furniture. They are also notable in their use of metal. A chair (fig. 10) designed for the National Life Insurance Company some twenty years later (but never executed) has a simpler base. The pedestal chair has become a standard form in twentieth-century office furniture.



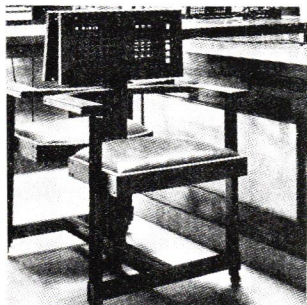
**Fig. 9** (left). Armchair, Larkin Company Administration Building, Buffalo, New York, ca. 1904. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase 1979, Theodore R. Gamble, Jr., Fund. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. **Fig. 10** (right). Sketch for chair, National Life Insurance Company Project, Chicago, Illinois, ca. 1924. Copyright the Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation 1942, 1970. Photo courtesy the Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation.

**Cantilevered Chairs.** In the Larkin Building, Wright also introduced a new form in the built-in chair on the metal desks (fig. 11). By cantilevering the chair, the architect has not only eliminated all legs but also simplified maintenance problems. European designers in the 1920s were to develop free-standing cantilever chairs utilizing the potentialities of tubular steel.

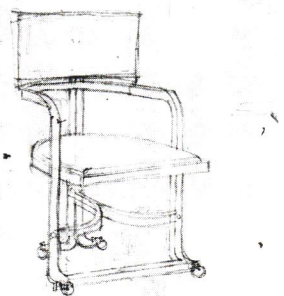


**Fig. 11.** Chair, Larkin Company Administration Building, Buffalo, New York, ca. 1904. Ausgeführte Bauten, 1911.

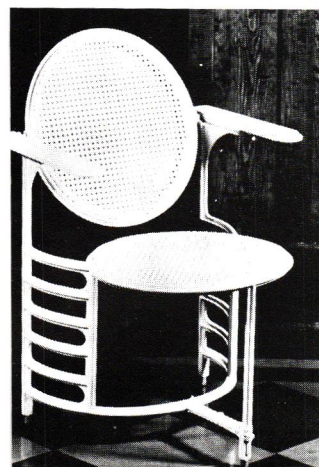
**Three-Legged Chairs.** Wright introduced yet another chair form in the Larkin Building—the three-legged chair. The executed chair (fig. 12) lacks the subtlety and the beautiful play of curves seen in the sketch (fig. 13) with its semi-circular seat and continuous legs and arms. In the designs (figs. 14 and 15) for his other great office complex for S. C. Johnson and Son, Inc., Wright has combined circular forms and tubular metal to achieve one of his most beautiful chairs (ca. 1939). The three-legged chair, in spite of its instability, is a form that has continued to fascinate twentieth-century designers such as Charles Eames and Arne Jacobsen.



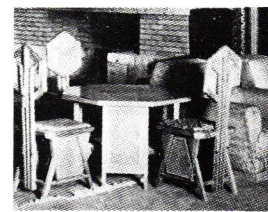
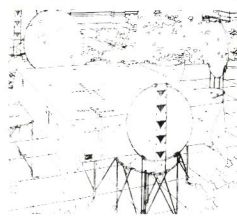
**Fig. 12 (left).** Armchair, Larkin Company Administration Building, Buffalo, New York, ca. 1904. Ausgeführte Bauten, 1911. **Fig. 13 (right).** Sketch for armchair, Larkin Company Administration Building, Buffalo, New York, ca. 1904. Copyright © Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation 1962. Photo courtesy the Frank Lloyd Wright Memorial Foundation.



**Fig. 14 (left).** Prototype chair, S. C. Johnson Administration Building, Racine, Wisconsin, ca. 1939. Photo courtesy Henry-Russell Hitchcock. **Fig. 15 (right).** Armchair, S. C. Johnson Administration Building, Racine, Wisconsin, ca. 1939. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.



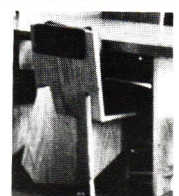
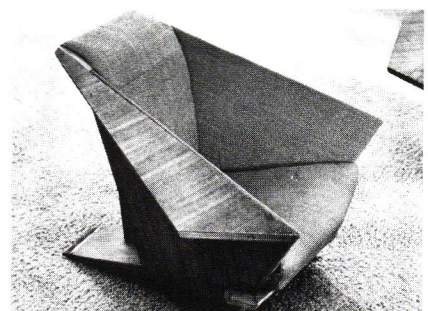
**Triangular/Hexagonal Chairs.** Although these chairs have four legs *per se*, Wright has introduced triangular or hexagonal elements which distinguish the designs from conventional chairs. In the case of the sketch for Midway Gardens (fig. 16), stretchers have been eliminated by the use of diagonal braces—an important consideration in achieving the effect of a wire armature base. Likewise, in the side chairs for the Imperial Hotel (figs. 17 and 18), Wright has set the legs at an angle and even added hexagonal caned panels.



**Fig. 16 (left).** Sketch for side chair, Midway Gardens, Chicago, Illinois, ca. 1914. Photo courtesy The Museum of Modern Art. **Fig. 17 (center).** Side chair, Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan, ca. 1922. Photo courtesy the Milwaukee Art Center, gift of the Frank Lloyd Wright Society of Japan. Photographer: Richard Eells. **Fig. 18 (right).** Side chair, Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, Japan, ca. 1922. The Life-Work of the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

**Crystalline/Folded Plate Chairs.** An increasing preoccupation with geometric forms may be seen in Wright's work during the 1920s and 1930s. Geometric constructions are no longer confined just to the chair base, as in the designs for the Imperial Hotel; the entire chair (figs. 19, 20 and 21) has now become something of a giant crystalline form. In such powerful compositions of interlocking planes, Wright achieved furniture that was quite compatible with the design of his architecture but not so compatible with the comfort of his clients. The furniture for the Usonian houses, in particular, poses many problems for the critic and curator in its use of plywood and other vernacular materials and in its manufacture by local carpenters or even the clients themselves.

**Fig. 19 (right).** Side chair, Paul R. Hanna House, Palo Alto, California, designed ca. 1937, executed ca. 1957. Photo courtesy Paul R. Hanna. **Fig. 20 (center).** Easy chair, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, ca. 1938. Photo courtesy Donald G. Kalec. **Fig. 21 (bottom).** Side chair, Stanley Rosenbaum House, Florence, Alabama, ca. 1939. Photo courtesy Henry-Russell Hitchcock.



In summary, these chairs indicate not only the importance that Wright gave to furniture design but also will, one hopes, give some idea of the numerous innovations he made in twentieth-century design. It is the latter point—Wright's position in modern design—which is the second matter for consideration.

Among major modern designers, Wright is unusual in the degree that he straddles both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His contributions are thus best seen if he is viewed in the larger framework of developments from the period of ca. 1850 through ca. 1950. At least six important trends in avant-garde design emerged during this period. Some were organized to the degree that they can be labeled as stylistic movements; others, for the time being, must be bracketed in quotation marks for lack of a better term. In each case a representative chair will be illustrated and major innovative characteristics noted.

There are three phases from the last half of the nineteenth century. As was the case in architecture with new developments in metal, glass, concrete, etc., many innovations which appeared in Victorian design were later synthesized by twentieth-century designers into a new aesthetic. Wright was certainly no exception in this manner.

**Patent Furniture (Mid-Nineteenth Century).** The major innovative characteristics of patent furniture were that it was intended to be mass-produced and that it incorporated many new technological innovations. The centripetal spring chair (fig. 22) is one of the most important pieces of nineteenth-century American furniture; its use of cast-iron and springs is prototypical for much later design. Patent furniture also signaled the beginning of the acceptance of non-traditional forms: in this case, a pedestal chair with, however, conventional Rococo decoration.

**Arts and Crafts Movement (ca. 1860—World War I).** International in scope, the Arts and Crafts movement was one of the most influential of the reform movements. An armchair by H. H. Richardson (fig. 23) illustrates many of the qualities which appear in Wright's early

work: a simplicity of form, often relying on Gothic or Romanesque sources; a respect for materials; honesty of construction; the greater importance of the craftsman and craftsmanship in the design process; and integral ornament—what Wright was later to call “organic.”

**Aesthetic Movement (ca. 1860—1885).** Contemporary with the Arts and Crafts movement, the Aesthetic movement demonstrates once again the refining influence of Far Eastern art on Western design. E. W. Godwin's side chair (fig. 24) is one of the most refined examples. It exemplifies many of the characteristics of Aesthetic design: the strong interest in *japonisme*; a movement away from upholstered forms; a lighter sense of mass which resulted in a greater emphasis on the frame; and as Marilyn Bordes has reminded me, the aesthetic concept of “solid and void” (perhaps best seen in fig. 30). Perhaps of the greatest importance, though, is the concept of the chair as “form in space.”



Fig. 24 (left). E. W. Godwin, side chair, ca. 1876. Photo courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Fig. 25 (right). “Cube armchair,” Frank Lloyd Wright Studio, Oak Park, Illinois ca. 1898. Ausgeführte Bauten, 1911.

“Abstraction” (ca. 1895—ca. 1925). It is at the turn of the century that we first detect Wright's influence on modern design in a significant way. Similar developments were occurring in Europe in the work of such reform designers as Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Josef Hoffmann. This movement has been labelled “Abstraction,” for lack of a better term, to reflect the growing interest of such designers in abstract forms. The innovations in this period were to be decisive for twentieth-century design: a predilection for severe geometric forms; little or no ornament; and, although objects were still to be largely handmade, the advocacy of the machine and its resulting importance in determining form and construction. Furthermore, the concept of an object as a spatial element is greatly extended. Chairs are often designed like small buildings! It is certainly no coincidence that many of the great designers of this period were also architects. To be more



Fig. 22 (left). Centripetal spring chair. The American Chair Company, Troy, New York, ca. 1849. The Metropolitan Museum of Art; gift of Elinor Merrell, 1977. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Fig. 23 (right). Henry Hobson Richardson, “Woburn Armchair,” ca. 1878. The Metropolitan Museum of Art; lender, Stephen Judge. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



precise, though, it seems that it is during this period of abstraction that the dissolution of the four-legged chair as a major form in twentieth-century avant-garde design began. Wright's importance here cannot be overstated. Wright's famous "cube chair" (fig. 25) of ca. 1898 is perhaps one of the earliest examples of these developments and as such should be ranked as one of the seminal pieces in modern design.

After 1925, the influence of Mackintosh and Hoffmann on avant-garde design lessened considerably. Although Wright experienced an architectural resurgence during the 1930s, his impact internationally as a furniture designer also seems to have decreased notably during the twenties. This may be attributed to the fact that Wright's designs remained highly individual rather than achieving a certain anonymous or universal style, and, secondly, his objects were not intended to be mass-produced for the general public, with the exception of some work in the 1950s.

**"Machine Aesthetic" (ca. 1925—World War II).** The year 1925 was a crucial point in modern design. The important developments of Breuer and Mies van der Rohe at the Bauhaus and Stam in Holland are well known, not to mention the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris that year. This period of the "Machine Aesthetic" summarized a great many of the characteristics enumerated for earlier movements. It is perhaps best exemplified in Mies' MR chair (fig. 26) of 1927. The period, however, saw further developments in certain important aspects: a concept of a totally industrialized society, the goal of mass-production, and a preference for glass and metal—particularly tubular steel. Formally, what is most visible is the emphasis on the frame; further, the introduction of the cantilever has changed the form and construction of the chair decisively. It was, in fact, an aesthetic that favored minimal dimensions and weight.

**"Shell Aesthetic" (ca. 1940—ca. 1960).** Many of the innovations in twentieth-century furniture were due to technological advances. With the development of machines to mold materials in three dimensions, furniture design was changed dramatically. The prize winning entry (fig. 27) by Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames for the *Organic Design in Home Furnishings* competition held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1940-41 was a catalyst for much of the work produced after World War II. The new ideal in chair design was a single or multipartite shell on a light frame; its appeal was to last well into the late 1950s and early 1960s. The technological innovations that made the shell possible were the introduction of plastics, foam rubber for upholstery, stretch fabrics, and super adhesives.

Even a cursory overview of the latter chairs illustrated in the first section on Wright as a chair designer will



Fig. 26. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, side chair, 1927. Photo courtesy Knoll International.



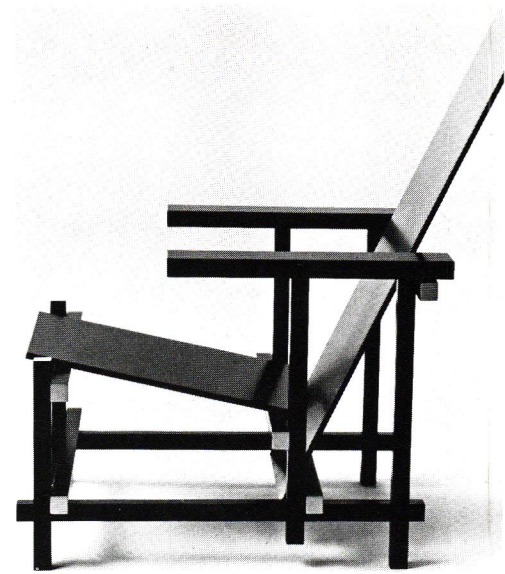
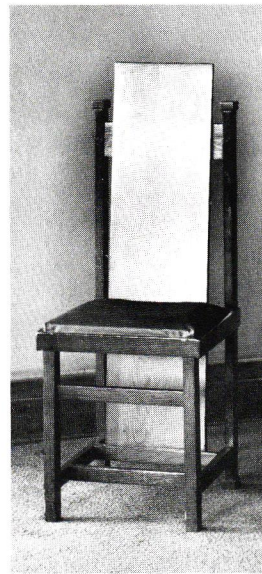
Fig. 27. Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames, sketch for armchair, ca. 1940. Photo courtesy The Museum of Modern Art.

indicate the substantive differences between his work and avant-garde design in the second quarter of this century. The inference is not that Wright's design from this later period is somehow of lesser quality but that his influence on the mainstream of development in modern design had lessened.

The last major point to be made about Wright's decorative designs concerns another source of possible influence in his early work. David Hanks has clearly shown Wright's involvement with the Arts and Crafts movement. I would suggest that the Aesthetic movement was equally important in his development artistically. The implicit influence of Japanese art in Wright's work hardly requires repeating. Yet there does seem to be a clear

line of development stylistically running from Godwin in the 1870s through Wright and on to Gerrit Rietveld in the 1910s. A comparison of Godwin's side chair of ca. 1876 (fig. 24) seen earlier with Wright's wooden side chair (fig. 28) from the Larkin Building (ca. 1904) and Rietveld's red-blue chair (fig. 29) of ca. 1918 reveals a similar composition of articulated frame and planar elements. Perhaps the stylistic unity is seen best at a monumental scale in three great examples of modern furniture: Godwin's sideboard of ca. 1876 (fig. 30), Wright's table of ca. 1915 (fig. 31), and Rietveld's sideboard of ca. 1919 (fig. 32; the latter comparison having been noted by Mr. Hanks). Once again, Wright's importance as a transitional figure between two centuries must be emphasized.

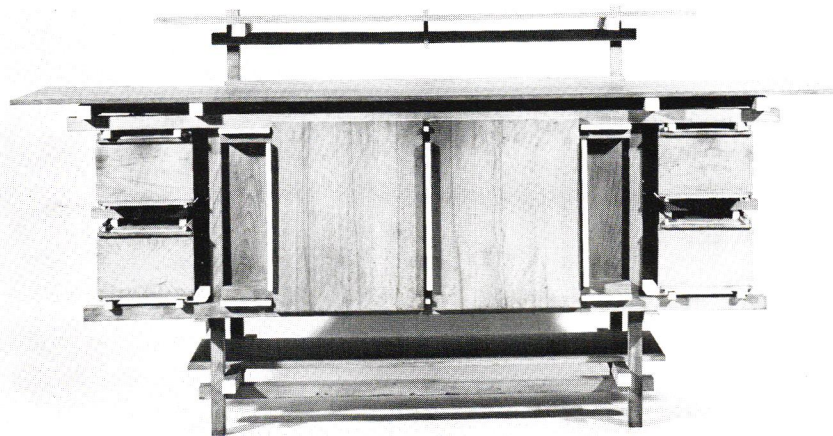
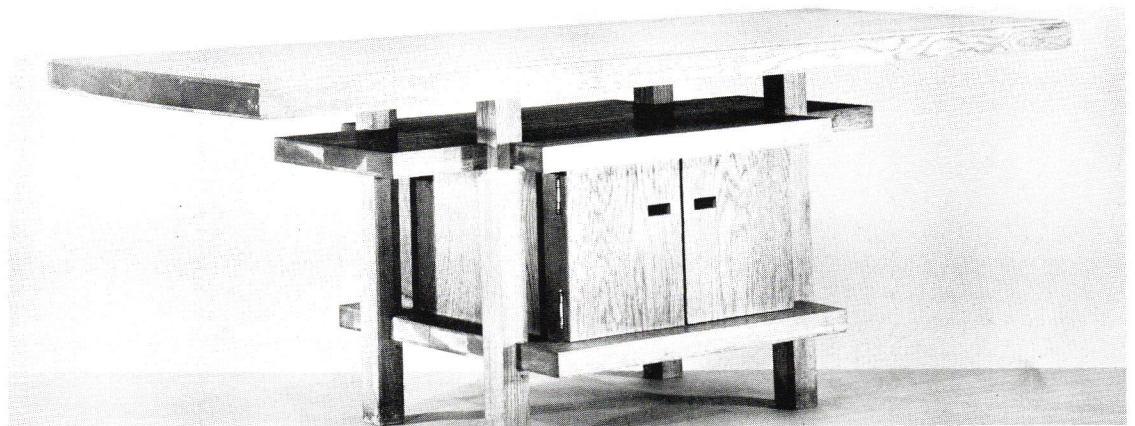
Clearly Frank Lloyd Wright played a role of considerable importance in the development of modern design. I hope that examining him in a larger framework has made his influence and unique contributions more evident. ■



**Fig. 28** (left). Side chair, Larkin Company Administration Building, Buffalo, New York, ca. 1904. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz. **Fig. 29** (right). Gerrit Rietveld, Red-blue armchair, ca. 1918. Photo courtesy Atelier International Ltd.



**Fig. 30** (top). E. W. Godwin, sideboard, ca. 1876. Photo courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum, London. **Fig. 31** (center). Table, Francis W. Little House, Wayzata, Minnesota, ca. 1915. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase: income from Emily C. Chadbourne Bequest. All rights reserved. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. **Fig. 32** (bottom). Gerrit Rietveld, sideboard, ca. 1919. Photo courtesy Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



## DESIGN ORIGINS OF THE WARD WILLITS HOUSE

by Mark David Linch

*This article complete a three part series on the Willits House.*

As a prologue to this article covering the origins and developments of the Willits design by Frank Lloyd Wright, I wish to mention one of the attitudes which I have taken with respect to the place of this house in Wright's *oeuvre*. In order to best review the Willits design, one needs momentarily to forget the buildings designed after 1902 and to remember the previous fifteen years of Wright's work. The Willits House is a turn-of-the-century product and as such is not necessarily subject to any twentieth-century axioms which followed. Wright was 35 years old when the house was built; Willits was 43. These were two men whose characters were formed in the Victorian era, which was just closing. Their association resulted in a design which reflected the nineteenth century, even though many aspects forecast the twentieth century and were lauded as modern developments. In retrospect, we can see that Wright was becoming a modern artist, but in 1902 his work lacked consistency. At that point, rather, he was demonstrating a tendency toward abstraction and simplification.

The origins of the design of the Willits House have been attributed to many sources: Froebel blocks, Wright's tenure with Sullivan, designs by Bruce Price and Robert Spencer, the Bradley and Hickox Houses in Kankakee (1900) and the Thomas House in Oak Park (1901), and the 1901 designs for the *Ladies' Home Journal*. I would like to suggest as well two other inspirations: Thomas Jefferson's Monticello (1793-1809) and the work of Henry Hobson Richardson.

Both Jefferson and Wright idealized the regional landscape with which they associated. Both had turned to their native localities, seeking strong personal and architectural relationships with the land. Each envisioned a uniquely American, democratic building ideal. Excellent expressions of their ideals emerge in the Monticello and Willits designs.

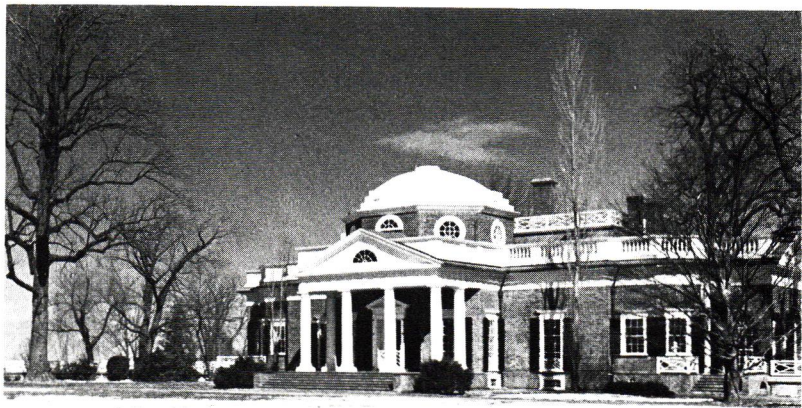
In examining the elevation of Monticello, it is apparent that Jefferson, whether consciously or unconsciously, found satisfaction in the strong horizontal bands at the cornices and balustrades common at the time. Note that, except for visual continuity, there is no particular purpose for the balustrade running up on the roof of the garden facade portico. The strength of these bands is further accented by the adjacent contrasting colors.

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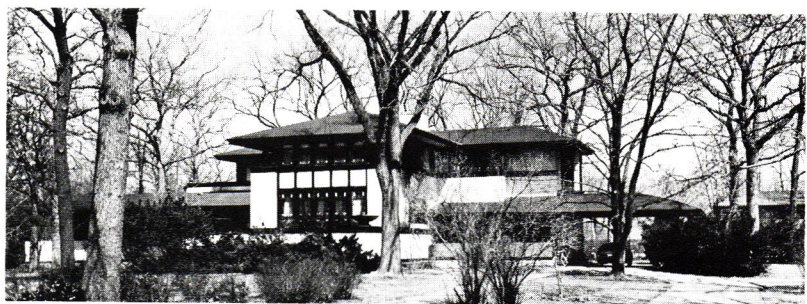
*Mark David Linch recently received his Master of Architecture degree from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and currently resides and works as an apprentice architect in Highland Park, Illinois.*

This banding dramatizes the extension of the house into the landscape. These same devices were employed by Wright in the Willits House.

The similarity of overall proportion and the layering of the facades of the two houses is indeed striking. However, it is necessary to examine the handling of the core of each building: Jefferson's domed void at Monticello contrasts with Wright's solid chimney mass at the center of the Willits House.<sup>1</sup> Both reflect the primary idea which each architect was expressing. Jefferson followed the Palladian tradition of man being at the center of the universe. Wright emphasized the hearth and the democratic ideal of the individual American family it represented. The resultant flow of space is different, as one would expect, but both architects understood that a building's relationship to the landscape is a unique one, and both used the cruciform plan to accomplish their goals.



*Monticello, south front. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.*

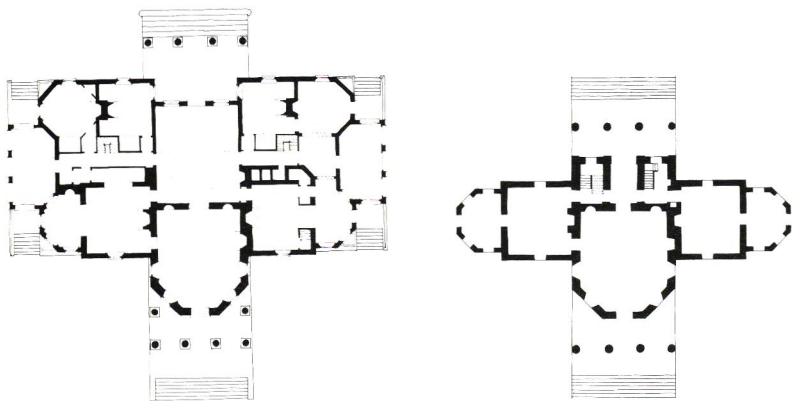


*Ward W. Willits House, west front. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.*

The horizontality of Jefferson's elevation is offset by the dome and portico at the exact center. Wright introduced a similar feature with the Willits living room facade. Though the specific functions are different, this projecting element was used by both men to extend major social spaces into the landscape. Wright's design may be thought of as a columned portico similar to the Monticello portico; relative to its site, its climate, and its time, the house derives its stateliness from this

<sup>1</sup> For further discussion see: Vincent Scully, Jr., *Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: George Brazillier, Inc., 1960) pp. 17-19.

abstraction. Without the portico in either design, the architectural presentation would be bland. It is also worthy of note that these central elements are set on a visual platform in a very classic manner.



Left: Monticello, final first floor plan. Right: Monticello, initial first floor plan, 1772. Drawings courtesy William H. Pierson, Jr.

In these two houses, Jefferson and Wright have provided summaries of the preceding centuries and forecasts of the coming centuries. The similarities are too numerous to be coincidental, especially if one recalls Wright's statement that, "If he [Jefferson] were living today, he would be sitting where I am right now—at the head of the table."<sup>2</sup> Wright's admiration for Jefferson is well known, and it is thus understandable that Wright would quote the statesman's design.

Another noteworthy aspect of the Jefferson/Wright relationship is the similarity of Jefferson's initial plan for the first floor of Monticello (1772) to the Willits plan. The side wings terminate in a prow shape, and the front facades are rectilinear and open onto a platform to the landscape. A coincidence? Possibly. However, Wright admired Jefferson, and he certainly knew how to draw essential elements from talented predecessors.

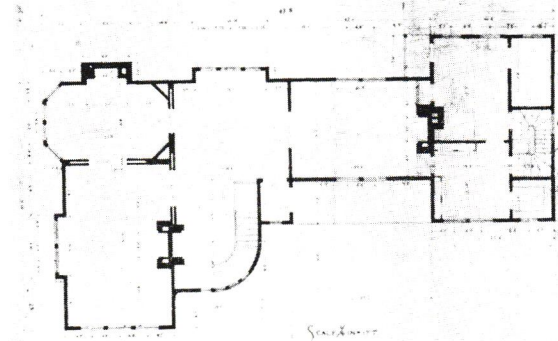
Wright's unmistakable design relationship with H. H. Richardson involves the interior as well as the exterior. Wright developed his use of surface, "lack of surface," spatial relationships, and finishing materials from Richardson's residential designs.

The Stoughton House in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1882-83), exemplifies the use of a continuous surface which tightly unifies the facade. "Lack of surface" is virtually nonexistent in the Willits and Stoughton designs, where the windows are tied together in such a way that they become a surface themselves. Thus, where there are actual voids, their unity has the strong impact of a plane which has surface qualities all its own. Surface—continuous planes which tighten the exteriors into unified expressions—is the significant element which Wright derived from Richardson and developed in the Willits House.

On the interior, Richardson gave each room two wide Victorian openings (except next to the stairways). These opened the plan and eased the circulation in each room, thus paving the way for Wright to develop an approach which kept the circulation paths out of the center of the room. Wright joined the rooms at the corners, a concept which H. Allen Brooks has recently described.<sup>3</sup> The circulation paths through the first floor thus were shifted to the sides of the rooms and the center of the building. Wright built this for the first time in the Willits House.



H. H. Richardson, Stoughton House, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1882-83, plan and facade. Courtesy Henry-Russell Hitchcock.



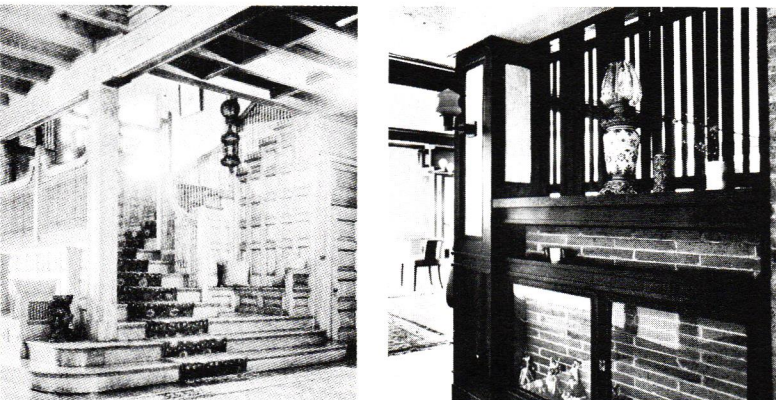
The interior finishing materials which Richardson used were of a typically Victorian genre, mostly wood. The vertical spindles set closely together at the stairwells serve as screens. Built-in seating, such as that found at the base of the stairs of the Paine House in Waltham, Massachusetts (1884-86), is an element Wright incorporated into the Willits House as well. Wright went further than Richardson in his use of spindles as screens between the major rooms, further dissolving spaces into each other. Richardson had used them merely to decorate and accentuate the stair. Wright used spindles for definition of space and also for a visual link between them.

The timbered ceiling of the Paine House is reminiscent of Colonial American's seventeenth-century houses, whose structures depended on these timbers for support. Once again, Wright appropriated an element and improved it. The larger wooden members in the ceiling of the Willits living room are hollow and non-supportive; as such they might be judged a decorative falsity.

<sup>2</sup> William Marlin, "Frank Lloyd Wright: The Enduring Presence," *Saturday Review*, October 4, 1975, p. 14.  
<sup>3</sup> H. Allen Brooks, "The Destruction of the Box," *The Frank Lloyd Wright Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1-8.



However, they play an extremely important part in one's sense of the space. Through them the ceiling is unified with the decorative bands at the soffits and at the corners of the walls; these bands, in turn, echo the banding of the exterior of the house.



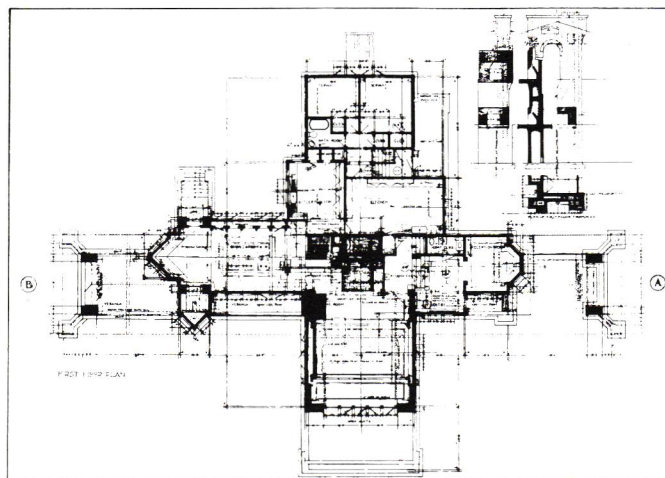
Left: H. H. Richardson, Paine House, Waltham, Massachusetts, 1884-86, stairway. Photo courtesy Henry-Russell Hitchcock. Right: Willits House, entry to living room. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz.

Wright's own immediately preceding designs for the *Ladies' Home Journal* give insights into the origins of the Willits design. The plan of the "Small House" and the elevation of the "Home in a Prairie Town" form the basis of the Highland Park design (see Vol. 2, No. 3 of the *Newsletter* for illustrations).

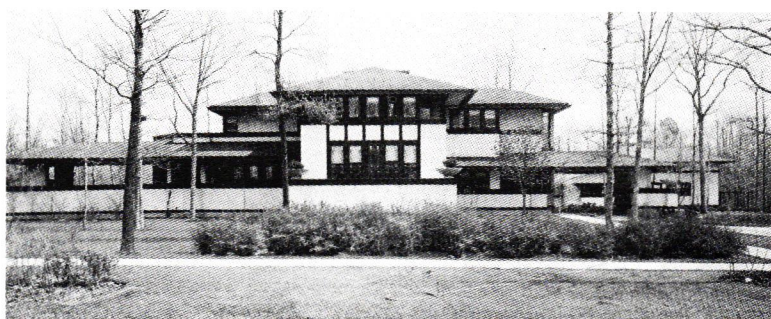
The plan of the "Small House with Lots of Room in It" (July 1901) is perhaps the link between the first Monticello and the Willits House. Note that rooms ending in a prow<sup>4</sup> are found on three sides of both Monticello and the "Small House." The Willits design incorporates the prow as well. Further, the Willits House and the "Small House" both have cruciform plans which locate the major circulation routes in the same way. In both houses, one enters, turns past a spindled screen, enters the living room, turns past another spindled screen into the dining room, turns and enters the kitchen.

The "Home in a Prairie Town" (February 1901) features a cruciform plan which is different from the design for the "Small House." However, the development of the Willits facade originates with this design, which makes use of a broad hip roof instead of the gable roof of the "Small House." Analysis of this facade provides an understanding of the development of the Willits House. The exterior of the Willits House is a modified version of the "Home in a Prairie Town." The Willits design achieves more balance in form, its surfaces are more unified, and the central core of fireplaces is grouped to emphasize the hearth as the center of the family.

The wood trim of the "Prairie Home" is somewhat disjointed, as evidenced by the awkward manner in



Willits House first floor plan. *The Life-Work of the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright*.



Willits House west facade. *The Life-Work of the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright*.

which the corners are turned and by the lack of unity between the floors. The facade, with its second floor bedrooms cantilevering beyond the first floor library, though adequate in design, does not demonstrate the unity of vertical alignment which the preliminary Willits sketch begins to achieve.<sup>5</sup> In this sketch, Wright has begun to unify the windows of the first and second floors by the use of vertical bands; however, due to the different number of windows on each floor, this relationship is not complete. When the house was built, Wright changed the number of windows at the lower level and related these two groups with vertical wood banding.<sup>6</sup> This refinement gives the Willits facade the stateliness of the portico of Monticello.

A second similarity between the main facade of the "Prairie Home" and the preliminary Willits sketch is the diamond paned windows which Wright indicated in both designs. This diamond pattern, with its reference to the seventeenth-century window patterns such as those of the Whipple House in Ipswich (ca. 1640), was later changed to ornamental art glass composed of verticals and horizontals rather than diagonals.

<sup>4</sup> The tapering of these rooms achieves a gentle transition to the exterior world. It softens the meeting of the two just as a ship's prow softens the force of the sea upon it.

<sup>5</sup> It is my belief that this sketch is the preliminary design and that it dates from the beginning of 1902.

<sup>6</sup> As the sketch indicates, these bands reaching up to the second floor were only partial initially. They also flare away from the surface of the building up to the horizontal band at the bottom of the windows. The detail drawing of June 1902 shows them appearing to support this horizontal banding at the bottom windows.

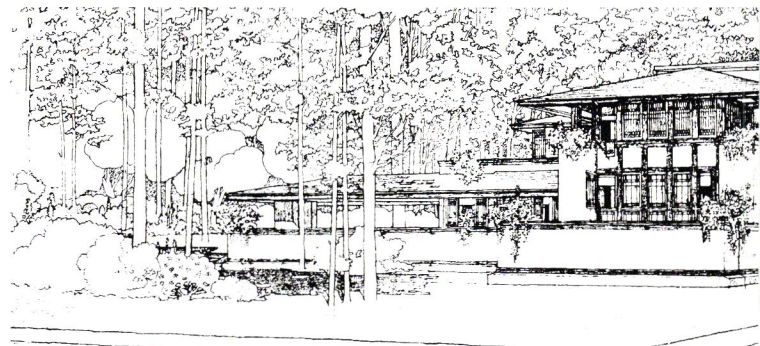
In examining the second floor window treatment, it is evident that changes occurred there as well. The “Prairie Home” shows the second floor windows tucked tightly in the corner next to the front bedroom; the Willits preliminary sketch features one window handled in a similar way, but the right side shows the windows at the end. In the June drawings, the number of windows was reduced from three to two, and they were tucked into the inside corner. During construction, however, these windows were relocated to the center of the wall. The wall itself was moved forward about three feet, which coincides with the width of an inserted window. This wall is in the same plane as the wall below which contains the front door. The result is that the upper and lower floors are tied together with another subtle vertical line.

The left half of the facade in the Willits preliminary sketch is similar to that of the “Prairie Home” in many respects. It is the longest extension of the house, featuring numerous windows and a covered porch. It varies in that the Willits preliminary sketch shows a prow-shaped room penetrating the veranda. This prow is reflected on the second level as the end of a balcony. The width of this balcony was increased in the June 1902 plan but was reduced when built.

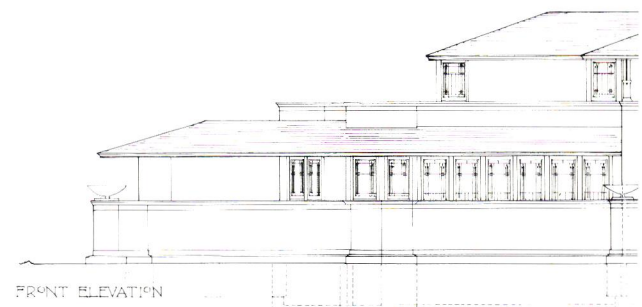
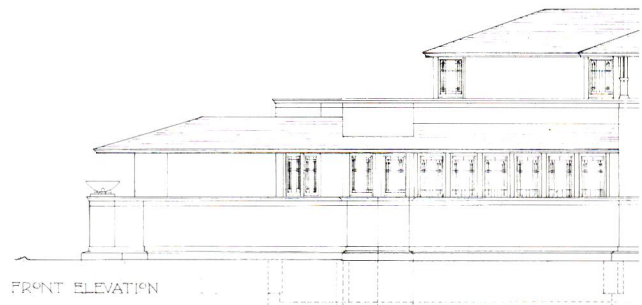
These delicate changes demonstrate the skill with which Wright manipulated surfaces and spaces. The blockiness and heavy-handedness of some of the earlier designs are gone. His sensitivity to minute changes in dimensions and surfaces has become highly attuned. Some of the subtle changes were occasioned by requests from the client, but on the whole Wright won out when it came to design. That was his job. Willits had unshakable respect for Wright’s design ability, and his faith in his architect is manifest in the excellence of the design of the house.

The projecting facade of the Willits House as an abstracted columned portico shows development between the preliminary sketch and the house as it was built. It would seem as though Wright actually increased the dimensions of the living room axis, “stretching” it, so as to make the house thrust more dramatically into the landscape. The sketch does not include any windows along the right and left sides; note also that the length of the projection from the body of the house is not very great. In the final design, as much as nine feet may have been added.<sup>7</sup> At the bedroom level, the single side window was increased to three windows, and in the living room three windows were added on each side. Since these windows are 2’ 8” with 7” side mullions, the addition of three of them would increase the projection nine feet!

<sup>7</sup> From looking at the sketch, it is certain that there was a change, but there is no accurate way of determining from this perspective rendering exactly how much was added.

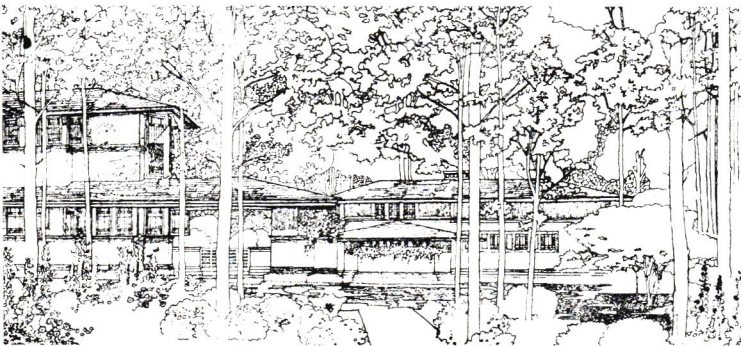
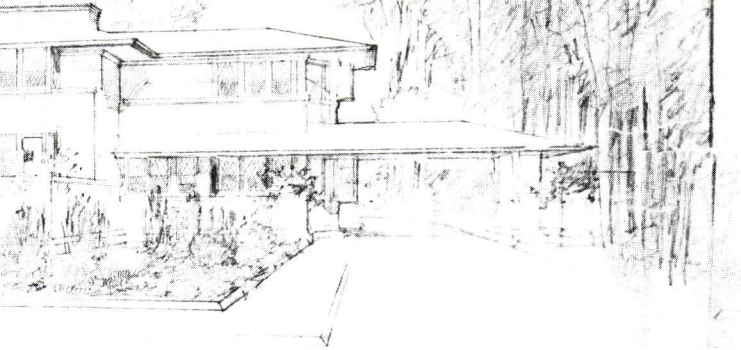


Top: Willits House preliminary sketch. Photo courtesy Thomas A. Heinz. Bottom: Frank Lloyd Wright, 1910.

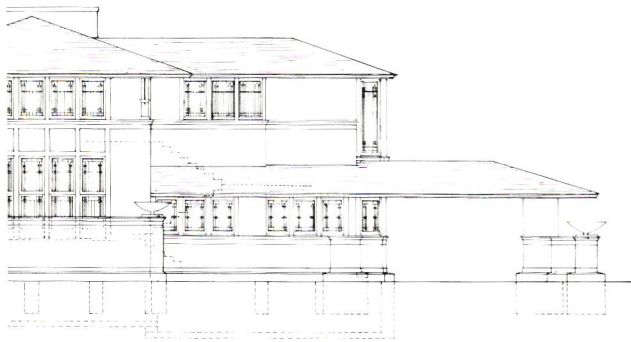
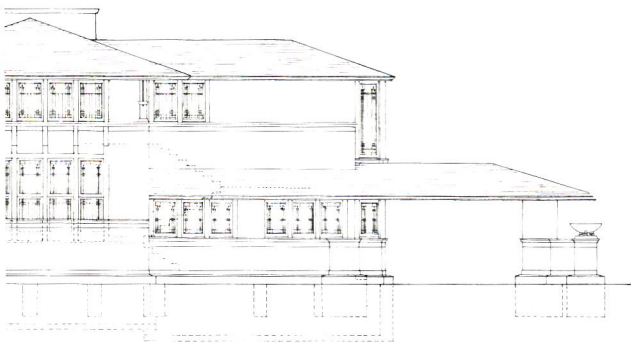


Top: Willits House west elevation from 1902 working drawings. Bottom: Willits House

Such a change is certainly significant. It is unlikely that this change originated with Willits, who was trying to keep the size and cost of the building down. Wright most assuredly must have understood that the reaching of this facade into the landscape, not just with one floor (such as in the “Prairie Home”) but with a major axis, was analogous to the relationship which Jefferson sought at Monticello. The visual relationship of the living room to the exterior landscape was increased even more with the addition of the windows, allowing the room to have three exterior sides like the Monticello portico.



*Willits House front elevation. Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von*



*built, 1903. Drawings by Mark David Linch.*

The dignity of the facade which Wright achieved in the Willits House is unlike anything he had accomplished earlier. Whatever it was that brought these numerous elements and subtleties together in Wright's vision of this house, it is unlikely that a genius and a talent such as his would not draw from the work of men who had also used the cruciform plan and the layering of facades to relate to the landscape. To discount this would underestimate Wright's ability to draw upon the past and to re-interpret and abstract that past into usable

elements for his time and purpose. There is a timelessness in Monticello—a timelessness which Wright also achieved in the design of the Willits House.

Further fascination with the Willits House is the result of the way solids and voids, verticals and horizontals, and lights and darks are juxtaposed. These qualities give the house its mystique, its individuality, and the sense of exploration which the viewer feels in this house as it reaches out into the landscape.

The interplay of solids and voids occurs on the large scale with the massing of the house, where each rectangular wing defines an exterior space adjacent to it. This continues on the facade where the corners become voids at the second floor level. On a smaller scale, the strip windows between the first and second floor are tied together with dark bands of wood which delineate the borders between the windows, creating an alternating rhythm. Inside, the spindled screens of inglenooks, bookcases, and radiator casings alternate mass with space, solid with void.

The interplay of verticals and horizontals begins with the site where the overall horizontality is balanced with the verticality of the skillfully thinned trees around the house. On the building itself, each facade is divided by horizontal and vertical bands of stained wood. Though fewer in number, the horizontals are wider than the verticals, further enhancing the delicate balance. This system continues on the interior as well, where strong horizontal bands are offset by numerous vertical spindles.

The light and dark balance of surface colors is continued by shade, shadows, and even the changing of the seasons, when in winter snow becomes part of the pattern. The darker surfaces are fewer than the lighter ones lest they dominate. The amount of shadow similarly obliges itself and accents the intricacies of the design.

Each design improvement, contrasting element, and subtle manipulation by Wright gives the Willits House its sensory richness. It is a wonder of proportion, scale, sequence, siting, historicism, innovation, and technology.

It is also a uniquely American building. Willits was the epitome of the American self-made man, who with little formal education elevated himself from humble beginnings to become chairman of the board of a railway manufacturing firm. Adams and Westlake was involved with the building of the railroads—the “pulse of America”—and was located in Chicago, the “Crossroads of America.” Willits found in Wright the most important architect this country has yet produced. Wright had an abiding love for the democratic way of life in America that was coupled with a true sense of national heritage. Thus, for this house and in the association of these two men, the timing was perfect for the greatest masterpiece of America's heartland. ■

# THE ODAWARA HOTEL

by Masami Tanigawa

Frank Lloyd Wright's visits to Japan for the construction of the Imperial Hotel brought several other commissions. Some of them were consequently built; others were not. These Japanese projects have been inadequately studied, but current research is beginning to answer many of the questions about them. As much research remains to be done, the following is a preliminary study of the Odawara Hotel.

The literature about Wright describes the Odawara Hotel as the project in Nagoya in 1917.<sup>1</sup> Our research shows that the hotel was designed for the town of Odawara, not Nagoya, and that, in fact, construction actually was begun on the building.

There is a perspective drawing which shows the design for the hotel as a wooden two-storied structure with a slanted roof, located atop a scenic cliff. On this drawing there is in the lower right an inscription which appears to be written by Wright: the first line says "for Hayashi," the second line says "Hotel—Japan," and the third line says "near Kamak. . ." (the rest of this line is missing). "For Hayashi" obviously means Aisaku Hayashi, the client, who was manager of the Imperial Hotel at that time. The proposed site for the hotel is described in the second and third lines; Nagoya is not mentioned. "Near Kamak. . ." in the third line is probably the first half of the word "Kamakura." Kamakura, in the province of Kanagawa, is famous as both a religious center and an historical city.<sup>2</sup> In 1917 Odawara was a small, country town about 25 miles from Kamakura, so it seems logical that the site was described as near Kamakura rather than in Odawara.

There are additional materials which help to document the location of the proposed hotel as Odawara and which also shed some light on the series of events leading to construction.

There is a "Petition for the Sale of Imperial Land" dated 1917. This petition for the Imperial land near Odawara Detached Palace was submitted to Mr. Mitsuomi Nambu, manager of the Imperial Forestry Administration, by Mr. Hironosuke Imai, mayor of Odawara, and three other people. The name of the hotel was clearly stated in the petition: "the above statement was made to use the land as Odawara Hotel building site." It continues: "the hotels should not be only shelters to protect tourists from rain and wind, but also places to console the weary hearts of travelers." The petition also emphasized that the "ideal hotel should be built in a suburb away from the polluted air of Tokyo. The land in Odawara, only 122 miles in distance and 2 hours by train from Tokyo, has nice fresh air, and a dramatically scenic view facing the ocean at the foot at Mt. Fuji."

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Along with this petition is found a drawing of the actual land survey. The drawing for the hotel is based on a survey drawn at a scale of 1/300; the total area of the hotel land is 19,345 *tsubo*.<sup>3</sup> Contours are drawn in every 5 *shaku*,<sup>4</sup> and all trees over two *shaku* are shown.

There is a contract, dated November 25, 1917, between four people: Mr. Yoshiro Takamatsu, Mr. Tsurukichi Seto, Mr. Takjiro Kobayashi and Mr. Aisaku Hayashi. The renewal of this contract is undated, but it indicates that five people were associated with the project and it contains more concrete articles. These articles provide that "All the members should approve the hotel construction on that land," "the right to borrow the land is Y100,000 that is paid by the hotel to the associates," and "the associates should let the hotel use the land at the rate of 5 *sen*<sup>5</sup> per one *tsubo* every month." It would seem that preparations for the construction of the hotel were almost completed at this time; the factors that delayed it remain somewhat uncertain.

Apparently some changes were necessary in the design of the building. According to a 1920 "Progress Report," in February, 1919, the associates submitted the architectural plans, based on a survey of the actual land done by the American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, who had designed the Imperial Hotel under construction at that time. However, in April, 1919, Mr. Takejiro Kobayashi, one of the associates, was called by the Imperial Forestry Administration and was told that some design changes were required due to the slight alteration of the construction site. Necessary changes in the drawings were done between April and June 1919.

This "Progress Report" also indicates a much more extensive program than just a hotel, for it also describes a clubhouse for the town people, an open-air school, a botanical garden, and a sports facility for children. The intention of the Imperial Hotel management was to build the Odawara Hotel as a country resort hotel, while keeping the Imperial Hotel as a city hotel.

In February 1920, the Imperial Hotel finally and formally obtained the leasehold from the Imperial Forestry Administration for the lands in Odawara. However, a contract called a "Proof" dated August 1, 1922, defines the site as having a total area of 8,200 *tsubo*,<sup>6</sup> less than half the proposed area of 19,345 *tsubo*.

<sup>1</sup> See: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *In the Nature of Materials* (New York: Duell, Sloan, Pearce, 1942), p. 123, illustration no. 233; Frank Lloyd Wright, *A Testament* (New York: Bramhall House, 1957), p. 128; Frank Lloyd Wright, *Drawings for a Living Architecture* (New York: Horizon Press, 1959), pp. 52-53; *Frank Lloyd Wright Writings and Buildings*, selected by Edgar J. Kaufmann, Jr., and Ben Raeburn (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), p. 206; Olgivanna Lloyd Wright, *Frank Lloyd Wright, His Life, His Work, His Words* (New York: Horizon Press, 1966) p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Kamakura was the capital under the Minamoto, Hojo, and Ashikaga shogunates (1192-1573) and is the location of a 42' bronze Buddha erected in 1252.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *tsubo* is about 36 square feet. Therefore, the proposed site was about 16.7 acres.

<sup>4</sup> 1 *shaku* is about 1 foot.

<sup>5</sup> 100 *sen* equal 1 *yen*.

<sup>6</sup> Or approximately 7.1 acres.

There is some information suggesting that construction was actually begun. A detailed map of Odawara, published by the Yamada Map Company on November 1, 1932, marks the location of the hotel as #718, Midori-4, Odawara-cho—that is, near the Odawara Detached Palace. In addition, an envelope bearing the date of May 4, 1928, shows the actual existence of the Tokyo Office of the Odawara Hotel at room #43, 3rd floor, Saiwai Building, Uchisaiwai-cho 1-3, Koji-machi, Tokyo. Although neither of these materials proves conclusively that construction was begun, they do indicate that the project had progressed beyond the point of being a mere proposal.

Although no photographs have yet been located, there are some people who remember that the building progressed as far as having its roof tiles on and that it was still standing in the early 1940s. No records have been found to date regarding the actual construction of the building, but it is hoped that continued research will reveal when it started, how far it proceeded, why the construction was left unfinished, and when and why this unfinished building was finally destroyed. ■

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Apprentice to Genius: Years with Frank Lloyd Wright**, by Edgar Tafel, New York: McGraw Hill, 1979, 228 pp., illustrated, \$19.95.

reviewed by Scott Thomas

*Apprentice to Genius: Years with Frank Lloyd Wright*, by Edgar Tafel, is neither serious biography nor autobiography, but reminiscence and, therefore, somewhat exempt from the usual rules of scholarship. The informality of the medium, however, demands a sure hand, which neither Mr. Tafel nor his McGraw-Hill editor possesses. The reader is fully aware that the author is undecided as to the real subject of the book: Mr. Wright or Mr. Tafel. Although the title ambiguously covers both, one is, at the end, still guessing about whom the book is written. Ideally we would see Mr. Wright and the early years of the Fellowship through the youthful eyes of an insider—an angle not before seen. Instead Tafel offers the usual public relations view of “the master,” that is, the official cant one has come to expect since April of 1959.

Certainly this persona is one Wright invented for himself: the eccentric genius dispensing largess and wisdom from the bucolic retreat—the last Jeffersonian democrat/aristocrat. But surely the apprentice who was so closely involved with Fallingwater, the Johnson Wax headquarters, and the birth of the Usonian saw something of the creativity, something more than the sideshow. Tafel's Wright is that same Merlin who boasts of carelessly tossing masterpieces from “out of his sleeves.” This is absurd; anyone intimately involved with a Wright

*Scott Thomas is Managing Editor, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, The Dana House, Springfield, Illinois.*

building is quickly aware of the painstaking work and thought that is his genius.

Tafel's anecdotes are amusing but of little interest and of less importance. The “strutting, pontificating,” vain Wright is hardly news. The background and development of the Usonian, which, for better or worse, was the spatial ancestor of the ubiquitous, post-war ranch house, would be news. Tafel barely touches on this, telling only an embarrassing story of surreptitiously including steel trusses to hold up a roof.

It should perhaps be mentioned, however, that Tafel's anecdotes remind us of Wright's wit and very real sense of fun. For twenty years, Wright has been the victim of an authorized official characterization, which, like Tass new bulletins, displays a Slavic lack of humor: every word spoken is **the** word. This diminishes rather than preserves Wright's stature. Tafel thoughtfully reestablishes the basis and background for the endless *outré* remarks, putting some life and color back into the graven image.

The author's lack of a sure hand is clearly evident in his choice of illustrations, which seem to display Wright at his worst. For whom are these intended: the reader with little knowledge or the “buff,” as Tafel refers to him? While the standard Wright biography is included for the reader without background knowledge, devoting pages of color plates to the Moore House II (Oak Park, Illinois, 1923) would be odd even for the more esoteric study. Tafel tells us Wright would cross the street to avoid this building. Tafel's close-up photographs make this fully understandable. Wright's flight into Sullivan-esque rococo ornament for this one house has never been explained. It was assuredly not in homage to “Liebermaster.” When one great artist conspicuously copies another, it is usually to display either virtuosity—e.g., the Liszt piano transcription of Bizet operas—or to conjure up decadence—Kurt Weill's transposition of sentimental German standards into minor keys. Wright's Moore ornament is beyond transposition; it is Sullivan mutation. That monster, the Schlesinger and Mayer marquee, is pristine, virginal in comparison. Tafel quotes Wright as referring to the same ornamentation as “decadent Sullivan” without seeming to grasp the peculiarity.

The Darwin D. Martin House, (Buffalo, New York, 1904) illustrations are also a poor choice, presumably included because of Tafel's recent work with the house. To the reader familiar with the house, these photographs are sad; to the reader unfamiliar, they are misrepresentations. The removal or defacement of the bookcase piers has destroyed all spatial definition. The interior is an uncorseted old dowager; the white ceiling paint is simply caking the old face with rice powder. One would prefer to turn away, rather than share in the embarrassment.

In contrast, Tafel includes a series of beautiful color plates of Taliesin, taken on the first birthday after Wright's death. Unfortunately the editor chose to

reproduce these in so small a format that their worth is questionable. The architectural illustrations are in general either poorly used or poorly reproduced.

The personal photographs, the snapshots of picnics, work, projects, are original and interesting. Displaying something of the spirit of the early Fellowship, they redeem, to some extent, other weaknesses of the book.

The other redemption is Tafel's own story: his youth, reasons for joining Taliesin, and feelings for the experience. This is the book's contribution. Most biographies and studies have treated the Fellowship as Mr. Wright's harem of ego boosters and Mrs. Wright's answer to maintenance and upkeep problems. Tafel carefully, purposefully dispels this idea. Rebuilding Hillside Home School and the Midway Farm buildings quite literally from scratch, i.e., felling the trees and quarrying the stone, was an education in "the nature of materials." If one knows how the stone lays in the hill, one knows how the stone should be relaid on the hill. Tafel makes it clear that if one questions the role of the Fellowship, one is actually questioning Wright's nineteenth-century romanticism, not his motives.

Tafel also brings up that other thorny problem concerning the Fellowship. As the years went by and the boys grew up, exactly what was their place and exactly who did what? The question of ascription in the last years is delicately circumvented, although hints are made. Perhaps one day Mr. Tafel will feel free to write without such delicacy. ■

## HISTORIC PAINT RESEARCH: ITS ROLE IN THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE

by Matthew J. Mosca

As Andrew Jackson Downing stated in 1850, color is second only to form in determining the aesthetic quality of a building. Color can enliven or subdue a structure by emphasizing its components or by blending these into a unified whole. As an example, one only need think of the Parthenon. Today it is a sculptural interplay of light and shade on marble, but in its original state it was a riot of polychromatic effects.

The color history of many nineteenth-century American homes has paralleled, in effect, that of the Parthenon. For example, the brilliant polychromy which highlighted Queen Anne style houses was eliminated during the ensuing Colonial Revival period which re-established white as the preeminent color of the day. Fortunately, we are now able to appreciate (or at least tolerate) the

*Matthew J. Mosca is currently working on a thorough paint analysis of Mount Vernon. He was formerly employed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and worked on the paint analysis of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio.*

original intentions of the architects, builders, and home owners of the nineteenth century who chose the rich colors of the era.

Frank Lloyd Wright may be counted among those most interested in the effects of color in the home. He used his own home and studio as a "laboratory" to study the qualities different colors created in a room. During the Oak Park period (1889-1909), Wright experimented with special effects such as gold and silver leaf, stenciled patterns, and the use of creosote to stain plaster. The paint research in Wright's studio disclosed a rich color scheme which was arrived at after much experimentation on the part of the architect. The walls, which were divided by wood moldings, had a vermillion red dado. The upper walls were buff-tan. The octagonal ceiling, two stories above, was metallic gold. This was achieved by using bronzing powder, which simulated gold leaf at a fraction of the cost.

The paint research project which was completed at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio is indicative of the technical developments in the field. The aim of the study was to determine which colors were evident during the period of Wright's greatest maturity while he lived and worked on the site. Hundreds of samples were collected throughout the property and were microscopically examined, and the paint layers were compared. In this way a means of relative dating was established. The additions following Wright's departure had fewer layers than samples from earlier sections of the building. Thus, the ca. 1909 colors were isolated.

Color photography was not available until the 1930s, so our knowledge of Wright's early color palette must come from the few written descriptions and, of course, from the buildings themselves. Wright's colors were a very important element in producing his complete architectural effect. (For another discussion of Wright's use of color, see H. Allen Brooks, "Observations Concerning the Color of Wright's Plaster Surfaced Prairie Houses," *The Frank Lloyd Wright Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 19.) Because of Wright's historical significance, it is essential that a corpus of research be developed to refine our understanding of the man and his times. ■

## A DAY AT TALIESIN WEST —A FORWARD LOOK

On Wednesday, April 23, 1980, Mrs. Frank Lloyd Wright and members of the Taliesin Fellowship, the staff and students, will host a one day session for design professionals and students. The "Day" will begin at 8:30 in the morning at the Taliesin West desert campus.

Lectures will be given by Charles Montooth, William Wesley Peters, and Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer. Also included will be a tour of the campus, a walk in the desert, lunch

with students and staff, morning and afternoon coffee breaks, a limited exhibition of original Frank Lloyd Wright drawings, an informal session with the staff architects at a review of their own work, a visit to a construction project on campus, and an exhibition of student work.

The fee for the day is \$125, payable at the time of acceptance of application for reservation. Reservations may be made by writing or phoning Richard Carney, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona 85258. (602) 948-6400. ■

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Perhaps I can give you some more information concerning the house at 338 Kenilworth Avenue illustrated in Vol. 2 No. 3 of *The Frank Lloyd Wright Newsletter*. This house was bought and remodeled by Mrs. Mary W. Herron, my great aunt. She was a sister of Mrs. Nathan Grier (Anna Walker) Moore whose husband, my grandfather, built the Wright house at 329 Forest.

Mrs. Herron moved from Peoria to Oak Park about 1925. She bought 338 Kenilworth shortly afterwards and Mr. Moore persuaded her to have Mr. Wright draw plans for remodeling the house. My recollection is that Mr. Wright's plans were not to Mrs. Herron's taste either architecturally or financially. Thus another architect actually did the job.

The interior first floor retains the typical Victorian front hall, front parlor and back parlor on the south side. The dining room is on the north with butlers pantry and kitchen in the rear. The marble mantles in front and back parlors were moved from the Peoria house as were the large mirrors above them and the one in the front hall. One of the interesting features of the house was a nineteenth-century wire operated bell system. A small screen porch was built off the back parlor and front room during the remodeling.

Mrs. Herron with her daughter, Mary, lived in the house until her death, about ten years later. Her daughter then married Luther Replogle (of Replogle Globes and later Ambassador to Iceland). The Replogles lived in the house until her death sometime in the middle 60's when the house was sold. I am not aware of its subsequent history.

Yours sincerely,  
John M. Hills  
El Paso, Texas

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**Staff:** John Zukowsky, Architectural Archivist

#### **Wright Holdings:**

First National Bank of Dwight for Frank L. Smith (1905)

Four original sketches from Wright's office  
Correspondence from Wright's office and various contractors  
Blueprints of working drawings

Herbert and Katherine Jacobs Collection

Three rolls of original drawings and blueprints of the first Usonian (1936) and Solar Hemicycle (1943) houses  
Correspondence regarding both houses  
Construction photos, interior and exterior, of both houses  
Newspaper clippings about Wright and his work collected by the Jacobses over the years  
Miscellaneous Taliesin publications, programs, brochures, postcards

Drawings

Coonley House (1907)  
original rendering by George Niedecken of a desk  
Robie House 1950 remodeling  
two interior renderings by Hyo Tan  
exhibition prints of plans  
mylar copy of reconstruction drawings of dining table  
Joseph Bagley House (1916)  
four blueprints

Photographs

(Note: The enormous historic photograph collection of Chicago buildings and buildings by Chicago architects is catalogued according to location, not architect. The collection includes hundreds of photographs of Wright buildings.)

Glass plate slides for the Armour Institute collection  
Mounted photographs  
David Phillips collection of Wright and Sullivan photographs from glass plate negatives of the Chicago Architectural Photographing Company

## Microfilms of Blueprints

Nathan G. Moore alterations (1923)  
E. A. Davenport Bungalow (designed by Webster Tomlinson)  
E. A. Davenport House (1901)  
Unity Temple (1904)  
Robie House (1909)

Wrightiana—a broad collection of miscellaneous materials including

Brochures and pamphlets of various buildings  
Announcements and pamphlets of exhibitions  
Taliesin publications  
Texts of speeches by Wright  
Newspaper clippings  
Selected articles about Wright  
Posters and other graphics

(Note: A checklist of this collection may be obtained through the archivist.)

Files pertaining to the acquisition of materials by Burnham Library include correspondence regarding Wright archival materials.

**Accessibility:** The archival collections are available only to members of the Art Institute and visiting scholars and curators; appointments are preferred. Out-of-town research requests and photo orders are accepted by mail. Many materials are restricted to use for study purposes only and may not be published. Quick-copying of archival materials is not permitted, but books and magazines, when not in the Special Collections, may be copied for 20¢ per page. 8" × 10" photographs are available for \$5.00 each if a negative already exists; if not, the negative fee is \$30.00. ■

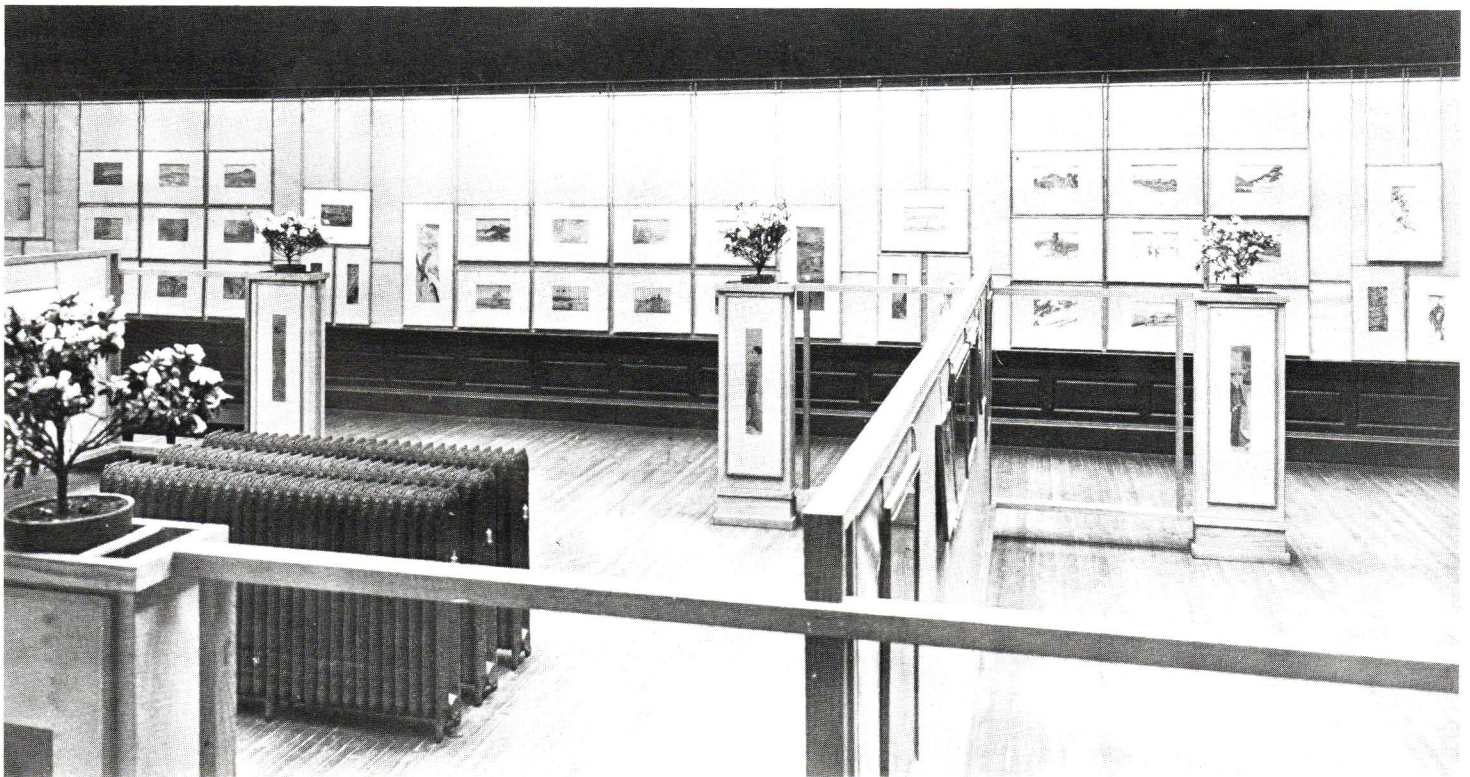
## TOURS

### Wright Plus Oak Park, Illinois

On May 17, 1980, the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation will hold its sixth annual tour, which features interiors of ten structures designed by Wright and his contemporaries in Oak Park, Illinois. As well as the Home and Studio (1889, 1898) and Unity Temple (1904), Wright-designed buildings open this year are the Arthur Heurtley House (1902), the Peter Beachy House (1906), and the Mrs. Thomas Gale House (1909). Homes by John S. Van Bergen, Talmadge and Watson, and E. E. Roberts also will be open. All proceeds from the tour go to support the operation of the Foundation and the restoration of Wright's home and studio. Tickets are \$15.00 (\$12.50 if purchased before May 1). For tickets or more information contact the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation, 951 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60302. (312) 848-1976. ■



Above: Inkwell design, the First National Bank of Dwight, Illinois, 1906. Below: Japanese print exhibition, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1908. Installation by Frank Lloyd Wright. Photos courtesy The Art Institute of Chicago.







Scale drawing, Emil Bach House, 7415 Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois, 1916. Drawn by Thomas A. Heinz.

Office  
 Frank Lloyd Wright  
 Webster Tomlinson  
 Architects

Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright and Mr. Webster Tomlinson announce their co-partnership in the practice of Architecture. :: Their practice will combine the Studio at Oak Park with a business office in Chicago, and will cover only such work as may receive their direct care in the matters of composition, construction and business detail, necessary to beautiful, rational buildings.

Chicago, January, 1901

*Webster Tomlinson*

Studio, Oak Park, Illinois  
 Telephone. :: Oak Park 53  
 Chicago Office, Steinway Hall  
 Telephone. :: Harrison 783

*Letter announcing the formation of the partnership between Frank Lloyd Wright and Webster Tomlinson in January 1901. This letter, which apparently Tomlinson sent to friends and clients, was recently discovered by Narciso Menocal of the University of Wisconsin. The Association is looking for other documentation of Wright's business dealings.*

## BOOKS AVAILABLE AT 20% DISCOUNT

The Association is able to offer books at a special saving to its members. To order, please send your check to: The Frank Lloyd Wright Association—Books, P. O. Box 2100, Oak Park, Illinois 60303. Allow 5 to 7 weeks for delivery. For shipping and handling: please add \$1.75 per book to your remittance (US\$ for all orders sent outside the U.S.).

**In the Cause of Architecture**, edited by Frederick Gutheim, 246 pages, illustrated.

From this collection of seventeen historic articles written by Wright for the *Architectural Record* between 1908 and 1952, his philosophy and theories on the use of materials, form, and space emerge. The book also includes an introduction by Gutheim, articles by noted scholars, and many historic photographs.

Publisher's Price \$22.50  
Member's Price \$18.00

**Building with Frank Lloyd Wright: An Illustrated Memoir**, by Herbert and Katherine Jacobs, 147 pages, 89 illustrations.

Herbert and Katherine Jacobs built two revolutionary low-cost houses designed by Wright: the first Usonian house in 1936 and the Solar Hemicycle in 1946 (beginning construction). As well as acting as their own contractors on one of the projects, the Jacobs also did much of the work themselves. This book documents the story of the building of these two houses and the warm friendship that developed between architect and clients.

Hardcover: Publisher's Price \$14.95  
Member's Price \$11.95  
Softcover: Publisher's Price \$ 8.95  
Member's Price \$ 7.15

**Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater**, by Donald Hoffman, 98 pages, 100 illustrations, softcover.

With an introduction by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., son of the original client, this book covers the genesis of the design of the house, the relationship between Wright and the Kaufmanns, and the day to day progress—and problems—of the house. Many previously unpublished construction photos are included.

Publisher's Price \$ 5.00  
Member's Price \$ 4.00

**Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910: The First Golden Age**, by Grant Carpenter Manson, 238 pages, 250 illustrations, softcover.

Frank Lloyd Wright once introduced Manson as the man "who knows more about me than I do." One of the most important books about Wright, this study of his

early years includes probing analyses on both the Froebel and Japanese influences.

Publisher's Price \$ 9.95  
Member's Price \$ 7.95

**Frank Lloyd Wright: A Study in Architectural Content**, by Norris Kelly Smith, 197 pages, 36 illustrations.

This book, originally published in 1966, remains the only critical analysis of Wright's work. Although not for the casual reader, Smith's probing study is a must for all who would truly understand the man who is America's greatest architect. This new edition has been upgraded from the original with a larger format and the addition of many new photographs.

Hardcover: Publisher's Price \$15.00  
Member's Price \$12.00  
Softcover: Publisher's Price \$10.00  
Member's Price \$ 8.00

**Apprentice to Genius: Years with Frank Lloyd Wright**, by Edgar Tafel, AIA, 228 pages, 120 illustrations.

This is a popular book of reminiscences and insights by a man who shared the life of the Taliesin Fellowship for nine years. Architect Edgar Tafel worked on such projects as Fallingwater, the Johnson Wax Company, and Wingspread, and he shares with readers the day to day experiences in the drafting room and at the building site. Illustrated with many photographs by the author, the book shows Wright from an affectionate and warm—yet honest—perspective.

Publisher's Price \$19.95  
Member's Price \$15.95

**The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright: The Life-Work of the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright**, edited by H. Th. Wijdeveld, 164 pages, 197 illustrations.

The Wendigen Edition of 1925 was the first major publication of Wright's work after the Wasmuth portfolios and consisted of seven special issues of the Dutch publication devoted to Wright bound together. Reissued by Bramhall House, this edition contains an introduction by Mrs. Wright.

Publisher's Price \$14.98  
Member's Price \$11.98

**In the Nature of Materials**, by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 143 pages, 413 illustrations.

This analysis of Wright's development during the first fifty years of his career is one of the most important works in the Wright bibliography. It contains many photos, drawings, and plans, and a chronology of buildings and projects through 1941 is also included.

Hardcover: Publisher's Price \$25.00  
Member's Price \$20.00  
Softcover: Publisher's Price \$ 9.95  
Member's Price \$ 7.95

## "SAGUAROS"

### A Crayon Drawing by Frank Lloyd Wright

This drawing was begun in 1927 by Mr. Wright, soon after his first exposure to the State of Arizona. He added to and improved the drawing several times over a period of years.

This fine reproduction was done by the Chicago Serigraphic Workshop using transparent inks and twenty-five separate screens. It is printed on the finest museum quality paper and faithfully depicts the colors and texture of the original.

The limited edition of 200 prints was produced under the auspices of the Arizona Architects Foundation, Inc., with the Arizona Society of the American Institute of Architects, with express permission from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Taliesin West.

To authenticate the edition as to design and color, each numbered print has been initialed by Mrs. Frank Lloyd Wright.

To order your copy, please write on your letterhead to the Arizona Architects Foundation, Inc., 1121 North Second Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85004, and enclose your check in the appropriate amount.

AIA Member \$300      Non-member price \$375

Ordered prints will be shipped prepaid in protective packaging, insured against damage, via the best method, to each destination. ■

**Back issues available:** 1978 issues are \$3.00 each; five of the six bi-monthly issues are currently in print. 1979 issues are \$5.00 each; all four quarterly issues are available.

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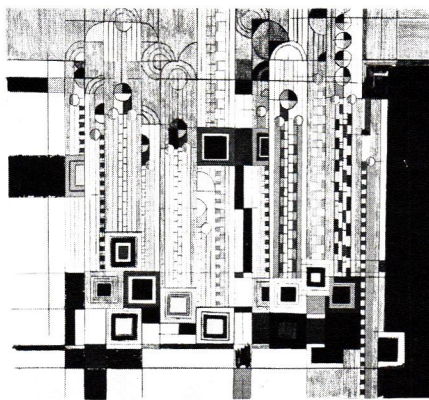
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#### PAINT ANALYSIS AVAILABLE

Owners of houses designed by Wright or other Prairie School architects may now take advantage of Mr. Mosca's services. Through paint analysis, the original colors (both interior and exterior) of these houses may be determined, thus allowing faithful restoration and enabling us to see and appreciate them as the architect originally intended.

For a fee of \$25.00 per sample, Mr. Mosca will microscopically analyze the paint samples, determine the original color, and reference that original color to a standard Munsell color chip. After contacting Mr. Mosca so that sample locations and procedures may be recorded, home owners can collect and submit samples themselves. Although not an alternative to extensive paint research requiring site visits, this procedure offers a means of obtaining the information at a much lower cost.

Information and instructions can be obtained from: Matthew J. Mosca, 1610 Avenue P, Apt. 3-J, Brooklyn, New York 11229. ■

**Advertising**—For information concerning rates and availability please contact the Editor.

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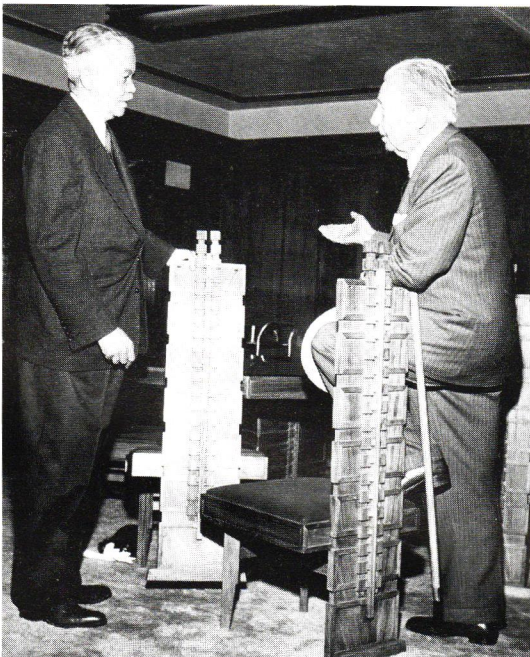
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Masthead design by John H. Howe, Architect, Minneapolis, Minnesota



*Frank Lloyd Wright and Paul R. Williams, president of the Municipal Art Commission, in the dining room of the Hollyhock House, 1954, taken at the time of the exhibition, Sixty Years of Living Architecture. Photo courtesy the Municipal Arts Department, City of Los Angeles.*