



THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

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THROUGH A WRIGHT WINDOW

by Maya Moran

- The masthead design is a progression of a window in the F. F. Tomek House (1907) in Riverside, Illinois. Wide
- comes divide it into three vertical parts and give the window a secondary, inner frame. Wright used this triple division
- earlier in the Darwin D. Martin House (Buffalo, 1904) in a more elaborate way. The Tomek House window is very
- simple, but it is deceiving in its simplicity, for few would say at first glance that it contains ninety-two panes. The
- upper three vertical rectangles are divided into four parts each by thinner casing. Below them are twelve small yellow pieces of glass, nine of which are squares; the other three are rectangular. These are encased in the thick leading. By day, the colors of the glass vary from a soft lemon to a light cadmium and naples yellow, and from the outside they sparkle with iridescent blues, greens, and purples. At nighttime the reverse is true; looking out into the darkness one is surprised to find the garden colors of the daytime in the windowpanes.

The three large glass panels in the lower part of the window provide an uninterrupted view of the sea of green or

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white outside. As in many of Wright's windows, the top part of the window is more elaborate than the bottom, thereby providing a different view depending on whether one is standing or sitting. This effect is achieved by the low placement, 33" above floor level, of the large windows measuring 33" x 40 1/4" without the frame.

Apparently Wright was aware of the power of passive solar heating and planned the fenestration accordingly. With the band of twelve windows facing the southwest, the furnace starts up only after sunset on sunny winter days. The wide roof overhangs do not allow the sun inside the house during midday in summer but let the low winter sun flood the house with its golden light all afternoon. In the early morning the sun runs under the front roof cantilever, across the porch, through the French doors, over the length of the 30-foot living room, across the hall, and up the stairs.

The windows facing the north east in the living room are small and 56" off the floor. Beneath them are three large radiators hidden behind a grille of 1/2" wide oak slats. These windows are made up of eighty panes, and the design features a foreshortening of the upper squares of four strips each. They contain the upper half of the larger window design.

It takes time to fully recognize and appreciate the subtle, balanced symmetry of the living room. Some features are noticed immediately; others only reveal themselves after